Abstract

Title of Document:	Government Support for 'Private Schools for the Poor': a case study in Mathare informal settlement, Kenya
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This case study provides an exploration of the Ministry of Education's strategy of engagement with non-formal schools in Kenya, and the responses made by these schools. Non-formal schools in the informal settlements of Nairobi represent a form of low-cost private schooling, which is found in other urban centers in less developed countries. The ministry's program includes: school verification and validation, changes in school management and the provision of instructional materials' grants. The ministry began supporting NFS through an investment program included in the first Kenya Education Sector Support Program 2005-2010. The study findings have been directed towards the question of whether this government support to NFS influences the educational experience of the poor to their advantage.

Some of the advantages identified include: greater financial stability in supported schools, which can be used to provide more concessionary places; eligibility of validated NFS for a national school feeding program through greater school legitimization; stronger support for school survival from parents and among pupils themselves because of the expectation of better academic results; higher teacher morale and greater teacher confidence; increased access to national exams through more NFS being granted exam

center status and a reduction in exam fees and greater potential access to secondary school through an improvement in exam results.

Disadvantages that are described include: the continuation of fees at the same levels as before the MoE support program; no substantive improvements in school conditions other than in teaching and learning materials; high rates of pupil transfer and an associated selection process, which is based on academic ability; tolerance of high rates of class repetition; increased academic pressure, translating into long school hours, class repetition and potential dropping out; modes of punishment that are not acceptable in public schools; deterioration of teacher: pupil ratio and the diversion of funds and support from other forms of non-formal education.

The findings suggest that the MoE support program has resulted in some improvements in equality between pupils in NFS and those attending public primary schools, but has done little to address issues of equity amongst children growing up in these disadvantaged circumstances.

Government Support for 'Private Schools for the Poor':
a case study in Mathare informal settlement, Kenya

By

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Dedication

For Richard – my inspiration and strength

And,

In memory of Mary Gichuru, for all her support and wisdom

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Abbreviations

8-4-4	Education curriculum adopted by Kenya in 1985. 8-4-4 refers to an 8 year primary cycle, 4 years of secondary schooling and 4 years tertiary education
ACE	Adult and Continuing Education
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASALS	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
CBO	Community Based Organization
CE	Complementary Education
CSRSP	Community Supported Rural Schools Program
Dignitas	Dignitas Project
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
EKW	Elimu Kwa Wanavijiji Coalition
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPE	Free Primary Education
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDI	In Depth Interview
IM	Instructional Materials
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KECOEPA	Kenya Complementary Education Providers Association
KESSP	Kenya Education Sector Support Program
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KISA	Kenya Independent Schools Association
LCP	Low-cost, private school
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFEC	Non-Formal Education Center
NFS	Non-Formal School
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSP	Non-State Provider
RNGP	Registered Non Government Primary School
SIMSC	School Insturctional Materials' Committee
SMC	School Management Committee
SIMBA	School Instructional Materials' Bank Account
The Policy	Policy for the Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training
TSC	Teacher Services Commission
Abbreviations used when quoting respondents	
Dir	School Director
HT	Headteacher
T	Teacher
P	Parent
Pup	Pupil
M Int	Ministry Official

NOTE: Kenya shillings are converted to US dollars at a rate of 74:1 in this paper.

Section I

Literature Review

and

Research Methodology

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

The promise of urban prosperity continues to draw thousands of people into already congested cities in less developed countries. However, the anticipated advantages of urban living, such as greater access to employment or education and health services, are often found to be illusory and many unfortunate people are reduced to living in informal settlements, commonly known as slums, where conditions are reported to have fallen below those of rural areas (Mugisha, 2006). In Africa approximately 72% of the urban population are estimated to be living in slums (Cohen, 2006 in Merkel & Otai, 2007), and this density of people, along with the lack of any planned infrastructure or development planning, severely tests the provision of public services in these areas.

In response to the high parental demand for school places in the informal settlements, a demand that is heightened by government promises of 'free' primary education, and in the face of a limited supply of quality schools from the government, many cities in less developed countries have seen a 'mushrooming'[1] of growth in the non-state provision of primary education. Much of this growth has been in the form of community or private initiatives to establish schools within informal settlements, schools in which low service charges are levied, and which are referred to in the international literature under the broad term of 'non-state providers', as 'low-cost private schools', and as 'private schools for the poor' (Rose, 2006: Motala, 2009; Tooley, 2009). In Kenya, however, such schools are referred to as Non-Formal Schools (NFS). These schools more accurately fit the

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[1] 'mushrooming' is the term used throughout the literature (Watkins, 2000:229; Rose, 2002:1; Caddell & Ashley, 2006 and Tooley, 2008:450) to describe the increasing and unregulated growth of 'low-cost, private schools' in the urban slums of less developed countries since the early 1990s.

description of low-cost private schools rather than the non-formal education centers suggested by the name, as they charge fees for their services and deliver the national, formal primary curriculum, called the '8-4-4'. The Ministry of Education (MoE) recognizes a range of NFS providers, including those who register their schools as 'private' institutions, those established and managed by churches and those who register their schools as 'self-help groups' and are considered community-based organizations.

The provision of primary education by non-state providers (NSP) is not without its controversy (Rose, 2009b). Concern centers around issues such as: whose interests are best-served by private provision; how educational quality can be ensured; how non-state actors are to be regulated and whether substantial public funds should be invested to support this non-public provision. Questions around equality, quality and equity are all the more poignant when pupils come from families living on, or below, the poverty line and whose interests should be of central concern to the government. Issues of equality and equity deserve greater scrutiny when the government engages directly with non-state providers and uses public funds to support what can be construed as a commercially-driven and profit-oriented endeavor. Since 2005 the Kenya government has initiated a new level of engagement with NFS providing a policy framework, systematic verification and validation of NFS and direct support in the form of grants for the purchase of teaching and learning materials. This government support is the subject of this case study.

Focus and Purpose

In this case study I am concerned with the expansion of support by the Kenyan MoE to primary NFS, the majority of which are located in the poverty-stricken and over-populated urban slums. The MoE investment program to support NFS is housed within the department of Non-Formal Education (NFE) yet these schools are essentially para-formal in nature (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991), and offer the chance for children to sit the formal Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) through an alternative and complementary channel to public schooling. At the same time, NFS school managers levy service charges and the schools resemble those referred to in the international literature as low-cost, private schools (LCP) many of which operate in poor urban communities.

My purpose in undertaking this study is to explore the Kenya government's engagement with NFS, the action that NFS have taken in response to this support and to situate the empirical findings within the ongoing, and often controversial, debate surrounding the equity and equality implications of the private provision of primary schooling for the poor.

Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the MoE's strategy of engagement with NFS under the 2005-2010 Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP) and the responses made by schools affected by this investment program. The central research question is:

'Government support to Non-Formal Schools includes three main elements: school verification and validation, changes in school management and the provision of instructional materials' grants. Does this government support to NFS influence the educational experience of the poor to their advantage?'

The study aims to answer three principal questions:

a) What are the objectives, assumptions and expectations that underpin the MoE's strategy of support to NFS?

b) How do school managers, teachers, parents and pupils experience the operationalization of school verification and validation, changes in school management and the provision of instructional materials' grants?

c) What do school manager, teacher, parent and pupil experiences of this government support, combined with MoE expectations, imply on issues of equality and equity for the economically disadvantaged?

Statement of the Problem

Progress in delivering universal access to basic education is one of the yardsticks against which governments in less-developed countries are regularly measured by both their own electorate and the wider international community. The dominance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the urgency of the commitment to achieving Education For All (EFA) both by 2015, are evident in education policies that promote the extension

of access to primary education above concerns of quality, relevance and outcome, and strategies that rely on new partnerships without considering critically the social and economic implications of widespread non-state provision.

The MoE strategy of engagement with NFS has been developed within this international policy context and against the pressing objectives of political survival. Within this context, serving the needs of 'the poor' acts as a trump card: coinciding with 'pro-poor' donor agendas and appealing to calls for equal treatment amongst the electoral masses. The poor attract other high-ticket labels such as, 'the disadvantaged', 'the marginalized', and 'the vulnerable'. However, these labels tend to mask the harsh realities of social and economic disadvantage and hide the diversity with which poverty is experienced at household and individual levels.

While the policy platform of achieving universal access is powerful and pervasive, the beliefs and assumptions that inform the strategies it generates are frequently taken for granted by those who design and implement such policies. Yet, even the slightest knowledge of the practical constraints posed by economic poverty and social exclusion calls many of the fundamental assumptions and implied theories of action into question. For example, strategies to support schools in less-developed countries are founded on human capital and psychological deficit models of education (World Bank, 1995). As such, they favor the provision of inputs, such as textbooks, to improve educational opportunities on an equitable basis. However, the lack of trained teachers, insecurity in school and at home, high levels of unemployment and the undeniable pressures of

survival, such as persistent hunger and ill-health, undermine the logic and rationale of such exclusively resource-based strategies. Similarly, models of decentralization encourage the participation of parents in school management structures, yet the disempowering nature of poverty challenges the central idea of effective parental participation in school-based decision-making. The potential for educational strategies to be effective in either ensuring universal access to basic education or alleviating poverty is, therefore, undermined by a lack of detailed knowledge of the processes by which change occurs, or responses are undertaken, within a context of severe and prolonged poverty. Even when some successes are observed, such as the outstanding performance of one or several pupils attending NFS, little is known of the way in which these successes materialized.

Beyond the fact that many excluded groups still require, deserve and have a right to access quality education, blind faith in unexamined assumptions can come at a high cost in low-resource settings. As Samoff emphasizes, unless we look critically inside the 'education black box', which conceals the processes that translate inputs into outputs (2007), we run the risk of squandering scarce funds on strategies that do not bring the intended results. This issue is pertinent in Kenya as the MoE, in its sector-wide program for education, (KESSP 2005 – 2010 and KESSP 2010 – 2015), is committing substantial funds to the support of NFS, a large part of which consists of Instructional Materials (IM) Grants. Since 2005 the NFE Department has disbursed a total of 3.5M[2] USD through these grants and plans to disburse a further 1.8M USD in the 09/10 financial year alone with plans to continue expanding this financial support until 2015.

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[2] These figures are derived from planning documents and are subject to change.

The MoE justifies its support to this sub-sector on the basis that it is extending access to marginalized, vulnerable and otherwise disadvantaged groups. Internationally some prominent commentators claim that the low-cost private provision of education is benefiting the poor (Tooley, 2004b). However, a review of available empirical data suggests that only the upper socio-economic families within the urban slums are able to afford these schools and that those pupils who actually complete the primary education cycle come from the minority of home situations that offer a broad-based protection against the more negative impacts of poverty. For these reasons the study will be conducted within a social justice framework, which Weiss and Greene describe as 'giv(ing) added weight to the perspectives of those with less power and privilege in order to 'give voice' to the disenfranchised, the underprivileged, the poor, and others outside the mainstream' (Weiss and Greene, 1992:145 in Patton, 2002). In this case study a social justice focus will mean ensuring that NFS serving the lower socio-economic communities are included, that the experiences of untrained teachers are captured and that the voices of a range of pupils are heard.

Potential Significance of the Study

In her 2006 survey of government experiences of non-state provision of basic education in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, Rose concludes that there are few examples of governments proactively supporting 'pro-poor non-state provision of basic education', with most interventions focusing on registration and regulation. She goes on to note that there is a subsequent lack of empirical studies of government facilitation:

'. . . the non-state sector is frequently operating independently of the state and, because non-state provision has been occurring in an unplanned and unregulated manner there are limited examples of explicit facilitation by the state' (Rose, 2006).

'despite the increasing attention that non-state provision has been receiving in international and national policy debates, there remains a dearth of published evidence-based research on the implication of different forms of non-state provision with respect to access for the poor and other hard-to-reach children and young people, the cost and quality of these forms of provision relative to state provision, and their implications for educational outcomes' (Rose, 2009b).

This study aims to provide empirical evidence that will contribute to the ongoing dialogue around the way forward for government engagement with private schools, which claim to serve the educational needs of the poor. Much of the currently published and available research concerning the privatization of schooling is quantitative in nature. In this study, I aim to provide deeper insight into the lived experiences and implications of government support to low-cost, private schools through a qualitative approach. I believe that this qualitative approach will both complement existing quantitative studies and reveal areas deserving further inquiry.

Limitations of the Study

This case study is located in the urban slums of Kenya and, as such, is limited to the informal settlements of one capital city in one country in Africa. While the international literature suggests that NFS are examples of similar low-cost, private schools for the poor in other parts of the world, the educational, social, economic and political contexts will differ from place to place. The case study will provide insights into the experience of government engagement with NFS and, through thick description, raise questions that others may wish to investigate in other contexts. The findings are not, however, immediately transferable to other contexts.

The quantitative and statistical data available for viewing these schools as a group are limited. A database covering just over 500 NFS has been created by the MoE based on surveys conducted in December 2008 and which provide basic institutional profiles. At school level the NFS do hold detailed enrollment and performance data. At national level within the MoE an electronic management information system (EMIS) data collection survey has been recently completed, but the response by NFE institutions, including NFS, has been low. Thus, the quantitative data for this sector are incomplete, difficult to confirm and limit the conclusions that can be deduced from the study findings.

In many less developed countries large numbers of people flock to urban centers in search of work and income. These people usually settle in informal settlements where accommodation is relatively cheap. NFS are a feature of these settlements as they provide an alternative, which some families can afford, to public schools, which are generally

absent in these unplanned developments. NFS are, therefore, typically located in large, informal, poverty-stricken urban slums. Such areas can be difficult to access by outsiders because of a lack of infrastructure, (many routes are only passable on foot), security, (much of the post election violence in Kenya erupted in the urban slums where tensions are already high due to extreme poverty), and sheer density, (some schools are located in such unlikely and hidden corners that they are known only to the immediate community). The study sites will, for security reasons, be selected from the more accessible and secure sites.

Researcher Position and Previous Experience

As I have carried out some previous work with the MoE on their engagement with NFS, it is important that I make the nature and extent of my prior experience clear and distinguish this earlier experience from the study that has been undertaken as the basis for my Phd dissertation. For a period of six months in 2009 I was engaged by the British Department For International Development (DFID) to provide technical assistance to the NFE Department in the MoE. The overall objective of this assistance was to release bottlenecks in the NFE Department's work schedule to allow them to extend their support to more NFS in the next financial year. DFID was, at that time, planning to provide funding to the MoE to cover the disbursement of IM grants to up to 1,000 NFS from a base of 400 schools. During these six months my main tasks were to assist the NFE Department in converting their survey data into an electronic database and to review the training materials being used to train NFS on the management of the IM grants. In the course of this work I visited a number of NFS, some of which had already received MoE

funding and others which had not then been verified and found eligible for funding. My visits to the schools involved meeting with only the Headteachers to discuss the training they had received prior to receiving the grants and making a physical tour of the school to better understand the survey data that had been collected by the MoE. During that time my concerns were essentially practical in terms of how best to assist the MoE in moving forward with the two tasks of establishing a database and reviewing their training materials. For the purposes of this Phd dissertation I have carried out new interviews with MoE officers, undertaken new school visits and conducted interviews with school-based staff, parents and pupils. My analysis draws on the data collected only in schools visited during June and July, 2010. My previous experience does, however, provide a foundation of general knowledge of this sector, which has helped me to design this study.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized in a traditional format with a review of literature and discussion of methodology preceding the study findings. The study is separated into two sections, the first of which includes the literature review and research methodology and the second of which contains a description of the case, the study findings and the conclusions drawn from the study. I begin in Chapter 2 with a review of three bodies of literature: the context of non-formal education; non-state provision of education, and the Kenyan context of NFS and government engagement with this sub-sector. Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology for this study, including a brief overview of equality and equity issues in education. In Chapter 4 I provide an overview of the case being studied: the Kenyan government's engagement with the NFS under the first phase of the

KESSP (2005-2010). In Chapter 5 I address the findings on the objectives, epecations and assumptions espoused by MoE officers in relation to the government support to NFS. Chapter 6 begins with a detailed description of the school sites and respondents involved in this study. I continue the chapter with a presentation of my findings in relation to the ways in which people have responded to MoE expectations and includes descriptions of the roles and responsibilities different agents have adopted. In Chapter 7 I present my findings on issues of educational access, survival, outputs and outcomes with reference to Farrell's (2003) dimensions of educational equality. In Chapter 8 I discuss study findings that relate to different perceptions of NFS in relation to the private sector. Finally, in Chapter 9 I present concluding remarks on those aspects of the government support that appear to embody educational benefits and the limitations of this support in improving the equality and equity status of children growing up in the informal settlements of Nairobi.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Context of Non-Formal Education

Introduction

The term 'non-formal' education is applied to a diverse range of learning activities that are conducted outside mainstream schooling. Covering topics such as agriculture, literacy, health and nutrition, civic education, academic subjects and HIV and AIDS, the modes of delivery include: 'trade training centers, on-the-job training, management training, moral or political reeducation, community development programs, literacy programs and even alternative schools. . .' (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983b). Distance education is another popular form of delivering NFE programs, often in combination with the use of modern media. The audiences reached through NFE are equally diverse, encompassing school-age children and youth, and adults; employees and the unemployed; full-time and part-time students; rural and urban dwellers, and permanent citizens and displaced people. The needs of these different target groups are met by different providers, have various objectives and, consequently, vary greatly in the nature of their content and delivery. For example, there is a significant difference between NFE for adults, which is often provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may have clear political objectives and be transformative in nature and NFE for children, which more frequently imitates formal schooling, albeit often at low levels of quality. The classification of NFE by Carron and Carr-Hill offers further insight into theses different objectives, (*see page 20).* The topic of this review is forms of NFE for children, particularly those forms that resemble formal schooling.

NFE for children aims to serve the needs of those who live in different circumstances, not those of different ability. As such, it is intended as a response to a differentiated demand, for example, those children whose circumstances do not allow them to attend school in the normal hours; people with nomadic lifestyles; young people who have missed out on school and may be older than the usual school going age; young mothers who have other demands on their time or children whose survival is dependent on specialist livelihoods, such as pastoralism. The differences in the educational provision may be institutional, be built around different teacher-student relationships, cover a different content than the mainstream formal curriculum and may have different objectives and raise different expectations. This differentiated demand may not necessarily be met by merely extending the supply of formal education and therefore calls for a different service provision.

Defining NFE

The sheer diversity of topics, learning structures and participants drawn under the NFE umbrella makes it difficult to reach any kind of consensus on a succinct and comprehensive definition of the term. Some scholars hold that the diversity of forms of NFE, as well as the difficulties involved in differentiating between contemporary examples of formal and non-formal education, has rendered the actual term 'non-formal education' essentially meaningless and irrelevant (Hoppers, 2006). Others warn against fixing one definition to a form of educational provision which is so far-reaching and which has yet to be systematically investigated (Kleis & Others – unnamed -, 1974a). Kleis et al. also suggest that establishing a single definition of NFE is unimportant as the basis for any definition lies in the purpose of the definer and 'as purposes differ, so do the

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aspects of education upon which we focus in order to construct a definition' (Kleis et al., 1974c). Nonetheless, the body of literature surrounding NFE contains an abundance of definitions and discussions of how to characterize and categorize forms of NFE. The terms formal, non-formal and informal are widely used in both academic and practitioner circles and so, are taken as a valid foundational framework for this discussion.

Kleis et al. (1974a), attribute the challenge of establishing a consistent and comprehensive definition of NFE to the wide range of contexts in which NFE takes place. They suggest that as the institutional context of any activity plays a crucial role in our understanding of that activity and as NFE takes place in so many contexts, the conceptualization of NFE is highly mutable. In contrast, when 'education' is construed as a school-based activity, as is most often the case in discussions of formal education, then the institutional context is more homogeneous and the task of defining education is limited by our conceptualization of schools as institutions. The assumption that formal education is synonymous with schooling is common within the NFE literature and formal schools are broadly characterized as being an 'age-graded, hierarchically-structured and certifiable mode of education propagated by the state' (Hoppers, 2006). Non-formal education is frequently described as the antithesis of formal education yet, as Ward & Dettoni note, as 'non-formal' is a 'negative descriptor', defining the activity as what it is *not* will always reveal far less than is represented by its counterpart term, 'formal' (Ward and Dettoni, 1974). By defining NFE solely in terms of the ways in which it is 'not' similar to mainstream schooling we may overlook essential dimensions of NFE. It remains, however, a useful place to start.

The idea that NFE comprises learning activities that take place 'out-of-school' has long been a dominant characterization of the NFE subsector. This starting point has persisted over time and those referring to NFE as being outside school span the last four decades: Coombs, 1976; Grandstaff 1976; LaBelle 1976b; Bock & Papagiannis, 1983; Carron and Carr-Hill 1991 and, more recently, Spronk, 1999, Hoppers, 2006 and Weyer 2009. For example, Hoppers sees NFE 'as a separate array of provisions, whose main characteristic was that in its format, approach and organization it was different from formal schools' (2009b). However, as Coombs (1976) notes, even as we differentiate NFE as being outside the formal schooling system, it does not, in itself, constitute a separate system of education with 'its own distinct structure, interlocking parts, and internal coherence' but rather, we are left with 'a bewildering assortment of organized educational activities outside the formal system that are intended to serve identifiable learning needs of particular subgroups in any given population' (1976). This lack of a strong structure within the NFE subsector, along with the presence of many different types of NFE provider, contributes to the sense of organic and unregulated development within NFE. As Rose demonstrates in relation to NFE in Malawi, much of the growth of NFE, especially that provided by non-state actors, has taken place by 'default rather than design' (2005)

Even though NFE is more than simply 'not school', the subsector remains inextricably linked to the formal sector in the sense that all participants in NFE have some kind of relationship with the norm that is represented by formal schooling, even if that relationship is one of exclusion from mainstream education provision. Non-formal

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education activities may play a very different role in a learners' life depending on their formal school experience. For those who have already completed a cycle of formal schooling, NFE takes on 'recreational, work and cultural' values, especially in higher income countries (LaBelle, 1976a). For those who have not had access to mainstream schooling, or who have not been able to complete formal school cycles, NFE programs may stand as a safety net against missed opportunities or may be the only opportunity for learning.

Much as we view NFE in contrast to formal schooling, we are reminded that, especially for the more disadvantaged groups in low-income countries, NFE is not necessarily 'chosen' over mainstream schooling but is often the *only* means to learn new things and acquire skills (LaBelle, 1976a). In contexts where NFE is the only form of education on offer, particular consideration is given to forms of NFE that provide a 'flexible and relevant equivalent of formal education to young people who either cannot access formal schools or who have prematurely left school for reasons associated with poverty, home conditions, cultural practices, geographical distance, the impact of HIV and AIDS and/or situations of conflict' (Hoppers, 2009a). Hoppers (2009a) distinguishes two main categories in the thinking around 'NFE-as-alternative' provision: *complementary and equivalent pathways*, which offer the flexible provision of primary education, but lead to the same essential learning outcomes and opportunities and *parallel programs*, which are not directly related to the formal system and which offer different approaches to learning, but with goals and opportunities that are more directly related to the local socio-economic environment. Consideration of educational outcomes is especially important when socio-

economic circumstances combine with the inadequate provision of formal education and result in only a small percentage of children successfully completing primary education.

Along with the distinction between those educational activities that take place *within* and those that take place *outside* school, the ways in which NFE is delivered with or without form is another dominant theme. As Ward and Dettoni clarify, the term formal 'connotes procedure, purpose, form and order' (1974). In contrast, the term non-formal has associations of being 'without form or discernible structure, organization or purpose', (Ward & Dettoni, 1974). However, as a great deal of education outside schools still has form, they return again to the thought that 'schooling' is a better term for formal education, highlighting that NFE programs are more often 'non-school' rather than without form. In a subsequent paper, Kleis et al., go further to consider which dimensions of NFE are likely to be with or without form and differentiate between issues of institutional status, teaching delivery and potential outcomes, concluding that 'the non-formality of an educational effort is taken to reside in its location, sponsorship and administration, but not in either its purposes, its pedagogical character or its credentialing status' (1974c). This categorization of the non-formal elements of NFE is not universally accepted and many authors, for example Bock & Papagiannis, consider the lack of formal, structured instruction as one of the distinctive features of NFE, and a critical ingredient in its success: 'nonformal suggests little or no formal structure, a highly participative, nonhierarchical and spontaneous learning environment where all participants are both teachers and learners' (1983b). The NFS in Kenya resemble Kleis et

al's definition (1974c) of NFE having less consistency of form in their provision but considerable form, and even rigidity, in their pedagogic delivery.

Discussions that locate NFE within a continuum of more or less formalized educational efforts, rather than within a form/no form dichotomy, highlight further dimensions across which forms of education may significantly differ. A frequently referenced definition of NFE situates this learning activity within a spectrum from formal through non-formal to informal learning environments:

'*formal education … (is)* the institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system, running from lower primary school to the upper reaches of the university, generally full time and sanctioned by the state; *non-formal education … (comprises)* all educational activities organised outside the formal system and designed to serve identifiable clientele and educational objectives … with all remaining educational activities being categorised as *informal education … (which is)* the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experience and exposure to the environment … (Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed, 1973, in Carron and Carr-Hill, 1991)

The Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed definition highlights ideas of NFE addressing the differentiated needs of target audiences that are presumably not being met by the formal system and of delivering against different educational objectives. It is reasonable to

expect that different pupil needs and different educational objectives would require a different form of schooling. By comparing non-formal with informal education, it becomes clear that the stronger presence of planning and order within non-formal education is not inconsistent with flexibility in its delivery.

Kleis, Lang, Mietus and Tiapula (1974b) go further to ground an understanding of *incidental*, *informal*, *non-formal* and *formal* education in a description of the education process as it relates to lifelong learning:

'Education is the sum of all the experiences through which a person or a people come to know what they know. Experience is encounter, direct or mediated, between a person and his environment. Encounter educes change (learning) in the person; and it produces change (development) in the environment. Learning yields knowledge in the form of cognition (perceived, interpreted and retained information), competence (intellective and/or motive skill) and volition (value, attitude, appreciation or feeling based preferences for acting or reacting). What comes to be known may be intended or unintended and it may be true or untrue; it is simply what is taken (believed) to be true' (Kleis et al., 1974b).

From this basis, we can understand *'incidental education'* as 'the day-to-day direct and unexamined experiences of living (which) constitute the bases of beliefs, habits, values, attitudes, speech patterns and other characteristics of a person or a people' (Kleis et al., 1974b). When these same experiences are 'consciously examined and deliberately

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augmented by conversation, explanation, interpretation, instruction, discipline and example' then these life experiences constitute '*informal education*' (Kleis et al., 1974b). The authors then differentiate non-formal and formal education as being more 'intentional and systematic' (1974b), forms of 'education' than informal education. In order to further differentiate between *formal* and *non-formal* approaches to education, Kleis et al., represent any 'intentional and systematic' educational system as having three primary sub-systems: *organizational*, *human* and *curricular*. Within each sub-system the authors recognize two major components: *mission* and *sponsor* in the organizational sub-system; *mentor* and *students* in the human sub-system and *content* and *media* in the curricular sub-system. Within this more detailed framework, formal and non-formal education activities can be differentiated according to their levels of stability over these sub-systems. For example, non-formal education programs may demonstrate a wider range of mentor-student relationships or greater diversity in their sponsorship while still adhering to structures in the curricular sub-system that mirror those of formal education. Those forms of instruction and learning that consistently sustain their form within these sub-systems are considered 'formal education' while forms of 'non-formal education' are those which exhibit a greater tendency to adapt the components. Any educational endeavor may, therefore, lean further towards either the formal or non-formal ends of the spectrum across each of the three components. This construct gives rise to a definition of NFE that encompasses the more adaptable and flexible nature of the activity:

'Non-formal education is any intentional and systematic educational enterprise (usually outside of traditional schooling) in which content, media, time units,

admission criteria, staff, facilities and other system components are selected and/or adapted for particular students, populations or situations in order to maximize attainment of the learning mission and minimize maintenance constraints of the system' (Kleis et al., 1974b).

The authors provide the constructive insight that NFE is discriminated from formal education 'not by the absence, but by the non-centrality, of form – by the persistent subordination of form to mission' (Kleis et al., 1974b). It is in this way that even those forms of NFE that appear closest to formal education, may still be better able to accommodate the needs of learners living in difficult circumstances and therefore be more inclusive. Examples of this might be greater tolerance for the lack of uniform, even if uniform is generally required, or greater acceptance of repeated periods of absence. The idea of NFE ranking priorities in a different way from formal schools resonates with accounts from urban slum parents, who report that the NFS are more willing to accommodate the constraints and challenges that living on low and unpredictable incomes brings.

Extending the discussion of NFE definitions, Ward and Dettoni (1974) consider NFE within a broader social context and explore the ways in which instances of formal and non-formal education vary across dimensions of their *source of authority* to stand as educators combined with their *methods of instruction*. Valid sources of authority are identified as either a social mandate, such as the authority conferred on families, or a more formal, institutionalized authority such as through a ministry or from the

professional status of being a teacher. In this framework, methods of instruction are differentiated between more 'overt' ie. deliberate, easily identified methods, and more 'covert' methods ie. more subtle, less obvious methods. The covert methods give rise to 'caught' elements in teaching and learning, in contrast to the 'taught' elements. References to 'caught' teaching recur in the literature on NFE. Based on this conceptualization *formal* schools would most readily be located in a position which favors a policy-based source of authority and overt instructional methods; *informal* education is more likely to draw its authority from a social source and may engage both overt and covert methods of instruction and *non-formal* education most frequently draws its authority from a formal base and may use both covert and overt methods. This framework provides the conceptual space to consider instances in which a non-formal institution may draw on a policy-based authority to enforce overt policies such as a dress code and may pass other, more covert, messages such as the qualities that are most suited to a work place. In our consideration of the para-formal, fee-paying schooling dominating the educational provision in urban slums, we are well advised to pay attention to the strength and nature of their social mandate to instruct pupils. For instance, the fact that 'low-cost private schools for the poor' derive their source of authority from their host communities and paying parents may better explain their offers of concessionary and free school places (Tooley, 2005) than pure philanthropic spirit.

In their second matrix, Ward and Dettoni model two other dimensions across which formal and non-formal education institutions may differ. One axis represents a continuum from *more flexible* to *less flexible forms of instruction*, where a less flexible setting places

substantial constraints upon pupils. A school classroom would be located on the less flexible end of the spectrum and the school playground towards the more flexible end. The other axis represents a continuum from more casual or *informal style of instruction to a more planned or programmed style*. This framework enables us to isolate a) the socialization function played by schools in contrast to the socialization process that takes place in broader society and b) those aspects of schooling that are socializing processes from the more formal processes that are directed towards programmatic outcomes, such as setting examinations and credentialing, (*see Table 1, below*).

Table 1: Educative Function in a Society Reflecting the Settings and Modes of Instruction (Ward & Dettoni, 1974).

		The Where? How View of Instruction (The Setting Continuum)	
		More Flexible	*Less Flexible*
The How? (The Mode Continuum)	*Informal (casual via norms)*	Socialization	Schooling as Socialization
	Planned (programmatic via policy)	Extension	Schooling as Formalization

Based on the two matrices, Ward and Dettoni, offer a tentative definition of NFE as: 'non-formal education is a planned instructional design which uses both overt and covert procedures in a more flexible environment to teach towards a goal determined by a regulated policy' (1974). This definition is helpful in identifying the potential policy role of education authorities and the state in instances of NFE provided by a range of non-state providers. It presents a conceptualization of how non-state providers may be ready to accept regulation from the state if that regulation enables them to better deliver against a recognized goal ie. they may be ready to take on certain bureaucratic practices if their chances of seeing more pupils pass exams or perform better are increased.

In the third of their essay series, Kleis et al. (1974c) propose a definition of NFE that takes into account four aspects, which appear to operate independently of each other. The four aspects are: *delivery system, purpose, pedagogical character and credentialing*. *Delivery systems* are most frequently divided between 'in-school' or 'out-of-school' but can also encompass categories such as, 'indigenous or exogenous', 'local, national or international' and 'political, social, religious and educational'. The *purpose* is categorized as being either short-term and specific, as in many forms of NFE, or long-term and general, as associated with formal education. *Pedagogical character* is described as either flexible, associated with NFE, or rigid, as in formal education. The significance of *credentialing* lies in the role it plays in clients' motivation and the relationship between that motivation and the educational program. The suggestion is that in non-formal education that does not include the acquisition of formal credentials, the benefit of the program to the client is more closely related to the client's needs and the relationship between the client's motivation and the educational program content is more direct (Kleis et al., 1974c).

The value of this approach is that we can assign formal and non-formal education activities to different categories across the four dimensions rather than trying to decide on an overall formal/non-formal label. Viewed from the perspective of these four dimensions, the NFS in Kenya appear to be very closely aligned to formal education. The *delivery* in the NFS is in-school, the *purpose* is considered to be predominantly long-term and general, the *pedagogic style* is rigid and it is possible for pupils to earn *credentials*.

From this work Kleis et al. derive the following definition, which summarizes some of the key characteristics of NFE:

'1. Although they may be linked to formal schools in several ways, such as sponsorship and shared facilities, non-formal efforts are outside the formalized, hierarchical structure of the graded school system.

2. Non-formal education is a deliberately planned educational effort, having identifiable sponsorship, goals and programs. It is not 'incidental' or 'informal'.

3. The 'non-formality' of an educational effort is taken to reside in its location, sponsorship and administration, but not in either its purposes, its pedagogical character or its credentialing status', (Kleis et al., 1974c)

However, Carron and Carr-Hill (1991) note that there are just as many commonalities between different classifications of education as there are differences. As a result,

'What one finds is a variety of activities which at one extreme differ very little from what is going on in the traditional school system and which, at the other extreme, are very close to informal learning practices . . . In essence, the appellation 'non-formal' is simply a device for labelling those activities outside the control or regulation of the bureaucratic school system' (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991).

The authors offer an alternative perspective by examining different categories of NFE within a broad classification of non-formal education rather than from the perspective of a formal/non-formal dichotomy. Different examples of NFE are described as varying in terms of: the educational needs they meet; the clienteles they serve; the educational agencies by which they are organized and the relationships they have with the formal education system. Four categories are described: *para-formal education, popular education, education for personal development and professional training* (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991). *Para-formal education* programs offer a 'substitute for regular full-time schooling' and, importantly, provide equivalencies to the credentials offered by formal education provisions. *Popular education* refers to the least institutionalized programs, which are often designed to meet collective needs such as community development or civic enlightenment rather than promoting individual competition. *Education for personal development* is described as an expanding category, which is dominated by forms of adult education which address personal needs and enhance self-actualization through courses in areas such as languages, sports and health and beauty. *Professional training* refers to more technical and vocational training offered by organizations such as companies, trade unions, private agencies and also formal education institutions. Consideration of these different types of NFE offers a means of differentiating between forms of NFE which cater more for children of school-going age rather than older youth and adults and also between those forms that orientate themselves towards school curricula rather than skills for immediate employment.

Based on the ways in which NFE is defined in the literature, I find that the NFSs in Kenya, although operating outside the mainstream schooling system, are not significantly different in their educational structure, pedagogic style, stated purpose or credentialing potential from their formal counterparts. Unlike other forms of 'alternative' education, which cater for the needs of children in emergencies or displaced by conflict, the NFS are organized by age-grades and follow a hierarchical structure. In this sense NFS are consistent with Coombs' definition of para-formal education programs, although access to the credentialing system, ie. examinations, is significantly limited in NFS by personal and school circumstances. NFS appear to follow similar learning objectives to formal schools although the potential for achieving similar learning outcomes is undermined by the impoverished conditions prevailing in the schools in terms of infrastructure, health and safety, trained teachers and teaching and learning resources. Without further study it is unclear whether NFS offer access to employment or transition to further levels of education in ways that are similar to formal schools. It is through employment or academic progression that social and economic mobility would be promoted.

On the other hand, the provision and growth of the NFSs as an educational sub-sector is taking place in an unstructured and unplanned environment. The location, sponsorship and administration of the NFSs are more diverse than in formal primary schools and, as such, could indicate some flexibility to accommodate the particular needs of a specific group of pupils living in difficult socio-economic circumstances. At the outset of this study it is unclear whether school managers have the willingness and capacity to adapt to some of the contextual needs of families living in the urban slums either because of the

'non-formal' nature of NFS, or because they are established and managed by non-state and private providers. Although these schools operate from a formal policy-base as determined by the MoE, their real source of authority is derived from the local community and the parents of their pupils. Schools are reported to have closed down when they lose the support of enough parents to be financially viable (Tooley, 2008). This socially-derived source of authority has an impact on the relationship between the schools and the parent body in terms of flexibility over payments and accountability with respect to teachers' conduct. It is unclear whether this accountability extends to formalized programmatic elements such as examination performance as not all NFS are publicly ranked according to national examination results, in the same way as formal schools. To date, the NFS in Kenya, which are mainly registered as self-help groups under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development, remain essentially outside the control or regulation of the state, although this is changing as the MoE increases its engagement and financial support to this complex sub-sector.

NFE Characteristics

Running throughout the literature on NFE are common ideas about the defining characteristics of the non-formal provision of education. These may not always be features that have been widely operationalized and do have the tendency to represent the ideal to which NFE providers aspire, rather than reality, but remain useful in investigating the nature of any particular case of non-formal education.

Coombs (1976) taking an holistic view, identifies three distinctive and recurring features of NFE that give it the potential to meet diverse learning needs and to change as needs develop. These are: flexibility, versatility and adaptability. This theme of potential responsiveness recurs throughout the literature from the 1970s:

'Nonformal education is generally seen as need-oriented, … utilitarian …and cheaper than the formal systems. Often it is tied to some productive activity … and is characterized by … peer learning … and flexibility' (University of Massachusetts, 1971:1 in Bock & Papagiannis, 1983a).

And through to the present:

'NFE is characterised by a 'specific approach, which is child-centred, heterogenous, flexible and participatory, bottom-up, and locally relevant, whereas the formal education approach is teacher-centred, homogenous, rigid, top-down and lies on an over-crowded curriculum' (Rose, 2007, in Weyer, 2009).

Grandstaff (1976) expresses another commonly held, but less empirically proven, belief that forms of NFE are provided at a lower cost. The belief that NFE, especially those forms that take place outside of schools, represent a cheaper method of reaching masses of people in a diverse range of settings, informs a great deal of the discussions around NFE. The claim for lower costs lies in assumptions that the provision of NFE often takes place in existing buildings during otherwise unused times, that instructors are often

unqualified and receive lower payments or are volunteers and that the providers of NFE are, because of their closer connections with the local community, better able to mobilize additional resources from local contributors. Insofar as NFE addresses the needs of disadvantaged groups they are also often the recipients of support or donations from a range of benefactors, such as rotary clubs or church groups, and other aid programs. However, where forms of NFE operate as complementary or alternatives forms of education to mainstream schooling, this kind of cost assessment overlooks the costs of providing the education infrastructure such as the formal curriculum, textbook development and examination systems etc. Any evaluation of cost-effectiveness that overlooks the government provision of an enabling infrastructure in support of education, will under-represent the costs of alternative forms of education.

Other characteristics of NFE that occur frequently within the literature refer to those curricula that are more closely related to employment needs and skills development. Brembeck (1972), identifies the 'proximity to immediate action, work and the opportunity to put learning to use' as central features of NFE. This relates more to forms of NFE that more closely resemble vocational or technical training. Beyond the immediate usefulness of NFE, either through personal growth or occupational enhancement, Ward and Dettoni add the 'person-centeredness' of NFE and, particularly important for para-formal forms of NFE, the frequent lack of certification of the instructors (1974). The dependence on untrained teachers is a complex characteristic in the context of NFS as it keeps costs to parents low, but also undermines teaching quality, especially among the higher age groups.

Several authors (Kleis et al., 1974; Brembeck and Grandstaff, 1974; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008, and Rogers, 1996, in Spronk, 1999) offer summary lists of the characteristics of NFE in different contexts. Some authors focus on the comparison between idealized examples of formal and non-formal education while others focus on the dominant features of one or other of the two sub-sectors. These are presented in tabular form below. The structures in the tables provide a range of entry points in considering which educational elements are present in a particular scenario and they draw our attention to elements which may not be readily evident. Given the sheer diversity of NFE forms that exist, this range of structures constitutes a valuable 'toolbox' from which to draw when discussing forms of NFE in detail.

Kleis et al. provide a detailed and useful summary of the most commonly appearing features of NFE:

'1) is not likely to be identified as 'education,' 2) it is usually concerned with immediate and practical missions, 3) it usually occurs outside of schools . . ., 4) proof of knowledge is more likely to be by performance than by certificate, 5) it usually does not involve highly organized content, staff or structure; 6) it usually involves voluntary participation, 7) it usually is a part-time activity of participants, 8) instruction is seldom graded and sequential, 9) it is usually less costly than formal education, 10) it usually does not involve customary admission criteria. . ., 11) selection of mentors is likely to be based more upon demonstrated ability than on credentials; and voluntary leaders are frequently involved, 12) it is

not restricted to any particular organizational curricular or personnel classification . . . and 13) it has potential for multiplier effects, economy and efficiency because of its openness to utilize appropriate personnel, media and other elements which may be available in a given situation without concern for externally imposed, often irrelevant and usually expensive criteria and restraints (Kleis et al. 1974b).

As NFE is consistently viewed as the antithesis of school, descriptions of the characteristics of formal education are helpful in highlighting key characteristics of NFE. Brembeck and Grandstaff (1974) examine key characteristics of the schooling model. They suggest that in trying to determine an effective alternative to formal schooling it is beneficial to re-evaluate the stable elements of schooling, the 'givens', in order to consider some of them as variables in an alternative model. As an example, achieving literacy is often assumed to be a stable element of schooling, but in alternative models one might consider what levels of literacy are actually necessary for effective learning to take place. The bases of Brembeck and Grandstaff's assessment of 'stability' are: 'stability over different levels, stability over variations in function and cross-culturally stability'. The 'givens' of the schooling model are summarized below:

Table 2: 'Given' Features of Formal Schooling
(derived from Brembeck and Grandstaff, 1974)

- Evaluation is a stable feature of schooling.
- Schooling is seldom, if ever, an end in itself, ie. schooling is instrumental mainly as *enabling* future behavior rather than as *being* the future behavior.
- Certification constitutes the integrated and integrating commodity of the schooling model.
- Time-performance accounting: schooling takes either time or performance, or both, as basic dimensions of design.
- Literacy is a primary goal and the basis of other learnings.
- Content specificity: we are constantly concerned with the content to be learned, content

is a 'commonplace' of schooling.

- Pedagogical transaction: the model of teaching and learning is highly stable over level, function and cultural context:
    - schooling is limited to learner acquisition of content
    - the determinants of learning are assigned to qualities of the parties to the transaction: teacher competence in terms of content-knowledge and pedagogical skill; learner variables such as ability, background and motivation; media and materials
    - vertical relationships of authority and competence (superordinate master, learner as subordinate)
    - relationship of content to teacher and learner (teacher aims to convey content, therefore it is secondary to teacher but to content is primary to the learner. There is no unity of primary relationships to create a mutuality of interest and a commonality of behavior.
    - Individualism: the learner is a monadic unit, rather than a member of a collectivity.
- Interface characteristic of schooling: schooling does not seem to emerge unless some imperative exists for acculturation and there is need for the establishment of an interface between different sets of cultural norms and practices. Groupings can be generational ie. school provides mechanism to transition from one generation to another; occupational; cultural ie. between primitive and modern societies.

While there is value in comparing forms of NFE with the characteristics deemed distinctive to schooling, another perspective is derived from efforts to determine a list of common characteristics of NFE itself. Farrell and Hartwell (2008) provide such a list, which provides an alternative entry point to exploring NFE, rather than portraying any obvious antithesis to descriptions such as that from Brembeck and Grandstaff above. This is reproduced in table format below:

Table 3: The Emergent Model: common features of the alternative school programs.
(Farrell & Hartwell, 2008)

- Child-centered rather than teacher-driven pedagogy
- Active rather than passive learning
- Multi-graded classrooms with continuous progress learning
- Combinations of fully-trained teachers, partially-trained teachers and community resources – parents and other community members are heavily involved in the learning of the students and the management of the school
- Peer-tutoring – older and/or faster-learning students assist and teach younger and/or

slower-learning students
- Carefully developed self-guided learning materials, which students – alone or in small groups - can work though themselves at their own pace, with the help from other students and the adults as necessary. The students are responsible for their own learning.
- Teacher- and student-developed learning materials
- Active student involvement in the governance and management of the school
- Use of radio, correspondence lesson materials, in some cases television and in a few cases computers
- Ongoing, regular and intensive in-service training and peer-mentoring for teachers
- Ongoing monitoring/evaluation/feedback systems allowing the system to learn from its own experience, with regular modification of the methodology
- Free flows of children and adults between the school and the community
- Community involvement includes attention to the nutrition and health needs of children long before they reach school age
- Locally adapted changes in the school day or school year, as needed
- Focus of the school is much less on teaching and more on learning

Rogers (1996, in Spronk 1999) compares formal and non-formal education across ten dimensions. While the cumulative descriptions of each category may not be of value in determining a clear boundary between formal and non-formal education, the structure may be used in combination with the various lists offered by other authors to direct our attention to aspects of learning activities, which we might otherwise overlook. Rogers is focusing on predominantly adult versions of non-formal education when he compares them to formal education, which mainly targets the young. The ten dimensions are presented in table format below:

Table 4: Contrasting the Characteristics of Formal and Non-Formal Education (Rogers 1996 in Spronk, 1999)

	Formal Education	**Non-Formal Education**
Target group	▪ mainly young ▪ universal ▪ compulsory ▪ selective	▪ mainly adults ▪ those interested ▪ voluntary ▪ open
Time scale	▪ full-time ▪ primary activity of participants	▪ part-time ▪ secondary activity of participants
Relevance	▪ separate from life	▪ integrated with life

	▪ in special institutions ▪ in sole purpose buildings	▪ in the community ▪ in all kinds of settings
Program	▪ run by professionals ▪ excludes large parts of life	▪ participatory ▪ excludes nothing
Curriculum	▪ one kind of education for all ▪ set curriculum ▪ compartmentalized ▪ subject-centered ▪ controlled by teacher	▪ education to meet learner-defined needs ▪ open curriculum ▪ integrated ▪ problem-centered ▪ controlled by learners
Methods	▪ teacher-centered ▪ mainly written	▪ learner-centered ▪ much is oral
Objectives	▪ conformist ▪ set by teachers ▪ competitive ▪ individualist	▪ promotes independence ▪ set by learners ▪ collaborative ▪ collective
Orientation	▪ future	▪ present
Relationships	▪ hierarchical	▪ egalitarian
Validation	▪ terminal at each stage ▪ validated by education profession	▪ continuing ▪ validated by learners

Of further interest in exploring forms of NFE are the structural dimensions of formal and non-formal education settings proposed by Brembeck and Grandstaff (1974). The authors discuss how these dimensions may affect learning in an attempt to address the question of which structural dimensions of learning settings are conducive to performance objectives. They identify eight dimensions presented in summary form in the table below:

Table 5: The Structure of an Educational Environment
(Brembeck & Grandstaff, 1974)

1. *Age and age-mix of persons* in the environment eg. school has a high ratio of children to adults while families have a low ratio of children to adults.
2. *Social composition* of adults and children (economic status, family background and educational aspirations recognized as potent determiners of outcomes)
3. *Nature of reward structure*: immediate/deferred, valued as real or symbolic?
4. *Proximity of learning environment to action*, meaningful work (or play) and to use eg. the difference between a classic grammar school and an apprenticeship program.
5. *Proximity of learning environment to living* (environments that do or do not bracket the main activities and values of everyday existence)
6. *Timing of the learning experience* with respect to employment (schools offer

> *preparatory* learning, and place children in a holding pattern, whereas in an internship the learning may run *concurrently* with its use)
> 7. *Levels of abstraction and use of symbolic meaning*: can either be specific and concrete or abstract and symbolic
> 8. *Duration of relationships* eg. school is repeated cycle of association and severance as pupils move from grade to grade

A review of the characteristics associated with idealized versions of formal and non-formal education suggests that NFS in the urban slums of Nairobi operate far from the child-centered, flexible and participatory approaches envisaged as part of NFE and more within the teacher-centered, top-down, rigid style associated with formal education.

The Role of NFE

Economic growth.

From a broad perspective, all forms of education, formal and non-formal, have a role to play in economic growth insofar as they represent an investment in human productivity. Even though human capital theory has been widely debated and seriously challenged since its debut in 1960, it still represents a dominant perspective on the mechanism by which education strengthens national development and contributes to economic growth. Human capital theory posits that the knowledge and skills acquired by students through schooling are transferred to the economic sector when these graduates are employed and that their increased competence translates into more efficient and effective ways of working, such that commercial profitability is improved. The cumulative effect of the expansion of formal education across society is to stimulate economic growth by increasing the productive capacity of the national labor force. Challenges to the theory include those scholars who find the asserted link between educational outputs and the

needs of the employment market unfounded and the subsequent link between labor inputs and productivity unsubstantiated. Others assert that education interacts with the labor market by providing a 'screening' service, rather than generating competences that are needed to function 'on-the-job'. Neo-classical economists have embraced human capital theory as a means of modeling education as a commodity and calculating rates of return for investments in education. Work by Psacharopoulos at the World Bank (1985) has been hugely influential in establishing comparative rates of return that favor investment in human capital (ie. education) over investment in physical capital, as well as favoring primary or basic education over all other levels and forms of education from secondary and tertiary to vocational and technical training, and including NFE.

Serious concerns about the limited role education could play in national development were raised by Coombs in the aftermath of World War II. Coombs' concern centered on the inadequacy of formal schooling to provide students with the competencies needed within the labor market as well as the inability of the formal education sector to respond on a cost-effective basis to the substantially increased demand for schooling. Coombs described the situation as a 'crisis' in education across the world (1968) and the problems faced by the education sector at that time are summarized by Bock & Papiagiannis as: 'the student flood, rapidly rising educational costs, inefficient management and teaching methods, unsuitability of present output, and scarcity of resources available for educational expansion' (1983a). Significantly, Coombs' promoted non-formal education as a response to this crisis on the basis that forms of NFE could be provided quickly and at a lower cost as well as reaching a wider socio-economic cross-section of society. In

addition, some forms of NFE were believed to be more accessible and appropriate for rural populations than mainstream schooling and, as such, were conceptualized as a means of not only increasing productivity and economic growth in the same way as formal education, but of bringing about a more equitable distribution of the benefits of this growth. The rapid expansion of NFE was therefore promoted by Coombs as central to a strategy of stronger rural development. Coombs' views did not go unchallenged by authors such as Brembeck 1972 and Carnoy 1982, but rather than rejecting his portrayal of the crisis they advised caution in setting such ambitious expectations of NFE.

The expectations on forms of NFE, however, remained high. The NFE subsector was expected to: '1) provide education to those for whom schooling is not a realistic alternative; 2) make new skills and attitudes available to the rural poor; 3) circumvent cultural obstacles that prevent some peoples from utilizing school effectively; 4) use scarce educational resources more efficiently and 5) modify the schooling system itself' (Deleon 1975, in Bock & Papagiannis 1983b). This reflects the belief that even if the existing formal school system could be scaled-up sufficiently to meet the increased demand driven by demographics, the formal sector could not meet all the diverse educational needs represented in society and especially not those of the disadvantaged and the rural groups.

In contrast to these high expectations, Grandstaff (1976) cautions that NFE is not a 'panacea for educational deficiencies in development' and outlines seven characteristics of development strategies against which the appropriateness of NFE should be assessed.

These are: the role played by literacy in learning; a differentiation between functional and general literacy; the importance played by immediate and long-term goals; whether a material or cultural change is expected; which socio-economic and geographic groups have access; whether the development needs have more specific or more diffuse goals and the appropriateness of transmitting codified knowledge. NFE is viewed as a more appropriate vehicle for education for development when the target audience is non-literate and when functional literacy skills are needed rather than general literacy – for example, it is possible to become an expert in many practical areas such as farming without being literate and being able to read may be sufficient in itself rather than needing to have a wide knowledge of literature. Education programs with a specific and short-term goal, especially when the goal represents a material change (eg. building a road), may be better suited to NFE. Learning that can be conveyed through role modeling, imitation and apprenticeship is considered better suited to NFE. NFE is seen as a source of education that is able to reach those excluded from formal education, especially the poor, the powerless and the isolated.

Kleis et al. (1974c) also reflect on the role played by NFE within the context of 'aid' for development. They highlight a shift in development thinking which goes beyond the immediate goal of economic growth and situate NFE within this broader context. An expanded concept of development incorporates some of the outcomes that are assumed to arise indirectly from economic growth such as improvements in health and nutrition and employment (1974c). Coombs (1976) also notes this expanded contribution of NFE as a 'stronger educational means for attacking staggering and ubiquitous problems related to

population, food, health, and rural unemployment and poverty'. This concern for the broader social objectives of education is consistent with the dominant liberal paradigm of this era, in which education was predominantly viewed as a public good with positive externalities and the most efficient allocation of resources was viewed as a public responsibility.

Some twenty years later the paradigmatic shift to neo-liberalism is evident in the difference in the debate around the potential role of NFE. NFE is still perceived as a means of reaching the disadvantaged and the marginalized but the main value associated with educational access is the economic return to the individual rather than the investment in social capital. The prevailing assumption is that some individuals or groups of people remain at a lower socio-economic level because they have some kind of skill or psychological deficit, implying that 'the root of problems of maldistribution of resources and statuses lies within the individual, not the social structure, and can best be remedied by prescribing more education as cure for the deficit' (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983b). Based on such models of human or psychological deficit, creating greater access to basic education is typically promoted as a poverty alleviation strategy in its own right. Since the 1990s and the world-wide focus on the goals of EFA, NFE has received increased international attention as a potential means of achieving the educational commitments incorporated in the MDGs. These development goals are founded on contemporary human rights agendas and NFE is seen as a means of reaching excluded groups by offering more diversified forms of education:

'NFE is now considered as playing a critical role in the achievement of the objective of Education for All, by reaching the learning needs of youth and adults who do not have access to formal education, increasing their employment opportunities and therefore contributing to poverty alleviation' (Weyer, 2009).

Given that the NFS in Kenya are operating in ways very similar to formal schools, the criticisms associated with human capital theory apply to them equally. For example, does the primary cycle of the 8-4-4 curriculum develop the competences and skills that will enable graduates to be more productive in the work place, is the labor market sufficiently competitive and will wage-levels reflect the years of schooling completed? The process chain implied in human capital theory is seriously challenged by the context of high urban unemployment and, since the 2003 removal of user fees in Kenyan primary schools, the increasing number of primary school graduates who compete for the scarce job opportunities that do exist.

Socializing function.

Beyond the potential for education to expand and improve a person's employability and productivity, schooling also plays a number of significant socializing functions. The socialization aspect of schooling is a beneficial supplement to the socialization provided by families and one's cultural group in that it provides exposure to some of the social skills and norms that are necessary to function well in a work environment. At the level of individuals Bock and Papagiannis (1983b) describe this socialization process as providing skills that are 'critical to promotability'. On a collective level, the socialization

function of schools is essential in the development of a national identity and to equip individuals with knowledge and attitudes that form the basis of 'citizenship'.

The social function of schools represents, in itself, a vast body of literature and cannot be adequately addressed here. Of particular interest for a discussion of para-formal examples of NFE, however, are insights into the social mobility function of education, its potential and the underlying assumptions and limitations. Much of this work has been developed by Bock and Papiagannis (1983). One of the major assumptions in the dominant model of education and development is that by granting otherwise excluded groups access to education they will, through improved employment prospects and earning power, follow patterns of economic and social mobility that are similar to the patterns experienced by the mainstream population. In this way, NFE, when it reaches otherwise disadvantaged groups, is expected to reduce the elitist power of formal education. Implicit in this model is the belief that individuals who remain in the lower strata of society have some kind of 'psychological-deficit', often referred to as 'culturally deprived' or 'socially disadvantaged' (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983a) which need to be compensated for by some kind of educational inputs. However, Bock & Papagiannis challenge these assumptions and propose a model in which education is seen as just one institution within a broader social context, in which other institutions and sub-systems have a substantial part to play in potential mobility: '(schooling's) complex organization usually mirrors the complexity of the other institutions and the structures of the society in which it is embedded' (1983a). This suggests that the expansion or improvement of NFE is unlikely to lead to substantial

socio-economic mobility unless other critical structures in society support the upward movement of disadvantaged groups.

Another assumption challenged by Bock and Papagiannis is that within society there is a linear continuum between unskilled (blue-collar, laborer) and skilled (white-collar, manager) forms of employment. This would suggest that, given access to comparable quantities and types of education, people are able to enter either of the employment sectors and move easily between the two. Bock & Papiagannis (1983b), challenge the potential for cross over between the skilled and unskilled labor markets. They assert that people are prepared for either the unskilled or skilled labor markets and that movement between the two is seriously constrained. The authors also raise the question of certification, which is not always present across many of the forms of NFE that are most different from formal education. Insofar as school certification acts as a 'gate-pass' to further academic studies or forms of employment, the absence of a credentialing function in NFE limits its potential contribution to social and economic mobility. Further, the authors suggest that, rather than leading to more widespread social and economic mobility, NFE may reinforce existing disparities by preparing students technically and socially only for the primary, unskilled labor force.

Bock (1983) examines two other school-based functions - 'allocation' and 'legitimization' - which, in conjunction with the development of competencies and credentialing, mediate the socialization process. He maintains that, in keeping with formal schools, NFE socialize their students into those values and competencies

'associated with the roles into which the schools are licensed to allocate them' (Meyer and Rubinson, 1975 in Bock 1983). In this sense, purely by being a graduate of a school institution, certain potential roles are conferred on its students. These roles may be beyond, and perhaps in the absence of, the competencies required to fulfill those roles. Educational institutions, therefore, have a socially-attributed charter to confer the potential to fulfill different social and economic roles on its students. Moreover, the more students perceive that their school has a strong allocation potential, the greater the power of that institution to fulfill a socializing function. Institutions that offer a ready example of this are the 'Ivy League' colleges of the USA, the 'red-brick' universities of the UK and the 'national' secondary schools of Kenya. To be graduates of these institutions provides access to certain political, social and economic roles that go beyond the substance of the education received. Bock asserts that 'students learn what it means to be a graduate of a school, and to what allocation rights this socially defined and created status entitles them' (1983).

Further than playing an allocation function, schools can also 'legitimize' or endorse certain relationships. 'Education does not simply allocate people to existing roles and statuses, education creates and legitimates new roles and new patterns of relations between them' (Meyer and Rubinson, 1975 in Bock, 1983). This can be interpreted to mean that education provides a form of 'membership' into new status over and above the substance of the education. For instance, those who complete university education become 'graduates' and become members of a globally recognized group.

The expectations raised by these socializing functions of schools may be realized once a student attempts to take on anticipated roles or enter into assumed new relationships. Alternatively, the implied promises may prove to be hollow if society does not live up to the expectations. Bock explores patterns of consistency and inconsistency between expectations and reality in a study on a secondary school and a vocational training college in Malaysia. He finds consistency between expectations and satisfaction with reality among graduates of the vocational college who had entered from NFE institutions, albeit at a low level, and greater inconsistency between expectations and satisfaction with reality among graduates of the vocational college who had entered from the secondary school. These findings suggest that forms of NFE may actually limit or lower students' expectations rather than raise their achievements. The dissonance between expectations and future satisfaction may lead to disenchantment with society itself and result in increased alienation and even rebellion. Alternatively, the controlling of expectations downwards may act as a 'cooling out' strategy (Dall, Klees & Papagiannis, 1983) which effectively limits the individual's disaffection while still constraining social mobility. Bock concludes that the benefits of education are not only deferred into the future, but may also not be directly attributed to improved competencies: 'the capacity of education to transform the competencies of individuals may not be as important as its capacity to transform their future prospects, and that the latter does not necessarily follow from the former' (Bock, 1983).

Conclusion

NFE is founded on the recognition that some children grow up in circumstances that do not lend themselves to school attendance in a formal setting, which is rigid in terms of mode of delivery, hours of activity, content and teacher-learner relationships. NFE is *not* founded on the belief that these children have different abilities or particular learning difficulties. It is, therefore, the characteristics of 'versatility, flexibility and adaptability' that enable NFE to respond to the different needs that arise in different circumstances. Specifically, forms of NFE are expected to be able to reduce the opportunity costs of school attendance by offering flexible contact hours; can include those who are 'over-age' because their schooling has been interrupted and can reach a broad audience as it operates through different teacher-learner relationships. Further, when NFE institutions offer a differentiated curriculum they can increase the immediate benefits of education by offering a more relevant and potentially productive curriculum, competencies that lead to employment and credentials that provide alternative routes to socio-economic mobility. Forms of NFE can, therefore, address issues of inequality in the provision of education by reducing the practical and institutional barriers inherent in the more rigid forms of formal schooling. However, based on a review of the literature and the fact that NFS offer the formal 8-4-4 curriculum, the NFS in the Kenyan slums appear to be more closely aligned to formal education. During this study I hope to establish whether there are aspects of flexibility in the provision that respond to conditions in the informal settlements. I also hope to gain insight into what role the NFS may be fulfilling with regard to socio-economic mobility.

The Non-State Provision of Education

Introduction

In the 2007 report on the Millenium Development Goals 72 million primary-school age children around the world are reported to have been out of school in 2005[3] (United Nations DESA, 2007). With the urgency of meeting the 2015 EFA goals mounting, and doubts over whether these targets can be met through state-led provision alone, there is increased interest in the potential for non-state providers (NSP) of education to close the out-of-school gap, reducing the number of children who have never been to school or do not attend school on any consistent or permanent basis. Heightened expectations are placed on non-state providers, who are seen to 'offer (the) potential for extending access and improving quality and outcomes of education' (Rose, 2009b). Rose describes three main roles for non-state actors: meeting excess demand by filling the gap in poor quality government provision, which has deteriorated as a result of rapid expansion; providing access to those unable to access the government system because of insufficient or inappropriate supply, and meeting differentiated demand, such as specific cultural or religious preferences. Non-state providers of education encompass a wide range of players such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), community-based providers (CBOs), and private, for-profit agents. Since the 1980s, NGOs have become particularly active in providing education to out-of-school children and often focus on under-served and hard-to-reach areas of the country.

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[3] Importantly the authors note that this figure is an underestimate: 'As high as this number seems, surveys show that it underestimates the actual number of children who, though enrolled, are not attending school. Moreover, neither enrollment nor attendance figures reflect children who do not attend school regularly. To make matters worse, official data are not usually available from countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. If data from these countries were reflected in global estimates, the enrollment picture would be even less optimistic' (United Nations DESA, 2007)

Churches and FBOs have long-since been active in providing education in many different contexts, often offering a differentiated education provision and they continue to play an important role in the provision of schooling in developing countries. Community-based providers are best known for their local approaches to education provision and for-profit providers, who are more commonly associated with serving domestic elites, are now extending low-cost private schooling to poorer parts of the population (Rose, 2009b).

While changes in the roles of all these non-state actors are being debated, it is the private individuals and community-based providers who levy fees on low-income families who are of concern in this review. Whereas for-profit providers were previously seen to address the preferences of wealthy elites it is the growth or 'mushrooming' (Rose, 2002; Caddell & Ashley, 2006) of low-cost private schools that appear to address the educational needs of some poor families that is giving rise to much debate. The existence of large numbers of low-cost private schools, especially in the urban slums of large cities in less developed countries, is no longer in doubt (Watkins, 2000). Within this group there is considerable diversity in terms of ownership, management structures, fee levels, quality of provision, relationships with the local community and collaboration with the government. It is the equity and efficiency implications of their non-state status and the associated profit-making objectives that are much discussed. As Kitaev notes, 'attitudes towards private education have been ambiguous and controversial' (2007).

Definitions of Privatization

Within the literature on non-state providers of education, various definitions of non-state provision are used. Here I provide a brief overview of some of these definitions and discussions. As a starting point, Kitaev provides a list of the synonyms for non-state institutions as: private schools, non-public schools, non-state schools, non-government schools, independent schools, privately managed schools, and privately administered schools (2007).

In his comparative analysis of private schools in five countries, Kitaev refers to the UNESCO classification of public and private educational institutions, according to which it is the identity of the decision-making body behind the institution which determines the classification of the institution as either a public agency or a private entity. Within this framework, private education is understood as all institutions that are managed by bodies that are *not* public authorities. This includes institutions which may have been owned and financially supported by public authorities if they are managed by an alternative, non-state agent. Therefore:

> 'An institution is classified as *public* if it is: 1. controlled and managed directly by a public education authority or agency; or 2. is directly controlled and managed either by a government agency or by a governing body (e.g. council, committee, etc.), most of whose members are either appointed by a public authority or elected by public franchise' (Kitaev, 2007).

An institution is classified as *private* if it is controlled and managed by a non-governmental organization (e.g. church, trade union, business enterprise, etc), or if its governing board consists mostly of members not selected by a public agency' (Kitaev, 2007).

This broad classification masks the diversity that exists within the private sector and the broad overlap between public and private institutions. Kitaev concludes that 'whether they are distinguished according to management, source of income, autonomy, or ownership, it is misleading to talk of the public and private sectors as if each is comprised of a homogenous set of schools. In many respects there is as much variation within the sectors as there is between them' (2007). Further, Caddell notes that the divisions between state and private schooling are not clear cut, giving examples of how the two are overlapping: 'private schools may run outreach programs for poor children; government schools may offer two tiers of tuition within the same school, charging children who choose to take 'private'/ English medium classes. Schools, including many in Nepal, may run with some government support, yet have a number of teachers supported by community funding or through the payment of tuition fees' (2006). In addition, 'other modalities include private sector operation of public schools under contract to states; private institutions serving public purposes such as providing free educational services or financing scholarships and vouchers (King, Rawlings, Gutierrez, Pardo & Torres, 1997, in Caddell & Ashley, 2006).

Caddell offers an alternative definition of private sector provision, which focuses on the objectives of the institution and defines private schools as 'those schools and education enterprises that are commercially oriented and subject to market-forces' (Caddell & Ashley, 2006). The commercial orientation of private schools forms the basis for Klees' arguments against the efficiency of privatized mechanisms to deliver social services, such as schooling:

'Privatised school systems reduce efficiency because they offer no improvement in student achievement, yet other valued outputs of schooling are diminished since they will necessarily be less responsive than a public school system to the externalities and general social benefits that education can provide. Moreover, the neoliberal focus on privatization takes attention away from the need for increased resources and other reforms that are essential to improving the efficiency and equity of education' (Klees, 2008).

Klees highlights the critical role of regulation in the private sector: 'perhaps the single most important issue in the privatization of basic social services is regulation. Within the framework of neoclassical economics, in order for the new, privatized market to be efficient and equitable, it must be well regulated by the government so that it operates in ways that maximize social returns' (Klees, 2008).

According to the UNESCO classification, 'schools that are managed by independent (non-public) bodies will be considered private even if they receive funding support from

public authorities' (Kitaev, 2007). However, Lewin (2007) asserts that once private providers are operating with substantial subsidies to cover the bulk of operating costs, then the provision essentially becomes public as far as resources are concerned, even if the management of the delivery remains with a non-state body.

In this study the definition of private schools is explored further in Chapter 8 xxx with particular consideration of how, in Kenya, 'community-based' non-formal schools are differentiated from 'private' non-formal schools in terms of management, funding, objectives and the groups they serve.

Privatization, Equity and Efficiency

Caddell captures the potential tension between the push for universal access enshrined in EFA and MDG goals and an uncritical expansion in private provision, noting that 'the rhetoric around 'new and revitalized partnerships' to aid the pursuit of EFA contributes to the masking of underlying tensions and cultural, even ideological, differences in how private provision is perceived and engaged with' (2006). Watkins summarizes the ideological debate as:

'Markets, so the argument runs, extend individual choice and liberty, while governments restrict choice and provide unaccountable schools and poor-quality education. The political message is that states in Africa, Asia and Latin America should withdraw from education provision, and shift the cost of financing education from the public purse to the household pocket' (Watkins, 2004).

Rose includes concerns regarding the equity of provision:

the 'unprecedented growth in private provision is proposed by some as extending choice to parts of the population which previously only had recourse to government provision. On the other hand, others argue that the prominence of private providers highlights problems of quality resulting in widening of equity gaps' (2009b).

Two main ideological positions, represented most clearly by liberal and neoliberal neo-classical economists, frame the debate over whether low-cost private provision of education is efficient and equitable. The tension is heightened when these schools purport to address the needs of some of the poorest groups in society, those people whose lack of economic power acts as a disadvantage in the market place, and who traditionally require the protection of governments.

The case for public provision of education.

The justification for the provision of education by the state is derived from the economic theory of public goods, according to which, education is a public good because, once provided, the consumption of education by one individual does not significantly reduce the amount of education available to anyone else, i.e. it has the quality of 'non-rivalry'. However, education is perceived as a quasi-public good as it is possible to exclude individuals from consuming education or making them pay for its use, i.e. it does not have the quality of 'non-excludability'.

The argument for state provision of education centers on the proposition that the market, without further intervention, would undersupply the service. One of the central assumptions of perfect competition is that consumers act to maximize their utility, i.e. their happiness, and that their happiness is solely a function of their own consumption. Likewise, producers are assumed to act to maximize their profit, which is solely a function of their own production. Prices then reflect the marginal cost of production. Some goods, however, cause effects that go beyond the individual consumer or producer and affect society at large, ie. have properties that result in negative or positive externalities. In the case of education, whereas each individual derives personal benefits from their own education, they also benefit from the increased education of others. Specifically, societies in which more citizens are educated are expected to have more social unity, less crime, better child well-being through the better education of more mothers and generally a more informed citizenry. The presence of these social effects are external to any individual consumer's decision making and therefore are not reflected in the price the individual consumer is willing to pay. Likewise, private producers would not take into account the external social benefits of education in their internal profit-making decisions. Any intervention to address externalities has to be implemented by a body that is governed by objectives other than profit maximization. For this reason, the optimum provision of education is believed to be the responsibility of the state and should not be completely left to the private sector.

Education has other features that might lead to sub-optimal investment if the provision is left solely to profit-oriented suppliers (Colclough, 1996). The first of these is the separate

identities of the principal and the agent in educational transactions. Children generally enter the market as members of a household and are most often economically dependent on their parents or another adult guardian. In the case of general school attendance, and particularly in relation to tertiary education, the beneficiary of the service is a child while the people who bear the majority of the costs are parents. In rate of return analyses the costs to parents are compared with the returns to the child. In fact, parents will make their decisions based on the costs and benefits to themselves of sending their children to school, which indirectly includes the benefits to the child. As only some of the returns to schooling will accrue to parents there may be instances where households under-invest in education. This is more apparent in societies where children of school-going age are viable wage earners or represent substitute labor for adults in the home. Likewise, in some societies the returns to girls' education perceived by parents may lead to an undesirable social outcome, which requires intervention beyond the actions of private entities. In much of Sub-Saharan Africa the high incidence of orphans places more responsibility on the government to act as a substitute for guardians in ensuring that children have access to school.

Secondly, the benefits of education are not immediately felt, either by the individual or society. The time lag between investment and returns may be long enough to distort market signals so that supply and demand are not at equilibrium. The speed at which the market clears can lead to losses among certain groups. As this would represent an inefficient solution in society, public sector intervention may be justified.

Thirdly, some aspects of education cannot be supplied on a viable basis to just a few students. For example, science laboratories or academic libraries need to serve the needs of a sizeable population to become economically viable. In some countries the demand for tertiary or higher education services may fall into this category. Very limited markets of this kind may lead to single, monopolistic suppliers. As efficient resource allocation in the free market requires many buyers and sellers to be making transactions without any one of them being able to influence the market price for an optimal situation to be reached, such restrictions on the market may justify public sector intervention.

In favor of private provision of education.

Arguments for and against the provision of education by the private sector differ depending on one's ideological position. Competing views are held by liberal and neoliberal neoclassical economists, who have dominated the policy agenda since the end of World War II. Where the two groups disagree is in their evaluation of the seriousness of divergences between the neoclassical economic model and reality, and what response should be taken to address imbalances. In the neoclassical economic model of perfect competition the 'free market' is a dynamic, self-correcting system in which prices guide the most 'efficient' allocation of resources. The model is built on certain assumptions including the existence of many buyers and sellers none of whom can affect prices alone, players who base their transaction decisions on factors that only affect themselves and who face no costs associated with entry into, or exit from, any market. In this context all-knowing producers seek maximum profit and equally well-informed consumers aim to maximize utility. Production factors, especially land, labor and capital, can be

transformed from one use to another, can be substituted for each other in production and can be moved from one place to another with relative ease. These assumptions underpin the central role played by the price mechanism in directing the allocation of resources towards situations that represent optimum efficiency for society as a whole i.e. a point at which no one person can be made better off without making someone else worse off. All neoclassical economists recognize that this model is an imperfect representation of reality because there are exceptions in all of the underlying market assumptions.

However, neoliberal economists hold that market imperfections are not so substantial as to invalidate the role of prices in determining the best allocation of resources. They believe that, in a real setting, governments are no more able or likely to make better decisions. Further, neoliberals highlight the fact that, in low-income countries, the public sector does not have sufficient resources to meet the demand for education. In the recent past, neoliberal economists have referred to less developed economies where resources are misallocated towards higher education rather than the primary sector, which they believe to have a higher rate of return, although this stance has softened. According to neoliberals, increased provision of education through the private sector frees up government resources and allows consumers greater choice.

Liberal economists challenge this position largely on grounds of equity. They argue that greater choice for consumers is inequitable as individuals do not enter the system on an equal footing and that socio-economic background plays a role in educational performance. As a result, redistributive policies such as providing vouchers for

individuals to choose schools do not, in and of themselves, result in equal access or opportunity. Consumers who enter the market with greater wealth, often accumulated over generations, benefit from private sector provision to a greater extent than those who have less economic power. As a result the divide between the rich and the poor is increased through extensive private sector provision.

From a liberal perspective market imperfections are significant and abundant. They claim that the existence of imperfections, especially the externalities associated with education, the long lead time before the benefits of education are felt, the existence of economies of scale in some areas of education and the disconnect between the child as the principal beneficiary and the parent as the main bearer of costs, will lead to such a significant undersupply of education that governments have to intervene to make it efficient. Further, liberals claim that only public sector provision can address issues of equitable access and participation in education.

In response to liberals, neoliberal economists contend that governments are more concerned with maintaining power than making efficient or equitable decisions about the economy. They claim that the profit-maximizing objective of market operations is more explicit and transparent than the advantage-seeking mechanisms of governments. Neoliberals contend that the market, if allowed to function freely, will offset inequalities over time because educational qualifications translate into employment, which is rewarded with wages which are equal to the marginal productivity of labor. Liberals challenge this model of the workings of the labor market, some particularly refuting the

belief that higher education levels truly increase productivity. Instead, many highlight the 'screening' role played by educational credentials in helping employers select future employees. Broadly speaking, neoliberal economists place greater faith in the market economy to deliver efficiency and equity while liberals believe that imperfections in the market require planned interventions to redress imbalances.

With reference to a range of authors, Ahmed and Sayed (2009), summarize the arguments for and against the private provision of education as follows:

> 'reasons put forward to support the growth of private education point to its utility for increasing choice, for meeting differentiated demand and its greater responsiveness and accountability compared with state schooling . . . The primary objections from those agains privatization are that education is (a) public good and a human right. Privatisation is challenged because it commodifies education as a public good, facilitates the states abdication of responsibility for education and is an exclusive rather than inclusive process (Tomasevski, 2006). These critiques call to question the 'neo-liberal mantra' of privatization (Mehrota and Panchamukih, 2006).

However, the 'neo-liberal mantra' remains the dominant perspective in education policy development in less developed countries and the private provision of schooling has long since become a significant feature of education provision. Private education provision is highly differentiated in a city such as Nairobi with schools offering day or boarding

facilities, delivering national and international curricula and charging a wide range of fees. Unsurprisingly, the World Bank, the largest lender to the education sector throughout low-income countries and a powerful voice in the agenda-setting environment, is a strong proponent of the expansion of private provision, as evidenced in their Education Strategy Paper of 1999 and through such initiatives as the Private Enterprise Partnership for Africa implemented by the financial arm of the Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The tension in the roles and responsibilities of private and public providers is heightened when the target audience, as in urban slums, is living on or below the poverty line. Claims that greater equity is being served are undermined when the concept of 'choice' in any aspect of life, from where one sleeps to what one eats, is denied by the lack of an adequate, consistent or sustainable income.

Low-Cost Private Schooling

Against a relatively recent backdrop of widespread support for fee-free primary education and the subsequent increase in primary enrollment in many less-developed countries, the debate around low-cost private provision surrounds issues of choice, cost, efficiency, accountability, equity and quality.

As Tooley and his colleagues at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK, are the strongest and most widely-published advocates for low-cost private schooling, I will give a brief overview of their position before discussing key issues in greater detail. In a proliferation of research publications based on studies in countries including China, Ghana, India, Kenya and Nigeria, Tooley and Dixon make a range of assertions. They

describe how low-cost private schools have been serving the needs of the poor for a long time and were largely unacknowledged by the education authorities in many countries until the early 2000s. Through his research Tooley documents the scale and nature of what he terms 'low-cost private schools for the poor', which had been increasing in number since the 1990s (2009). On all the contentious issues, Tooley and his colleagues stand in favor of the expansion of low-cost private provision. Based on academic testing of pupils in private and public schools in urban slums, they claim that the low-cost private schools offer higher quality teaching inputs and learning outputs than public schools (Tooley & Dixon, 2006). With respect to costs, they portray low-cost private schools as being 'within reach of many of the poor' with fees that are less than 5-10% of the 'absolute poverty' figure (2008), and that 'private primary schools do not obtain this superior performance through higher expenditure' (Tooley & Dixon, 2006). On equity, Tooley provides data reflecting gender-parity in enrollment and asserts that the providers of low-cost private schooling display philanthropic behavior by providing concessions or free places to those who cannot afford fees: in India he records an average of 15% places being awarded on a concessionary basis (2004a). Tooley and Stanfield also find that low-cost private schools are much more accountable to parents and the community than government schools (2004b). Tooley concludes that poor parents 'want private schools' (2004a), that they are making their preferences clear by 'voting with their feet, *en masse* taking their children out of the state system into private education' (2004a), and that assisting poor people in the choices they are making in favor of private education would be a 'beneficial way forward for equity, justice and educational achievement' (2004b).

To be clear, Tooley does not call for private agents to be the sole provider of education but calls for private education to be 'embraced' as a way forward in reaching the EFA goals (2008). He recommends demand and supply-side reforms to support the expansion of private provision. However, as Lewin (2007) points out, for the marketization of private education to result in more efficient and effective service provision, certain conditions need to be met, including: 'informed choice, transparent accountability, adequate regulation, and effective legal frameworks', most of which are not evident in sub-Saharan Africa. Tooley's findings highlight concerns over the inadequacy of the scale and quality of government provision that need to be addressed, as well as providing insight into how the excluded are making critical decisions about education. However, in his writing he leaves himself open to the kind of criticisms from Watkins of issuing a statement that 'combines the blindingly obvious with the highly contestable, linking statement of fact to value judgment though an illogical leap of faith' (Watkins, 2004). Comparing Tooley's work in Kenya with locally produced research that has not had the benefit of international publication, I find that his work fails to reflect the diversity of parental and pupil experiences with low-cost private schools and, in particular, under-represents the negative experiences.

Cost and finance.

Since the end of World War II development agendas have been strongly influenced by the economic regimes that dominate in donor countries. Therefore, in the 1960s and 1970s, under the influence of liberal neoclassical thought the belief that the state was responsible for the provision and improvement of education was largely unchallenged.

This gave way, under the ascendance of neoliberal leadership, to an era of extensive 'cost recovery' in the guise of 'user fees' and 'community partnership' only to return, in the 1990s and in conjunction with the EFA and MDG goals, to a reversal in user-fee policies. In the current era of 'free' primary education the costs of education are again covered by taxes, (see Klees, 2008, for a detailed discussion). Empirical data at a national level, such as the decline and increase of gross enrollment rates in response to the introduction and removal of school fees has confirmed that individually-borne cost and general affordability are the biggest factors responsible for low enrollment and non-attendance (Bray, 2004; Watkins, 2004). The persistence of hidden costs associated with public schooling, such as buying full uniforms, exam or extra tuition fees and contributing to various school funds, fuels the argument that fee-free education still discriminates against, and excludes, those with low incomes. Through his research, Tooley strives to demonstrate that the costs of private provision are low enough to be affordable to low-income families. This position is challenged by Bray's analysis in which he asserts that 'detailed work on education costs consistently shows that the formal school fees paid by poor households are typically dwarfed by informal fees and costs associated with exams, books and uniforms' (Bray in Watkins, 2004).

Watkins (2004) challenges the assumption that willingness to pay is automatically linked to, or can be assumed to indicate, an ability to pay for education. Tooley emphasizes that poor people are demonstrating their willingness to pay by sending their children to low-cost private schools. Watkins argues that 'willingness to pay is differentiated on the basis of income, gender and other factors' and, as a result, the need to pay exacerbates

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inequalities based on gender and income. Watkins notes that even without direct user fees, families are already sharing in the costs of education either by contributing to school construction or supplementing the costs of teachers and teaching and learning resources (2004). He also highlights that the need to pay for education among low-income families competes against other basic needs: 'education costs divert resources needed to maintain nutrition, address health problems, maintain shelter, invest in production or to provide a buffer against future emergencies' (Watkins, 2004). The opportunity cost of attending school is higher among lower socio-economic groups and represents a very real barrier to the completion of a full primary or secondary cycle of education.

Bray (2004) emphasizes that in reality government commitments of increased education provision are set against a backdrop of limited funds. He 'notes the importance of issues of access and equity, but does so in the context of a realization that many governments are not able to meet the full costs of schooling for all even if they have aspirations to do so. Partnerships with households may be an essential ingredient for operating education systems and meeting the needs of the poor' (Bray, 2001 in Bray, 2004). Bray draws attention to the fact that countries in which there is least primary education often have unstable governments and poor tax collection systems. Klees, however, challenges the validity of arguments around 'budget constraints' on the basis that whether or not to increase taxes and expand public expenditure is a question that economists face regularly, and one which is, from an economics perspective, most appropriately answered based on an assessment of efficiency of the outcome (Klees, 2008). However, there may also be over-riding political reasons against increasing taxes. Tomasevski argues that any fiscal

constraints on the provision of education violate the human right to education and undermines the state's responsibility to fulfill its rights-based obligations as demonstrated by the low budgetary priority given to education.

Academic quality.

Some commentators assert that private schools serving the poor, given their weak physical and human resource base, are of low quality, implying that extending access to such schools would not be desirable (Watkins, 2004; Rose, 2002). In reviewing the research literature a distinction in quality needs to be made between low-cost private schools as establishments and the educational activities that are conducted within them. Most studies are consistent in that they find the institutions poorly constructed and inadequately resourced, and the general school environment below normal standards. Based on a study in the slums of Nairobi, researchers from the international NGO Dignitas list the challenges as: 'polluted environment and dilapidated facilities, dilapidated textbooks, overcrowded classrooms' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). The schools generally lack trained teachers and teaching and learning resources. In this sense they represent schools of low quality. However, there is less consensus when the quality debate centers on teacher commitment and accountability, teacher/pupil ratios and performance levels. The international debate over the quality of private and public schooling focuses largely around academic outputs, represented by examination results.

Amongst education specialists, researchers and commentators, the debate over the academic quality and performance outputs of NFS is highly contested. Tooley and Dixon

are the main proponents of the belief that NFS demonstrate higher academic performance while Pauline Rose from University of Sussex, UK, along with Watkins and Bray all challenge the findings. In a study of English, Math and Kiswahili, testing approx 3,000 children, Tooley found that in the Kibera slum of Nairobi the pupils in public and low-cost private schools were scoring at about the same level as each other, (Math 69.8% public and 70.7% private and for English 68% public and 65.9% private). However, pupils in private schools are reported to have performed significantly better in both Math and English when the researchers controlled for background variables (Tooley, 2005). Tooley does not report on whether the study controlled for the number of years the children had been attending school in the comparison between NFS and public school performance. Many children join the NFS in the nursery, pre-school or kindergarten classes, while these classes are not available in the public schools that serve the slums (GoK, 2009a). Also, the pupils surveyed are reported to be drawn from Standards 4 and 5 (approximate age 10 and 11), and it is reasonable to expect the lack of trained teachers and the absence of teaching and learning resources to have less of an effect in these younger years than in the Upper Primary classes when the curriculum content is a lot heavier.

Watkins challenges the validity of this achievement differential, quoting the Probe Team report on India: 'the team emphatically did not find that private schools systematically outperform state schools when parental income is taken into account' (2004). 'What it did find was that private schools were out of reach for the vast majority of poor parents, that such schools 'often take advantage of the vulnerability of parents', that parents lacked

information, and that the curriculum was geared towards cramming and rote learning rather than the wider personal development of children' (Probe Team, 1999 in Watkins, 2004). In the Oxfam Education Report (Watkins, 2000) the author concludes that the low-cost private schools are of 'inferior quality' and 'offer a low-quality service' that is so bad it will 'restrict children's future opportunities'. Rose concludes that 'the provision of low quality private education for the poor is not serving their needs, but rather using up their scarce resources with limited benefits' (2002). This stand off reflects the status of this long-standing public-versus-private achievement debate. As Klees concludes, 'despite 25 years of rhetoric, there is no credible evidence that private schools perform better in increasing student achievement than public schools' (2008).

Parents do not have access to such studies and form their judgment of school quality based on their personal experiences and observations of others (Tooley, Dixon & Stanfield, 2008; Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). Those who send their children to NFS report seeing evidence in NFS of teachers' planning, pupil time well spent and academic progress in the subjects (Tooley et al., 2008). Others refer to children performing better in the examinations (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). While parental views are both valid and influential, some other facts about the NFS as a collective group give rise for caution. NFS show patterns of high absenteeism and irregular attendance, particularly in the upper primary classes, which undermines the concept of high academic performance either for the individual or the class as a whole as the absence of one is likely to slow down the rest of the class (Dignitas, 2008a; Mugisha, 2006).

Caddell expresses the view that 'the private sector institutions have much to gain by maintaining a sense of competition between the government and private schools: perceptions of government failure fuel private school enrollment' (Caddell, 2006). She also raises the challenging question of whether parents and students have accurate perceptions of what benefits schooling provides and notes that 'there is a need to engage with value-based concerns about the content and purpose of schooling and the aspirations providers feed on and promote' (Caddell, 2006). The role played by parental expectations in their decision making over school choices, the potential for private providers to prey on unrealistic hopes and the way in which government support for low-cost private schools may endorse such expectations is particularly pertinent in the context of low-cost private schooling for the poor, where the routes to an alternative and brighter future are both severely limited and highly sought after:

'There is much to be learned from the various elements of the interaction between the state and private sector, and crucially, the interplay with parental and student aspirations and expectations. The expectations learners and parents have of schooling, the livelihood opportunities that they hope private schools will offer and the educational decision-making processes they engage in arise from particular dynamics of the relationship between state and private schooling…This takes the debate away from relatively straightforward comparative indicators between types of schools such as examination performance or checklists of facilities to an exploration of value-based concerns about the perceived content and purpose of schooling and the aspirations that education providers feed on and

promote. As part of this agenda are questions around the role of schooling as an individual and social good and whether formal education should be a government responsibility or opened to market forces' (Caddell, 2006).

The choices that parents in urban slums are making between public and private schools are dominated by their personal observations and experiences, the opinions of their peers and the circumstances in which they live and which constrain such choices. This scenario is a far cry from the information rich environment depicted in models of the competitive market. Of interest in this study is the question of how changes in the government's support for privately provided schooling are being experienced at this local and school-based level, the level at which parents are making difficult decisions in a context of severely limited resources.

Profit versus philanthropy.

Caddell expresses the central question regarding the social responsibility of low-cost private school providers: 'while school Principals may claim that they are offering a 'social service' and engaging with the needs of the poor rather than simply catering to the elite, questions remain over whether such positions are compatible with being effective and profitable in the marketplace' (Caddell, 2006). Tooley and Dixon address 'the potential disjuncture between profit-orientation and social concerns' (Caddell, 2006), by suggesting that low-cost private schools show their concern for the poor through their own philanthropic provision of free or subsidized places. Based on research in 15 schools in Hyderabad, they assert that 15% of all places were free or provided at a concessionary

rate. These decisions are made by the individual school owners rather than a school board and concessions are reported to be made for a range of philanthropic and marketing reasons:

'To stop the drop-out rate increasing

To help the poorest parents by providing education at the cheapest rates

To uplift the standard of education by offering services to the poorest in the slum areas

To help the poor(est) among the poor without any return from them

To gain a good reputation for the school within the community'

(Tooley and Dixon, 2005)

Tooley also uses the argument of operating under a profit-making objective as a means of low-cost private schools being able to offer concessions, which is essentially suggesting that it is appropriate to endorse a situation in which the urban poor are subsidizing the even poorer, where teachers are paid no more than a subsistence salary or sub-standard educational facilities are not improved even though the provider has surplus funds:

'if the schools were not running any surplus, if they were simply balancing their books with fee income against staff and other expenditures, then they would not be able to provide free or concessionary places. That is, if the schools were not run on a commercial basis, generating an adequate income for their owners as

well as a financial surplus, they would not be able to offer philanthropy to the poorest' (Tooley, 2005).

Harma challenges this idea of free or concessionary places with reports that these are most often free places for the youngest child in large families or a 'three for the price of two policy' (2009). It should be noted that the decision to offer a concession is a personal one, can be revoked at any time and ties a family into one school. Tooley himself reports the negative impact this dependency has on long-term access in his study of Kibera slum, Kenya. In this study his team reports that low-cost private schools closed when FPE was introduced, often because a) the more regular payers left to attend local public schools and b) children who had received free or concessionary places from the previous school owner could not secure this benefit in another school (Tooley et al., 2008).

Conflict.

Caddell and Ashley extend the theme of conflict to examine the private school sector as a 'battlefield'. The authors identify three forms of conflict apparent in the sector. In the first instance, 'policy exchanges over the appropriateness of private provision at different levels of education continue apace. These translate into party political debates and into local-level conflict between private schools and the state over school registration and access to resources such as teacher training'. At another level, there is the inter-school conflict 'as the advertising strategies of private schools make clear, ongoing struggles between institutions over the recruitment of students'. 'Finally . . . private schools have emerged as actual battlefields, the site of physical violence and armed conflict' (2006) in

Nepal. Similarly in Kenya, the urban slums are often sites of conflict, as evidenced in the 2008 post-election violence and the subsequent 2009 conflict between the police and the Mungiki sect. Low-cost private schools are frequently caught up in these battles and experience a high level of on-going insecurity.

Choice and competition.

Proponents of the privatization of education highlight the role played by private provision in expanding the range of schooling options available, acting as a complement to public provision and thereby increasing choice (Tooley and Dixon, 2006). In turn, greater choice is believed to represent increased welfare. Willmore makes the point that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, not only calls for primary education everywhere to be both compulsory and free, but that it also guarantees parents the 'right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (2004). He suggests that situations in which parents 'who are dissatisfied with the tax-financed service (are forced) to pay full tuition fees at private schools', are violations of this right as it restricts parents' choice to government schools. Emphasizing the importance of school choice over and above who pays for education, ie whether they are financed through taxes or user fees, Willmore focuses attention on the question of 'why (do) governments only finance a subset of schools, typically those it owns and operates' (2004). He calls for 'the government to be prepared to pay the tuition fees of any student at a competing, private school up to the amount it spends on the student in an official school' (2004). Similarly, Blaug poses the provocative question of 'what needs to be explained about formal

schooling is not so much why governments subsidize it as they do, but why they insist on owning so much of it in every country of the world'(Blaug, 1976).

Also from a human rights perspective, Tomasevski (2003) problematizes the commodification of education through privatization as it places the emphasis on education as a means towards achieving economic growth rather than as an end in itself. She highlights the central role played by education in enabling people to support themselves and remain self-sufficient from state support and describes this as a development process which realizes 'the attainment of human rights through a process that respects human rights' (2003). This belief in the value of education pre-dates the dominance of the human capital approach, which views people as an object of investment and therefore a means of achieving economic growth. Human rights provide a safeguard against the abuse of power by the state and Tomasevski asserts that the emphasis on people as an object of investment facilitates the state's abdication of responsibility for education, as reflected in the low budgetary priority given to the sector (2003). From this perspective, the substantial privatization of education is an excluding rather than an inclusive process and therefore undermines the realization of this human right. As education is also seen as a means of realizing other human rights such as political participation, preserving languages and religions and the foundation for eliminating discrimination, universal access to education plays a critical role in the promotion of all human rights.

Summing up the contrast between the human-rights and human-capital approaches, Tomasevski refers to Sen:

'To correct what is missed in the narrower perspective of 'human capital' and 'human resource development', we need a broader conception of development that concentrates on the enhancement of human lives and freedoms, no matter whether that enhancement is – or is not – intermediated through an expansion of commodity production. Human beings are not only the most important *means* of social achievement, they are also its profoundest *end*. Being a fine piece of capital is not the most exalted state that can happen to a human being' (Sen, 1998 in Tomasevski, 2003. Italics in original).

The majority of commentators acknowledge that 'government school systems are unlikely to be able to meet UPE targets and the potential role of private providers in supporting these efforts' (Caddell & Ashley, 2006). However, Harma determines from her study that 'what parents in this study *actually want* is a well-functioning, well-staffed government school, inspected regularly and sincerely to ensure accountability' (2009. Italics in original). Rose concludes that 'the real challenge for governments with basic education systems which are broken is to fix the system' (Unesco, 2009 in Rose 2009a). Further, Caddell and Ashley assert that 'reducing the debate to a choice between either private or state provision is of limited conceptual or practical significance in the education field' (2006) and Klees poses the broader and more fundamental question of 'whether it is good public policy to convert intentionally a large portion of the public

school system to private schooling?' (2008). This debate about the respective roles of the government and the private sector in meeting education needs on a universal basis, raises the question, addressed in the next section, of how governments are engaging with the private sector, especially the low-cost providers.

Government Engagement with Low-Cost Private Providers

Collaboration has been a central element of the international education agenda for the past 20 years. The world declaration of EFA calls for 'new and revitalized partnerships at all levels' to achieve the EFA goals:

> 'National, regional and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organizational requirement for this task. New and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary: partnerships among all sub-sectors and forms of education;… partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families … When we speak of 'an expanded vision and a renewed commitment,' partnerships are at the heart of it (WCEA, 1990 in Crossley and Watson, 2003)

The need for collaboration also underpins the raft of governance reforms that are part of the core agenda for education in developing countries. As summarized by Mundy, these reforms 'typically draw upon an 'ideal' governance agenda that includes decentralization, the creation of public-private partnerships, and a variety of efforts to enhance

participation and local level oversight' (2008). Such reforms are consistent with the neoliberal imperative of privatization and decentralization, which dominates the global discourse on educational reform.

Referred to by the World Bank as 'short route accountability', these reforms include:

'decentralization of educational management and financing; the involvement of parents in school based management; the provision of better information on school performance and student achievement to parents and communities; the introduction of school choice mechanisms (including demand-side mechanisms); and the expansion of NGO and public-private service provision to stimulate competition and efficiency among schools, as well as broader access' (derived from World Bank's 2004 World Development Report Making Services Work for the Poor in Mundy, 2008).

In contrast, national level mechanisms, such as elections, legislative oversight of policies, collective groups such as teachers unions and the overall bureaucratic environment, are seen as 'relatively impotent to the achievement of EFA' (Mundy, 2008). The World Bank goes further to conclude that 'public funding cultivates a large bureaucratic machinery and strong interest groups whose lobbying could result in inertia' (2006). This emphasis on decentralization is evident in the financing of projects with 80% of World Bank funded projects including financial decentralization to local government and 90%

including the introduction of school level management mechanisms (World Bank, 2006 in Mundy 2008).

Klees (2008) draws attention to the ambiguous use of the language of 'partnerships' as a euphemism for forms of privatization: 'under such labels as community 'involvement' and 'participation', tied to narrow versions of decentralistaion, we have seen local communities increasingly called upon to supply funds, labour, or other in-kind contributions for the provision and maintenance of schools, teachers, and other educational necessities' (Klees 2008). He critiques the neoliberal 'Great Experiment' that has been underway since the 1980s and which incorporates privatization and the application of user charges. Klees argues that neoliberal capitalism cannot, even with international commitments to EFA and the MDGs, bring social progress: 'from this perspective, in the last quarter century neoliberal ideology was able to replace a welfare state ideology because it furthered this process of accumulation while still offering sufficient legitimation to maintain people's faith in the system. However, the repeated economic, educational, and other failures of neoliberalism continually call its legitimacy into question. Efforts like EFA and the MDGs can be seen as ways of attempting to restore legitimacy to the system, trying to show that neoliberal capitalism can offer sufficient social progress. The argument here is that it has not and it cannot' (Klees, 2008). He argues that this Great Experiment has been detrimental to education and that rather than privatizing we need to commit more resources to the public provision of schooling:

'What should be clear is that user-fee and other cost-recovery policies for primary education have been very harmful to equity, have not improved quality or efficiency significantly, if at all, and have been inimical to the attainment of EFA and the MDGs' (Klees, 2008).

Decentralization, privatization and partnerships.

Contemporary forms of government engagement with non-state actors are set within this context of international support and promotion of decentralization, privatization and expanded partnerships. Mundy reports that a wide range of 'democratic decentralization' experiments are underway in Africa, including: 'widespread use of direct user committees (primarily in the form of 'school management committees'); devolution of system oversight to elected local authorities; a myriad of crosscutting experiments in citizen engagement in education through 'social funds' or funds placed at the discretion of individual parliamentarians; and pilot projects focused on the creation of community 'school report cards' (Mundy, 2008). With reference to Malawi Rose confirms that efforts to decentralize have been moving ahead in a planned way, albeit slowly: 'decentralization has been taking place by design, but making slow progress due to identified barriers such as resource and capacity constraints, as well as resistance from the centre' (Rose 2005). There are several anticipated benefits of decentralization, including greater accountability of service providers, increased empowerment of civil society and, indirectly, increases in quality and equity. Many of these benefits are assumed to be a result of bringing decision-making geographically closer to the beneficiaries and into the hands of those who have more local knowledge and expertise

(Dyer and Rose, 2005). However, the anticipated benefits such as civic empowerment, broader participation and more equitable and effective decision-making are dependant on the nature of the decentralization strategy, which is often influenced by both technical and political issues. As Bray describes, 'centralization and decentralization are about matters of control, about the distribution of resources, and, in the education sector, about access to opportunities that can fundamentally influence the quality of life for both individuals and social groups' (Bray, 2004). It is unlikely that resources will be redistributed more equitably without mechanisms that explicitly address what constitutes a more equitable distribution and tackles all the differing and value-based judgments that equitable solutions entail.

Along with 'deconcentration, delegation and devolution', Dyer and Rose describe privatization as a form of 'organizational decentralization' as 'governments are considered to divest themselves of responsibilities and functions' (2005). However, Bray emphasizes that although privatization may be a form of decentralization, it may simply result in power being concentrated in other, non-governmental, bodies. As Caddell and Ashley observe, 'while much can be gained by considering privatization as a form of decentralization … there are distinct practical, political and conceptual concerns related to the private sector that require exploration' (Caddell & Ashley, 2006). In instances of decentralization and privatization, questions arise around where the decision making power lies in the new structure, who is involved in the decision-making and what mechanisms exist to deal with dissent and reaching a consensus.

Commentators also report a difference in the speed and extent to which the aspects of decentralization and privatization reforms are being adopted and implemented, with forms of decentralization generally moving ahead more rapidly than engagement with private providers. Rose asserts that, in the Malawi context, 'privatization has been occurring by default, with very limited government control over its growth, resulting in the mushrooming of low-cost, low-quality unregistered schools' (Rose 2006). As a result, the non-state sector is frequently operating independently of the state and, because non-state provision has been occurring in an unplanned and unregulated manner there are limited examples of explicit facilitation by the state (Rose, 2006). Rose notes further that as relatively low-cost, low-quality, unregistered private schools proliferate, the government is actually losing control of a significant part of the system (Rose, 2006).

Wilson (2004) challenges the empowerment and participation properties of decentralization strategies, asking: 'does the policy in fact deepen democracy and promote empowerment or is it more accurately represented as a decentralization process related to the privatization of education?'. It is clear that under the current reform agenda many schools, communities and parents are being asked to take more responsibility for improving the quality of schooling but Wilson (2004) notes that 'governance appears to be inextricably linked to management rather than democratization' and asks 'whether parental participation like voting on budgets and school fees amount to substantial participation?'. He argues that the discourse on civic participation and deepening democratization is largely symbolic and that 'the decentralization and the commoditization of education has actually served to constrain space for civic

participation' (2004). This is particularly relevant in the case of low-cost private schools where the parental target audience is largely unschooled and may lack the socio-economic power to engage in decision making with school owners on an equal footing. Government criteria for eligibility of such schools, for example forming a School Management Committees or involving parents in decisions about the spending of government grants, may be applied in name only in these settings.

Registration, regulation and facilitation.

In her overview of government support for non-state provision of basic education in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, Rose notes that the most common examples of government-initiated engagement with NSPs are associated with registration and regulation and there are few examples of government proactively supporting pro-poor non-state provision of basic education (2006). She notes, however, that where governments do facilitate non-state provision it is mostly in the areas of 'indirect support from the government in terms of curriculum design, training of teachers, and sometimes textbook provision' (Rose, 2006). She discusses government involvement under the themes of policy dialogue, registration and regulation, facilitation and contracting. Here I will highlight some of the published opinions and experiences with registration, regulation and facilitation.

Government registration, which can be with several ministries other than the MoE, confers recognition status on NSPs. The process frequently entails compliance with certain establishment criteria and minimum operating standards and may also lead to the

categorization of institutions. For example, in Kenya, low-cost, private non-formal schools can be classed as either private schools or self-help institutions and this categorization has an impact on the level of initial and annual registration fees paid and the types of government support that can be accessed by the institution. The process of registration is also closely linked with mechanisms to verify school information and overall data collection, both of which pose significant financial, logistic and quality challenges to ministries in low income countries.

Successful registration may confer a direct benefit, such as in India, where, 'gaining recognition allows pupils to take state examinations within their institutions and provides them with certificates allowing transfer between schools' (Dixon, 2004). Alternatively, registration may lead to other benefits such as the exemption from business trading licenses, as in Kenya. Official registration is frequently a minimum requirement for further government support. Further operating regulations may be imposed by the government either to maintain recognition status or to be eligible for further government support. Examples of South Africa and Kenya are given overleaf:

Table 6: Regulations for non-state schools to be eligible to receive government financial support.

Regulations for Non-state Schools to be Eligible to Receive Government Financial Support	
South Africa *(to receive tuition fees)*	**Kenya** *(to receive grants for Instructional Materials)*
Registered by Provincial Education Department	Registered with any government department
	Offering the formal (8-4-4) curriculum
Registered as non-profit organization	Be a community-based organization
Managed successfully against a management checklist	Have opened SIMBA bank account with a bank that has signed an MoU with the MoE
Agrees to unannounced inspection visits	SIMBA account should have minimum 3 signatories, all of whom are mandatory
Has not been established in direct competition to a nearby uncrowded public school.	Have a School Management Committee
	Establish a School Instructional Materials

(Ahmed and Sayed, 2009:208)	Selection Committee Be willing to be subjected to government auditing (GoK, 2009a)

India provides an example of the complexities of government regulation of private schools and the limitations in compliance. Private schools are prohibited from making profit from education or from 'commercialising' the service. In practice, however, schools do make a profit and, according to Dixon (2004) use them to improve facilities and raise standards. There are also many written laws and rules concerning the licensing of private unaided schools. These regulations also cover the establishment and running of private schools but can be circumvented through the bribing of officials. Likewise private schools are supposed to receive an annual inspection, rectify any shortcomings that are recorded and maintain proof that these improvements have been carried out, but regularly fail to do so (Dixon, 2004). The regulation of low-cost private schools does not, necessarily, safeguard or improve standards.

While many perceive the role of government to be regulating private sector to maintain quality, Dixon (2004) presents an alternative view according to which regulation can only be to the disadvantage of the consumer. Using a theoretical framework derived from the Austrian economic approach to regulation, Dixon studies the operating environment in independent schools in India. The Austrian framework favors an unregulated approach and argues that:

'during the search for profit the entrepreneur will fulfil consumer demand, developing innovative production methods and new products. Profits will only be made if the entrepreneur serves the consumer, the consumer is sovereign in the market and the success of the entrepreneur depends upon the approval of the consumer. It is the consumer who quite voluntarily rewards the entrepreneur who is regarded in Austrian economics as an expander of choices, whereas the regulations set by the government will restrict choices. Profit motivates entrepreneurs to innovate, experiment with quality and price structures, and attempt new ventures ….' (Dixon, 2004).

Any form of regulation is then viewed as a distorting factor over market prices and, therefore, 'government regulation may limit competition and it can 'violate consumer sovereignty, if not consumer freedom' (Kirzner, 1978 in Dixon, 2004). Dixon compares the 'on paper' rules provided by the Indian government with the 'extra-legal' rules that apply in practice and finds that even though the government regulations exist, they are not enforced (Dixon, 2004). As a result, 'thousands of private schools operate in Hyerabad, competing with one another, making profits and with the 'on paper' regulations waived. It is an innovative, thriving, prosperous industry answerable not to the government but to the consumer, the parent' (Dixon, 2004). In a regional study on EFA Kitaev (2004) highlights the diversity of experience in privatization, which makes comparisons and aggregations extremely difficult. With reference to the effectiveness of inter-party dialogue he notes that issues such as 'registration, accreditation, inspection, supervision, recognition of diplomas, taxation, status of teachers and their benefits are not

resolved in many cases'. He recommends that 'even if direct government support to private education may be sensitive for various reasons a demarcation of its role in the overall policy of education development will be essential for all parties involved' (2004). These views confirm the view that low-cost private schooling represents a rapidly growing sub-sector that is largely outside of government control.

Several authors note the potential conflict in the role of government as both originator and monitor of regulations. A critical question arises around the 'role of the state as both initiator of engagement with the private sector and as enforcer of any regulations' (Caddell, 2006). Further conflict may arise between the government as the provider of public education and as regulator of private schooling. Much of the literature places private and public education in a competitive dynamic. The central objection is that if large numbers of poor parents support private education, it will undermine the government schooling system because it reduces the pressure on government to improve the public provision (Watkins, 2004). Watkins perceives a course of events whereby 'public education loses the voice of a powerful constituency in the policy-making process, giving rise to a vicious circle of under-investment in state education, and the allocation of public funds to private providers' (2004). In Kenya, Tooley documents a case where the removal of tuition fees in public schools under the Free Primary Education initiative has 'crowded out' schools that were serving the poor (2008).

In a multi-country study of collaboration in EFA in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malawi, Nigeria and South Africa, Rose notes that collaboration between governments and NSPs

is closest when different forms of engagement interact. For example, when governments are facilitating or contracting education services among alternative providers greater regulation is needed, which can lead to closer involvement in policy dialogue. However, at the same time, these more intense forms of engagement can result in tension, mistrust and even antagonism. This is particularly likely where dominant but ineffective centralized ministries of education attempt to maintain control over the sector, even when they are unable to support their own provision effectively (Rose, 2006).

In order to strengthen their voice and liaise with government, NSPs frequently form associations that advocate on their behalf. Rose describes the situation as: 'where formal policy dialogue occurs, it is most often dominated by umbrella associations of registered, for-profit providers which are usually concerned with lobbying for government support to their provision (for example to obtain tax concessions and other forms of subsidy), rather than for pro-poor provision. Their membership mainly comprises better-resourced private schools which have initiated the establishment of the association to strengthen their voice' (Rose, 2006). However, 'dialogue of umbrella associations with government can sometimes be at best tokenistic or at worst antagonistic, with a tension evident between the desire of NSPs to influence the government agenda and at the same time wanting delivery services without interference' (Rose, 2006). Tension has been experienced in Kenya with schools that may have received funding before the eligibility criteria had been formalized and who do not now qualify for grants asserting their claim for financial support and more recently funded schools demanding higher levels of financial support to reach equality with public schools.

The issue of weak capacity at government level poses a challenge if government is to act as an effective regulator. As Rose asserts, 'states unable to provide quality schooling to their citizens are also those likely to have difficulty enforcing regulation of non-state providers' (2005). Watkins highlights the same problem and asserts that 'weak states lack the capacity to protect the public interest through effective regulation' (Watkins, 2004). Dyer and Rose also stress the need to build capacity if any reform agenda is to be successful: 'reform must be accompanied by strategies to strengthen capacities and leadership, and provide support to schools through professional, well-managed structures, with central authorities playing a critical role in monitoring school performance to identify patterns of low quality and inequality' (Dyer and Rose, 2005). The areas that are critical to effective regulation and in which government capacity is often weak are: communication with schools, dissemination of information, accuracy of data collection and reporting, general administrative efficiency and consistency and local education authority implementation capacity.

In her 2006 survey of experiences of government support for NSPs, Rose notes that examples of government-initiated involvement with NSPs beyond registration and regulation are limited and identifies only three examples of government facilitation in South Africa, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Facilitation in South Africa demonstrates the blurring of public-private partnerships as the system allows public schools to charge fees to supplement public funding (Motala, 2009), as well as providing state subsidies to non-profit service providers (Rose, 2006). More recently the policy has been amended to allow some schools meeting specific criteria to qualify as 'no-fees' schools (Ahmed and

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Sayed, 2009). Motala examines per capita allocations, learner-educator ratios and educator qualifications to study the effect of this 'privatisation of public schools' on equity. She finds that as the private fee contributions are used to increase quality-related inputs such as reducing the learner-educator ratios and raising educator qualifications, the 'presence of private contributions had led to significant social stratification in the public schooling sector with the maintenance of elite and very poor schools' (2009). In Bangladesh, Registered Non Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) are eligible for a range of government interventions including the 'construction and maintenance of school buildings, training of teachers, payment of 90% of teacher salaries, provision of free textbooks and inclusion of eligible students in the government's primary education stipend programme' (Rose 2006). Although RNGPS do not receive the same level of support as public schools, they are constrained by substantial regulations and this gives rise to considerable tension. In Pakistan under the Community Supported Rural Schools Program (CSRSP) schools receive government loans. However, these loans have fallen in value and the program has changed to one in which the government provides grants that match the value of the schools savings. Schools in poor areas find it particularly difficult to raise sustained excess funds to generate savings. Overall, Rose finds that 'where facilitation exists, it appears to be either inadequate or inappropriate to support pro-poor provision on a sustainable basis' (Rose, 2006). Furthermore, Caddell highlights that types of government engagement are unlikely to improve the teaching and learning that is carried out in these schools: 'focusing on regulation and fees does little to address the issues of the divergence in student exam performance or to address the unmet aspirations of the vast majority of children and their parents. . . . (it) create(s) a façade of action but

changes little at the level of school practice' (2006). The Kenyan experience of nascent government facilitation to low-cost private schools could provide valuable insight into how far, and in what ways, school practice is changed by state engagement.

Conclusion

Debates around low-cost private schools serving the urban poor center around questions of equal access to educational opportunities, efficiency in resource allocation, the academic quality of public and private educational provisions, the implications of dominant neo-liberal reform packages, and the efficacy of government regulation and engagement with the sector. Positions on these questions are influenced by ideological allegiances and weakened by a lack of consistent and uncontested research findings.

With regard to equal access to educational opportunities, the research-based literature focuses on monetary aspects such as household income, fee levels and the availability of concessionary school places. Whichever way the figures are calculated, the overwhelming reality in urban slums is that the target audience is living, at best, at subsistence levels and represents an economically disadvantaged group. From an equity perspective, the access of this excluded group to a public good, which is both a human right and a determining factor in their future well-being, should not be constrained by monetary barriers in either the public or private provision of education. However, much less attention is paid to the opportunity costs associated with school attendance and the completion of an acceptable primary education cycle. Opportunity costs, such as helping run the home or, for older children, contributing to household income, are both age and

gender sensitive and appear to lead to a pervasive pattern of interrupted attendance, early drop out and a lack of primary school completion. This pattern undermines claims that current forms of low-cost, private, para-formal schooling are delivering a more equitable solution for children living in urban slums.

Informed opinions on the relative academic quality of private schooling are divided and, as they are influenced by the ideological position of the researcher, are unlikely to be resolved in the near future. My concern is how best, given the low socio-economic circumstances of families and the low resource base of the NFS, can the potential academic performance of each pupil be improved on an equitable basis, (ie. such that only ability and not wealth, gender, location nor ethnic origin predicts academic achievement). While there is little optimism, in more developed countries, that school institutions effectively redress the inevitable socio-economic imbalances of birth, there is evidence to suggest that in less developed countries material teaching and learning inputs can offset pre-existing socio-economic disadvantages (Farrell, 2003). The resources available to governments in less developed countries may be limited but the range of strategies they can employ in deploying those resources is not. It is important that sufficient and relevant empirical data are made available to governments to assist them in reviewing their engagement with the private sector and deciding on the most beneficial combination of strategies to enhance equity.

The dangers inherent in contemporary neo-liberal reforms are that governments simultaneously distance themselves from the responsibility of providing equal access to

educational opportunities on an inclusive basis and avoid developing the internal capacity to manage the new processes and partners on which these reform objectives are built. Rose (2006) provides practical insight into the ways in which some governments have responded to the introduction of these reforms. It is clear in the literature that governments lack depth in this experience. Insufficient informed experience exists either within governments or among researchers in handling these nascent new relationships and working practices. I hope that by conducting this study on the Kenyan MoE strategy of engagement with NFS and the schools' responses more insight will be gained into the dilemmas and opportunities that are associated with providing educational opportunities within these distressing and challenging circumstances.

Literature on Kenyan Non-Formal Schools

Introduction

NFS in Kenya serve the needs of a specific and extremely disadvantaged group of children. Unfortunately, these children are not in the minority but rather represent a vast and expanding sector of society whose lives are dominated by pervasive poverty. The urban informal settlements, or slums, are reported to house more than 50% of the population of Nairobi and yet occupy only 5% of the residential land area of the city (Dignitas, 2008b). This statistic alone reflects the key feature of this environment: dense populations settled in areas that were not intended for human residence. Definitions of slums frequently refer to the presence of 'one or more' of certain features, but it is common for *all* the listed features to be evident in the slums of major cities:

> 'Slums are communities that are characterized by one or more of the following shortcomings: insecurity of land tenure, poor structural housing conditions, deficient access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and severe overcrowding. Slums are built in areas where no development has taken place, owing either to unstable land, or proximity to garbage dumps or industrial areas' (Merkel & Otai, 2007)

These harsh and inhospitable conditions give rise to a complex social and economic environment in which 'high unemployment, violence, absence of basic infrastructure, and the AIDS pandemic (are) only its surface-level issues' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). Demographic reports indicate that this situation is both long-term and of increasing scale,

with 'an estimated 72 percent of the urban population of Africa now (living) in slums' (Cohen, 2006 in Merkel & Otai, 2007) and given that 'two-thirds of all people will live in urban areas within the next 50 years, with 95% of that growth occurring in developing countries' (World Economic Forum, 2007, in Merkel & Otai, 2007).

Informal settlements develop on unoccupied land and the divide between those who 'have' and those who 'have not' is most clearly visible when slums grow up immediately next to formally developed and more affluent, residential areas. Although unplanned in any formal sense, the slums are long-term residential areas that have organizational units familiar to the residents, called 'villages', and that, over time, establish makeshift, fragile and severely limited systems of service provision. Strong social structures are also evident in the numerous community-based initiatives that emerge to meet the most pressing needs. Outsiders, however, often find it difficult to either navigate the slums internally or to map out the external borders with accuracy. As a result, quantitative data are hard to establish with any consistency. For example, the official 2003 census gives a population of 90,000 people living in one of the oldest slums in Nairobi, Mathare, whereas community-based organizations and local leaders estimate a total population of anywhere between 600,000 and 900,000. Research by Dignitas confirms the lack of reliable data: 'similar to other informal settlements in the world, official census counts were often unreliable measures because of movement, instability, and lack of official registration of households. Rough estimates indicate that up to 300,000 school-aged children live in Mathare' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008).

The public provision of schools is one of the many services that people living in slums lack. For example, Mathare's large population is served by just three government primary schools within its borders. Long-term solutions to service provision are undermined by very real environmental, land, health and safety issues and made more complex by legal, political, economic and social conditions. Writing of the health sector, Sclar and Northridge identify a spirit of self-help as a survival technique in the absence of state care:

> Slums are 'the spatial manifestations of urban poverty, social exclusion, and inappropriate government policies. Indeed, they represent an active, grassroots attempt by the desperately poor to take care of themselves' (Scalar & Northridge, 2003)

Community-based responses, individual initiatives, personal opportunism and grassroots activities are both a common and an essential aspect of daily life in the slums.

Non-Formal Schools in Kenya

Non-formal schools in the slums are an example of such self-help initiatives with individuals or community-groups establishing small, often nursery level, schools to serve the children in the community and expanding the number of classes as the pupils grow either in years or number. While organizations who work in the slums have been aware of these schools since the early 1970s (Dignitas, 2008b), an apparent increase in their number has attracted the attention of education commentators since the early 1990s and

particularly in the context of EFA and the MDGs. Termed a 'worldwide phenomenon', the spread of fee-paying schools serving the urban poor has been studied in the major cities of India, Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya (Tooley, 2004a) as well as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malawi and South Africa (Rose, 2006). Perhaps an obvious point, but one worth stating, is that the need for schooling in the slums grows as the slum populations expand and so any factors that increase the depth, persistence or patterns of poverty, or which drive rural-urban migratory patterns, such as economic decline, political instability or the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, provide an impetus for more non-formal schools to be opened.

The terminology used in discussions of these schools can be misleading and lead to some fundamental truths being overlooked. From a pedagogic perspective, the term 'non-formal schools' (NFS) in the Kenyan context is a misnomer. These schools are more accurately described as poorly-resourced, fee-charging, para-formal schools established and run by NSPs and with limited engagement with the government. NFS also fall into the category referred to as 'private schools for the poor', but these institutions do not conform to any image that suggests privilege or elitism. The NFS are poorly resourced in terms of school infrastructure and facilities, trained teachers and adequate teaching and learning resources. NFS operate within the same constraints as households living in the slums and therefore, have little or no security of tenancy, lack space or sanitation facilities and are vulnerable to the insecurity and conflict that pervades these densely populated and volatile environments. Pupils who are excluded from formal schools by a myriad of factors such as location, socio-economic disadvantage and the impact of HIV

and AIDS, and yet whose families can afford to pay for school, attend NFS. Parents pay tuition fees for NFS at an average of 3-5 USD per month (GoK, 2009a). NFS in Kenya offer access to the formal primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary curricula. Relatively few schools are recognized as exam centers, but their pupils are able, at a cost, to register to sit the national school-leaving examinations as private candidates in formal schools. NFS generally have a close association with the local community and are frequently established by individuals from those communities or groups of community members. Despite the informal nature of the development of these settlements, urban slums represent long-standing and permanent residential areas. As a result, a large proportion of children enter NFS in the 'baby' or pre-school classes at the age of 3 and, if a full range of classes are offered, can continue up to Standard 8 at about 14 years of age. At primary level there is substantial transition between different non-formal institutions and some, much more limited, movement between NFS and public schools.

A considerable body of research exists on low-cost private schools across the urban cities of less developed countries and Kenya features amongst these studies. Other, more locally-originated and often unpublished studies exist amongst the NGO sector. This body of literature, which is presented in this chapter, forms a valuable foundation, which has informed the direction of my own study. The key elements of the existing research are discussed in the following sections.

Descriptive studies.

Several descriptive studies have been undertaken, which provide detailed insight into the characteristics and functioning of NFS in various informal settlements in Kenya. Two of the studies provide in-depth studies of individual slums: Kibera slum is the subject of Tooley et al.'s work in 2008 and Mathare is the site where the NGO Dignitas work. A third study by the civil society group Elimu Kwa Wanavijiji (rough translation: Education for People from the Informal Settlements/Villages) covers all of Nairobi.

Summary of Sources of Descriptive Studies

Professor *James Tooley and Pauline Dixon* lecture in the Education Department at Newcastle University, UK. Their research in the Kibera slum contributes to their world-wide study of low-cost schools for the poor. Other countries studied include India, Nigeria and Ghana. The Kenyan study is based on the work of 25 researchers, all graduates from Nairobi University, who carried out a systematic sweep of the Kibera slum in late 2003, surveying all the private schools found. FGDs were carried out with parents of four of the schools.

The *Dignitas Project* (Dignitas) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to improving education outcomes for impoverished children through the empowerment of community and school leaders, parents and youth. Their research was conducted over a two-week period in the second half of 2008 with a team of twelve researchers in the Mathare slum. During this time they carried out a total of 61 FGDs, among schools (48), community groups (11) and 2 organizations. They conducted a total of 47 in-depth interviews (IDIs) and observed classes with an observation protocol in 7 schools. They continue to work closely with schools in Mathare, particularly in supporting and training teachers.

The *Elimu Kwa Wanavijiji Coalition* (EKW) was established as a result of the Urban Informal Settlement Education Providers' Consensus Building workshop in 2002 and comprises participants from that workshop. The objective of EKW is to act as a local and provincial level NFE advocacy, campaign and lobby group and to generate quality education information and data to feed into national level education coalitions. The research was lead by two education policy specialists and covered all eight divisions in Nairobi in early 2004. Research questionnaires were completed by 272 Headteachers, with a response rate of 84%, and FGDs with teachers and pupils were conducted in 40 NFS. Key informant interviews were held with a number of NGOs and Ministry of Education Department staff.

Some of the key insights afforded by these studies are summarized below under 6 headings of: NFS providers; parental and community expectations; financial context; enrollment; attendance, retention and transition and teachers and educational resources.

NFS providers.

Descriptive studies show the main providers of NFS as private individuals, community groups, faith-based organizations and some non-governmental organizations. The composition of these providers appears to vary over time and geographical location and do not provide a consistent pattern. In Kibera, Tooley et al. record the largest group of NFS providers (38%) to be community groups (2008). In contrast, Elimu Kwa Wanavijiji (EKW) found that the majority, (67%), of NFS was provided by private individuals (EKW, 2004). These data reflect the diversity of non-state providers.

Table 7: NFS by Type of Provider

Type of NFS provider	Tooley et al, 2008 *(Kibera Informal Settlement, Nairobi)*	EKW, 2004 *(All divisions of Nairobi)*
Community groups	38%	18%
Individual proprietors	30%	67%
FBOs/Religious groups	26%	15%

Beyond the general division between state and non-state provision there is a further debate around the different objectives and motivation between private individuals and community groups. There are widely-held assumptions (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008) that community-initiated or community-managed schools are provided at a lower cost to the beneficiaries because the community members are more concerned with the collective well-being than personal profit. Similarly, schools identified as originating with, or being

run by, private individuals are assumed to be more overtly driven by profit and more likely to charge higher fees.

Parental and community expectations.

The high expectations put on NFS by the community are well-documented in the Dignitas study. The testimonials from the FGDs in Mathare demonstrate how central education is to people's hopes for a brighter future for themselves and, especially for their children: 'The belief that education can break the cycle of multi-generational poverty is a fervent hope shared by many in this community'(Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). The research team identified individual expectations around self-empowerment as well as upward social mobility: 'in school, you get the knowledge of managing your life' (2008) and 'the people are very eager to be better and mostly aim to get out of the poor situation they are in' (2008). The research also identifies hopes and expectations for being a proactive force in changing the immediate environment: as one teacher comments, 'the youth want to involve themselves in making Mathare a better place' and an out-of-school youth asserts that 'education can change this slum' (2008). Beyond economic and social improvement, the residents of Mathare also expect education to play a crucial role in halting the spread of disease, such as HIV and TB. Interestingly, one boy compares education to land as a form of inheritance and, in the context of urban poverty, the only inheritance parents are able to provide: 'My mum has struggled to educate me. Right now, many people living in Nairobi do not have land for inheritance. Education is the only thing your parents can give you' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008).

Financial context[4].

The immediate impact of the removal of public school fees in many less developed countries has consistently been a dramatic increase in enrollment in state-provided education. Although the longer term picture becomes more complex when the pressure of high pupil figures impacts negatively on the quality of learning conditions, most education specialists conclude that user fees are a barrier to universal education (Bray, 2004; Watkins, 2004). The concept of the poorest groups in society choosing to pay fees in NFS is, therefore, counter-intuitive and requires us to look more closely at who, among these low-income groups, is able to pay for, and therefore access, low-cost NFS.

Tooley et al. promote low-cost private schools as an affordable option for the poor (2008) and report the costs of one child attending a low-cost private school to represent somewhere between 4.7% (for nursery level) and 8.1% (in upper primary classes) of a household's monthly income. However, this assertion of affordability overlooks the fact that household income in informal settlements is typically insufficient to cover all the household's basic needs and the majority of families operate on a negative budget ie. live in debt or are behind on payments such as rent on a regular basis. Based on an average income of Ksh 3,000 – 4,000 (Dignitas, 2008a; Tooley et al. 2008) estimated monthly rent of Ksh 1,000 (Dignitas, 2008a) and a subsistence-level monthly food budget of Ksh 3,000 (Dignitas, 2008a) it is unclear how families still manage to pay Ksh 200 – 500 in monthly school fees (per child) to NFS. Dignitas (2008a) confirms that income is spent on rent, food and education, in that order of priority, which suggests that other needs such as water, fuel for lighting, transport, medical care, clothing etc either go unmet or are met

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[4] Kenya shillings are converted to US dollars at a rate of 74:1 in this paper.

on an ad hoc and opportunistic basis. This brief overview suggests that children attending NFS either come from families earning more than the average income experienced in the informal settlements or do not pay all the school fees.

Table 8: Monthly Family Income and Expenditure

Monthly figures	Dignitas (2008a) *(Mathare Informal Settlement, Nairobi)*	Tooley et al. (2008) *(Kibera Informal Settlement, Nairobi)*
Income	Ksh 3,000 – 4,000	Ksh 3,174 (excl. rent)
Rent	Ksh 1,000	-
Food	Ksh 3,000 (Ksh 100/- per day)	
NFS fees (per child)	Ksh 200 - 500	Ksh 200 – 500
NFS feeding (per child)	Ksh 300 - 400	

The information on employment provided by Dignitas paints an even more depressing picture. Dignitas (2008a) report an unemployment rate of 80%. Of the 20% employed adult population, the majority are employed as casual laborers in construction work or washing clothes, or 'hawking' ie selling vegetables, second-hand clothes etc. Another group is engaged in illicit brewing or drugs, leaving only 2% of the slum population engaged in formal employment. The forms of employment identified by Dignitas are characterized by their irregularity and lack of permanence. This picture suggests that the vast majority of the population is unable to afford any kind of school fees, however low, which is confirmed by one school leader's estimate that fewer than 30% of the school's parents/guardians are able to sustain themselves in addition to paying school fees (Dignitas, 2008b). It would appear that the families accessing NFS are, first and foremost, among the 20% of employed people and, secondly, from within a higher earning bracket of that employed group, earning above the average monthly income of Ksh 4,000/- ($53) on a consistent basis. Dignitas indicate that some households may be

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earning up to Ksh 50,000/- ($667) per month and still living in the slum areas. This concurs with Harma's findings that those who are *excluded* from 'private schools for the poor' in India represent the most disadvantaged social and economic groups (Harma, 2009).

In order to provide a more complete context, information on the cost of attending public schools serving the Mathare slum in one term (3 months), are: Ksh 80 ($1) exam fees, Ksh 120 ($1.6) food (schools serving poor communities are part of the school feeding program also subsidised by the World Food Program) and Ksh 600 ($8) for extra tuition fees for pupils in the upper primary Standards of 6, 7 and 8. This comes to Ksh 67 ($0.9) per month for lower primary pupils and Ksh 267 ($3.6) for upper primary pupils. However, respondents in the Dignitas survey report that public schools require each child to have two complete sets of uniform to start the school and one respondent in the Tooley et al. (2008), study claims that the local public school requires Ksh 11,000 ($147) on enrollment and that the payment must be paid in full before a child can be accepted. School uniforms cost the same for either a public school or a NFS at approximately Ksh 1,500 ($20) but the difference is that children are not excluded from NFS for having incomplete uniforms or no uniform at all. Reference is also made in Tooley et al.'s study to the other 'hidden costs' that are levied by public schools, which may range from proper shoes to contributions to the building fund. Many respondents who send their children to NFS confirm the flexible approach of NFS towards fee payments as a major benefit (Tooley et al., 2008; Dignitas, 2008b), and this feature is consistent with the

pattern of irregular and lowly-paid employment on which most households are dependent.

In support of the claim that NFS are of benefit to the poor, Tooley et al. consistently assert that NFS provide concessions or free places to the neediest children and, in urban slum environments similar to Kibera, they have quantified this to range between 5% and 18% of all places (Tooley et al., 2008). No reference to free or concessionary places are made in the other two studies reviewed here.

From this brief overview of the very low income levels, limited employment opportunities and basic costs of living that prevail in the urban slums, I would anticipate that only interventions that reduce the direct costs of schooling to parents can result in the more equal or equitable provision of schooling. Government strategies that reduce the cost of providing schooling appear unlikely to affect patterns of enrollment or attendance unless these cost reductions are passed on to families.

Enrollment.

From a national perspective the gross enrollment rate (GER) in Nairobi is the second lowest in the country at 51.8%, leaving approximately 48% of primary school-age children in the Nairobi area outside of any public or registered[5] private school, four years after the abolition of tuition fees (GoK, 2007). Many of these children are believed to attend the NFS. Much of the literature on schooling in the urban slums focuses on the fact

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[5] Here, registration refers specifically to registration with the Ministry of Education, which can only register either a public or private institution. The majority of NFS are registered with the Ministry of Gender and Social Services.

that there are large numbers of fee-paying schools compared to public institutions and that the number of NFS has been seen to increase in the last two decades. For example, in the period between 2003 and 2007 the MoE reports an increase in private schools in the Nairobi area from 94 to 1,044 respectively, while the public school provision has, in the same period, reduced from 195 schools to 191 serving the city (GoK, 2007). The increase in private schools covers both low and high-cost schools.

Before examining enrollment figures in detail it is important to note that the pupil enrollment in NFS is weighted towards younger children. Many NFS are established first as nurseries because of the poor provision of early childhood centers in the public system. NFS often grow organically and add classes as the children grow older or as the numbers increase. The Kibera study by Tooley et al. records 91% of the 76 NFS identified surveyed catering for primary school children. However, a breakdown of the composition of these schools shows that 79% of the NFS catered for both primary and nursery levels, only 3% provided the primary cycle alone and 9% catered for all three nursery, primary and secondary cycles (Tooley et al., 2008). These data suggest that enrollment figures for NFS need to separate out the numbers of nursery pupils from primary to reflect an accurate comparison with public schools.

Within the slum areas themselves, estimates of non-enrollment still range from 25% to 40% (EKW, 2004 and Dignitas, 2008a). The presence of a persistent and large out-of-school population is consistent with Harma's study, in which she estimates that at least half the sample in her study of Indian slums cannot afford to send their children to the

private, low-cost schools (2009). This reflection on the high proportion of children living in the urban slums, and who are not being served by the low-cost private or public schools, serves as a reminder that any government strategy that is justified as extending universal access to disadvantaged groups needs to be designed to expand the provision of primary schooling on a large scale .

It was hoped that the removal of tuition fees in 2003 and government direct support for running and equipping primary schools would provide access to all those out-of-school. Despite an initial influx of an additional 1.3 million pupils into the existing public schools, there remained an estimated 1.6 million out-of-school children in 2007 (Dignitas, 2008b). In their study, Tooley et al. challenge reports of a massive 48.1% net increase in enrollment in the Nairobi public schools. The researchers conclude that while the introduction of FPE resulted in a net increase in enrollment in public schools of over 3,000 pupils, it also led to a net decrease of NFS of over 11,000 pupils, giving a net *decrease* in total enrollment of almost 8,000 children. The net decrease in NFS enrollment is reported to be due to the closure of NFS either because they lost too many pupils to remain viable or lost those pupils who had been the more reliable in making payments. Those children who had remained in the NFS that found it necessary to close therefore added to the net decrease in enrollment. This research finding serves to remind us that the catchment areas for public and private schools overlap, that different education providers may be competing to serve the needs of some of the same children and that increases in enrollment figures may not reflect net figures and may hide the transfer of pupils between schools.

Information provided at a disaggregated level suggests that the enrollment levels between girls and boys in the NFS remain more or less at par (GoK, 2007; EKW, 2004), reflecting the national picture (boys enrollment in NFS, 49.43%; girls 50.56%, GoK 2007). However, none of the studies mentioned so far provide the enrollment figures disaggregated by gender across the Standards. In a study on the so-called 'urban advantage', Mugisha examines enrollment figures disaggregated by two urban categories (slum and non-slum) and those in rural environments. He concludes that far from being advantaged, children living in the urban slums are at a disadvantage in terms of health and education. In education this disadvantage is indicated in different patterns of enrollment. Among girls, children in the urban slums are more likely to experience a decline in rates of enrollment 5 years earlier than their rural counterparts. Specifically, girls in urban slums show a marked decline in enrollment at age 9 whereas female enrollment declines in a similar way in rural environments at age 14. Further, the decline in enrollment among girls living in urban slums above age 9 is steeper than their 14 year old counterparts in the rural settings. For boys, enrollment declines significantly at age 11 in the urban slums and at age 13 in rural areas (Mugisha, 2006). These data suggest a worryingly high and gendered drop out rate in the NFS.

Based on this picture of high and persistent numbers of out-of-school children, interrupted attendance and early drop out I anticipate that those pupils who do survive up to Standard 8 will already represent the more socio-economically advantaged children in the surrounding communities.

Attendance, retention and transition.

Enrollment figures often mask the fact that pupils are not benefiting from full-time or even consistent attendance and this pattern of absenteeism undermines the quality of the educational experience being gained. Although the NFS either did not keep detailed records on attendance or were reluctant to share that information, in their study, the NGO Elimu Kwa Wanavijiji (EKW) carried out spot checks on their sample of 40 schools over a two-week observation period. They established that approximately 10% of the study population were absent on any given day (EKW, 2004). Further, EKW concluded that the daily attendance of girls was less regular than that of boys in the lower primary classes, but the reverse was true in the upper classes. While it is unclear why this should be the case, EKW do provide detailed insight into the general factors that influence school attendance. The researchers identified the following causes of absenteeism: child labor; lack of food; proximity of alternative pastimes, some of which might bring financial rewards such as combing a dumping site or having sex for payment; examples set by truanting peers; frequent sickness; family conflicts; drug abuse and drug peddling; having to raise school fees and a lack of transport (EKW, 2004). Some additional factors create a pattern of repeated absenteeism such as the end of month demand for school fees and, for older girls, their monthly menstruation cycle.

The Dignitas study of Mathare portrays a similar picture of repeated absenteeism associated with the constraints of poverty. As an extension to the pattern of absenteeism, both the Dignitas and EKW studies note that the pressure to bring school fees on a monthly basis contributes to the 'chronic' levels of transfer within NFS as parents send

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their children to a new NFS at the end of the month when fees are due to avoid payment (EKW, 2004). These patterns of irregular attendance are likely to translate over time into low survival rates because they make it difficult for pupils to keep up with their work and undermine performance

In Mathare the reasons given for high rates of drop-out include: basic economic needs, especially when aggravated by the loss of parents; pregnancy and early marriage among girls, (10% of teenage women are reported to fall pregnant); helping out in businesses; pulled into crime and drugs; disenchantment with the employment benefits of further schooling and lack of exam fees. EKW add the indirect effects of HIV and AIDS as another cause of drop outs, along with a general disinterest in education 'arising from unemployment among school learners and also limited chances of slum children being taken to secondary schools' (EKW, 2004).

This disenchantment with schooling is documented in more detail by Dignitas in relation to the low transition rates from primary to secondary levels. For example, one opinion leader from Mathare explains, 'youth are very affected by poverty because after they finish school, there is no money for college and there are no jobs' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). Another young respondent explains the thinking process that undermines transition to secondary school: 'when you graduate from primary school, theft is the only solution you see to surviving and paying for secondary school fees. But when you take time to think about it, you see that maybe it is better to get a job [and quit school]' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008).

In their study of Mathare the Dignitas team report that only 2 out of every 10 (20%) pupils who sit the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) go on to secondary school. Out of those who transition to secondary, only 4 out of every 10 (40%) are likely to complete the secondary cycle. However, another estimate from a Mathare respondent in the same study puts the rate of transition to secondary school at the much higher level of 50% transition (Dignitas, 2008a). No consistent picture in the reported rates of transition emerge from these studies as EKW estimates that in 2002 only 9% of students in urban slums who completed the primary cycle in NFE attained entry into formal secondary schools (EKW in Dignitas, 2008b). In comparison, at the national level within the public sector, the rates of transition to secondary school among those who sit their KCPE exams are recorded as almost 60% in 2007 (GoK, 2007). During the secondary school cycle, 8.2% of pupils fail to complete the four year course in public schools (GoK, 2007). Although the data available are rather fragmented, the different studies suggest that issues of retention and transition may be an area of concern in the NFS.

Teachers and educational resources.

According to the MoE 2007 statistical booklet (GoK, 2007) the teaching establishment in the 1,395 NFE institutions across the country, which include NFS, is typically made up of untrained teachers, (65%). These data are based on the 2005 survey by Unicef. The 35% of teachers who have been trained and are teaching in NFS have not been deployed by the TSC and are still paid by the school, rather than the government. In many cases the teachers come from the same communities as their pupils.

The qualitative material gathered in the studies by Dignitas and EKW depict a mixed picture of the commitment and performance of teachers. While some schools are running their own informal professional development initiatives to help strengthen their teachers' skills, other schools barely manage to keep up with the high turnover of teaching staff and it is common for a teacher to stay at a school for one term and sometimes as little as a month (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). This is especially the case where the teachers are working on a voluntary and unpaid basis. EKW researchers sum up the nature of the teaching force as 'characterized by low remuneration levels, little benefits, low morale and self esteem, lack of job security, high turnover, low levels of academic and professional training and very limited opportunities for training, including in-service training. Most teachers were sustained by spirit of voluntarism and not salary' (EKW, 2004). The salaries paid to teaching staff vary across a wide range, but EKW data show that only 22% of the teachers receive a salary above Ksh 3,000/- ($40) per month, which places the majority at or below the average monthly income of other slum residents. From 1st July 2010 government teachers received an increase in salary, giving a P1 teacher a monthly salary in the range of 14,310 – 17,108 Ksh. The lowest paid government teacher, at level P2, now earns 13,037 Ksh per month (Daily Nation, 7th May, 2010)

Educational resources are universally reported as being low in all NFS. This encompasses: poor infrastructure; appalling sanitation; lack of basic amenities; inadequate desks and chalkboards and minimal supply of books. Some resources have been provided over time by individual benefactors and many of the books that have been

in NFSs since before the government disbursement of instructional materials grants come from those random sources. Not only are the conditions for studying poor, but the provision of textbooks is highly inadequate, with one book for the teacher only or only two books for a whole class of 18 to 20 pupils being the common situation (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). The general conditions of teacher training, teacher employment and teaching and learning resources in the NFS seem to challenge Tooley and Dixon's claims (2006) that LCP are delivering a higher quality education and that academic performance indicators show that LCP pupils perform at a higher level.

The literature on NFS in Kenya presents a bleak picture of largely unregulated non-state providers who, in response to people's high demand for, and expectations of, education, charge service fees for attendance in schools that have few educational resources and which are staffed by a considerable proportion of untrained teachers. The context of poverty in informal settlements is reflected in high levels of unemployment, contributes to poor levels of attendance and retention, and results in low levels of transfer into forms of further education and training.

The choice between NFS and fee-free public primary education.

One of the central questions that concerns education researchers and commentators regarding the recent growth and persistent support of NFS by poor communities is why should low income families continue to pay for schooling where the state has made public education free of fees? Throughout the literature, parents are reported to choose between NFS and public schools on the basis of proximity, school and classroom

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conditions, direct costs of schooling, school management and service delivery, teacher attitudes and perceptions of achievement in learning and I expand on the existing information on each issue below, drawing on the studies by Tooley et al. (2008) and Cheng and Kariithi (2008).

Based on data available for Kenya, a common concern is that public schools, being located on the edges of the slums, are too far from people's homes for them to send their children. Walking even one kilometer through a slum settlement can expose children to a number of high-risk activities ranging from the illicit brewing of alcohol and pornographic video-selling to basic health risks such as walking through dirt and sewage. This is a particularly strong concern for parents of younger children and is reflected in the high proportion of NFS that run nursery classes. Not only do the public schools often not have ECD centers, but they operate according to shorter schools hours, with the lower primary classes up to Standard 3 closing at 3 pm. In addition, some public schools have to run double shifts in order to accommodate all the children so any one pupil is in school for fewer hours in the day. NFS are, therefore, more accessible and convenient - situated closer to homes and looking after children for longer hours.

Since the removal of primary school fees in Kenyan public primary schools, the school and classroom conditions in those schools are widely considered to have deteriorated, largely because the increased enrollment has not been matched by either the physical expansion of schools or increased numbers of teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio in public schools is therefore at unacceptably high levels, (47:1 in Nairobi schools according to

MoE 2007 statistics, GoK, 2007:23 and, according to Cheng & Kariithi, 2008, anywhere between 60-90:1 in Mathare). According to Tooley et al., NFS in Kibera have a pupil-teacher ratio of 21:1 and in the public schools, this is 60:1 (Tooley, 2008). Parents recognize that with such large classes their children cannot receive adequate attention from the teacher, which is particularly noticeable when performance is not supervised and homework is not marked. Even though the teachers in public schools have been trained, the parents of children living in the slums are critical of the teachers' lack of commitment towards their work and complain of the lack of accountability of teachers to the parents. The parents refer to the fact that even though it is common for teachers to be lazy, frequently absent or not delivering any substantive teaching, they as parents have no influence over that teacher's correction or continued employment, which is left to the government authorities. Teacher commitment and accountability is perceived to be stronger when parents pay for education.

Parents provide many examples of how public schooling is not free, either in terms of examination costs, building fund fees, charges for additional tuition in upper primary classes and, in particular, the cost of complete sets of uniform (Tooley et al., 2008). In addition, parents find public schools to be very rigid in their demands for early and complete payment and do not provide any flexibility for payment by installments. Despite the requirements from the MoE that public schools demonstrate transparency in the management of any government grants, parents report that they are not informed of how government funds or the parental fees collected are spent.

One of the areas of inconsistency in research on Kenyan slums concerns the immediate security of the school area. References to the lack of security around NFS are common, while a few isolated references to security concerns around public schools are noted. In January 2008 the NFS found themselves in the midst of conflict and violence as the urban slums formed the centers of the post-election violence. Parents report different experiences in their schools, with some telling how the communities rallied around to protect their NFS while others were left exposed or were attacked and ransacked (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). The difference in community response may be related to the ethnic make-up of the area as well as the relationship of the school manager with the local community. In periods of calm the NFS still report problems of hostility from the community and lack of consideration such as continuously high noise levels next to the classrooms or drunken behavior around the school and urination on the outside of classroom walls.

Another area of inconsistency in accounts is around the behavior of teachers in NFS. Consistent accounts are given of the low earning power of largely untrained teachers. However, while some schools maintain that high rates of turnover among teachers in NFS undermine any program for professional development other school managers and parents speak of high levels of teacher commitment with the teachers working long hours, providing extra coaching to the students and taking an interest in their performance and progress. Some parents are attached to NFS as all their children have attended a particular school and they feel that the teachers know the children and that there is 'love' between the teacher and the children (Tooley, 2008). At the same time, there are accounts of the

low morale of lowly paid teachers resulting in frustration and the beating of children (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008).

The existing studies also reflect a complex relationship between NFS and their neighbouring communities. Many of the owners and teachers derive from the communities being served by the school and a special relationship and dedication to purpose is evident in much of the research findings. Anecdotal evidence confirms that many of the people who work in the NFS see pastoral care and guidance and counseling as an intrinsic part of their work. They claim to understand where the children are coming from and maintain that they intervene in family disputes on behalf of the children (interviews with School Director and Headteachers). On the other hand, other accounts refer to the difficulties surrounding school communication with parents because of the 'wide social chasm between student's family and school life' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). This chasm may be aggravated by the fact that many of the parents have not attended school themselves. There are, equally, accounts of parents who lack money providing in-kind support to the school, such as manual labor.

While public schools are accused of lacking accountability and transparency, parents also complain that the NFS are run like personal businesses and they are not told how the income, parental fees, private donations or government grants, is spent (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008). Teachers also complain that they have never seen any parents on the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and no teachers sit on the School Management Committee (SMC) or the PTA (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008).

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Given that public schools are subject to the management of a centralized ministry, it is not surprising that the picture of their deficiencies is a homogenous one. When FPE was introduced in 2003 it affected all the schools in the country at the same time and in a similar manner so now, all schools have high teacher:pupil ratios. Likewise, the teachers deployed to the public schools are all trained in the same Primary Teacher Training Colleges and are employed through the Teacher Service Commission (TSC). All teachers are employed on the same basis and work in similar school and teaching conditions so commonalities in their behavior are to be expected. Similar to the use of the term 'non-formal', to say that NFS are not like public schools reveals little about what NFS actually are like. Locally-available studies in Kenya (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008; EKW, 2004) reveal a range of experiences within NFS, with some clearly offering advantages over the public schools while others operating at a much lower standard. This more complex picture is consistent with an unregulated, privately-provided sector although some commentators, and in particular Tooley et al., do not draw attention to the greater diversity of standards of provision within the NFS. So, while the objections to public schools are clear, rational and consistent, the preference for NFS is still less convincing in terms of them offering a consistently 'better' rather than 'alternative' option.

Several other studies offer insights that could be considered relevant to a study of the choice-making process among parents in the Kenyan context. From a quantitative perspective, Oketch et al. (2010) analyzes the choice-making behavior of parents faced with both public and private educational provision options. The author's base their analysis on the theoretical framework of excess and differentiated demand, expounded by

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James (1993). James examines the different combinations of public and private provision of educational service from the perspective of 'excess demand' and 'differentiated demand and nonprofit supply'. 'Excess demand' refers to a situation in which public and private forms of education are seen by parents as interchangeable. When the supply of public school places is less than the actual demand for places, those families who have sufficient income to pay for private education, and who consider the cost of private education to be adequately compensated for by its benefits, will seek places in the private sector as an alternative option even though they would have preferred to enroll their children in the public system. James concludes that the excess demand for private education will be greater when the difference between the total effective demand for education and the capacity of the public sector is larger. 'Differentiated demand' refers to a situation in which public and private schooling are not perceived as perfect substitutes for each other. This is most likely to occur when people have diverse tastes and the public provision of education is relatively uniform. Differences in taste may be due to religious, linguistic or nationality differences within the population. In this case, differentiated demand refers to parents who prefer to enroll their children in the private sector because of the kind of education that is being offered. James notes that perceptions of quality can also reflect differentiated taste. She concludes that differentiated demand for private education will be stronger when there is greater cultural heterogeneity in a society and when the public education system is more uniform (James, 1993).

Referring to James' theoretical framework Oketch et al. (2010) conclude that 'it is excess demand which drives poorer parents to low quality private schools, but it is differentiated

demand which is driving non-slum parents to choose private schooling for their children over free public schools'. The authors explain that an increase in demand for primary education was stimulated by the introduction of FPE, but that families are effectively 'crowded out' of the free public school system as the capacity to deliver within the urban slums is severely constrained. As the public school system offers an essentially uniform provision of education and the removal of user fees is associated with an overall decline in quality, higher-income families who are willing and able to pay for a private alternative, opt to send their children to perceived higher quality private schools. Oketch et al. recommend that the government 'find ways of improving supply of state schools of acceptable standard in the slums' (2010).

Watkins, one of the researchers of the Oxfam Education Report (2000) summarizes the findings of that study as: 'private schools were out of reach for the vast majority of poor parents, that such schools often take advantage of the vulnerability of parents, that parents lacked information, and that the curriculum was geared towards cramming and rote learning rather than the wider personal development of children' (Probe Team, 1999 in Watkins, 2004).

Also, Harma (2009) in her study of private primary schools in India, found that 'while many rural families are accessing LFPs (low-fee private), poverty is still a bar to the majority'. Also, that:

'many parents feel that LFPs are the 'lesser of two evils, and that the real demand is for improved, functional government schools. Parents feel that under current conditions, LFP schools are preferable because of prima facie evidence of better quality; however, there also exists serious mistrust of these institutions as they are perceived to be focused primarily on profit, and are under the control of a single individual, meaning that they could close down at any time. This study shows that choice is serving the needs of families with the necessary purchasing power to pay for LFP schooling while the majority of families cannot afford the costs' (Harma, 2009).

Conclusion

This review of the research findings currently available for the NFS in the slums of Nairobi reveals a complex picture of inadequate public school supply; inconsistent and often low-quality private provision; deep-rooted economic constraints on the capacity of families to pay *any* school costs; adverse teaching and learning conditions in the NFS and a set of combined circumstances that threaten regular attendance or high rates of survival through to the end of the primary cycle. Children who grow up in the slums are disadvantaged by wealth and location and 50% of them are further disadvantaged by circumstances of their gender, and yet their path to academic success is further threatened by the inadequacy of resources at every level. The capacity to extend NFS to the large numbers of children still out of school is also severely limited. There is no indication that equal or equitable access to educational opportunities are being provided in this situation. Lewin (2007) discusses the minimum operating costs for running schools and concludes

that 'unsubsidised providers cannot serve the poor and the poorest if they depend on revenue from the communities they serve' and, that this constraint limits the expansion of private schools serving the poor. The question remains, however, of how the more recent government support to the NFS has influenced aspects of equality and equity. Is the government support providing a serious input that allows more poorer children to attend school, do better in school, continue to secondary education or gain employment or is the government facilitation simply legitimizing an educational activity that is inherently discriminatory against the poorest families?

As the MoE is currently providing instructional materials grants direct to schools the situation is one of a mixture of both private (ie. user fees) and public financial support (ie. textbook grants), which, as Motala notes in relation to the South African experience, (*see page 89 for details*), may give rise to previously unconsidered issues of equity and equality (2009):

> 'Not only does the distribution of fees and private contributions have
> consequences for wider issues of equity, but the combination of public and private
> per capita expenditure also reveals new patterns of inequality …. Suggesting that
> post-apartheid schooling requires a different framework of analysis to measure
> equity against across all schools'

I hope that through an in-depth exploration of how NFS have responded to the relatively recent government support new insight will be provided into both the relationship

between the government and this group of private providers and into contemporary issues

relating to equality and equity.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research Questions

In this study I explore the Kenya government's engagement with non-formal schools in the slums of Nairobi. Through this study I aim to illuminate the assumptions, expectations and intentions that undergird the government strategy; gain insight into, and understanding of, the experiences and responses of educators, parents and pupils in NFS and reflect on the implications that this government strategy and school-based responses to it have on issues of educational equality and equity. The central research question is:

'Government support to Non-Formal Schools includes three main elements: school verification and validation; changes in school management and the provision of instructional materials' grants. Does this government support to NFS influence the educational experience of the poor to their advantage?

The study aims to answer three principal questions:

a) What are the objectives, assumptions and expectations that underpin the Ministry of Education's, (MoE), strategy of support to NFS?

b) How do school managers, teachers, parents and pupils experience the operationalization of school verification and validation, changes in school management and the provision of instructional materials' grants?

c) What do school manager, teacher, parent and pupil experiences, combined with Ministry expectations, imply on issues of equality and equity?

I adopted a qualitative approach in addressing this research question because I aim to 'understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (Mertens, 2005). I believe a case study research design is best suited to yield findings that will make a valuable contribution to debates around government facilitation of low-cost private provision because a case study design enables the researcher to 'focus on a particular instance (object or case) and reach an understanding within a complex context' (Mertens, 2005). In the remainder of this section I set out my approach to conducting a qualitative case study.

Qualitative Case Study Research

Mertens identifies four paradigms that are evident in contemporary research: positivist, constructivist, transformative and pragmatic (Mertens, 2005). Each paradigm supports different sets of ontological and epistemological assumptions and methodological approaches. I align myself with those constructivist researchers who believe that reality is socially constructed and historically determined, that multiple perceptions of reality exist and that knowledge is derived from a dialogic process. Although case studies are also conducted within a positivist framework, within which reality is perceived to be a single, fixed and, within a certain level of probability, objectively-knowable phenomenon, case study research designs are more frequently associated with constructivist approaches. Along with ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory, case study research reflects the core characteristics of qualitative research: 'the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an indicative orientation to analysis and findings that are

richly descriptive' (Merriam, 1998). As a researcher within this qualitative framework I engaged in an interactive relationship with the research participants and was ready to practice 'a tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to context and data, and good communication skills' (Mertens, 2005).

Researchers in many disciplines, such as anthropology, history and sociology, as well as areas such as economics and political science, conduct case studies. Each discipline varies in 'the manner in which they formulate their questions, how they define the content of their domains and organize that content conceptually, and the principles of discovery and verification that constitute the ground rules for creating and testing knowledge in their fields' (Shulman, 1988). Education is a complex field of study, which is often framed with the concepts, models and theories from a range of disciplines. Thus, education researchers draw on all the disciplines and make inquiries of many different kinds. As a result we can find examples within education of ethnographic case studies on a topic such as the experiences of immigrants in an American high school, historical case studies on aspects of schooling over time and educational psychology case studies on topics such as the study of a single student learning math concepts (Merriam, 1998). As a result, case study research provides a highly flexible research design, which can be applied effectively to meet many research objectives. However, for the findings of case studies to carry weight a researcher needs to make explicit the paradigmatic, theoretical and conceptual foundations of their research design.

My approach to carrying out research is grounded, first and foremost, in my understanding of Shulman's exposition on disciplined inquiry. Shulman contends that we differentiate between research and 'mere observation and speculation' by applying the methods of systematic inquiry (1988). He asserts that the characteristics of disciplined inquiry are that:

'disciplined inquiry does not depend for its appeal on the eloquence of the writer or on any surface plausibility; that the investigator has anticipated the traditional questions that are pertinent; that the research design controls information collection and reasoning to avoid errors; that the researcher discusses a margin of error if all errors cannot be eliminated; that the raw materials entering the argument are displayed along with the logical processes by which they were compressed and rearranged to make the conclusion credible; that the inquiry is not sterile, ritualized and narrowly conceived; that the work is capable of withstanding careful scrutiny and finally that the inquiry reflects to an ordered, regular, or principled nature of investigation' (Shulman, 1988).

I aspire to produce work that conforms to Shulman's standards of disciplined inquiry.

Two distinctive and fundamentally interrelated elements recur in definitions of case study research: the case and its context (Mertens, 2005). Creswell defines case study research as 'an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in

context' (1998). Beyond the recognition that case study research involves the study of a distinct case *in situ*, practical examples of case study research reports illustrate the wide range of forms this research strategy can take. This great diversity in case study research is represented dramatically by the work of researchers as different as Yin (2003) and Stake (1995). Yin attributes the investigative power of case study to its theoretical framework and logical design, believing that 'empirical research advances only when it is accompanied by theory and logical inquiry and not when treated as a mechanistic or data collection endeavour' (2003). In dramatic contrast Stake demonstrates a more conceptual and integrated approach to the case study process: 'the design of all research requires conceptual organization, ideas to express needed understanding, conceptual bridges from what is already known, cognitive structures to guide data gathering, and outlines for presenting interpretations to others' (1995). While I appreciate the theoretical rigor of Yin's approach and the importance that Stake places on writing up research findings so that they have a strong impact on the reader, my own understanding and appreciation of case study research is more closely aligned to the views expressed by Sharan Merriam (1998).

Merriam outlines a structured, theoretically-framed approach to case study research, 'the outermost frame – the theoretical framework – is the body of literature, the disciplinary orientation that you draw upon to situate your study' (Merriam, 1998). The theoretical framework forms the basis for the identification of the research problem, the purpose statement, research questions and sample selection. This framework represents what is, and is not, known about the topic under study and provides the rationale for the study.

From my review of the relevant bodies of literature I have concluded that there is a lack of empirical evidence relating to the facilitation of low-cost private schooling by government (Rose 2006 and 2009). All three perspectives from which I reviewed the literature – non-formal education, private provision of education and existing research on Kenyan NFS – confirm issues of equality and equity as a central concern in addressing the needs of the urban poor.

Merriam emphasizes that as the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis this also means that the limitations of biases and human error come more heavily into play than in more experimental or controlled forms of research design. Throughout her work she strives to illustrate how human intuition, combined with conscious method, produces the best work. Merriam depicts this as a combination of art and science (1998). The 'art' in case study lies in making sense out of the data: 'there is little doubt that the process is highly intuitive; a researcher cannot always explain where an insight (that may later be a finding) came from or how relationships among data were detected' (Merriam, 1998). Case study as a 'science' is represented by 'the observer's critical presence in the context of occurrence of phenomena, observation, hypothesis-testing (by confrontation and disconfirmation), triangulation of participants' perceptions, interpretations and so on' (Kemmis, 1983 in Merriam, 1998). She goes on to explain that: 'while we have examples, guidelines, and other people's experiences to draw upon, the process as well as the end product will reflect the uniqueness, peculiarities, and idiosyncrasies of each research situation' (Merriam, 1998). Merriam further presents case study research as particularistic, (focuses on a particular situation, event, program or

phenomenon); descriptive, (the end product of a case study is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study), and heuristic, (illuminates the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study). She states that 'the interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation' (Merriam, 1998). Thus, this conceptualization of case study research suits my research objectives, which focus on exploring a relatively new process of government engagement that is emerging in a complex context of urban poverty and private sector activity.

In my study the case can be described as the engagement of government with the private provision of education for poorer communities. The case is limited by time and location and focuses on changes that have taken place over a five-year period from July 2005 to June 2010 in one of the urban slums, called Mathare Village, of Nairobi, Kenya. The five-year period concurs with the first sector wide plan developed by the MoE and called the Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP).

At a national level the context for this case are the commitments to EFA and the MDGs, which are embodied in the Free Primary Education initiative, introduced in 2003. Under this initiative tuition fees were removed from public primary schools and the government began providing public schools with grants to support running costs and the provision of instructional materials. In 2005 the MoE began engaging more proactively with the NFS and has, since then, begun providing a select group of NFS with instructional materials grants. At an international level, the context is that of the private provision of education,

especially the growing number of schools that levy low service charges and target those living in informal settlements. The tension between private, fee-paying provision and poverty gives rise to debates around equality and equity:

> the 'unprecedented growth in private provision is proposed by some as extending choice to parts of the population which previously only had recourse to government provision. On the other hand, others argue that the prominence of private providers highlights problems of quality resulting in widening of equity gaps (see UNESCO 2009). However, this debate is often insufficiently substantiated by appropriate evidence-based research' (Rose, 2009).

Given the increase in low-cost private schooling, the limited nature of resources in less developed countries and the limited experience and capacity that governments have of engaging with the private sector, the point of interest in this study is the process by which government support is translated into practice by the NFS.

Integrity of the Research

Commentators refer to the contested reputation qualitative case study research holds, despite its long history and broad application (Yin, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Flyvberg, 2006). Yin refers to the stereotypical image of case study research as 'a weak sibling among social science methods' (2003). He attributes this impression to the fact that positivist scholars perceive case studies to have 'insufficient precision, (ie. quantification), objectivity or rigor' (2003). Merriam refers to case study in terms of its

apparent deficits in the eyes of non-qualitative researchers, who 'often designate the case study as a sort of catch-all category for research that is not a survey or an experiment and is not statistical in nature' (1998). Much of this criticism derives from positivist research philosophy. Flyvberg (2006) outlines five common misunderstandings about case study research:

> 'one, that general, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge; two, that one cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case and therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development; three, that the case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypothesis testing and theory building; four, that the case study contains a bias toward verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions and five, that it is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies' (2006).

In this section I will address some of these concerns around the integrity of qualitative case study under the general terms of demonstrating trustworthiness and researcher bias.

Demonstrating trustworthiness.

As Patton describes (2002) researchers apply a very different logic of approaches towards claims of trustworthiness depending on the paradigm within which their research is constructed. Quantitative researchers base their claims to validity, reliability and generalizability on the proof of 'a truly random and statistically representative sample

that will permit confident generalization from the sample to a larger population' (Patton, 2002). Demonstrating the trustworthiness of findings in a quantitative study focuses on the steps taken to identify the study sample. In contrast, qualitative researchers defend their claim to significance and relevance based on purposeful sampling techniques that allow the selection of information-rich cases and provide the basis for 'thick descriptions' and in-depth investigations. Demonstrating trustworthiness in qualitative research, therefore, is concerned with demonstrating rigor in the research process itself, for example, the data collection, management, categorization, analysis and reporting. As Merriam summarizes: 'unlike experimental designs in which validity and reliability are accounted for before the investigation, rigor in qualitative research derives from the researcher's presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description' (Merriam, 1998).

Lincoln and Guba summarize the different criteria for assessing quality in qualitative research as, 'credibility as an analog to internal validity, transferability as an analog to external validity, dependability as an analog to reliability, and confirmability as an analog to objectivity' (1986). Documenting how these processes are carried out supports claims to confirmability, dependability, authenticity, transferability and utilization in qualitative research studies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). *Confirmability* focuses on a concern to achieve 'relative neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged researcher biases – at the minimum, explicitness about the inevitable biases that exist' (Miles & Huberman, 1994). *Dependability* is about a research process that is systematic, that 'is

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consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods' (Miles & Huberman, 1994). *Authenticity* in qualitative research focuses on the truth value of the work. *Transferability* in qualitative research reflects similar concerns as the concept of generalizability in quantitative studies and generates a great deal of debate. Shulman defines the generalizability of findings as: 'the degree to which findings derived from one context or under one set of conditions may be assumed to apply in other settings or under other conditions' (1988) and asserts that all research methods share the problem of generalizability. In quantitative studies, researchers argue that if samples are drawn randomly from a population then it is legitimate to make inferences from that sample to the population. However, it is rarely possible to draw a sample according to the strictest principles of randomness and the degree and nature of bias in sampling forms the foundation of much criticism of quantitative study assertions. Qualitative researchers engage with the issue of generalizability in different ways. Stake acknowledges that case studies are better suited to particularization than generalizations but also describes situations in which generalizations can be modified over time by the repetition of issues and findings within one case study, 'petite generalizations' and between studies, 'grande generalizations' (1995). In contrast, Yin asserts that with regard to case study research the findings are 'generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes' after they have been tested through replication (Yin, 2003). Shulman notes that generalizations are usually made from one sample of people to a larger population. He posits that it may be possible in case study research to make inferences from one situation to another. Merriam addresses the potential transferability of qualitative case study findings under the concept of external validity and claims that three techniques: rich,

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thick descriptions; typicality or modal categories and multi-site designs, can strengthen the claims to generalizability by case studies. In this case study I have tried to provide sufficiently 'thick' description in several ways: my review of the 'Literature on Kenyan Non-Formal Schools' highlights the main features known about life in the informal settlements in relation to the NFS (*see page 94*); in my chapter on the 'Nature and Extent of MoE Support to Non-Formal Schools' (*see page 165*) I provide a detailed description of the MoE's engagement with this sector to-date; in Chapter 6 I describe the sites and respondents included in this study and throughout the analysis of the findings I provide direct quotations that provide the reader with the chance to consider the raw data that forms the basis of this study. The two sites that were selected for this study represent a 'modal' category of NFS around the level of school fees and were not considered to have any distinctive characteristics by the MoE. During the design process two NFS were considered enough sites to reach a level of saturation on the issues being studied in this piece of work. Although this proved to be true for government-supported, community-based NFS themselves, during the data collection process I extended the study to include Key Informants from two additional schools, one a private NFS and the other an NGO-funded NFS. The information from these additional, and different, schools was helpful in deepening my understanding of the way in which issues of school access and participation play out in a context of persistent and varying poverty.

The techniques used to demonstrate trustworthiness in qualitative research are many and varied, for example Miles and Huberman (1994) describe thirteen tactics for testing or confirming findings. Techniques that are most prevalent in qualitative research and which

I have adopted, include: triangulation, member checks, long observation, audit trails and thick descriptions. *Triangulation* refers to consulting a range of independent sources of information in order to cross-reference the findings and expose errors through inconsistency and contradiction. Triangulation may include accessing different data sources, applying different data collection methods, sourcing data from different investigators and employing different theoretical frameworks to analyze the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994). *Member checks* refer to a process of conferring with respondents and peers on the analysis and reporting of the study findings. I will share and discuss the rough drafts of initial findings with key respondents, such as the MoE officer who leads the investment program for NFS and the Headteachers of the study sites. Commentators also advise that by spending as much time as possible in the site of study the researcher will be less likely to be influenced by first impressions. I am in the fortunate position of living close to my subject of study and have considerable flexibility over the time I spend both at the Ministry and in the NFS. An audit trail, or as Yin refers, a 'case study database' (2003) enables other researchers to repeat the study or retrace the researchers steps in analysis to determine where conclusions came from. Qualitative case study research reports are often characterized by the inclusion of 'rich' or 'thick description' either through direct quotations or detailed observations. *Thick descriptions* allow the reader to evaluate whether the characteristics of the case studied matches another situation in dimensions that matter for the research question. Altogether, I find resonance in Patton's summary of the aims of qualitative research, which should 'provide perspective rather than truth, empirical assessment of local decision makers' theories of

action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound extrapolations rather than generalizations' (Patton, 2002).

Researcher position.

As I, the researcher, am the main instrument of data collection in this study and analysis I will provide some insight into the 'opinions, experiences, cultural definitions and prejudices' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) which may affect this research and its outcomes.

As a European who is married and living in Africa I walk a fine, and frequently meandering, line between cultures. The exposure I gained by living and working in the UK before moving to Africa, along with my academic qualifications, enable me to live a life of considerable opportunity and privilege in Kenya. At the same time, my close family, friends and colleagues, most of whom were raised in Kenya and have also spent years studying or working abroad, have achieved similar positions of status and advantage. The paths we have followed are, however, very different. As a result, our views on issues such as power, disadvantage and development, personal responsibility and collective capacity, or education and equal opportunity, differ greatly and I am challenged by 'rival explanations' of my own lived experiences on a daily basis. I believe this exposure to different ways of thinking has improved my skills as a listener and I intend using these listening skills to search for a rich understanding of the experiences I aim to make known.

For most of the past 15 years I have provided technical assistance to officers in the Ministry of Education in Kenya and other African countries. From this experience I have

detailed knowledge of the daily operating norms of the government environment and can appreciate the challenges associated with bringing change to such a large and slow-moving institution. In addition I have considerable experience carrying out process evaluations on development programs, especially in the area of behavior change initiatives. I believe that too little attention is paid to the skills, motivation and contextual factors that need to be in place for well-intentioned initiatives to deliver the intended results. There is a persistent reliance on skills development or 'capacity-building' with little attention being paid to sources of motivation to adopt change or to the contextual constraints that limit or undermine the potential benefits of many initiatives. I believe that the government's engagement with NFS suffers from a similar emphasis on providing inputs without sufficient in-depth knowledge or consideration of the context in which these inputs are expected to make a difference, or the motivation of NFS providers to employ these additional resources for their intended purposes. I embark on this study with considerable skepticism of the likely value of the government strategy in benefiting the most disadvantaged children in the urban slums.

As a parent of three I identify closely with the parents who, above all else, wish to endow their children with life opportunities that surpass their own. I know the agony that comes from injustices enacted on one's child and I appreciate the burning need to find immediate solutions. I identify keenly with the mothers whose children are growing up so quickly before their eyes and who are determined to give them the hope that education embodies. I try to put myself in the position of those people who face impossible circumstances on a daily and persistent basis and ask: if I were a teenage mother of two

living on less than $1 a day or a 10-year old girl born in a mud hut in Mathare, what would I want the government to do, what would help me most to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty?

At the outset of this research my position on equality and equity issues was unclear. On one hand I believed that giving free reign to the profit-making objectives of a competitive market was unlikely address the disadvantages inherent in birth, which are passed on from one generation to the next. As such, the government has an inalienable duty to reallocate public resources to meet the needs of those disadvantaged by, and excluded by, the market. On the other hand, I am painfully aware of the inadequacies of the leadership in a country such as Kenya, which is economically weak and socially divided and realize that to wait for sufficient capacity to be built to address these problems is an anathema to a parent with a growing child. Private suppliers are providing a solution for some today, while the government struggles to finds solutions for the masses even by tomorrow. As a result I am motivated by a strong sense that justice needs to be done, but this is tempered by a reluctant acceptance of reality.

Limitations of the Study

This case study is located in the urban slums of Kenya and, as such, is limited to the informal settlements of one capital city in one country in Africa. While the international literature suggests that NFS are examples of similar low-cost, private schools for the poor in other parts of the world, the educational, social, economic and political contexts will differ from place to place. In addition, the study was carried out in two government-

supported, community-based NFS with additional material gathered in a private NFS and an NGO-funded NFS and the material gathered is limited to the range of experiences relevant to these sites. The case study will provide insights into the experience of government engagement with NFS and, through description, raise questions that others may wish to investigate in other contexts. The findings are not, however, immediately transferable to other contexts.

The quantitative and statistical data available for viewing these schools as a group are limited. A database covering just over 500 NFS has been created based on surveys conducted in December 2008, which provides basic institutional profiles. At school level the NFS do hold detailed enrollment, attendance and performance data. At national level an electronic management information system (EMIS) data collection survey has been recently completed in Kenya but the response by NFE institutions, including NFS, has been low. Thus, the quantitative data for this sector are incomplete, difficult to confirm and limit the conclusions that can be deduced from the study findings.

In many less developed countries, large numbers of people flock to urban centers in search of work and income. These people usually settle in informal settlements where accommodation is relatively cheap. NFS are a feature of these settlements as they provide an affordable alternative to public schools, which are generally absent in these unplanned developments. NFS are, therefore, typically located in large, informal, poverty-stricken urban slums. Such areas can be difficult to access by outsiders because of a lack of infrastructure (many routes are only passable on foot), security (much of the post election

violence in Kenya erupted in the urban slums where tensions are already high due to extreme poverty) and sheer density (some schools are located in such unlikely and hidden corners that they are known only to the immediate community). The study sites will, for security reasons, be selected from the more accessible sites.

Although English is the national language in Kenya, people vary in the ease and comfort with which they converse in English. I have a rudimentary understanding of Kiswahili but offered the Headteachers the services of a fluent Kiswahili speaker in interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, parents and pupils, where it might be necessary. However, all respondents declined this offer. The reluctance to accept a translator may be linked to a general tendency by School Directors and Headteachers to present those people as respondents, whom they considered to be the most accomplished. It is likely that the teachers, parents and pupils made available by the Headteachers as candidates for interview represent those with higher levels of education or commitment. The criteria I gave to the Headteachers covered aspects such as gender, school grade, position on the SMC etc. Headteachers' tendency to forward the brightest pupils for interview or training is an issue that has arisen in other research activities in Kenyan primary schools, for example during a Peer Education programme on HIV and AIDS in 2004-2006, in which I was involved.

Site Selection Decisions

My initial interest in the subject of this case study arose out of my work with the NFE Dept of the MoE in Kenya. For six months in 2009 I provided part-time technical

assistance to the NFE team and assisted them in converting their survey data into an electronic database and reviewing the training materials being used to train NFS on the management of the IM grants. During this time I was impressed by the energy and commitment being shown by both the MoE officers and those working in the NFSs I visited. As I learned more, however, I began questioning the broader implications of the MoE strategy of engagement and became more aware of the international debates that surround the low-cost provision of private schooling for the poor. I have a unique opportunity to carry out a study within this sector as I have lived and worked in Kenya for many years and am known to the MoE officers working with the NFS. As the number of officers working with NFS at the national headquarters and in the Nairobi City Education office is quite limited and only one officer fulfills each role, I have identified MoE respondents on the basis of the positions they hold and will interview all of them.

In qualitative studies researchers focus on relatively small samples, which are selected purposefully for the depth of information they can provide. Researchers use different strategies to identify a purposeful sample 'of sufficient intensity to elucidate the phenomenon of interest' (Patton, 2002). In this case study I employed typical case sampling. The purpose of typical cases is to 'describe and illustrate what is typical to those unfamiliar with the setting – not to make generalized statements about the experiences of all participants' (Patton, 2002). I used the survey data held by the MoE to identify characteristics that are typical, such as user-fee levels. In order to maximize the richness of the information gathered I selected two NFS as sites, both of which have received MoE grants for the purchase of instructional materials.

In a similar fashion I drew the samples from one of the oldest informal settlements in Nairobi, called Mathare Village. Mathare is a typical slum and a rich source of data because qualitative research studies have already been conducted in the area, which provide valuable contextual information.

NFS site selection.

I selected two NFS in the Mathare slum, both derived from the MoE database of Non-Formal Schools. The sites were screened to eliminate other key factors which may have distorted their experiences. The selection criteria included:

- both sites within one slum, Mathare
- both sites offer up to Standard 8 level classes
- both sites charging similar fees ranging from the modal value of termly fees and the maximum the MoE considers 'low-cost', (600 Ksh to 1,000 Ksh)
- no sites with significant financial support from a long-term donor (eg. Dignitas, religious group, international charity, UN body etc)

The current population of schools on the MoE database for Mathare consists of 58 NFSs in Mathare, of which 50 have received MoE grants to-date and 8 of which were categorized as ineligible to receive government funds. Of the 50 funded NFS, 19 offer schooling up to Standard 8 level. Within this group of 19 schools, 8 levy fees at a level consistent with the MoE definition of 'low-cost' ie between 600 and 1,000 Ksh per term. I selected 2 schools from these 8 based on their willingness to participate and physical accessibility.

Data Collection

One of the distinctive characteristics of case study research is the use of several different forms of information. The forms of data collection used in this study include: document review, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations. The data collection took place over a period of 8 weeks, while schools were in session. During the course of this study several themes emerged, which appeared to have a bearing on issues of equality and equity. In order to clarify the possible relevance and impact of these themes I identified and interviewed an additional three key informants. The themes are: provision of a school feeding program, availability of alternative forms of education, and understanding the spectrum of educational provision available to those who live in Mathare. I interviewed a senior representative from the international NGO, Feed the Children, a senior representative from a long-standing provider of non-formal education, Undugu Society, and Headteachers from two other schools operating in Mathare, one school that is registered with the MoE as a private school and one that is fully supported by an American NGO.

Document review.

-        NFE Investment Program, KESSP, 2005-2010, including the work plan and budget
-        MoE draft policy on the 'Alternative Provision of Basic Education'
-        reports from other organizations working with NFS
-        recent studies on the impact of Free Primary Education on public primary schools in Kenya.

-       school management records in 2 NFS (relating to school management structures and procurement etc and any other documentation school representatives consider relevant)

Interviews/ Focus Group Discussions.

In the MoE:

-       Director of Basic Education
-       NFE Investment Program Team Leader
-       NFS Program Officer
-       Provincial Director of Education representative
-       Director of City Education
-       NFE Desk Officer, Nairobi
-       Kenya National Examinations Council representative
-       Kenya Institute of Education representative

In the two NFSs:

-       interviews with 2 Headteachers and 1 School Director
-       interviews with Standard 7 or 8 teachers of Math, Science and/or English (total of 3 male and 2 female teachers)
-       held FGDs with pupils from Standard 7 or 8 (total of 3 boys and 3 girls)
-       held FGD with pupils from Standard 4 (total of 2 boys and 2 girls)
-       held FGD with pupils from Form 1 (total of 2 boys and 1 girl)
-       held interviews with parents on the School Management Committees of both schools (total of 2 men and 2 women)

Key informants:

-       interview with senior representative from Feed the Children
-       interview with senior representative from Undugu Society
-       interview with School Director and Headteacher of a private school in Mathare

-        interview with School Director and Headteacher of an NGO-funded school in an informal settlement in Nairobi

Classroom observations:

Within the two Mathare schools:

-        observed Standard 7 or 8 classes in Math and Science

These forms of data collection were organized around three stages of information gathering:

Stage 1 (ie. research question 1).

Based on document reviews and in-depth interviews, interrogate the Ministry's strategy of engaging with NFSs under the first KESSP (2005-2010). Make explicit the objectives, assumptions, and expectations that underpin this initiative.

Stage 2 (ie. research question 2.

Based on school visits, classroom observations, in-depth interviews and FGDs, explore the experiences of teachers, parents and pupils with respect to the Ministry's engagement with NFSs. These experiences included: official interactions with education offices and other government departments; school/community policy dialogue with the Ministry; changes in structures in school management and parental involvement at school level; adoption of new financial management processes; experiences with the selection, distribution and use of textbooks purchased with government-provided Instructional Materials' grants and changes in the school environment or learning circumstances

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experienced by Upper Primary level pupils, (Standards 7 and 8, approximately 13-16 year olds).

Stage 3: (ie research question 3).

Consider the equality and equity implications of the lived experiences of teachers, parents and pupils in the light of the Ministry's support to NFSs.

Interview schedules are attached as Appendix I.

Data Analysis

The capacity of case study research to accommodate diverse and contradicting data, while essential for some areas of study, presents the researcher with an intellectually demanding task of reducing, organizing, managing and interpreting data. While analysts working on quantitative experimental research designs can, with the help of computers, reduce vast quantities of numeric data into single and precise percentages, qualitative case study researchers face more moderate limits of data absorption and analysis.

Miles and Huberman address the challenge of analyzing large volumes of detailed information as a process that is continuous throughout the research process from before data are collected through to the writing of the research findings. They identify three major types of activity that take place concurrently: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification, Data reduction or condensation refers to 'selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data' by writing up field notes,

coding data, making notes or identifying themes etc (1994). Miles and Huberman note that the main method of displaying qualitative data is through written text but extended texts are not particularly accessible or compact as a form of displaying data. The authors recommend creating more visually illustrative tools such as 'matrices, graphs, charts and networks' (1994) to better represent what is happening. Conclusion drawing and verification involves attributing meaning to the data that are being gathered and includes: 'noticing regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions' (1994). Although the final conclusions may not appear until a later stage of analysis, impressions and conclusions are emerging and being verified or challenged throughout the data analysis process. I find this description of the continuous and highly integrated approach to the analysis of qualitative data a helpful framework as it helps to group associated tasks.

Merriam also discusses the analysis of data as an activity that takes place simultaneously with data collection. She provides guidance on how this process translates into daily activities. The sequence Merriam outlines is familiar to me from work I have undertaken in program evaluation and I shall apply it in my data collection and analysis for this study. I will adopt a daily pattern which follows this sequence: collect data; transcribe interviews, observations and/or documents collected; review the purpose of the study; re-read the day's data; make notes or comments in the margins; summarise reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas and things to pursue; note things that need to be asked or looked for in the next data collection activity. At the end of the second day I will refer back to the set of data collected during day one (Merriam, 1998).

At the heart of the data management and analysis tasks is the creation of categories and the coding of data. I will use a combination of manual and computer-based (NVivo) systems. From Merriam's perspective, the use of categorization to manage data is an example of this combination of art and science. Merriam explains that 'devising categories is largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study's purpose, the investigator' orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves' (Merriam, 1998). The categorization of data is a complex and critical process in making meaning because 'the categories describe the data, but to some extent they also interpret the data' (Merriam, 1998). Categories should reflect the purpose of the research, be exhaustive, be mutually exclusive, sensitizing and conceptually congruent. It is challenging for the researcher to achieve conceptual congruence as it requires each category to express the same level of abstraction. This broad level of perspective is difficult for the researcher to achieve when she is immersed in the data. Throughout the case study process the researcher reduces and refines the categories, which are 'linked together by tentative hypotheses' and thereby the researcher moves toward a theory to explain the data's meaning. The saturation of categories ie. when relatively little new information is coming in in relation to the effort to gather it, is an indication that the end of the data collection is near. This is likely to coincide with the exhaustion of sources of information, the emergence of regularities or a sense of 'integration' of the data and that the information is far removed from the core of viable categories that have emerged (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Above all, I aim to manage the tension between 'descriptive excess' (Lofland, 1971), and 'reasonable conclusions and generalizations based on a preponderance of the data' (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

Equality and equity in education.

Whether equal access to educational opportunities is promoted as a human right, an end in itself, an investment opportunity, an essential element of democratization, a quantifiable objective embedded in global targets or a means of socio-economic mobility, there is little disagreement over the fact that access to education is beneficial, that it has intrinsic value on an individual and collective level. The actual means by which school attendance translates into benefits later in life may be unclear and still open to discussion and debate (Samoff, 1996) but the critical role that education plays in mediating access to other aspects of life, such as jobs and indirectly better health and well-being, is largely uncontested. However, as Ahmed and Sayed highlight, a tension remains between the *intention* of universal provision and the *means* to provide education to all children: 'the financing of public education remains a global challenge, attempting to balance the call for compulsory and free education with a view to extend social justice, on the one hand, and limited resources and fiscal restraint on the other' (2009). Issues concerning the equal and equitable *distribution* of education resources are, therefore, central to education reforms and education policy agendas. Further, as Farrell notes (2003) in countries where resources are less scarce and the mean provision of education is higher, the equitable distribution of opportunities is also greater. In less developed and poorly resourced countries the disparity in educational opportunities is particularly severe.

Commentators demonstrate many different ways of considering equality and equity in education from looking at which children are excluded from school to considerations of how different groups of adults are represented in the workforce. For the purposes of this

study I have structured my discussion of the equality and equity implications of the government engagement with low-cost private schools for the urban poor around the framework outlined by Farrell (2003). Some of the key equality and equity debates have already been raised in the literature review on non-formal education, non-state provision of education and the Kenyan experience of non-formal schools. Here I will address the definition of equality and equity from an education perspective and then provide a brief overview of the dimensions that Farrell puts forward.

Literal definitions of the two terms, equality and equity, are similar but analyses of the equality and equity implications in different scenarios raise more complex debates. Motala (2009) expresses the dominant view on the difference between equality and equity as,

> 'equality as used here has to do with sameness or, in policy terms, non-discrimination, whereas equity encompasses that which is socially just and which advocates a process of differential distribution to achieve its goals'.

In educational terms equality[6] means that every individual has an equal chance of success according to his or her ability. Educational equality is achieved through meritocracy and mobility based on competitive performance. The principle that underlies equality in education is that of 'may the best person win'. An example of educational equality is the idea that whoever has the best academic results deserves the best educational rewards or

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[6 and 5] These ideas on the meaning of equality and equity in education draw on lectures from a course in Macro and Micro Planning in Education, which I undertook at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya in August 2008.

the best job, although other dimensions of equality surround the actual achievement of academic success as I will discuss later. Equity, in educational terms, means that every group should have a share of educational success that is equal to the proportion of the group. An example of educational equity is that as many males as females should be enrolled in higher education because the sex ratio is 1:1. Alternatively, if the ratio of race A to race B is 4:1 then there should be 4 people from race A in higher education for every 1 representative from race B. Educational equity can often only be achieved through affirmative action, such as reverse discrimination and sponsored mobility.

Farrell identifies the value judgments that surround issues of equity as the main source of differences in positions on issues of equality, concluding that, 'many of the most complex political debates about educational equality, and what might be done for it in terms of public policy, revolve around differing equity-based interpretations of different equality-driven statistical indices' (2003). The relationship between the two concepts is complex. On one hand, affirmative action can mean that unequal, ie. dissimilar, treatment leads to a more equitable outcome. Alternatively, as Motala says, we may achieve 'sameness' in state expenditure, but if differential distribution has not been achieved, a notion of equity which includes what is socially just, will not have been realized (2009).

The main dimensions of inequity that are discussed in educational contexts are wealth, gender, location and ethnicity (Farrell, 3003; Ahmed and Sayed, 2009 and Motala, 2009). The experiences of different groups of students across these dimensions are measured and monitored at national and international levels. The indicator used to track differences

among groups of varying *wealth* status is socio-economic status (SES). SES consists of a combination of indicators such as adult income, parental or guardian education level, type of housing etc and essentially categorizes students according to the wealth of their family, or the household to which they belong. In situations where such data are not available, researchers typically capture information about the materials of which houses are made, the availability and type of sanitation facilities at a household level and number and occupation of earning adults who support the family. The measurement and monitoring of *gendered* experiences are tracked by disaggregating data according to the gender of learners and teachers. Differences in *location* are most frequently split into urban and rural dimensions, although 'urban slum' is a third category that is more frequently included (Farrell, 2003). The dimension of *ethnicity* is concerned with the fate of minority groups who are frequently disadvantaged by both their cultural differences and higher incidences of poverty (Motala, 2009). In this study the *location* was restricted to that of one long-standing 'urban slum' and the ethnicity of the respondents was determined by the catchment area of the school. I did not consider it relevant to collect data on the ethnicity of the respondents as they were each drawn into the sample by their relationship with the NFS being studied. I was alert throughout the study to the possibility that aspects of *gender* and *socio-economic background* might play a part in explaining the differences in experiences between respondents. The study findings include some reflections on the diversity of socio-economic well-being amongst the inhabitants of the informal settlement, who are usually viewed as a relatively homogenous group labeled as 'the urban poor', and how this diversity is reflected in the

different types of NFS provision, such as low-fee, community-based NFS, high-fee, private NFS and wholly-subsidized NGO-run NFS.

Farrell (2003) provides a concise overview of the historical changes in discussions around equality in education and presents a useful framework from which to consider equality and equity in education and I draw heavily on this work. Farrell describes the progression from an optimistic view in the period following World War II, in which achieving a more equal distribution of wealth at all levels was seen as a simple and relatively short process, to the more cynical view that emerged in the 1970s, in which the concept of schools as institutions which reproduce pre-existing social inequalities gained more prominence. During the 1950s the expectation that more education would produce net social benefits, increase the total amount of wealth in a society and improve its distribution, led to increased spending on education, which brought a major increase in access as well as educational reform efforts aiming to make education more accessible to marginalized or disadvantaged groups. This view was supported by the dominance of human capital theory and education was viewed as a beneficial investment opportunity. The main focus was on substantial expansion in quantitative terms and universal primary education and universal literacy became central aims from the early 60s onwards. The more widespread and equitable provision of education was seen as essential to all forms of social, economic and political development. However, from the 1970s onwards a more cynical view emerged and was confirmed in the 1980s and 90s as it became evident that 'educational reforms aimed at increasing equality were very difficult to enact and implement successfully and, even when implemented reasonably well, seldom had the

intended effects on comparative life chances of the children of various social groups within and among nations' (Farrell, 2003). In addition, it became apparent that the increase in educational expenditure could not be sustained over a longer period.

Running throughout debates about how gaps in wealth and well-being can be closed have been changes in understanding of the meaning of educational equality, expressed by Farrell (2003) as 'a constant modification, amplification, and nuancing of what is meant by the term educational equality'. Farrell refers to the progression from a focus on educational equality as equal access to educational *opportunities* to a concept of equal educational *results*. Whereas the responsibility for making the most of an educational opportunity lay with the individual, a focus on equal educational results brings the focus back on the responsibility of the government in the sense that 'the task of the state has been extended to include ensuring that all children, whatever their social origin, have an equal ability to benefit from the educational opportunity provided, in terms of what they learn and how they can use that learning in later life, particularly in the labor market' (Farrell, 2003).

Farrell goes on to discuss at what points in the education process, to what extent and how children from different social groups are 'screened out or kept in' the school system (Farrell, 2003). He describes four distinguishable facets of education, the first three of which are strongly influenced by the school system and the fourth of which refers to the transition between school and adult life, usually via the labor market.

Table 9: Facets of Educational Equality
(Farrell, 2003)

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1. *Equality of access* – the probabilities of children from different social groupings getting into the school system, or some particular level or portion of it.

2. *Equality of survival* – the probabilities of children from various social groupings staying in the school system to some defined level, usually the end of a complete cycle (primary, secondary, higher).

3. *Equality of output* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will learn the same things to the same levels at a defined point in the schooling system.

4. *Equality of outcome* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling (have equal incomes, have jobs of roughly the same status, have equal access to sites of political power, etc).

The topic of equality and equity is vast and other authors, such as Bruce Fuller (Fuller, Hannum, Baker & Wenum, 2006; Fuller, Elmore & Orfield, 1996) discuss inequality in education using different dimensions. However, I have found Farrell's framework the most useful to frame my analysis and discussion as the dimensions enable me to highlight the objectives, expectations and assumptions expressed by MoE respondents, namely issues of access, retention and quality . I reflect on the MoE's expectations and school and community experiences with regard to school access, survival through to the end of primary school and delivery of outputs such as exam performance and transition to secondary school or employment. I also consider who benefits from the government support and what this suggests for considerations of equity and equality in education.

Summary of the literature and Farrell's framework.

I have carried out a qualitative case study in the style of Sharan Merriam (1998). According to Merriam, 'the outermost frame – the theoretical framework – is the body of

literature, the disciplinary orientation that you draw upon to situate your study' (1998). From this large frame the researcher draws the problem statement and finally, the exact purpose (1998). The literature reviewed for this study confirmed the following key aspects of this topic of study:

Firstly, there is considerable debate about whether the expansion of low-cost private schooling is to the advantage of the poor. Some commentators assert that, in the face of low quality public schooling, the greater choice offered by private providers is to the benefit of the poor while others maintain that levying schools fees essentially excludes children and undermines the demand for high quality public provision. Secondly, in the Kenyan context, there appears to be some interplay between the expectations and assumptions surrounding non-formal education and those associated with low-cost private schools, which are known as Non-Formal Schools. This confusion may have lead to a disconnection between the conceptualization of a support strategy by the Ministry of Education and the realities experienced at a school and community level in the urban slums. Thirdly, the literature highlights a gap in empirical findings on examples of government facilitation of low-cost private schools. The level and scope of the Kenyan government's support for low-cost private schools in the urban slums makes the case worthy of study. Fourthly, the existing literature on the Kenyan situation indicates that there are diverse experiences with low-cost private schooling and that the experiences of older pupils may be less comforting than those of younger pupils. There is evidence of early and high drop out rates and considerable disenchantment with both low-cost private and public schooling in terms of school outcomes, specifically the completion of primary

schooling and transition to the secondary level or access to forms of employment. Finally, the literature confirms that, while parents refer to concerns of educational quality when choosing between public and low-cost private schools, the pressures that force children to drop out of school before completing the primary cycle are more closely associated with poverty, namely: parents' inability to pay for schooling; nutritional, sanitation and security issues associated with living in urban slums; the need for young people to assist in family upkeep either by earning money or looking after younger siblings and/or other family members; early pregnancy and marriage and the low capacity of families living on and below the poverty line to bear the opportunity costs of schooling for the full 8-year primary cycle. This review of the literature has informed the framing of the research questions.

Further, I draw on Farrell's work on educational equality to provide a framework for considering stages within the school cycle at which pupils may be disadvantaged and possibly exit the school system. The four dimensions of access, survival, outputs and outcomes provide an appropriate framework to examine the school experiences of older pupils as they move across the whole primary cycle. Although these four dimensions are frequently monitored through quantitative measures such as: gross and net enrollment rates; cohort completion and survival rates; rates of repetition, drop out and wastage; examination performance and transition rates, it is also possible to examine experiences across these four dimensions from a qualitative perspective.

Lareau, in her discussions of designing and conducting qualitative research on aspects of social reality poses the question of how qualitative researchers can show that the data they have gathered 'support one interpretation and suggest that another interpretation is not as useful' (2000). To respond to this challenging question I reframed my central research question in a manner that lends itself to a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Secondly, I drew up a framework that indicates how I anticipated the MoE's support to non-formal schools to be operationalized in ways that either benefit or disadvantage pupils. I present this framework as a 'sensitizing' rather than a 'definitive' conceptual framework as described by Blumer:

'A definitive concept refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks. This definition, or the bench marks, serve as a means of clearly identifying the individual instance of the class and the make-up of that instance that is covered by the concept. A *sensitizing concept* lacks such specification of attributes or bench marks and consequently it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. *Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances*. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look' (1954. My italics).

Within this framework, see below, I have drawn on Lockheed, Vail and Fuller's study of the ways in which educational resources, specifically textbooks, affect achievement

(1986). Based on a review of published research the authors identified four ways in which teachers benefit from textbooks and two ways in which pupils make use of the resources. Textbooks are considered capable of a) substituting for gaps in teacher knowledge and skills, b) promoting the delivery of a more complete and coherently organized curricula, c) enabling the teacher to make better use of teaching time and d) enabling the teacher to assign higher quality homework. With respect to pupils, textbooks are considered capable of a) providing a basic exposure to written material that is otherwise unavailable in the environment and b) enabling students to learn independently of the teacher, particularly through the completion of homework (1986). In their study Lockheed et al. found that in less developed countries the use of textbooks contributed to achievement by substituting for gaps in teacher knowledge and skills and supporting the delivery of a more comprehensive curriculum. They did not find evidence that textbooks enabled teachers to make better use of classroom time or that they encouraged the assignment or completion of homework (1986). A table summarizing the sensitizing concepts around the operationalization of MoE support to NFS, used to guide this study and expressed in terms of educational advantages and disadvantages, is presented below.

Table 10: Sensitizing Concepts around the Operationalization of MoE Support in terms of Advantages and Disadvantages to Pupils (sensitizing framework prepared prior to the study).

Ministry Support	Farrell's Four Dimensions of Equality	Operalization of Support at School Level in the Context of NFS in Urban Slums	
		Indications of Advantage *(and greater equality)*	Indications of Disadvantage *(and less equality)*
1) School Verification and Validation by the MoE = school legitimization and new, ongoing relationship with MoE **2) School Management Changes Required as Prerequisite for Grants** = School Management Committee with parent representatives (SMC) = School Management Instructional Materials Committee with parent representatives (SIMSC) = new School Bank Account with specified signatories (SIMBA) **3) Instructional Materials Grant** = fixed amount allocated per pupil = conditional on audited records of correct materials' selection, procurement and management processes	**ACCESS** *Equality of access –* the probabilities of children from different social groupings getting into the school system, or some particular level or portion of it.	- *lower fees* being charged to families because lower school running costs (ie cost of textbooks covered by MoE grant) transferred to parents. - NFS *increasing number or value of concessionary places* perhaps because they feel that their role in providing schooling for the poor has been recognized by the government and is valued (ie greater philanthropy).	- *increases in the cost of schooling* to parents perhaps because supported NFS have a stronger competitive advantage over non-supported schools (Eg. less tolerance of late or gradual payment of fees; fewer concessionary places; higher fees; new costs associated with meetings of SMC or SIMSC). - *changes in enrollment criteria or introduction of conditional selection processes* against poorest families (eg. new academic entrance tests, only accepting pupils who have been in baby class, stronger demand for uniform etc).
	SURVIVAL *Equality of survival –* the probabilities of children from various social groupings staying in the school system to some defined level, usually the end of a complete cycle (primary, secondary, higher).	- *parents valuing schooling more highly* and more willing to send children to school at older ages (esp. girls 9+, boys 13+) - *pupils valuing schooling more highly* and more likely to fight to attend	- *misuse of grants* (eg. poor/non-transparent book selection process that don't support school or pupil needs; purchase of books for lower classes/favoured subjects; spending not reported) - *centers of power* being created among certain parents, ethnic groups etc and used to gain advantage for certain groups

			- *parents less supportive of school* because feel the emphasis on exam performance is raising expectations for secondary school rather than functional literacy and employable skills (Eg. math to help at market, ability to write letters) - *loss of well-wishers' support* because of assumption that government now supporting NFS, therefore no longer represent the 'poor', (eg. concessions, books, scholarships)
	OUTPUTS *Equality of output* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will learn the same things to the same levels at a defined point in the schooling system.	- *increase in number of trained teachers* or more stability in teaching staff because teaching materials available - increased *number of KCPE candidates* per school and average performance improved - *teachers more confident* in subjects, able to cover more of the curriculum, better able to answer pupils questions because of textbook provision, better use of class time, setting homework etc - *pupils more confident* (Eg. understand more, able to get more answers from teachers or books, able to study independently or do homework) because of textbook provision	- pupils needing to stay in *school for longer hours or more days* to use the textbooks/do homework - pupils experiencing *'do page ...' style of teaching* or more time left alone by teacher with books - more stringent academic or financial criteria for transition into higher classes (ie. *higher repetition rates or higher rates of coerced transfer* into other schools) because academic performance in supported schools is being more closely monitored by MoE - *deterioration in teacher pupil ratio* because NFS gets more

		- successful lobbying of MoE for *exam center status* of supported NFS (leads to more pupils being able to sit exams because don't need to travel or being able to do better because familiar setting) - successful lobbying either by parents to the NFS or by the NFS to the MoE for *exemption of exam fees* for poorer children or all pupils of NFS	grant if more pupils or because high demand for supported NFS over non-supported - *lowering of teacher morale* because untrained in use of textbooks or greater school/parent pressure to deliver exam results
	OUTCOMES *Equality of outcome* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling (have equal incomes, have jobs of roughly the same status, have equal access to sites of political power, etc).	- greater access to *MoE support for transition to secondary school* (eg. NFS pupils in supported schools recognized for selection quota into secondary schools or access to secondary school bursaries)	- *continued poor transition or worsening of transition rates* (may also manifest itself as inability to stay in secondary school) - *parent and pupil disillusionment with NFS* despite government support, perhaps in response to heightened expectations from the support (ie. employment or academic transition) - worsening of/ greater neglect of other *forms of NFE provision*

Section II

The Case

and

The Findings

Chapter 4: The Nature and Extent of MOE

Support to NFS in Kenya

In this section I describe the case being studied: the engagement of the MoE with NFS since 2005, when the first Instructional Materials' grants were disbursed to these schools. Here I have drawn on a number of MoE documents including: KESSP workplans and associated progress reports; draft policy for the Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training; initial analyses of the MoE database on NFS; the KNEC report, Monitoring Learner Achievement (GoK, 2010) and internal working documents such as the criteria for eligibility of NFS to receive grants, summary of disbursements etc. In addition, I have drawn on information in the public domain surrounding the introduction of the Free Primary Education initiative. My aim in this section is to outline the nature and extent of the support that has been offered by the MoE to NFS since 2005.

Introduction

As part of his pre-election promise, and in keeping with Kenya's international commitments to Education For All, Mwai Kibaki announced the abolition of primary school tuition fees in his inaugural speech as the third president of Kenya at the end of December 2002. The president's declaration of the Free Primary Education (FPE) initiative introduced 'free and compulsory' primary education throughout the country with immediate effect. Eight days after the president's announcement approximately 1.3 million additional children arrived at public schools for the first day of the new academic

year (GoK, 2009a). Despite this increase in enrollment, it was estimated that over 1 million school-age children remained out of school at that time (GoK, 2009a).

Since the 1970s, education specialists have argued on behalf of alternative forms of education to address the needs of children whose needs are not best served by the formal sector. More recently the recognition that formal delivery channels may not meet all learners' needs has resurfaced as advocacy for 'third channel' approaches to increasing school enrollment (Dakar Conference, 2000). In Kenya, government support to NFS is justified at an official level as being one of these 'third channels' (GoK, 2009). At the same time, commentators report pressure from civil society groups for NFS to be included in the financial assistance provided under FPE:

> ' we argued that the children in non-formal schools were children of parents who voted for government officials who promised free primary education. The government heard us and granted funds to schools that meet certain criteria. It is good that the Ministry of Education realized that children are not non-formal' (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008).

Government support to NFS is incorporated in the first Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP) under the Non-Formal Education Investment Program. The first KESSP covered the period July 2005 to June 2010 and sets the boundaries of this study. A second KESSP, covering 2010 – 2015, is currently under development and reflects the continued and expanding support by the MoE to NFS under a new overall term of

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'Alternative Provision of Basic Education'. The KESSP is part of the broader national policy framework detailed in the Economic Recovery Strategy and represents the largest single investment program of the government.

The Context of Free Primary Education in Public Primary Schools

Prior to January 2003 and the FPE initiative, the GoK provided primary schooling on a 'cost-share' basis whereby the government paid salaries for trained teachers, who were deployed by the Teacher Services Commission, and provided the existing school buildings, while parents paid fees to cover a range of school services such as admissions, examinations, staff training, transportation, school refurbishment, maintenance and expansion, security services, and additional teachers etc. The level of parental fees was set by the Headteacher and the School Management Committee of each school and the fee levels varied, often in relation to the school's academic ranking. In addition to fees, parents had to buy their children's school uniforms, textbooks and stationery. When President Kibaki enacted the FPE policy he removed some of the most persistent barriers to school access, specifically: school fees, and textbook and pupil stationery costs. The government stated its goal in bold and simple terms: 'to have every child in school' (MoE, 2003). The lynch-pin of the new policy was the abolition of the school fees that parents had paid directly to schools. Now, in 2010, the government continues to pay teacher salaries and benefits as before. Under FPE, however, the government pays the equivalent of 5 US$ per pupil per academic term into existing school bank accounts to pay for the following school running costs: support-staff wages; school repairs, maintenance and improvements; quality assurance; support activities; electricity and

water; postage and post office box rental, and telephone services. In addition to grants to cover the running costs listed above, the government was able to disburse funds through an accompanying Instructional Materials (IM) initiative. Under this program schools receive 10 US$ per pupil per academic term to pay for teacher and pupil instructional materials. The amount allocated per pupil was intended to equip schools with key textbooks on a shared basis of one book for every two children. In order to receive these grants schools had to open new and separate bank accounts, called School Instructional Materials' Bank Accounts (SIMBAs). Once the monies had been disbursed into these accounts by the MoE, schools could carry out prescribed procurement processes to buy textbooks, pupil stationery and teaching materials such as chalk and registers. The government soon started referring to the Instructional Materials component as an intrinsic element of FPE. The media and the general public accepted FPE to mean both the removal of tuition fees and the decentralized funding of textbooks and stationery.

These two per-capita grant payments constitute the mechanism through which the government made primary education 'free' to parents. By reasserting primary school attendance as compulsory the president reinforced the legal rights of children, which are contained in the Children's Act of March 2002. The right of children to be educated is incorporated in the FPE Policy document as follows: 'Education is a human right that every child must enjoy and has to be protected by law' (MoE 2003a). The FPE policy is not explicit about the penalties for non-compliance. The Minister for Education, George Saitoti, gave only a vague warning that 'school officials would face unspecified sanctions should any students be turned away' (Saitoti in World Education News and Review

2003). Parental non-compliance can be penalized under the Children's Act, which provides for both imprisonment of up to twelve months and a maximum fine of approximately 700 US$.

The main intended beneficiaries of the FPE policy are children from low-income families, and who have been excluded from school. Out-of-school youth between the ages of 6 and 14 represent young people who have never been to school as well as those who were once in school but have been forced to discontinue, and those who do attend school but only on an intermittent basis. Typically these children are excluded from formal education because of a lack of money, the need to earn a living or the high opportunity costs associated with daily school attendance. The FPE policy was not limited to a particular age group so people above school-going age who had never completed their primary education were able to enroll in government primary schools. Only two years later, in 2005, did the MoE begin to extend some of the financial support offered under FPE to a few non-formal schools in the form of Instructional Materials grants.

Government Support to Non-Formal Schools

Policy framework: alternative provision of basic education and training.

The MoE has made slow progress in developing and formalizing a policy for NFE that addresses the provision of education by NFS, with an initial draft being prepared in 2004, which is scheduled to be officially launched in November 2010. Some of this delay has

been brought about by changes in which forms of education should be covered by the policy. Initially, forms of education provision intended for pastoral communities, ie. mobile schools, were covered within the NFE draft policy, along with traditional forms of NFE and also NFS, but these have now been removed and the needs of pastoralist and nomadic groups are addressed in a separate policy. Another delay was caused by internal structural changes, whereby the Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) department became more formally associated with the MoE, rather than the Ministry of Higher Education, and ACE provision is now incorporated within this draft policy. Over the past six years the name of the Policy has also changed to reflect changes in thinking and what was originally known as a policy for Non -Formal Education is now called the 'Policy for Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training'.

The origin of the name 'non-formal schools' for this group of school providers is not clear. I speculate that the name was originally used to highlight the fact that these schools were 'not formal' schools in the sense that they were not public schools. In addition, the location of NFS within the informal settlements also emphasizes the characteristic of 'informality' and the predominance of 'Non-Formal Education Centers' in the informal settlements added weight to the label 'non-formal'. A number of NFS providers have noted that the label is inaccurate as they do cover the formal 8-4-4 curriculum and have tried to establish a new label of 'Complementary Education Providers'. However, the MoE had, until recently, resisted changing the name of NFS on the basis that it was then a familiar and accepted term. More recently, during the development of the Policy, a

name change for the activity as a whole, ie. 'alternative provision' has been adopted by the schools themselves are still referred to as NFS.

Support to the NFS has, therefore, emerged and been developed outside any formal policy framework. Support has been implemented incrementally and more systematic, coherent approaches have been adopted only at the number of verified and supported NFS has grown and the number of disbursements has increased.

The Policy on Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training (the Policy), brings together the MoE guidelines on three forms of alternative education: Non-Formal Schools (primary and secondary); Non-Formal Education Centers (NFEC) and Adult and Continuing Education (ACE). In Kenya, the NFS follow the formal, national curriculum known as '8-4-4', while Non-Formal Education Centers (NFEC) offer a range of non-formal curricula. An NFE Curriculum has been developed by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and this six-year NFE-KIE course of academic and vocational subjects is designed to have horizontal and vertical linkages and equivalencies with formal education curriculum, although this stage of development and integration has not yet been reached. Both the NFECs and NFSs are distinct from Adult and Continuing Education Centers (ACE), which focus on functional literary and numeracy, although the target audiences sometimes overlap with older youth being eligible for more than one of these forms of education provision. The three types of educational provision are described in the table below.

Table 11: Forms of Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training Recognized in the Policy

	Target Age Group	Curriculum
Non-Formal Schools NFS	Age 6-14, primary Age 14 and above, secondary	Formal primary and secondary education curricula, as followed by public schools: '8-4-4'
Non-Formal Education Centers NFEC	Age 6 – 18.	Various non-formal education curricula, which incorporate both academic and technical subjects as well as literacy and numeracy programs. Includes a NFE curriculum developed by the Kenya Institute of Education.
Adult and Continuing Education ACE	Age 18 and above.	Various curricula, which include vocational and technical training programs as well as functional literacy and numeracy.

Stated policy objectives.

The central aim of the Policy is to support the realization of EFA by providing access to quality basic education and training to those who are excluded from formal schooling through socio-economic and cultural factors, (GoK, 2010). The Policy aims to strengthen the inequitable provision of schooling opportunities by supporting forms of provision that address the needs of the most vulnerable learners.

Within the Policy document, education leaders note that many forms of alternative education provision are registered with parts of the Government other than the MoE. Also, many institutions are registered as one type of institution and then deliver schooling at a later date. This lack of centralized registration by the MoE is problematic because: 'the services are therefore uncoordinated with the majority not meeting the stipulated standards for educational provision' (GoK, 2010). This lack of coordination poses difficulties in supervision and MoE officers are not well-positioned to ensure quality and standards, which include the quality of school management structures and processes. The

weakness of NFS in the area of management is given as the reason the NFS were not initially able to benefit from the mainstream FPE support program (GoK, 2010).

One of the aims of the Policy is therefore to strengthen the coordination of this sub-sector: to 'provide the necessary guidelines to streamline the development and management of the alternative provision of education and training in Kenya' (GoK, 2010). Further, the Policy identifies the perceived lower quality of education in these alternative forms, the lack of linkages between the alternative provisions and the formal system, and the exclusion of alternative provisions from both the legal framework and national statistics relating to education and training, as problematic.

For the purposes of this study it is important to note that the authors responsible for this Policy write from the perspective of learners being excluded from formal schooling by factors such as poverty, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, cultural factors or environmental constraints, including living in the ASALs (GoK, 2010). The Policy does not refer to situations in which parents and learners are actively choosing alternative provisions over and above formal schools, and sometimes even after sampling the formal provision offered under FPE.

Stated policy provisions.

The Policy refers to a number of ways in which the MoE will engage with this sub-sector including: registration of NFS by the MoE; supervision of schools for purposes of quality assurance and ensuring minimum standards; provision of guidelines relating to school

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management; access to FPE funds; collaboration in the management and training of teachers and, where long-term land ownership can be determined, support for infrastructural development (GoK, 2010). These elements are interrelated and are discussed below.

The registration of alternative forms of provision is identified as an entry point into a quality assurance mechanism in that prospective providers will have to demonstrate adherence to certain minimum standards, including: 'school resources (classroom sie, acreage, teacher qualification), management, safety and sanitation standards' (GoK, 2010), in order to be registered. Special acreage specifications are anticipated for urban NFS and five-year lease agreements are mentioned as being acceptable proof of secure tenure. The assessment process that underpins registration is intended to form the basis for further supervision and quality assurance. It is also the channel that allows data about the NFS to be included in the national statistics.

The Policy recognizes that minimum standards also relate to the management of alternative provision institutions and intends to provide criteria that outline 'standards of educational achievement, language proficiency and necessary skills required as pre-requisites for managers' (GoK, 2010). The Policy also refers to the need for alternative providers to constitute inclusive management boards and committees with representatives from the Education Office, teachers, parents/guardians and learners, where applicable (GoK, 2010).

With regard to resources, the Policy identifies registration as a prerequisite for access to any resources allocated by the government (GoK, 2010), and notes that official recognition enables the sub-sector to access the 'FPE funding kitty and provision of teachers to selected institutions' (GoK, 2010). The Policy, therefore, allows for alternative provision schools to receive government grants, specifically those awarded under FPE for instructional materials and infrastructural development, and for teachers to be deployed to alternative provision schools by the Teacher Services Commission. The Policy also allows for alternative provision schools to benefit from the expertise and services embodied in the national examination body, KNEC, although the emphasis in the text refers to the development of alternative assessment and accreditation systems rather than inclusion in the existing formal national examination system (GoK, 2010). This may reflect the assumption that alternative provision centers already have unrestricted access to existing examination systems and the associated mechanisms to transition through the educational hierarchy.

Based on the plans outlined in the Policy, coupled with knowledge gained about those activities relating to NFS that have already been initiated by the MoE under the first KESSP, this study focuses on three areas of MoE engagement with NFS, namely:

NFS verification and validation.

This annual process, by which MoE officers visit and assess NFS, forms the basis for the Ministry's initial and ongoing interaction with NFS and includes the completion of a school survey. A database of approximately 500 NFS has been

built by the MoE based on these surveys. The verification and validation exercise is central to the supervision and quality assurance role the MoE aims to play and forms the foundation for any future registration of NFS by the MoE.

NFS management structures.

NFS must adhere to specific management requirements that also apply to public schools in order to be eligible for government grants. Specifically these are a School Management Committee (SMC) and a School Instructional Materials School Committee (SIMSC). MoE guidelines stipulate the composition of these two committees as well as the roles and responsibilities of position holders, which control the financial freedom of the committees. Detailed procurement and recordkeeping systems are also prescribed by the MoE and NFS records are audited in the same manner as public schools. It is through these two committees that parents and teachers become involved in the management of the school.

Provision of resources.

The two items above are pre-requisites for the receipt of government grants. To date these grants have been limited to Instructional Materials' grants that must be used for the purchase of textbooks and pupil stationery. Over time the number of NFS eligible to receive grants has increased. However, due to financial constraints not all eligible NFS receive funds at every round of disbursement. In addition, the per-capita rate allocated to pupils in NFS, has varied over time so the size of grants is variable.

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Non-formal school registration.

Under the current Education Act the MoE is only able to register either a public or a private education institution. NFS are clearly not public institutions as they are neither provided, nor managed, by the state. The only option, at present, if an NFS wishes to register with the MoE, is to register as a private institution. However, if NFS register as private institutions they will not be considered eligible by the MoE to receive government grants derived from public funds. The majority of NFS are currently registered as self-help groups with the Ministry of Gender, Childrens and Social Services. However, within these non-public institutions the NFE Department currently differentiates between 'private' and 'community-based' NFS and deems only community-based NFS to be eligible for grant provision, if they fulfill all the other criteria. The operational definition of private institutions is that they are institutions that were established, and are owned or managed, by a single individual. Community-based institutions are defined as those that have been developed from some form of community initiative, in response to community interest or operate in close partnership with the community. The Ministry acknowledges that the boundaries between private and community-based institutions are not easy to determine and use two main indicators to confirm 'community' status: relatively low level of fees and the existence of a school management committee with community/parental representation. The level of fees accepted as low or reasonable for a community based institution is not stated officially by the MoE. However, MoE officers refer to levels of 500 Ksh and below per month as acceptable:

> 'These are pockets of poverty meaning we have the parents preferring the non-formal schools which are relatively very cheap and cheaper here I'm talking mainly 500 Ksh' (7 M Int)

'Some NFS charge as much as 3,000 in a term, they ask parents to pay 1,000 per month. That will depend again on how many teachers they have, the infrastructure that is there, the maintenance that is required and how many people, staff are employed in the school. But the grants, the schools that we give grants, I think 60% of the schools, still have reasonable fee charges at a level that parents can afford, not more than 500 Ksh in a month' (2 M Int)

'Typically we support schools that charge somewhere around 600/- and 1,000/- a term, that's for 3 months, maybe up to 500 Ksh a month – it varies if they are feeding or not' (5 M Int)

Where NFS do not have the necessary school management structures in place when they are verified for eligibility for funding, they are allowed to establish new structures in order to meet the conditions. Once an institution has been confirmed as a community based organization, other criteria are applied to confirm eligibility for funding, see below.

Table 12: Eligibility Criteria for NFS Funding

The NFE Department requires the following for an NFS to be eligible to receive government grants:
- Be community-based
- Be registered with a government department
- Offer the formal 8-4-4 curriculum
- Have a School Management Committee (SMC)
- Establish a School Instructional Materials School Committee (SIMSC)
- Have opened School Instructional Materials Bank Account (SIMBA) account with banks that have signed an MoU with the MoE
- Account should have minimum 3 signatories, all of whom are mandatory
- Be willing to be subjected to government auditing

(Public Notice, MoE, NFE Department, March 2010)

Non-formal school verification and validation.

In order to determine whether additional NFS not yet known to the MoE are eligible to receive government grants, MoE staff now make annual verification visits to schools. The first cycle of visits took place in December 2008 and was used to create an initial pool of recipient schools. Since then NFE officers have made a second annual verification round

to approximately 500 schools in December 2009 and plan to do the same in 2010. The verification visits include schools that have been awarded grants in the past as well as new schools that were previously not known by the NFE Department. The verification visit is made by an Education Officer who completes a survey to confirm:

- name of school, location and registration number
- school enrollment for the past 5 years, disaggregated by gender
- teacher establishment, disaggregated by gender and information on whether trained or not and whether they are deployed by TSC or paid for by the PTA/SMC
- Free Primary Education Funds received and expended (if previously funded)
- textbook: pupil ratio per subject and across Standards
- confirmation of structures in place (SMC, SIMSC Minute Book, SIMBA account)
- curriculum and courses offered
- physical facilities (administration block, classrooms)
- sanitation facilities (water, number and type of toilets)
- fees charged per term and by Standard
- bank account details (bank name, branch, account number, number of signatories)

(NFS Survey, MoE, NFE Department, June 2010)

Following these verification visits, MoE staff, including members of the NFE Department as well as officers from the Municipal/District Education Offices, meet to review the surveys and validate whether or not the surveyed NFS are eligible to receive government grants. Some of the reasons why some new NFS have *not* been validated after a verification visit are reported as:

- not registered with any government department

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- not offering the 8-4-4 curriculum

- no evidence of being community based

- lack of management structure

- high fees

- management not prepared to be audited

- unacceptably poor facilities in terms of health, safety and hygiene

- too few pupils

(NFS Officer, June 2010)

As an example, during the validation exercise in 2009, 33 % (117 schools out of 359) of the NFS that were visited, were found *not* to be eligible for funding (NFS Officer, June 2010). During visits to schools that have already been receiving grants, Education Officers check whether the proper procurement procedures have been followed, whether the pupils have access to the instructional materials and whether all the documentation is in place. During the 2009 validation exercise, 8 % of previously supported schools, (27 schools out of 322), were found *not* to have reached the required standards and were removed from future disbursement lists (NFS Officer, June 2010). The reasons for their rejection were:

- no evidence of textbooks being in the school or in use by pupils
- lack of documentation (SIMSC Minute Book, Tender Documents etc)
- not having followed proper procurement procedures
(NFS Officer, June 2010)

Based on the data collected during the verification and validation exercises, the MoE has built an initial database on NFS. Two rounds of these data are now held electronically on

over 500 NFS and initial reports have been generated on the first round of data collection, which took place in December 2008.

Although it is tempting to consider this database as a source of comparative, quantitative data that can be interrogated and analyzed, closer investigation reveals inconsistencies that make disaggregation of the data problematic and unreliable. For example, within the group of schools that are recorded as 'never having been funded', some schools have entered an amount of government funds received, which calls the accuracy of the categorization into question. As another example, both groups of 'ever funded' and 'never funded' NFS show substantial increases in total enrollment in the last 6 years, but it is unclear whether this reflects the establishment of new schools or increased enrollment in existing schools. Drawing comparisons between the two groups would therefore not be valid. At an aggregate level some indications may be helpful in indicating areas that would benefit from further insight. These are that:

> *Girls and boys are enrolled at similar levels.*
>
> The overall enrollment of girls has remained at 50% or just above over the last 5 years. While this may suggest gender parity at an aggregate level, there may be a more distorted picture across the 8 Standards and patterns of retention may differ. It may also be that this gender balance indicates more girls are sent to NFS rather than being enrolled in formal schools.

Table 13: Enrollment Disaggregated by Gender (GoK, 2007).

	National Formal Schools	**Nairobi only, Formal** *Schools*	**Non-Formal Schools** *(majority of schools in Nairobi)*
Boys	4,258,616 (51.2%)	159,722 (50.07%)	33,813 (49.43%)
Girls	4,071,532 (48.88%)	159,278 (49.93%)	34,585 **(50.56%)**
Total	8,330,148	319,000	68,398

An overall increase in enrollment.

Overall, the 456 Nairobi NFS indicate an increase in total enrollment from 47,020 in 2005 to 88,783 in 2008 (GoK, 2009a). At an individual school level some schools report increases and other decreases, which is consistent with reports of high levels of transfer between NFS. The reasons given for changes in enrollment include: post-election violence, which erupted in the slums of Nairobi and forced some schools to close either temporarily or permanently or caused families to move elsewhere after adult family members were killed or their homes destroyed; introduction of school feeding program, which attracts more pupils because the feeding program is subsidized usually by the World Food Program and Feed the Children; increased government support, (especially grants for the purchase of textbooks) and changes in quality of teaching and/or performance of the school, which are possibly also related to the provision of textbooks.

Textbook provision improved.

The priority of textbook purchasing is reported to be given to the core subjects of Math, English and Kiswahili and overall the textbook to pupil ratio can be said to have improved. It is not possible to conclude whether funded schools have better

textbook to pupil ratios than 'never funded' schools, nor whether changes in textbook to pupil ratios are due solely to government funding or if books are received from other benefactors. It is also not known whether textbooks are bought for lower or upper classes.

Limitations in key information.

No information is gathered in these surveys on either the qualifications of teachers nor on academic performance of the pupils, and enrollment data are only given at an aggregate level and not broken down by Standard.

Given the broad-based complexities of gathering data in this sub-sector and the further inconsistencies shown in MoE records, great caution needs to be exercised when drawing conclusions from this quantitative data. It is uncertain whether all schools have been accurately categorized as 'ever funded' or 'never funded', anecdotal evidence suggests that physical checks of textbooks are unlikely to have been carried out thoroughly and the government is not the only funder in this sector.

School management changes/requirements.

In order for the MoE to disburse grants to NFS, the schools must meet the same financial management and procurement standards as public schools. Essentially these standards relate to: parental participation; banking facilities and procurement procedures.

Parental participation.

Schools are required to have a functioning School Management Committee (SMC), which includes the representation of parents on a class by class basis as well as a School Instructional Materials Selection Committee (SIMSC), which includes teacher and parent representatives. Further, one elected parent representative is required to act as a bank account signatory on all instructional material procurement processes. These structures are summarized below.

Table 14: School Committee Structures

	School Management Committee SMC	School Instructional Materials Committee SIMSC	School Instructional Materials Bank Account SIMBA
Roles/ Composition	Chair: Elected member (not HT) Secretary: Headteacher Members:	Chair: Headteacher Secretary: Deputy Head Teacher Members: The senior Teacher Teacher representative for each class (8 members) Two elected representatives from parents (1 f/1 m) Chair Person of the SMC Teacher for Special Needs Education (where applicable)	Cheque signatories: 1) Headteacher 2) SMC Chairperson 3) Elected parent representative All 3 must sign cheques
Function	Governance of the school – pedagogical and financial issues	Management of the Instructional Materials process: - Select materials - Select suppliers - Oversee procurement procedure - Receive purchases - Sign cheques - Oversee materials distribution and storage - Keep records according to MoE guidelines	Account dedicated to the receipt of Instructional Materials grants.
Financial Responsibilities	Headteacher reports to MoE	SIMSC audited by MoE	Cheque only bank account Open for MoE audit

Banking facilities.

Schools must have a separate, dedicated bank account into which funds can be received. This account, called a School Instructional Materials Bank Account is a dedicated account which can only hold funds for this kind of grant. Agreements have been set up by the MoE with the major banks so that these accounts can be operated with a minimum of bank charges. Funds from these accounts can only be accessed by a cheque and each cheque has to be signed by three stipulated and named individuals.

Procurement procedures.

A strict procurement process is required by the MoE. This includes the provision of multiple tenders and a process of comparison between potential suppliers. Guidelines are provided for each step with templates for correspondence and ordering. All records, including the minutes of meetings, must be kept for auditing purposes.

Instructional materials' grants.

Once a school has been classified as eligible to receive funding, the Headteacher and representative from the School Management Committee are invited to attend a one-week residential training course on the management of the IM grants. The MoE has disbursed textbook grants to a maximum of 410 different schools since 2005. Not all schools that have been classified as eligible for funding actually receive grants during every disbursement period. This is because funds are sometimes limited and disbursement is then restricted to only a proportion of the eligible schools. The table below shows approximate values compiled from various internal documents.

Table 15: MoE Disbursements to NFS for Instructional Materials Grants to-date

Date	NFS Validated *(ie. Eligible)*	NFS Funded	KSh	USD	No. Students
2004	59	59	6,000,000	81,000	
05/06	165	165	42,000,000	580,000	41,176
06/07	208	208	46,000,000	630,000	
07/08	163	163	38,000,000	525,000	35,987
June 08	255	255	62,000,000	843,000	47,120
Dec 08	242	219	50,000,000	685,000	45,578
June 09	410	191	22,000,000	303,000	33,988
			266,000,000	**3,647,000**	

The continued expansion of support to NFS may not be immediately apparent from these figures for two reasons. Firstly, not all eligible NFS have received grants during every disbursement round and secondly, because the per capita amount allocated to each pupil has changed over time. From 2004 to June 2008 the total number of eligible and funded sites grew from 59 to 255. Between December 2008 and June 2009 the total number of eligible schools grew from 242 to 410 because more new NFS had been verified and validated. However, the number who received grants did not grow because funds were limited and only newly validated schools (191) were funded in June 09. The MoE officers decided it was better to provide new schools with at least some books than speard the funds over more schools who had received grants in the last disbursement round. In early 2010 the MoE was charged with financial mismanagement and no further disbursements were made before the data collection process for this study was completed in July 2010.

Public schools are allocated 1,020 Ksh per child under the IM grants program. This covers 650 Ksh for books and 370 Ksh on general items, such as chalk and dusters. For

NFS the allocated per capita level has changed over time, beginning at 1,020 Ksh and reducing to 650 Ksh. Prior to 2005 the MoE provided no support to the NFS and the introduction of any grants to this group represents an improvement in the allocation of resources. However, even though the amount allocated per child for books in both supported NFS and public primary schools is now the same, ie. 650 Ksh, the situation represents one of great inequality in two main respects. Firstly, the MoE is no longer providing the per capita grant of 370 Ksh per child to cover other general items. Secondly, the government provides a much broader base of support to public primary schools than supported NFS in the form of school buildings, teacher salaries and by covering other administrative costs. In the context of Mathare where only three government primary schools exist and cannot possibly serve an estimated total population of 900,000 (Cheng & Kariithi, 2008), this distribution of resources represents a substantial inequality.

Table 16: Per capita grants allocated to NFS and public schools

Year	NFS pupil per capita level for IM grants	Public Schools pupil per capita level for IM grants
2005	1,020/	1,020/- per child (650/- Books; 370/- General)
2007	1,300/-	
2008 July	1,300/-	
2008 Dec	1,097/-	
2009 July	650/	

Conclusion

From an outside perspective the MoE support to NFS may seem rather an inconsistent and halting process, not yet directed by a specific policy. However, on the ground, since 2005, staff in the NFE Department at the MoE have engaged directly with NFS providers,

have physically visited the sites, gathered data, input these into an electronic system, and disbursed grants as often as possible to an increasing number of different schools. At a school level these grants represent a large influx of money, for example one school may receive 500,000 Ksh /6,850 USD, in one disbursement. The support to NFS by the MoE features as a substantial change in the functioning of this sub-sector.

Chapter 5: MoE Objectives, Expectations

and Assumptions

In this chapter I document and discuss the ways in which MoE officers expect the support

offered to NFS to influence educational experiences in urban informal settlements. The

MoE objectives in supporting these schools are described and the expectations

underpinning how this support is translated into positive benefits are recorded. The

content of this chapter is drawn from face-to-face interviews with officers from the

following MoE offices:

> Director of Basic Education
>
> NFE Department
>
> Provincial Director of Education, Nairobi
>
> Director of City Education, Nairobi
>
> NFE Desk, City Education, Nairobi
>
> Kenya Institute of Education
>
> Kenya National Examinations Council

All ministry respondents are referred to with the abbreviation for Ministry Interview (M

Int). Numbers are used to identify different respondents, but do not follow the sequence

reflected in the list of offices above.

I begin with a description of the MoE objectives that direct this support and go on to

discuss MoE expectations around the three main areas of input: school verification and

validation; school management structures and Instructional Materials' grants. This is

followed by a discussion of MoE expectations of how these inputs are translated into

results at a school and community level. I present this material from the perspective of the anticipated roles and responsibilities adopted by Directors and Headteachers, Teachers, Parents and Pupils and summarise the material in Table 17, p.206. MoE respondents identified a number of challenges, which are discussed before I provide a summary of MoE objectives, expectations and assumptions in Table 18, p.213. The classification of NFS as either private or community based oragnisations emerged as a complex theme and I discuss the MoE perspective at the end of this chapter, concluding with a summary in Table 20, p.311. The picture built in this chapter is interrogated in subsequent chapters, 6 and 7, through the responses of Directors, Headteachers, Teachers, Parents and Pupils from the NFS in this study.

MoE Objectives

MoE officers present a consistent picture of the objectives behind the ministry's support to NFS. Many MoE respondents speak with confidence about the positive impact support to NFS will have on the achievement of the MDGs, EFA and the successful realization of the FPE initiative. Specifically, officers believe that support to the NFS will increase access, strengthen retention and improve the quality of basic education. These three objectives are spoken of as interrelated goals. The intended beneficiaries of this support are those children who, despite the FPE initiative, remain out of school and are excluded from formal schooling by adverse circumstances, such as their socio-economic status or cultural practices. These children represent a disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized group of learners.

In addition, some officers express the belief that the support provided by the MoE will reduce the cost of school attendance to parents and that this cost reduction will lead indirectly to greater access and retention. As the quality of education is improved through the greater availability of teaching and learning materials, MoE officers expect the NFS to be better able to compete with public schools in terms of academic performance.

MoE objectives.

- *Extend access to those children out of school, especially the disadvantaged.*

'The main focus of support to the non-formal sector remains increasing access, while the priority for support to the formal sector is moving rapidly from increasing access to improving quality' (2 M Int)

'There is an independent Investment Program under KESSP. Why is the government doing this, because they form part of the core of the vulnerable groups and the marginalized in society. And in achieving Vision 2030, which is the focus of the education sector and the KESSP program I think the way to the future is inclusive education. You can't have inclusive education when a very big sector of the Kenyan population is not included so to speak. So the focus of this investment program for the non-formal sector is much on this and again, crack the whip on such opportunistic parasites so to speak who try to thrive on the challenges faced by some members, segments of the society in such schools' (6 M Int)

- *Increase retention.*

'Again, even when we talk of the larger goal of the Ministry in terms of our schools, we also have our bigger objective is to make education in this country accessible to all the school age-going children, so there is the issue of access, quality and even retention, retention rates we also address them in this Ministry. So as we help the NFS we are also addressing these issues of access, quality and retention rates' (5 M Int)

- *Improve quality of basic primary education.*

'I think the main objective of even the IM grants has been to help in access and retention of the children and improve the quality of education, through the provision of textbooks. We hope that children will be able to access, to read the content of what is required of them, the syllabus and be able to improve their performance' (2 M Int)

- *Reduce costs to parents.*

'The fact that we are now providing these resources means that parents will not be paying for these resources therefore it will encourage more parents to bring their children into school. They will be able to be retained. They will be able to complete and that one relates directly to the MD goals' (2 M Int)

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'One, the school gets more resources to buy textbooks and that burden is shifted off from the parents and therefore we expect the parents to get their children to access education cheaply and therefore we expect more children to come to school and to get retained', (2 M Int)

'. . . once we give the money for the books his cost will not be borne by parents and low costs will be maintained as well as quality of teaching and learning being improved' (3 M Int)

- *Strengthen competiveness of NFS vs public schools.*

'Now, the objective of that support was to try and make education to cheaper for these NFS. It was also supposed to increase enrollment. The other thing is that, was to provide the learning materials to NFS, to the primary NFS, so that at least they would be able to compete with the public and the private' (7 M Int)

'For the school, it puts them on the level footing with the public schools. Such that if we are to consider giving them more support it is, it will be directed towards those schools. That gives them an advantage over those other schools that are not validated' (2 M Int)

MoE Expectations About Inputs

The three elements of MoE support to NFS being addressed in this study are: school verification and validation; school management structures and instructional materials' grants. The findings are organized under these three topics.

School verification and validation.

The school verification and validation process is built around assessment visits to NFS made by MoE officers. It is during these visits that MoE officers start to form a working relationship with the NFS and expect to be able to affect changes in the school through this engagement. One officer refers to the NFS being brought 'into the mainstream' and notes that the schools are effectively 'legitimized' (2 M Int) by the fact that the MoE has recognized the institution, especially if it is found to be eligible for funding and receives a grant. The advice and directives given by MoE officers during the verification and validation process are expected to enforce minimum standards and improve the quality of

a range of school features including: physical school conditions, health and sanitation, school management and delivery of the curriculum.

Officers report that the relationship between the MoE and the NFS continues to strengthen over time and this interaction enables NFS to gain better access to other departments in the MoE or MoE contacts. For example, this relationship can lead to an NFS being registered as an exam center once it is large enough or NFS staff may be invited to training events organized by agents who consult with the MoE to identify prospective participants. MoE officers expect to be able to provide NFS with greater access to this wider range of services and opportunities for development.

MoE expectations: school verification and validation.

- *Regulate NFS in terms of them observing minimum standards given their context (close bad schools/advise schools on improvements).*

'We do ask those questions, we also observe the conditions of the school. From there we also advise' (7 M Int)

'Then, the flow of the, in terms of quality, when we are doing monitoring and checking, supervision is also directed towards those schools and these teachers who in the NFS that receive grants can be capacity built on pedagogy and other teaching skills and that, therefore, improves also quality of the teaching' (2 M Int)

'Yes, there are those, we have had those cases, schools that are too far down and we have advised that they should be closed. . . we work with others to take the children to other nearby schools that are better' (5 M Int)

- *Improve NFS quality through advice on management, curriculum, health and sanitation (on site visit/last day of workshop).*

'It is true the verification exercise has some educative features to these schools. When we visit them we assess the way they are, we assess their needs actually. . . We are able to advise them on the implementation of the curriculum. For example, sometimes when we visit them we discover that they might not even be having the syllabus book yet they are teaching 8-4-4. We might discover that the children are too crowded where they are . . .So what I'm saying is even as we verify them, even as we see them to know whether we can really, they have structures that would qualify for funding, we also take the opportunity on what they can do to make their schools better or to make them more

attractive to the children . . .If we find that a school is not really adhering to the basic health standards, we advise them on that' (5 M Int)

▪ *Include in mainstream systems through ongoing relationship (eg. provide information, talk to community etc).*

'In the first place, the process of verification starts with the school. It starts with their application. The fact that the school has shown interest in getting government funding, the fact that we shall account for the funds and them wanting to come into the mainstream is part of the Ministry where we can offer more services to these schools. So the schools are, in a way, seeking out services from the Ministry, more services. So, when we do the verification it is also legitimizing that this school fulfills the criteria for the funds, just as any other public school. It is non-profit making, it's a school that is community based and therefore their's, for us we don't see this school as different from public schools once we start verifying and validating it' (2 M Int)

▪ *Strengthen relationship between NFS and MoE.*

'I must say the relationship is gradually becoming cordial because they have also now learned to appreciate that we have something to offer in terms of advice, a lot of them have confessed that they have been able to address some of their questions which they did not know where to take for an answer' (5 M Int)

▪ *More able to register as exam centers as NFS recognized by KNEC.*

J: Do you think more have been able to register as exam centers because of the support from the Ministry?
7 M Int: Yeah, what happens is there is a number you have to attain before you can register as an exam center (a number of candidates?). Um 15. So, most of them now, as a result of an increase in enrollment, have been able to realize that number and seek for exam center status'

▪ *Increase access to other training opportunities eg publishers, some MoE training.*

'Like Longhorn, Oxford, they sometimes organize these workshops on how to teach English so we always advise our NFS teachers to always take advantage of these kinds of opportunities to receive some training, which can help them become better in the use of the books we give them. . . The relationship may not always have been there. But since the inception of the FPE publishers have developed special interest in schools and NFS have not been left behind' (5 M Int)

School management structures.

High expectations are placed on the role that committee members, particularly parents as

representatives of the local community, can play in supporting the school, improving its

management and, indirectly, contributing to a positive impact on the three main

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objectives of improving access, retention and performance. The establishment or strengthening of SMCs is associated by MoE officers with greater accountability and transparency over financial decision making, even to the extent that parental involvement in the SMC can influence school fees.

MoE expectations of school management committees.

- *Including parents/community members on committee is central to idea of partnership with community (community base is a central rationale for classification as NFS).*

'The SMC members have opened up the school to the public' (3 M Int)

' So they are community based, the community is involved . . . community involvement is being interpreted in terms of them being part of the SMC' (5 M Int)

'They will talk of 'their school, not other people's school, so that sense of ownership as far as the school is concerned is very important because they will also be able to rise up to the challenges facing the school. And where their help might be needed, they will want to give it because it is their school and they have owned it. So, the SMC, by incorporating parents, you are actually telling them, this is your school. So, there makes them part and parcel of the management and that is why we are saying in the long run, the school becomes a better place. Because they own it and they want to support it and this support is very, very important. In a school you need the support of the community, of the parents, in other words and everyone else who are partners' (5 M Int)

- *More inclusive management leads to more transparency in use of funds/more financial accountability/ regulation of fees to be reasonable and within means of families.*

'. . . having those structures means that there is greater accountability to the parents, because the committee members are parents, just selected from the parents whose children are learning at the school' (2 M Int)

'You know that one now if it comes from the school committee and the SMC should be able to say, now that we are getting, we have been contributing these fees for this, now that there is an intervention to this effect can we now remove this charge. That should be coming from the committee now' (5 M Int)

'Because if the community is involved it means, if it is an active participant, then it means that the people who get the funding will be keenly aware that the community is watching what they are doing with the money we give. And the community will also be eager to know if the money that the government is giving is being put to good use. Whether the money is being used to buy books and the right books and that kind of thing' (5 M Int)

- *Community ownership/involvement in management leads, indirectly, to higher enrollment, greater retention and higher quality.*

'. . . once the parents, when they see that the management is effective and resources are utilized well, the parents appreciate and therefore they need to keep their children there. But when they see the school management is weak and does not care and the resources are being wasted parents will withdraw their children very fast. In fact the cases of drop out are very high in poorly managed schools' (2 M Int)

Instructional materials' grants.

The IM grants form the backbone of the MoE support to NFS with school verification and validation and the establishment or strengthening of SMCs as pre-conditions for grant disbursement. The instructional materials bought with these grants are expected to have a rapid and direct effect on the quality of teaching by improving the teachers' skills in terms of curriculum coverage and lesson planning. Pupils are expected to benefit from the books by having greater independent access to knowledge so that they can revisit material either to do homework or to revise.

The more effective teaching and learning made possible by the presence of textbooks is expected to be a motivating factor that encourages parents to keep their children in school longer, therefore increasing retention. At the same time, exam performance is expected to improve because the children have access to books, which supports their 'determination to succeed' (2 M Int).

Interestingly, MoE officers expect the provision of IM grants to reduce directly the costs of schooling incurred by parents because they no longer have to buy books themselves. However, this expectation of reducing costs to parents was also challenged by some officers, who expressed the view that parents are too poor to have bought textbooks in the

past and, as they were not bearing this cost in the past, are not spending less now that the

MoE is providing grants for instructional materials.

MoE expectations of instructional materials' grants.

- *Improves teaching (know curriculum, better planning).*

'The teachers will find it easier to teach as they will get teachers' handbooks and will improve the quality of their lesson planning. The books have packaged the curriculum so the books will help the delivery of the curriculum. Even without teachers the children can still go through the curriculum' (3 M Int)

- *Improves learning (children access books, independent learning, direct access to source of knowledge, means of revising or practicing independently).*

'children will be having books to refer to if given homework. Or to practice and to re-read what they've been taught. They can revise. They can also use the story books to acquire vocabulary and language' (3 M Int)

- *Higher rates of retention (ie books convince parents its worth keeping children in school; children happier because have books, more motivated).*

'Yes, it motivates children, the parents – it will not be the children per se, in fact it is the community. Once the community knows there are books in the school, they will take their children to the school, the parents will take their children. Because the children per se may not know much about books, but the parents who are the providers of help or who are the caretakers of these children, they will take them to school when they know that school has books so – we must say, this FPE funding to the NFS is certainly having an impact on quality, access, transition and retention rates. It is certainly having an impact' (5 M Int)

- *Improved quality of education reflected in higher levels of performance ie better KCPE results.*

'The IM grant, we expect these to impact not only on the enrollment and the retention but on the performance of the children. The performance of the NFS I am happy to say, that currently the KCPE performance, the mean score, the mean grade for the NFS are better, the NFS are posting better grades in terms of mean score than the public schools in Nairobi, for the last two years, in 2008 and 2009' (2 M Int)

'We expect better performance because these children have a great determination to succeed and now they have access to books. When these children see opportunities, they take them' (3 M Int)

- *Higher rates of transition to secondary.*

'Yeah, yeah, yeah we have seen a lot of impact. More people have started joining secondary schools' (7 M Int)

5 M Int: Of course, they value the academic knowledge given to their children and their dream is to have these children proceed to a secondary school from the primary. Unfortunately, a lot of them are not able to proceed to good secondary schools, because their parents cannot pay the fees for boarding.

*J: So the children in the NFS, do they have the same opportunities to go to a **day** secondary school?*

5 M Int: They do. And that is where they are going. That's where the majority are landing.

J: So the ones that transition go to a day secondary school even though they can't afford boarding?

5 M Int: Most of them go to day secondary schools.Because once they do well, even when they are in NFS they are admitted to any school in the country….. A lot of children in fact are benefiting from the day schools. The day schools can accommodate very many children these days because there's very little to be paid in the day schools but in the boarding the fees are still very high. So there are all those challenges related to transition to secondary and the books have helped but as you can see there is also that bottleneck because the places are few.

- *Brings lower costs to parents.*

'One, the school gets more resources to buy textbooks and that burden is shifted off from the parents and therefore we expect the parents to get their children to access education cheaply and therefore we expect more children to come to school and to get retained' (2 M Int)

'once we give the money for books this cost will not be borne by parents and low costs will be maintained as well as quality of teaching and learning being improved' (3 M Int)

'. . . the fact that we are now providing these resources means that parents will not be paying for these resources. therefore it will encourage more parents to bring their children into school' (2 M Int)

'Let me tell you the numbers (of books prior to the funding) were negligible. The numbers of textbooks, maybe one per class and that one for the teacher only. There are schools that are not supported, the books are extremely few' (5 M Int)

'What we have is that, remember these are areas where at least the parents are very poor and most of them are struggling to get food so buying a textbook to them is hard. And some of them do no even know the value of education. So, what will also happen is that most of them will not see the sense of buying textbooks because of the priorities for their families. That means before the introduction of this FPE fund to those schools it was common to go and get a school where the teacher is the only person with a textbook, the pupils were having nothing. Because the moment you tell those pupils to go and buy books they will never come back to that school, they are gone. So, I think that assistance has helped' (7 M Int)

MoE Expectations About the Translation of Inputs into Results

MoE officers' expectations that the government support will translate into the achievement of common educational goals are founded on the assumption that key players in the delivery of schooling will adopt new practices and play new, different or expanded roles. Here I describe the roles that MoE officers expect to be played by: School Directors and Headteachers, School Management Committee members, Teachers, Parents and Pupils.

NFS Directors/Managers and Headteachers.

MoE officers assume that the managers, and especially Headteachers of funded NFS, with support from their management committees, are willing and able to implement the changes required by the government and to lead the changes needed to translate inputs into results. This is an under-stated assumption and is implied in the way that MoE officers refer to Headteachers in NFS as playing a similar role to a Headteacher in a public school, even though they are not MoE employees. While MoE officers talk specifically about the role to be played by SMC members and parents there is an almost unspoken assumption that the Headteacher, and to a lesser extent the NFS Director, will act as MoE agents and lead a process of change in the school. This includes opening up their management practices, and information about how the school operates financially, to a school management committee that has some financial authority in relation to the spending of the IM grant. NFS Headteachers and Managers are expected to be MoE agents and represent the channel through with the MoE interacts with the school.

MoE expectations: School Directors and Headteachers.

▪ *Headteachers expected to act in ways similar to Headteachers in public schools and to implement according to MoE guidelines, even though they are not employed by the government.*

'And they (Headteachers) have to be very transparent to the parents and they are accountable to the government' (2 M Int)

'You'll be able to see the other documents that the Headteacher may be keeping for the smooth running of the school, like the register that will tell you of the improvements' (2 M Int)

'during our workshop with the managers we take advantage of telling the managers of these schools, and the Headteachers, to take advantage of any opportunity they get to have their teachers trained' (5 M Int)

'Er, the structures have been put to first of all (by the Headteachers) to ensure the resources the school gets are run efficiently, effectively, its not wasted and when resources are used effectively and they are utilized well then we expect a good return. But when they are wasted then we don't expect those children to benefit from the resources that we give. So having the structures, having the committees ensures effectiveness and therefore the retention of the children, the school operating normally and running smoothly' (2 M Int)

School management committee.

As mentioned above, high expectations are placed on the SMC to act as both a partner to the Headteacher in implementing changes, but also as a watchdog and critical voice to ensure that the NFS Director and Headteacher do the right thing. Involving parents in the SMC is expected to: build a strong sense of school ownership among the community; provide an avenue for parents to become knowledgeable about the running of the school; involve parents in decision-making, especially around financial issues; confer some form of authority on parent representatives such that they can challenge the management of the school and increase the capacity of the school to make improvements.

MoE expectations: school management committees.

▪ *Parental involvement in school management leading to school improvements.*

'Yes, a participatory approach is important because it creates ownership in the community. They will talk of 'their' school, not other people's school, so that sense of ownership as far as the school is concerned is very important because they will also be able to rise up to the challenges facing the school. And where their help might be needed, they will want to give it because it is their school and they have owned it. So, the SMC, by incorporating parents, you are actually telling them, this is your school. So, that makes them part and parcel of the management and that is why we are saying in the long run, the school becomes a better place. Because they own it and they want to support it and this support is very, very important. In a school you need the support of the community, of the parents, in other words and everyone else who are partners' (5 M Int)

'The SMC members have opened up the school to the public. Also because the supported NFS schools agree to have their accounts audited and because the committee can make decisions on running the school and the use of the funds. Therefore, they will not be charging exorbitant fees' (3 M Int)

'What we want to do, what we want to have here, is that the Headteacher and his staff, especially even the committee, are the ones to quality assure the teachers. Who is doing what in the school – they'll be looking at their lesson plans, they'll be looking at their record of work, they'll be looking at the performance of this teacher' (2 M Int)

'For example there's that area of, there's that part of the verification instrument that requires us to know whether they have a school management committee because we wouldn't want to give them books when there is no proper management in the school manage these books' (5 M Int)

'We have said they (the SMC) are the managers of everything' (5 M Int)

Teachers.

MoE officers report that many teachers, up to 50%, (2 M Int), in NFS, are untrained, but are considered highly motivated and committed to either their work or their communities. It is expected that untrained and trained teachers alike will be willing and able to be more effective as teachers with the support of more and more relevant teaching and learning materials. Greater effectiveness is associated with preparing better schemes of work that cover the syllabus and more or stronger lesson planning. The MoE recognizes that these untrained teachers lack capacity as a group, but still reflect confidence that the teaching

and learning materials alone can improve their teaching effectiveness. The assumption is expressed that trained teachers will provide peer support to untrained teaches and effectively train them in the necessary planning skills.

MoE expectations: teachers.

- *Untrained teachers adopting new skills, especially scheming and planning.*

J: So, do you think even the untrained teachers are able to teach better because they have the textbooks?
2 M Int: 'Er, they are committed to their work. And, I think there is some, some of the teachers who are trained, they provide a kind of like key resource teachers for, in the schools where they are. So they induct these teachers, show them how to make schemes, how to scheme from the syllabus and how to teach. And I think they are kind of inducted by their own colleagues from the same schools. And there's a lot of interaction between those teachers who are untrained and those who are trained. Such that if you look an untrained in a NFS you will think that this teacher is better, is a trained teacher because of the commitment that he has. You may think that he is trained and that he knows his stuff better than one who is training in a public school. This is what we have noted'

'The teachers will find it easier to teach as they will get teachers' handbooks and will improve the quality of their lesson planning. The books have packaged the curriculum so the book will help the delivery of the curriculum' (3 M Int)

'The teachers in the NFS are more committed than the ones in the public schools. This is something that is acknowledged even by the parents. And we have seen them. We have seen, when we visit them, we have seen teachers who have gone without pay for 2 or 3 months and yet they are still willing to teach and willing to help those children and they stay extra hours with these children' (2 M Int)

'It is because they (untrained teachers) are part and parcel of these communities. They just grew up in the slums, have done their KCPE in the slums and they come back and help them. There's that motivation' (2 M Int)

' . . these teachers who in the NFS that receive grants can be capacity built on pedagogy and other teaching skills and that, therefore, improves also quality of the teaching' (2 M Int)

'So, much as they would, we would want them to use these books very, very well, to the advantage of the pupils, they have got that challenge of lack of training' (5 M Int)

Parents.

As mentioned above, parents are expected to become more involved with the running of the school and monitoring the use of government grants through their participation in the SMC. In addition, parents are expected to be motivated by the presence of textbooks and to make more efforts to keep their children in school because the school has teaching and learning materials. Parents also have a role to play in monitoring the use and safe-keeping of books when they are issued to be taken home and are perceived to try very hard to look after the books. MoE officers believe that parents most want their children to perform well academically and progress to secondary school. Some officers doubt that parents can afford secondary school and are less optimistic about the children's chances of academic progression.

MoE officers recognize that parents of children who attend NFS are poor, struggle to find the money for fees and spend long hours either looking for work or trying to find an income. Parents of children in the NFS are depicted as frequently illiterate and of low educational backgrounds. It is suggested that SMC members are selected from among the more educated members of the parent body.

MoE expectations: parents.

▪   *Supportive parents as school partners who are struggling against poverty and recognize the value of education for their children.*

'In fact, what we have found is that those people really value the books and they will give you stories of how wonderful those books are because they didn't have them before. . . So, poor as they may be the communities in the slums might aso be very protective' (5 M Int)

'Actually among the issues I told you, in the urban poor you find parents whose income is marginal, actually not impressive, but all the same they struggle, they make an effort to

their children to 'private' schools' (6 M Int – respondent specified quotation marks around 'private')

'Most of those people are in pockets of poverty, remember these are places where people cannot even afford three meals per day' (7 M Int)

'The average income? Now that one depends, because some, if you look at most of the slums – me, I can talk of a quarter of a dollar per day, not even half a dollar. Most of them, because now there are those people who go for job in the Industrial Area by they don't get it. So, they can get one day's work, job, in one week. Not even a day. Even if it is a day, but you see some people go there for about three days without getting anything. So, if you look at it per week, it's 200 divided by 7, which is very, very low. So, there's a range where there's poverty. There's real poverty' (7 M Int)

In terms of quality parents will want their children to excel. Academically, in the exams. They want the children to excel academically so that they can go to the secondary school' (2 M Int)

'Unfortunately I must say, a lot of them are not able to proceed to good secondary schools, because their parents cannot pay the fees' (5 M Int)

'And then the parents are also, some of the parents are not very literate. They have not been to school themselves so they have the interest to educate their children but are not educated themselves' (2 M Int)

'But there are some parents who are informed and those are the ones that I think are selected in these committees, SMCs, when they are selective. But generally the parents will not know, understand what goes on in the school' (2 M Int)

Pupils.

The children who attend NFS are portrayed by MoE officers as highly committed and motivated pupils who are eager to attend school and who will seize the provision of textbooks as an opportunity to learn. It is believed that access to the books will enable children to revise, learn on their own and to do their homework.

The challenges that children face are numerous and include: insecure living environments, child labour, adult responsibilities at young ages and very poor learning conditions. A supported NFS is seen as offering more protection to children than that offered by a non-supported school.

MoE expectations: pupils.

▪   *Children who are eager to go to school.*

2 M Int: You'll find increased enrollment, increased participation.
J: Net enrollment?
2 M Int: Yes, and I think you will also find, you'll find increased net enrollment in the schools. And also I think you will find in the slums generally the gender disparity is also not very wide. It may vary from school to school but overall the gender disparity is not very great' (2 M Int)

' I think we are targeting them as children who are out of school and they should be in school' (5 M Int)

▪   *Highly motivated and determined children.*

'I expect better performance because these children have a great determination to succeed and now they have access to books. When these children see opportunities, they take them' (3 M Int)

'I really think what makes the difference in the urban slums is the motivation, an intense determination to do well and that can be translated elsewhere' (6 M Int)

▪   *Children who benefit from the books and use them for independent study.*

'Children will be having books to refer to if given homework. Or to practice and re-read what they've been taught. And they can revise. They can also use the story books to acquire vocabulary and language' (3 M Int)

▪   *Numerous challenges to school attendance remain.*

 'then these schools are also very near to the residential places and due to the insecurity in the slums parents are more comfortable when the children are much near than where they have to trek for a long distance' (7 M Int)

'They have, the children there have uniforms, but the structures are dilapidated, the time may be slightly flexible than the normal school and basically they are from very poor families' (2 M Int)

'Most of the children are also involved in labour activities' (2 M Int)

'And in some of the families they are child-headed households' (2 M Int)

▪   *Children in a non-supported NFS more vulnerable.*

'The child that is in a non-supported school is very vulnerable. Very vulnerable because he is just at the mercy of the headteacher who will decide to kick this child, he'll be asked to buy textbook or an exercise book and the child will not be able to do that and the parents, once his child has been sent home several times, there is that fatigue of the parent. They feel that they cannot always, and if the child is a grown one and somebody who can do some little work outside the home then that makes them more vulnerable. So

the child in a school that is not supported is very at the risk of dropping out than the other one in a supported school' (2 M Int)

Once a NFS has been identified and visited by the MoE a chain of action is expected to follow. In some cases a school is found to be operating below the accepted standards or fails to qualify as a community-based school and MoE officers take steps to either close the school or, if possible, to work with the school management to put in place those features that will enable the school to qualify. Alternatively, a school is found to be eligible for a grant and it is expected that the key actors will adopt new roles and responsibilities that will eventually improve the quality of schooling. These roles and responsibilities are summarized in the table overleaf:

Table 17: Summary of Expected Roles and Responsibilities

Agent	Action

MoE:	▪ engages with NFS and provides access to other MoE depts
	▪ introduces informal minimum standards at visited schools
	▪ provides preliminary responses and advice on current situation in the visited schools
	▪ screens out those schools who are:
	    - below the minimum accepted standards for NFS
	    - not prepared to establish SMC
	    - not prepared to be audited
	    - charge unacceptably high fees
	▪ strengthens teaching capacity
	▪ audits use of grants

SMCs in the supported NFS:	▪ include parent representatives and meets regularly ▪ improve management of school through parental involvement ▪ represent parents' interests on issues of finance ▪ hold school management to account for procurement ▪ are engaged with the running of the school enough to affect issues of access, retention, quality and fee levels
Parents in the supported NFS:	▪ play an active role in the SMC ▪ act as a watchdog over school managers ▪ appreciate the government support and textbooks enough to keep sending their children to school ▪ value the improved exam access and performance and the potential for transition to secondary school

Teachers in the supported NFS:	▪ use the books to:
	   - draw up schemes of work
	   - plan lessons
	   - fill in gaps in their knowledge
	 ▪ are committed and motivated

Pupils in the supported NFS:	▪ use books to read independently, practice exercises and revise ▪ get more support from parents to attend school ▪ get more support from parents to complete primary education ▪ are able to perform better in exams ▪ are able to transition to secondary school

Challenges Identified by the MoE

Despite considerable optimism expressed by those MoE officers who work most closely with NFS, all respondents recognized at least some challenges. Some plans, such as the in-service training of untrained teachers in NFS, have simply not been operationalized because of a lack of funding. Other officers find it irregular that any institution offering the formal curriculum should be registered anywhere other than with the MoE. Permanent land tenure is also identified as a constraint to the extent to which the MoE is able to strengthen the infrastructure and improve the standards of NFS

Challenges identified by the MoE.

▪ *Limited funds to roll out training to NFS teaching staff.*

2 M Int: Something we have been able to plan and we have done but I must admit that we haven't been very effective in that area. Helping the teachers in terms of capacity building because of the funding, the little funding that we get.
J: So when you say not effective do you mean that you have not reached many teachers or you mean that the training wasn't any good?
2 M Int: No, the training was good but we have not been able to roll out to as many teachers, we have also not been as frequent as required.

▪ *Differences of opinion over the accountability of NFS and where NFS are registered.*

'Those schools that are 'non-formal' but the proprietors are using them to get funds from elsewhere ie. sponsor – some getting lunch, but what about accountability? How much have they received and what was it given for?' (1 M Int)

'If schools are offering the formal curriculum they should be registered with MoE. If not, they should be offering the NFE curriculum' (1 M Int)

- *Poor infrastructure and constraints on how much the government can provide permanent solutions to poor quality infrastructure because of lack of land ownership.*

'Even if we don't give them money to build new classrooms because they have nowhere to build them, maybe we can help them make the structures they use better. You know, rehabilitate the structures, maybe you don't make them permanent. Make them better, more attractive, even if you don't make them permanent' (5 M Int)

'. . . and then in terms of trying to improve the environment, generally the infrastructure in schools that have maybe only a small piece of land. I think we have also not been doing very well in that area. Because of the fear, the risks of investing in money into places that are temporary' (2 M Int)

One of the challenges central to building the capacity needed to strengthen the school management was identified as the high turnover of parents as the MoE cannot keep training new SMC members in each school. The educational and experiential entry level of parents also poses a challenge to the way in which they can raise standards in the schools and contribute to higher quality education. The low levels of literacy and knowledge about quality education undermines ideas that parents can be effective in raising the standards of schooling. There is also a suggestion that parents may be open to exploitation either in terms of paying high levels of fees for low quality education or somehow being manipulated into paying for schools because they are offering the formal curriculum.

Challenges associated with parental involvement.

- *Low level of literacy/education/awareness of parents – less effective partner.*

'And then the parents are also, some of the parents are not very literate . . . When they are not literate they will not be able to account the school properly. They will not be able to follow up issues with the Headteacher, pick up issues with the Headteacher and teachers' (2 M Int)

- *Lack of knowledge about quality education among parents.*

'I think the parents are not well informed about quality. The quality of the teacher, the quality of the classroom teaching, the rules of the school, the majority of the parents. But there are some parents who are informed and those are the ones that I think are selected in these committees, SMCs, when they are selective. But generally the parents will not know understand what goes on in the school' (2 M Int)

- *High turnover of parents (same as public school) – can't keep training them.*

'The problem is the high turnover of the parents and we have not been able to retrain, train the new committees of the schools. The first NFS started getting grants in 2004 and I don't think those parents are now in those schools, maybe one or two. So the high turnover is a big problem' (2 M Int)

The lack of broader pupil data at a school level is identified as a problem, as without data on drop outs, repetition and transfers it is impossible to establish the true nature of changes in enrollment and to monitor survival rates.

Challenges around monitoring change.

- *Lack of data at school level recording if pupils repeat or drop out etc.*

'You'll find that there are more children as you go down. You are likely to find more children there. But then, when you ask them, they don't keep a track record of where those children have gone. There's no record to show that this one has gone on transfer, this one has dropped out and is staying with an aunt or a family, this one is doing child labour. There is no track record and clear analysis for situations' (2 M Int)

MoE respondents recognize that there is a limit to enrollment, above which teaching and learning conditions will deteriorate. MoE staff have noted some dramatic increases in enrollment in supported NFS. There is also recognition that even though children may have been supported well through primary school and may perform well, there is a general lack of resources to support their transition to secondary school.

Challenges around increasing enrollment and support for transition to secondary school.

- *Increasing enrollment in supported schools (may exceed capacity).*

'Over enrollment is in some schools because now the funding is there' (7 M Int)

- *Limited resources to support transition to secondary school.*

'Unfortunately I must say, a lot of these children do not, even after being helped with the books and after doing very well, a lot of them are not able to proceed to good secondary schools, because their parents cannot pay the fees. So, that's a big challenge and much as the books might be increasing access there's also that big question, might the parents also become apathetic at the end and say 'even after my child passes so well, where will he go to anyway?' (5 M Int)

Among MoE officers there are also differences of opinion on the appropriateness of NFS being funded and doubt over the distinction between 'private' and 'community-based' schools. Individual voices within the MoE are skeptical about the intentions of NFS providers and therefore the appropriateness of the government providing support. It was noticeable that those who work most closely with NFS expressed more confidence in the NFS and optimism about how the government support would benefit disadvantaged children. Greater skepticism and discomfort with the provision of grants to NFS was expressed by representatives from more indirectly involved departments.

Individual Voices

Some individuals expressed opinions which appeared to run counter to the essentially optimistic views of those MoE officers who have been working most closely with the NFS since 2005. The majority of these comments were contributed by one respondent who holds a senior position in an office that engages with NFS on an intermittent basis. I

am including these comments with a brief discussion in order to represent the diversity of positions.

The respondent suggests that the status of community-based NFS as schools offering the formal 8-4-4 should not be supported because they are not adhering to the usual practices. In his/her opinion if the NFS do not conform to the category of either a formal school (effectively registering with the MoE as a private NFS), or a non-formal center, offering a curriculum other than the formal 8-4-4, then there is no place for them as schools and, by implication, no grounds for the government to provide financial support.

> 'If schools are offering the formal curriculum they should be registered with MoE. If not, they should be offering the NFE curriculum. Non-formal schools should be offering NFE curriculum. The NFS are only non-formal in their utilities because they don't meet the standards that are set. But when it comes to the curriculum, the NFS feel they will be disadvantaged if they follow the NFE curriculum so do the formal one' (1 M Int)

The same respondent expressed concerns over a range of standards are not being applied in the supported community-based NFS. These are standards of accountability, safety, attendance and book management:

> 'Those schools that are 'non-formal' but the proprietors are using them to get funds from elsewhere . . . but what about accountability?' (1 M Int)

> 'Some are orphanages with boys and girls of different ages. How safe are the children?' (1 M Int)

> 'Why should they be in school if not learning because of high absenteeism – some may appear only once in the week' (1 M Int)

> 'when we go to schools sometimes, for QA (quality assurance), we are looking at books – storage, on the ground the books are not even there. Some are torn, some have gotten lost and are not replaced. The textbook ratio – are they there, are they being used for the purpose?' (1 M Int)

Other comments made by the same respondent, and echoed by a second officer in a different office, suggest that parents are somehow being exploited. This may be by a form of manipulation in which parental aspirations for formal education and, by extension, official qualifications are used as leverage to get them to support sub-standard schools.

> 'The NFS are offering the formal curriculum without the proper facilities, such as laboratories and enough classrooms. The schools are appeasing parents by offering formal curriculum' (1 M Int)

Alternatively, as the second respondent indicates, NFS may operate as 'opportunistic parasites' who thrive on parents' strong desire to have their children escape the intergenerational cycle of poverty, and should therefore be closely monitored and regulated:

> 'So the focus of this investment program for the nonformal sector is much on this and again, crack the whip on such opportunistic parasites so to speak who try to thrive on the challenges faced by some members, segments, of the society in such schools' (6 M Int)

Despite these alternative views the most consistent picture presented by MoE officers builds to one in which non-state schools operating in areas of persistent and pervasive poverty: respond positively to MoE requirements for higher operating standards and greater parental involvement; adopt new, or strengthen existing, school management structures, and translate the IM grants into stronger educational outputs. The motivation for school staff, parents and pupils to make these changes are: access to financial grants to buy teaching and learning materials, the opportunity to improve academic standards and examination performance, and higher rates of transition into secondary school. MoE objectives, expectations, assumptions and anticipated challenges are summarized in the table overleaf:

Table 18: Summary of MoE Objectives, Expectations and Assumptions:

MoE Objectives, Expectations and Assumptions:			
▪ Greater access, retention and quality in primary education for out of school children, especially the most disadvantaged. ▪ Reduced costs to parents ▪ NFS in more competitive position with formal schools			
Components	**Processes of Change** *(to be identified)*	**Outputs** *(to be confirmed)*	**Challenges** *(to be interrogated)*
NFS Verification and Validation	- MoE provides attention and advice addressing immediate concerns at school level - longer term mentoring and supervision of NFS by MoE - greater interaction between NFS and MoE	- minimum standards raised, especially delivery of curriculum and health and safety - school capacity raised in management and teaching	- limited MoE funds for rolling out training - differences within MoE over status of 'private' schools and whether NFS can be accountable - NFS not eligible for infrastructure investment
NFS School Management	- parents involved in running NFS - parents have stronger role as 'owners' of NFS	- higher enrollment - better retention - better performance - higher transition rates to secondary - control over fees - higher quality teaching and learning (performance)	- parents largely illiterate - parents not knowledgeable on school quality - high turnover of parents - lack of school data on drop outs and repetition rates
Instructional Materials Grants to NFS	- teachers use books to teach better (curriculum/ planning and scheming) - students learn better through access to material for the curriculum	- higher enrollment - better retention - better performance - higher transition rates - higher quality (performance)	- over enrollment in supported schools - untrained teachers - teachers not always paid - no fees for secondary school - insecurity for storage of books at school/home
Combined Components	- higher enrollment - closer relationship with MoE	- more NFS registered as exam centers - more pupils taking KCPE exams - higher transition	

Conclusion

The objectives, expectations and assumptions around how NFS will respond to government support, as represented by MoE officers, are consistent with approaches adopted by other MoE departments in working with public schools. By extending government grants to the NFS on the same basis as IM grants are provided to public schools, the MoE is effectively drawing them into the mainstream provision of education. NFS are expected to operate with the same School Management Committee structures under the leadership of the Headteacher as a public school. Similarly, teachers are expected to increase their efforts to deliver quality education, parents are expected to make a positive contribution to the running of the school and pupils are expected to benefit from both the improved management environment and the teaching and learning resources. These expectations are held despite that fact that none of the staff in NFS are employed by the government, substantial numbers of NFS teachers are untrained, parents face constant financial insecurity and pupils struggle against the daily hardships of survival.

In the following chapters, 6 and 7, I present the school-based findings that reflect whether the processes anticipated by the MoE have actually come into play and whether the educational goals appear to be being realized. Chapter 6 takes the summary table, Table 17, *Summary of Roles and Responsibilities*, p.201, as a framework for its structure and Chapter 7 is framed around two summary tables presented earlier: Table 10, *Sensitizing Concepts Around the Operationalization of MoE Support in Terms of Advantages and*

Disadvantages to Pupils, p.161, and Table 18, *Summary of MoE Objectives, Expectations and Assumptions*, p.213.

Chapter 6: Roles and Responsibilities in a

Process of Change

In this chapter I present material relating to the ways in which schools and their communities have responded to the support being offered by the MoE. The context of persistent and pervasive poverty in which NFS are situated suggests a low capacity to respond to new external conditions and procedures. However, in order for the MoE support to result in educational benefits to disadvantaged children, various individuals and groups are required to adopt new roles and responsibilities that will translate MoE inputs into educational benefits. Here I look particularly at the ways in which different groups have adopted new roles and responsibilities in this changed environment and reflect on whether the expected actions appear to have been taken by each agent.

Description of the School Sites and Respondents

Surveyed non-formal schools.

The informal settlement called Mathare Valley is located to the northeast of Nairobi city centre and is home to anywhere between 300,000 and 900,000 people (Dignitas 2008a). One of the two community-based NFS surveyed in this study is situated to the north of Mathare, while the second is found to the east of the settlement. Additional Headteacher interviews were held with the Headteacher of a private NFS, which is located to the east of Mathare, and with the Headteacher of an NGO-funded NFS, that is located to the north of the Valley.

As is typical of community-based NFS the two surveyed schools are housed in rented property, which lies in amongst the shops and residences that make up the informal settlement. In both cases a number of rented rooms form the center of the school and includes the Headteachers office and additional rooms are rented nearby as classrooms. Classrooms are typically made with dirt floors, and have walls and a roof made out of woodent posts and corrugated iron sheets. Doors and windows are frequently unprotected openings in the walls and may be covered with plastic at times. The classrooms are furnished with narrow wooden desks, which form a combined table and bench, each intended to seat four pupils. There are exceptions in all cases and some rooms, and particularly any rooms used as offices, are made of brick with a wooden door and metal framed window with panes of glass. At the time of this study both schools were using 11 classrooms, one for each grade class (ie. Standards 1 though 8) and one for each of the three pre-school classes of baby class, nursery and pre-unit. In addition each school had a Headteacher's office, an area for a secretary, and a teachers' preparation room.

The NFS to the north of Mathare Valley has a total enrollment of 844 pupils and a teaching staff of 16, including the Headteacher, who also teaches. In addition to the salaried Headteacher or School Principal, this school also has a School Director, who is one of the original founders of the school and still receives a salary. The School Director takes care of administrative issues including the liaison with government officials from a number of departments. This school has recently opened a secondary school in a cluster of nearby rooms and the School Director and Headteacher play the same roles in both the primary and secondary units. Parents pay 350 Ksh per child per month to attend the

school and this includes a mid-day meal, which is provided through a government-subsidized school feeding program.

The school to the east has 518 pupils and a teaching staff of 14, including the Headteacher. The school was founded by a group of parents plus the Headteacher, who is the only person who currently receives a salary or payment. In the Kenyan primary school system teachers are class teachers up to and including Standard 4 and therefore deliver all the curriculum subjects, and from Standard 5 they specialize by subject, usually taking two or three subjects across different grades. Pupils are charged 400 Ksh per month to attend this school and there is no subsidized feeding program. Both of these two schools have a school management committee, through which parents' interests are represented by one elected parent member per grade. Both schools identify three types of pupil in terms of payment: those who pay in full, those who do not pay at all and those who pay partial fees. Although school management committee members are aware of this differentiated scale of payments the Headteachers are careful not to make it known to the wider group of parents. Very few of the teachers in these two NFS are trained, although both the Headteachers are trained as primary school teachers.

In contrast to these schools both the private NFS and the NGO-funded NFS are housed on self-contained compounds with a secure perimeter. The schools look similar a typical urban public primary school. The private NFS was allocated a piece of land by the neighbouring church and the school buildings were donated by an international NGO. The NGO-funded NFS was constructed on a piece of land bought by the NGO. Both of

these schools are stone structures with cement floors, roofs, doors and windows. Their classrooms are much larger than those in the community-based NFS and are equipped with individual desks or tables. In both of these schools all the teachers are trained. In the private NFS there is no parent representation on any management body. In the NGO-funded NFS the community is only involved in the selection of pupils in the sense that they are asked to nominate potential candidates during the annual intake process. None of the pupils at the NGO-funded NFS pay any costs and the pupils receive full tuition, school feeding, holiday food rations and healthcare and free medical treatment. At the private NFS there are sponsored and self-sponsored pupils, meaning that some pupils are accepted as not paying any fees and others pay fees at a rate of 2,115 Ksh per month, exclusive of lunch, which costs a further 1,000 Ksh per month for those who are willing and able to pay.

Respondents.

During this study I interviewed a total four teachers, one of whom was a woman. One of the female parents interviewed was also a teacher in one of the two surveyed schools and she answered some questions specifically as a teacher. All five of these respondents named public primary and secondary schools outside of Nairobi where they had studied up to Form 4, which is the equivalent of high school graduation and which makes them eligible to enter university. In addition, both women had taken additional courses after school, one in just computing and the other in computing and secretarial work. One of these two female teachers is in the first year of a Diploma course in Early Childhood Development. Among the male teachers one had followed an Accounting course after

completing his Form 4 exams. As an example of the teachers' teaching load one male teacher teachers Math to Standards 6, 7 and 8 and teachers Science to Standard 7. Another male teacher teachers Science to Standards 5 and 7, Math to Standard 8 and Math and Religious Education to Standard 4.

I interviewed a total of four parents, one of whom is the parent/female teacher mentioned above. All four parents stated that they completed both their primary and secondary schooling in the public school system and graduated from Form 4. All four parents are employed full-time, one as a teacher in the NFS, one as a hairdresser, one as a privately hired security guard and one as a security guard with a large company.

I held four FGDs with pupils, meeting a total of 13 pupils: six from Standards 7 and 8, four from Standard 4 and three from Forms 1 and 2. Their profiles are entered in the table below. The target pupils for this study were Standards 7 and 8, which represents the final two years of the primary education cycle. Of the six pupils from these classes all had been to at least one other school and only one pupil had not repeated any classes. All the pupils who entered the secondary school at this NFS had previously been in public primary schools. It is generally expected that a pupil scoring 320 and above in their KCPE exam would gain entry into a public secondary school. The pupils joining the NFS secondary level all scored lower than this cut off mark. The Headteacher in one school insisted that I hold an FGD with his Standard 4 pupils, all of whom had been at this school all their school lives, some joining in the ECD classes, other joining in the first year of the primary cycle.

Profiles of interviewed school pupils:

Pupils Gender (M/F)	Age	Grade	Minimum Age of Pupils in this Grade	Repeated Class	No. of Previous Schools	Type of Previous Schools	KCPE score (out of 500)
M	17	8	13/14	Yes	2	NFS	
F	15	8	13/14	Yes	2	NFS & public rural	320
F	16	8	13/14	Yes	3	NFS & public rural	
M	13	8	13/14	No	1	NFS	
M	14	7	12/13	Yes	2	NFS	
F	15	7	12/13	Yes	1	Public urban	
F	10	4	9/10	?	0	Joined this NFS in Standard 1	
M	10	4	9/10	?	0	Joined this NFS in nursery	
M	12	4	9/10	?	0	Joined this NFS in baby class	
F	12	4	9/10	?	0	Joined this NFS in Standard 1	
M	17	Fm 2	15/16	Yes	?	Public primary	272
F	16	Fm 1	14/15	Yes	?	Public primary	261
M	15	Fm 1	14/15	No	?	Public primary	258

Instructional materials.

Through the Free Primary Education (FPE) initiative the government aims to provide Instructional Materials grants to public primary schools, which will enable the schools to achieve a pupil to textbook ratio of 1:2 in the upper primary classes. In the two NFS in this study the schools reported a ratio of 1:4 in the larger of the two schools and 1:3 in the second school. A survey of 383 funded NFS (MoE 2003), carried out by the MoE found that 26.7% of the funded NFS had attained a pupil to textbook ratio of 1:2 and 25% had a ratio of 1:3. One of the difficulties that NFS face in reaching a ratio of 1:2 is that there is a substantial time lag between the time at which the MoE gathers its data on enrollment

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and the time at which the IM grants are disbursed. During the time lag NFS report that they experience increases in enrollment, which undermines their achievement of the 1:2 target ratio.

During this study I was unable to establish an accurate picture of the way in which textbooks are administered. Within each school the respondents answered the question so differently that no consistent pattern emerged other than the fact that in the classroom it is usual for pupils to share one book to each desk and desks typically seat four pupils. Otherwise, pupils said that they did sometimes take books home; that they were issued with books from a central store when they requested them, and that at one time they were issued with books at the beginning of the day. They also explained how they stayed at school to complete their homework using the books and how some pupils write the homework into their exercise books and complete the work at home. Teachers and parents provided similarly varied accounts stating that pupils were issued with books to complete homework and that parents or guardians are asked to sign for the books, but also that books could not be taken home by pupils as they would be lost. Given this diversity in experiences I speculate that the method of administering textbooks varies at a class rather than a school level and that the teacher has a degree of autonomy in deciding on his or her approach.

In summary, the evidence for this study was gathered during visits to two NFS in the Mathare informal settlement, each visit lasting five days. In each school I met with the School Director and/or the Headteacher, teachers, parents and pupils. This chapter draws on the responses of one School Director, two Headteachers, four teachers, four parents

and 13 pupils (six from Standards 7 and 8, three from Form 1 and four from Standard 4) from the two schools. Additional insights were drawn from interviews with Headteachers in two other forms of NFS, one a NFS registered with the MoE as a private schools and the second a NFS fully-funded by an American NGO. The following abbreviations are used for respondents: School Director (Dir), Headteacher (HT), Teacher (T), Parent (P) and Pupil (Pup). This chapter is structured around Table 17, as presented in Chapter 5, p.189. Individual rows of this table are reproduced at the beginning of each topic for ease of reference.

MoE Officers

Row 1, from Table 17: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Agent	Action
MoE	- engages with NFS and provides access to other MoE depts - introduces informal minimum standards at visited schools - provides preliminary responses and advice on current situation in the visited schools - screens out those schools who are: - below the minimum accepted standards for NFS - not prepared to establish SMC - not prepared to be audited - charge unacceptably high fees - strengthens teaching capacity - audits use of grants

Responses from Headteachers confirm that a new relationship between the MoE and NFS has been created since the MoE extended aspects of the FPE support initiative to NFS. Headteachers refer to greater recognition of the sub-sector, as well as better understanding of their work by ministry officers since financial support has been provided to their schools. Physical visits to schools are confirmed as being the basis of

the MoE officers' knowledge and the foundation for better communication. The relationship appears to have been extended beyond the officers in the NFE Department at the national headquarters to include officers from other departments, specifically those working in the national exams council, those in the secondary schools department, officers working in the recently formed District Education Offices[7], and external partners such as publishers. Visits from the MoE, which are known to the whole community because MoE officers arrive in marked cars, as well as the receipt of grants, act as a form of legitimization of a supported NFS in the eyes of parents.

- *MoE engagement legitimizes supported NFS.*

'Initially there was quite a distinction between the non-formal and the public and so they were doing their own things and they were in their own world. But they have come to recognize this sector and maybe to recognize, it was recognized fully when they started issuing the FPE grants. That's when they even established the NFE Desk in the Ministry of Education. That's when we gained recognition and we can get communication and workshops and all that from the Ministry' (HT 2)

HT 1: No, no, we used to sit for the same, same exam but they were not being allowed in public schools. We were sitting the same, same exams but they didn't recognize.
J: *They didn't recognize the results?*
HT 1: We were told, no, no, we don't know, they can call other students from other public primary schools and when it comes to NFS, not taken. But now, they are taking.
J: *And since when is that?*
HT 1: 2008, or 2007, I think it came latest in 2008

HT 1: That relationship has affirmed, has confirmed to the parent that what we are doing the government is aware. For example, when they come, they come with their vehicles, they spend like 2 hours in school and everyone knows.
J: Everyone knows they've been?
HT 1: These are their vehicles written Ministry of Education or City Dept Education we find that people are believing in us and what we have offered, it is enough'

'First it has brought us to one family. For example, before 2003 we could see an officer from the Ministry and people could close down the school and run away. There was not that friendliest there was not that cordial relationship and now you find that was a challenge, like they used to close down sometimes schools. They come and say this is not

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[7] Previously Nairobi was divided into Divisions in a structure that differed from all other Provinces. Since late 2009 the structure operating in the rest of the country, one which is based on District units, has been established. There are many more Districts in Nairobi than there were Divisions, which means that District Education Offices are more closely situated to schools than under the Divisional structure.

fit for education, they close down. But now from the year 2003, 2004, we have been friends. They come, particularly from the City Council' (HT 1)

However, the MoE itself is a large institution and NFS in Nairobi are subject to the authority of the National Headquarters, Provincial Education Offices and the City Education Department. In addition, NFS in Nairobi are answerable to other government departments such as health and safety or trade. The ambiguous status of NFS as private businesses or community-based self-help groups gives rise to situations in which the stronger and more positive relationship with certain departments in the MoE cannot resolve other areas of conflict. For example, the NFS are frequently asked to buy business licenses and NFS providers have to go to court to challenge these demands. MoE Officers claim they are unable to step in and help resolve the conflict.

- *Inconsistency among government offices.*

HT 1: No, it's not changed. Last week they were here, they wanted permit, license.
J: *And how much do they ask for?*
HT 1: Yeah, according to the children
J: *According to the number of children?*
HT 1: You tell them the number of children they can collect and how much you ask from the parents, so I can give them 40, 50, 60,000. It's that expensive per year, you see.

'We explained why we were not happy with the system of asking us to pay for the business permit, it would turn everyone to be a business-oriented organization and people will not now give the proper services, they are intended to do. She (MoE official) told us, my friend, my hands are tied. I'm a department, I cannot be seen to be blocking revenue to be collected by another department and therefore, my hands are tied, I'll be seen to be somebody blocking that party from collecting the revenue. But we told them, if you are very sure that what these people are doing is also very beneficial to the Kenyan child, you are the person who should voice this, very loudly. That 'no, no, no, no, these people are supporting, and they really assist us, why do you insist that they have to buy the license. They are not in business. Oh, she said, no you have to do it for yourself' (Dir 1)

MoE officers from the NFE Department, the NFE Desk in the City Education Office and members of the Quality and Standards Office appear to have created a presence for themselves in the NFS and from this basis are able to offer advice and make

recommendations on how the schools can be improved. Recommendations relating to the management of the school and creating conditions that support the receipt of IM grants appear to be the priority concern.

- *Improvements in NFS management conditions and style.*

'Maybe you see like they were looking specifically on management and that was the major element, because, do you have the parents meeting, do you have this and all that. So that was the major component and the charges, what we are really charging. Maybe through that they would now gauge and see these people are organized, they can manage the funds we are giving them' (HT 2)

'So initially before they started visiting us even some centers they didn't have an office. So like we would operate come a class/come an office something like that. So they started making such recommendations and maybe we, as an organization, also started also if we've been told to put up these classes, er these offices, we have to make sure that at least our members are having offices. That is an improvement. And even the management part of it there is much improvement. At the centers, at least we are looking at better centers since then' (HT 2)

'That is maybe being consultative, we get that there are some ideas that we may lack in the management but when you do consultative the representatives sit and look into the issue you get them arriving maybe at a solution or a conclusion is easier. And maybe new ideas come in, new ideas also come in because they are really determined to make the school look better, recently, like in the case of admission they were being told 'yes, let us not admit one who is like this and all that, we want the quality to be realized in the school', so it's so good and maybe they would have …' (HT 2)

Standards around management appear to be more readily or more easily adopted than recommendations on infrastructure, sanitation or physical learning conditions such as the number of children in a classroom. There is a strong suggestion that recommendations to improve the physical conditions of the schools are not effective because the reality of the environment is too serious a constraint. Meeting minimum standards of sanitation is one of the most difficult areas for NFS. There are reports of some schools being closed down by the MoE because acceptable conditions were not in place. However, based on reports from pupils in a supported NFS, it would appear that the standards enforced by the MoE

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are extremely low – a priority for pupils aged 10 is still for the school to have more toilets.

- *Health, safety, santitation and physical infrastructure resistant to improvements.*

'The Health Dept or even the MoE when they come they advise on the number of toilets and the health condition but what happens now, because of the limitation of the place, you see you've already got into a structure that is having maybe 10 rooms and you are utilizing maybe a few toilets here, so even if you told maybe add the 10 toilets, there is no room to increase this number of toilets because of that. But we were maybe to be in a big space, in land of our own, then such recommendation we would maybe have implemented. They do recommend, that's why I was saying they do recommend 20 per 1, but it's not realistic depending on where we are' (HT 2)

P2: They do close down the school.
J: Have you heard of a school being closed.
P2: I've heard
J: That some are closed
P2: Yeah, because they don't have toilets.

J: So what are you hoping for? What do you want in the next few years? Now you are in Class 4, what do you think about for the future?
Pup7: I think that we should have a toilet and sometimes we take a balanced diet and some more books.

J: What do you think would be a balanced diet?
Pup7: A balanced diet, for example, on Monday we can have some carbohydrates and some vitamins so that we can also be protected from diseases.

J: OK, ok and what about Pup8, what to do you think about the future?
Pup8: I think we should have more classrooms, a toilet and washrooms because people sometimes wash their hands with dirty water and they get diseases, they get infected.
J: What do you have here, do you have a pit. A pit latrine somewhere?
Pup7: Down there.
J: How many are there?
All: One. Just one.
(Note: *This may mean one toilet for their Class as the MoE database records this school as having 12 pit latrines shared between pupils and teachers. The MoE database also holds a note that this school needs more toilets for the number of pupils, which is over 800)*

MoE officers expect, through the government support, to be able to strengthen the capacity of the teachers in NFS. Two factors undermine the idea that engagement with the MoE can improve the capacity of teachers in the NFS. One is that large numbers of teachers in the NFS are untrained and the second is that the MoE itself acknowledges that

it has not had the funding nor capacity to roll out training to the NFS teachers. In this study, all the teachers interviewed were untrained and one MoE official estimates that 50% of teachers in the NFS are untrained (2 M Int). However, respondents confirm that the MoE do invite NFS to training seminars, both those facilitated by the MoE and those offered by other partners. It is noted, however, that a fee was being levied by the MoE for NFS teachers to attend one upcoming seminar and the Headteacher felt that the fee was prohibitive. In addition, one teacher suggests that she made the effort to learn how to draw up schemes of work and lesson plans from other colleagues when she knew that the MoE officers were coming to monitor teachers in her school. This suggests that there has been some transfer of capacity to untrained teachers, albeit in an unsystematic and rather opportunistic way. The findings suggest that there is scope for the improvement of teaching skills if the MoE were able to mount a sufficiently large training program.

- *Potential to improve capacity of untrained teachers.*

'We do have their Quality Assurance Standards Officers to come to our centers and visit our centers, at least once a term. And then they also do some seminars like this one – they are offering for Mathematics and Science teachers. This one will be 20th June' (HT 2)

'First the support, the FPE there was also an induction course we were given but to another extent they've organized such action for teachers, teachers in English, Kiswahili and all that at least to improve on their performance' (HT 2)

T4: They check if the FPE money has done something, they look at the books.

J: Do they visit the classrooms?
T4: At times. There was a week when they came but they got into St 8.
J: And then they sat in class for a while?
T4: They stand there, they check whether the teacher is equipped and teaching, then they talk to the Headteacher and they have to go.

'When I came we had some teachers who had trained, so I heard the Ministry of Education people were coming, so I had to go through it (*scheming and lesson planning*). But now I've been taught how to do it. Now it is simple, we can do it' (T4, now undergoing ECD teacher training)

In conclusion, MoE officers have established a working relationship with NFS and have a continued presence in the schools, within the limits of their resources. Staff in the NFS have responded as far as their working conditions will allow. This relationship appears to be of a cordial and productive nature and goes beyond a relationship of inspection and regulation. However, the closer relationship with the NFE Department of the MoE does not shield NFS from the conflicts that arise with other government departments over their private or community-based status, seen as an issue of whether they are in business or providing a service to the community. It also appears that the reality of the conditions that prevail in the informal settlements are too overwhelming for the MoE to consistently and substantially raise the physical, health, safety and sanitation conditions in the NFS.

School management committees

Row 2, from Table 17: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Agent	Action
SMCs in the supported NFS	▪ includes parent representatives and meets regularly ▪ improve management of school through parental involvement ▪ represent parents' interests on issues of finance ▪ hold school management to account for procurement ▪ are engaged with the running of the school enough to affect issues of access, retention, quality and fee levels

According to reports from Headteachers and SMC parent representatives, there is an effective consultation process between the school and the parent body. NFS appear to be able to mobilize their communities to provide one elected parent representative per class and to hold regular meetings, at least once per term. School minutes confirmed that such meetings had been held. Parents report being involved in problem solving, even to the extent of monitoring the behavior of teachers.

▪ *Greater parental involvement through the School Management Committee.*

'Because when there is any problem, they call us parents and we sit down and we discuss together. It is quite easier. Because we are fewer in number, parents, so it is easy to reach us' (P2)

'Here we have a voice. Even if a teacher misbehaves we are called upon, we sit down, we try to talk to him or her first. If he or she doesn't change we don't have any alternative, we have to send him or her away for the sake of the pupils' (P2)

'During the closing time, the opening of the school, during even the salary. We had a policy that they could not give the report forms to the kids so we come and collect. And that time, he can exchange, he can come and talk to the management of school. Even during the, anytime, he can come because Mr X (Headteacher) is here always and if he is not around, his wife is around or there is a Deputy Headteacher. So we have a lot of people which we need, who will help here. So parents normally come any time' (P1)

A number of challenges in establishing effective parent representation on the SMC are noted by the Headteachers. These include: the difficulty of getting men to attend meetings; apprehension amongst parents about taking on the role, which leads to some members remaining on the SMC for more than the recommended one year; repeated induction or training of new SMC members; negativity of some parents, and general lack of knowledge about quality education and running a school.

- *Challenges experienced around parental engagement.*

'For me I can say it's a challenge. It's a challenge as I said earlier on, most of them when it comes to say parents meeting you'll find that you have only women who come for that meeting. Men are not around. They have gone to look for that casual job. Most of the time whenever we have parents meeting the presence is women. So it has been a challenge and you find at times, a school to get representatives from parents is also a challenge to us in understanding maybe the affairs of the school. But what we try our level best, we try to come in and to help them to understand, for example if it is SMC we come and teach them their roles in a low way, but generally it has been a challenge for us' (HT 1)

'Every year, yes. Sometimes they say, let her continue, let him continue or only maybe have changes in Class 8. We have changes in Class 8, but we find most of the time they say, let her continue, she has done well. Others they fear, others are not confident' (HT 1).

P2: Yes, it depends on the other parents. When you come at the end of May to elect a new one, if they re-elect you, you still stay.
J: So when you join one of these committees or whatever do they give you some kind of training or you learn from your fellow parents. How do you know what you've got to do?

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P2: The one who was there initially is willing to show you around. This, this and this and that.
J: So they kind of handover?
P2: Yes, yeah.
J: To the next one. And then, how often do you come for meetings do you think?
P2: Often, let me say once a term for parents, but for us representatives and whatever, we are here even weekly. On a weekly basis.

Despite these challenges pupils confirm that they have class mates whose parents are on the SMC and who tell them when significant events are happening, such as the receipt of a grant; teachers confirm that parent representatives visit the classrooms and provide feedback on that experience; parents confirm their involvement in solving problems and Headteachers assert the value of community involvement in decision-making.

- *All parties confirm parental involvement.*

'But last year we had a class representative, he was one of the parents of a class mate' (Pup4)

'When the money is spent we, as the committee of the school, the parents from the various classes, we have to know, we have to come in during the spending. We have to come in, if it is during the giving out of the exercise books we have to count the exercise and we have to see the money from the government which came, how many books have been bought, just be satisfied that all the money has been spent. And we have to make sure that they have been given to all children and they are no longer there and there are none left. So when the spending is being done we have to be part and parcel to make sure that the money has been spent well. It is all of us, it is not only Mr X (Headteacher) who can sign, the class representatives must be there' (P1)

T4: In fact, there was a day when the Headteacher called a parents meeting and they had to choose.
J: And how do you get on with that parent?
T4: He normally comes, he checks the class, if there is a problem he normally tells me and I have to go about it.
J: What kind of problem would he get involved in.
T4: You know these are very young children, at times they are going home, they do play on the way. Sometimes they lose their books without even informing you. So you'll only see the parent coming, yeah.

J: So you think the management style is a bit more consultative, that's what the Ministry advocates. Consultative between the HT and the teachers?
HT 2: Yes, and the parents. Because it has to be owned by the community. You see like, even the covering of the books, you advise, you put up a policy on the management of the books and the covering and all that and parents also have to buy that idea, they had to make sure that their books are covered because it's coming to them.

J: They did it themselves?
HT 2: Yes, they did, they contributed some funds, we bought the papers and it was like that'

The problems that the SMC is able to address relate largely to child welfare issues such as, how to deal with children whose parents who are unable to pay fees, how to handle the selection of new enrollees, and problems with children who stop attending school. In addition respondents refer to raising concerns and dealing with issues of poor teaching and with being active witnesses to the spending of government funds.

- *Parents engage on child welfare issues and witness use of government grants.*

'For sure, they (*parents representatives*) walk around, for example we get the numbers, for example why are Class 3 not 70, they are now 50, where are the 20. They get contacts, they'll meet at the grassroots parent to parent rather than a teacher going to a household. You see a parent will be able to make the contacts, will be able to meet her (so this is when they move from class to class, so if you have 70 in class 2 and then only 50 turn up for class 3 you go looking for the other 20). Now where are they, we must know where they, are they transfers, OK, what is the reason why they are transferring is it because they are not performing well, is it because, what is it? So we also learn from that, but basically from the same, same parents' (HT 1)

'It is hard but when the school wants to increase the fees, we have to be called first, the committee now, the class representatives, we sit down with Mr X (Headteacher) and he places that agenda that he, due to some circumstances, we have to increase some fees. So, he has to say his figure, what he wants to increase. We have to talk it as class representatives and we have to agree that in the school the fees will be increased. From there we call all the parents and the matter is put forward from Mr X and we, as the classroom representatives, we have to support it. We are the parents so we have to talk with our friends, with our parents because they are the ones who chose us. So, we have to tell them we have to convince them, to come up with an agreement that we add a certain amount to the fees. It is not the owner who just adds' (P1)

J: So do you get involved in the problems?
P3: Problems just like school fees, parents can't pay earlier.

'Like the time we were given these funds of FPE we are called upon, there was a meeting. Then we were told we had received around a half a million, or let me say half a million, not around. So we were told the teachers were going to sit down, discuss on what books to buy, then after that the books were bought. We were called to make sure they were in good condition and then a meeting was called and we were told we come and sign for the books for our kids. We were given exercise books, some rubbers, pencils but we thought going home with these textbooks, we saw some parents were careless so we decided as parents only textbooks (*meant exercise books*) were going to be issued but

these other textbooks they were going to be issued on Fridays. But during the weekdays if a kid had homework he or she will be allowed to go with the textbooks. Because our kids are careless and this is a non-formal school. Today we have a parent, tomorrow he is not there. So we won't know where to find them, they keep on moving. So that is what we decided. But we were given some books, rubber, pencil – that was the first allocation. And then even the second allocation we were called, we were told it was now lesser, the amount was lesser compared to the first one. Then again we were called, we were given some books, pencils. You can see all our books here' (P2)

One critical question is whether the SMC in an NFS can truly represent the best interests of the community with regard to fee levels. Evidence from this study supports the idea that SMC members are involved in discussions around fee levels and situations in which parents are unable to meet the fees. It is clear that the issue of fees is a constant element in the dialogue between the NFS Headteacher and the SMC: members may try to avoid meetings for fear that 'fees' are an item on the agenda, parent representatives may put the question of why schooling in the NFS is not free on the meeting agenda, and parent representatives may be involved in discussions when changes demand a fee increase. It appears, however, that unless an increase in fees is directly related to an additional benefit, such as a feeding program, the more practical constraint of the actual capacity of a typical family living in the informal settlement to pay an increased fee level is the factor that marks a cap on the fee level an NFS can set. Headteachers in the NFS are acutely aware of the ability of the parents to pay and maintain a fine balance between both fee levels and the ratio of full, partial and non-payers.

- *Continued discussion over fees.*

'For example, the agenda comes from both sides. The school has agenda, and parents also has agenda, obvious, for the parents they'll want the school fees to be free. One of their agenda, the schools they can say, government schools are free why not us? Yes, so there was an agenda, we also spoke together and we discussed, so they also have agenda, they can say now we also want to have land for our school *(land?)* Yeah, school land, we want to have a school bus, we want to have this, so our children are asking us at home when are we going to have all this. So they also have agendas and we allow every agenda to come from all, from both sides' (HT 1)

HT 1: For example, we meet once a term, a time like when we are closing schools, we meet. That's the only time, maybe you say we are closing today, that's the only time you can get them when they are coming for report forms. Yes, because if there's nothing, they say ahh, we know he wants to add school fees, he wants quorum to add school fees, so they are not going (*laughter*). So you wait until you have report form and you say we are closing on Friday tell all your parents to come for report forms, if they don't come that is it, we won't issue them. So on that notice they come up in big numbers, so you keep the report forms until you have a meeting with them. So you say then, class 8, give me somebody, class 7, give me somebody, class 6 give me somebody to work with for the year.

- *Ability to pay as a firm constraint on fee levels.*

J: If you have to raise fees, how does that work, do parents, I mean obviously no parents wants to pay more fees.
HT 1: Like we used to ask them to pay 200 shillings a month and we wanted to go from two hundred shillings to three hundred and fifty shillings so what we did is we told them, now we have feeding program, this hundred shillings, this 150 is going to cater for that cook, for that firewood, for that water and so on and the rent, for the store. Before the feeding program, the Feed the Children is not going to come and pay for us rent. So they said, sure, so when they calculated and found that 150 divided by 30 days, how much is that per day.
J: So the children don't have to pay on a daily basis, in some schools like they pay 15 or 20 bob a day?
HT 1: Now that is a challenge because when you say daily no one is going to get money, because we understand their status. We put it in the fees, the monthly fee, so you make sure that by the end of the month you clear this one. Yeah, this 350.

'If you charge more they will still not pay because of (*laughter*) where they are coming from, there are many things dictating the limits and all that. These parents are poor, the community that is coming here is so poor so like you get, some are just going to, there's Eastleigh just here, where we have the Arabs and all that. So some just go there everyday to do the washing and after doing the day's washing they are getting, they are being paid' (HT 2)

Within the relationship between the MoE and the NFS the Headteacher plays a central and leadership role, effectively translating and implementing the MoE requirements at school level. Although not addressed explicity, the MoE requirements that NFS establish SMCs and adopt the same financial management and procurement procedures as public schools, implies an expectation that Headteachers will be in a relationship with the MoE similar to that of Headteachers who are employed by the Teacher Services Commission.

Whether a Headteacher is willing and capable of responding does not appear to be founded on any common characteristic among NFS Headteachers, MoE guideline or official criteria for the management of the school. Headteachers in NFS are paid, according to one School Director, half that of a public school teacher and Headteachers in this study were both trained P1 teachers. There is evidence of direct benefits to a Headteacher of becoming a supported NFS, specifically that enrollment increases substantially, parents are more content and that the same fees can be stretched further to cover both the Headteacher's salary and the more regular payment of teachers, all of which makes the task of running the school easier. There appears, therefore, to be both high expectations of NFS Headteachers by the MoE, but also grounds for strong motivation among Headteachers to respond positively to the MoE requirements, even though they are not MoE employees.

▪ *Increasing enrollment and improved academic performance as motivation for Headteachers and teachers to respond.*

HT 1: The reason being for Mr X, the one talking, to pay rent depends on the number of children he has in his school
J: To pay rent for the school?
HT 1: Even my rent
J: You mean your rent at home?
HT 1: Yes, who is paying me? For me to eat so that parent will bring that 100 shillings so I can budget and I can remain with something little
J: So you get a salary?
HT 1: Salary, salary, we pay ourselves in form of salary
J: So do the parents know how much you get? They know your salary?
HT 1: Yes, they know, I also sign, it's a salary.
J: So if there is something extra, do the parents know and do they decide how it's spent? Any surplus over and above the running costs, they decide?
HT 1: Yes, the SMC they decide. Now, from that perspective a teacher in a NFS is going to put in more effort, is going to spend an extra time to make sure this child performs well to retain that child next year or to retain other children in lower classes.
J: So that they keep getting the salary?
HT 1: Yes, because for example if I have 20 children, next year I have 10, it means I'm going to reduce the number of staff, because they are paid through the amount we get. So, what we do with the teachers is we sit down in a meeting and we say what are we going to do now, strategy number one, let us improve, work hard, make sure that the weaker child performs well. That is it. The last child, has very good marks, that is it. So,

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> comparing to a teacher who is in a public school, his pay slip, whether he has come or not is guaranteed, but with us, it is not guaranteed.

In conclusion, it appears that an SMC with parent representatives can be a functioning and effective feature of NFS, despite the generally lower levels of formal education or exposure to schooling issues among parents in the informal settlements. The motivating factor behind this mechanism appears to be the mutual dependence between the NFS and the parents: the NFS need a certain number of parents to pay a minimum fee level on a regular basis in order for the school to function and for them to have a source of employment and the parents want their children to have access to what they perceive to be higher quality academic education for their children. In a similar fashion, the relationship between the Headteacher and the MoE is also finely balanced with the MoE needing the NFS to meet certain minimum requirements in order for them to be able to legitimately disburse funds and the Headteacher needing to deliver certain standards and features in order to access the grants that will strengthen the financial stability of the school.

Teachers

Row 3, Table 17: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Agent	Action

Teachers in the supported NFS	▪ use the books to:
	   - draw up schemes of work
	   - plan lessons
	   - fill in gaps in their knowledge
	   - are committed and motivated

The four teachers interviewed in this study had all been educated in public schools up to the end of secondary school level, ie. had completed their Form 4. In all cases, the people

concerned would have been eligible to be trained as teachers. As one teacher explained, she would have like to have trained as a teacher, but was not offered a place at college. Several of them had gone on to further training after Form 4, such as secretarial, computer and accounting courses. Several of the teachers interviewed had been untrained teachers in public schools until the introduction of the FPE intiative in public schools in 2003. From that date public schools were no longer allowed to hire additional, untrained, teachers funded through parental contributions. These teachers report having earned approximately 4,000 Ksh per month as untrained teachers in the public schools and now earn between 3,000 – 4,000 Ksh per month in an NFS.

Despite this low wage, and the fact that salaries are not paid every month, the teachers interviewed show great dedication to their role as teachers. On the whole they put in long hours, are concerned with the academic progression of their students, and tolerate financial delays in their payments.

- *Teacher dedication and commitment despite low wages and unreliable salary payments.*

'You get someone who is dedicated, I'm telling the truth, you get someone who is ready to work. He is here at 6, if I tell him, or I tell her, to be here at 6.30, he is here. If I want schemes of work by now, she brings or he brings, they are ready, they are on your desk' (HT 1)

'I hope for the best, being I do stay around, I do come very early in the morning for the classes. They come to school at 6 am, they have arrived. By that time it means that I make sure I find myself in class by that time. So I stay with them and they see the seriousness I have for them, so they also have to work hard. Because I have a better plan for them. They stay up to 6, (*these are which class?*). These are Class 8s, up to 6pm' (T2)

J: So what do you do as a teacher, you still have to eat, you still have to live, what happens when you don't get paid? How do you feel?
T1: Well, you know, you feel degraded but at the time you say, you are working for God. You are working for God and God will not leave you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. So you persevere and then thereafter when they have, they give.

J: Are you ever tempted to go and do some other work?

T1: (*laughter*) No, because, you will be abandoning the children. You know, we, as the staff that are here, we are volunteers, we have given out ourselves to support the children. And the major issue here is not the money, the major issue is the child, to eradicate tomorrow's thugs from our community. Now, if you abandon these children because you are going to look for another white collar job somewhere, right now, at this point, you will be – it will be adding the society more thieves, more thugs and these thieves and these thugs they will steal even the little we have, isn't it. So we look at this prospect and say, no, let us be patient and let us call the parents meeting, the community, let us see how we can clear this debt from our teachers so that they don't go'

Teachers describe how they used past exam papers and the syllabus to plan their teaching before the textbooks were available in school. They report the ways in which the books have helped them in their teaching as: being able to build their own subject knowledge; covering the whole syllabus; writing less on the chalkboard; being able to set homework and allowing children to read independently. Classroom observations and checking pupil books confirmed that work is being set and marked on a regular basis. Classroom observations confirmed that teachers are able to use a mixture of writing on the board and questioning from the books.

- *Textbooks used to improve teacher knowledge, cover the curriculum, prepare schemes of work, plan lessons, set independent pupil assignments/homework.*

'Yes, the books came and found me there. Now, let's talk about the time I went there without books. It was a very rough time. Sometimes we used to teach using past papers, we didn't have these IM so you just go and buy exam papers so you start scheming and lesson planning using exam papers. You don't have the syllabus, don't have whatever so until the time we acquired the syllabus then we started using the exam papers and the syllabus to scheme and lesson plan. It was very, very difficult until the time the government chipped in, they saw a reason why they should sponsor even the non-formal sector. And we do appreciate for their assistance as it does really improve the academic standard of the non-formal sector' (T1)

'Yes, because all along I found when they were just using the books that they bought, if you want to do any assignment or if in any case you want to allocate the assignment you just have to go and write on the board. But since the government brought the books we are doing very easily, I only take the textbook, I tell, would you work out this, would you work this exercise then I will mark them tomorrow' (T3)

'Now from then, from now it is now enlightening our works. And also when you talk about the performance, we saw it is also increasing or is now uplifted. It has lifted the performance, because I was teaching Science in Class 8 last year and we saw the product

of the books. Because they were using the varieties, for example, like Mathematics and Science lessons you cannot go with one particular book, you go with a variety. Because we have different authors with different intentions, people are doing different research that is now, from that we saw that when we were using varieties of books you get different ideas then you frame them, then they become one point' (T3)

There is evidence to suggest elements of 'on-the-job' training, either in the form of a probationary period during which the Headteacher provides a basic induction or the more general sharing of knowledge between more and less experienced teachers.

- *Books helping trained staff to prepare untrained teachers to teach.*

HT 1: But for me, the books have really helped untrained teachers because the teaching guides are there and once this untrained teacher comes and finds somebody like me he is trained, it is a matter to prepare the schemes of work and the lesson plans and how to manage time, that is it.
J: So you've been teaching them lesson planning and schemes of work and management of time even before the books or you've been doing that since the books?
HT 1: Even before the books because there is what we call probation, one month, he is not a teacher yet. We say you are coming here, you are untrained so we are going teach you on how to teach first, for one full month. Teach you how to prepare the schemes of work, teach you on how to prepare the lessons plans, lesson notes and then from there we'll take you to class and listen to your ability, how you can talk and that is it. And from there we can gauge somebody, if he is a teacher or not.

Several respondents, including pupils, reflect on the fact that the teachers in NFS are closely supervised by the Headteacher, or 'followed' by both the Headteacher and parent representatives.

- *Headteachers as an ever-present superintendent.*

Pup1: Just something to add on that, here you know teachers they are being followed so they have to do their work so they cannot be asked. Because if they don't do it they'll be asked so many questions. But in City Council schools they will just be seated there, they can sit for even a month and when the month ends they go for their monthly salary. So, here, the teachers are being followed and we really get something.
J: Who follows them? The Headteacher or your parents and guardians?
Pup1 and 2: The community. The school community.

Teachers express their hope that the pupils they are teaching will surpass the level the teachers themselves have reached.

- *Teachers aiming to help pupils achieve academic or professional levels higher than their own.*

'What I always like, is whoever you teach in class, to maybe he or she has to pursue something, then it should be higher than what you have done. So that is what I like mostly maybe like a, being a doctor or an engineer or a pilot, I think that is better' (T2)

However, teachers reflect on how much they hope the government will start paying them in recognition of the work they are doing.

- *NFS teachers seeking government salary support.*

'Well, I, as a teacher, I need much more, much more expectation. From the government, now some of us are not trained in this institution. But we are delivering, why can't the ministry allocate some of the payments now the salaries, even if means a half of what the government teacher is getting. Why can't the MoE at least think about a non-formal teacher, yeah, this person who is teaching and he is delivering. He is not trained but he is delivering. When you'll come, they are sitting for the same exam, public pupils and private pupils are sitting for the exam. And private pupils are even performing much better, so why can't the Ministry allocate some funds to at least motivate these teachers' (T1)

Many of the teachers in the NFS are untrained. It was revealing to discover that several of them were untrained teachers in public schools before the introduction of FPE as this demonstrates one source of the supply of untrained, but experienced, teachers into the growing NFS sub-sector.While the teachers in the NFS express high levels of commitment to teaching and equally high levels of tolerance for the poor working conditions, it is also clear that jobs are scarce. It is no longer possible for an untrained teacher to find employment in a public school and the demand for the other skills that these untrained teachers have acquired over time, such as secretarial, computing or accounting skills, are also not in high enough demand to provide them with alternative employment. It is also suggested that the levels of supervision on the part of the

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Headteachers in NFS, who are answerable to paying parents and dependent on parental payments, are higher than those in public schools and that NFS do not offer any scope for slacking among teachers.

Parents

Row 4, Table 17: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Agent	Action
Parents in the supported NFS	▪ play an active role in the SMC ▪ act as a watchdog over school managers ▪ appreciate the government support and textbooks enough to keep sending their children to school ▪ value the improved exam access and performance and the potential for transition to secondary school

During this study I interviewed four parent representatives. All reported having completed primary and secondary education and of having completed Form 4. The occupations of these parents were hairdresser, security guard employed by a company, watchman employed by an individual household and a teacher in the NFS. These representatives appear to represent the more educated members of the parent body and it is likely that the parent body as a whole is less well equipped to engage in school and education matters than these representatives.

This is an important distinction to make because, while the general picture of the inhabitants of informal settlements is one of them being a less well educated group in society and often being unemployed or casually employed, it is also true that among this group are representatives with higher levels of formal education and more regular forms of employment. These parent representatives appear both willing to, and capable of, playing an effective liaison role between the school and the wider parent body and also

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appear able to challenge the school management on some of the softer issues on behalf of the community.

- *Parents who have graduated from secondary level education, Form 4, act as parent representatives on school issues.*

'We complain, we complain before we do anything, that's why we are representatives from the class. We have to complain to the management of the school, the owner of the school and to tell him – you know the parents complain to us, you know they can't come here directly because they chose me as a representative of the class and from there, we can meet – all the representatives from class 1 up to class 8 and we can come to the school to complain on behalf of other parents. So if we have seen any weakness we complain and the owner of the school he has to prepare with what we have said. If there is a teacher who is not teaching well, he is lazy or she is lazy we complain and the owner of the school can do something to make the parents to be happy' (P1)

'At least, if these things are just left on the teachers alone they can mess around. But if we have that SMC I think we keep them on their toes. Yeah' (P2)

On the whole parents are portrayed as wanting good quality formal education for their children, which is reflected in good performance in the KCPE exams and acceptance into a secondary school.

- *Parents eager for high academic performance, indicated through KCPE exam performance.*

'Because parents nowadays are going for quality, parents nowadays are going for quality. Now in non-formal sector because the supervisor is close to the teachers (the supervisor is the HT?) Yes, yeah. He is the HT and they have other people, those people who came up with the vision of that school, they are just there, the Director is there, the person who came out with the vision to start that project is just near there. So you find that the teachers work with a lot of dedication, then they deliver. Now, if you have IMs, you have every resource and the supervisor is close there is no sluggishness, the performance definitely goes up and that is why many pupils are running from the public schools and coming to the non-formal sector. Simply because there is free primary education there, there is IMs there, at the same time there is quality education there. So there's no sluggishness in non-formal sector' (T1)

J: So you want them to go to a government secondary?
P1: Yes, after scoring good marks from class 8 in KCPE to join a good school, which in future my son will be able to stay somewhere else, not here in Mathare. That's my aim. And that's why I'm working hard to make sure he is here where he is being managed rather than in public schools.

However, parents who were interviewed were also critical of those parents who did not value education and who were therefore 'ignorant'. Parent representatives portray themselves and their fellow parents who strive to pay for NFS as enlightened, as valuing education and being able to determine good quality from poor quality schooling. They perceive those who send their children to public schools as 'ignorant' as well as those who do not send their children to school at all.

> ▪ *Parents with children in NFS identify parents who do not send their children to school as 'ignorant' of the value of education.*
>
> P4/T: What I know is if, some people are also ignorant. In some cases they say, you know me, when I was young, I was studying in a government so my child will also school in the government school' (P4/T)
> *J: So they don't look at performance?*
> P4/T: Yeah, they are ignorant
>
> 'There are some with money but because of the ignorance they just leave their children at the public schools. They have money but they don't want to pay. There are some that cannot afford to pay, they are at public schools. But mostly it is because of ignorance you can get somebody with my age, like this one, he just has his kids here at the public school, he doesn't care. Whatever the results he's not caring. So, let us say, he can afford but because of the ignorance he just doesn't care' (P1)
>
> 'Yes, I can say that levels, also in Mathare there are levels. There are levels where we find among the poorest there are also the rich. Those who are poor and another one is because of ignorance. They don't want to take their children to school. If you go there and tell them I want to sponsor a child they say, no I'm not poor, leave alone the child. And that is ignorance, so it depends' (HT 1)

Parent representatives in the NFS are capable and willing to play an important role in monitoring the running of the school to the best of their ability and are also aware of the responsibilities they bear on behalf of the community. They appear to be a group of people who can effectively liaise between the school management and the broader community.

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Pupils

Row 5, Table 17: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Agent	Action
Pupils in the supported NFS	▪ use books to read independently, practice exercises and revise ▪ get more support from parents to attend school ▪ get more support from parents to complete primary education ▪ are able to perform better in exams ▪ are able to transition to secondary school

Pupils who are surviving in the NFS are ambitious, determined and hard-working. Whether at Standard 4, Standard 8 or in Form 1, these students have clear academic and professional goals. In primary schools the pupils are aiming to score '400 and above' and then progress to secondary school and beyond. In secondary school the pupils are aiming to attain an A grade and continue studying. The KCPE exam comprises 5 subjects (Math, Science, Social Studies, Kiswahili and English) and is marked out of 500. A score of '400 and above', therefore represents an average performance of 80% on each subject. 250 marks out of 500 is generally held as a minimum 'pass' score and pupils typically expect to be called for a place in a government secondary school if they score around 320 marks and above.

▪ *Ambitious pupils who are determined to succeed.*

Pup1: Why I'm still in school, I want to achieve my goal. So, if I want to achieve my goal I must be here so I can achieve it in the future.

J: A*nd where does that come from, where does the determination come from?*
Pup1: The determination comes from working hard
J: *Yes, but is it your parents who tell you, have given you that determination or is it just you*?
Pup4: No, I am an orphan, I stay with my brother and he is my guardian, but really it comes from me, me myself. Because I have brothers, some of them have not learned. I have the opportunity to learn so why don't I make good use of it, so that's where it comes and I challenge myself. This is my brother, he did not finish this one, so let me show them that I can really do it. So that's where the determination comes from

Pup2: For me I see dropping out of school will bring me much problem in my life, like when I drop out school I'm going to get married, it will be very worse. The man, after he

makes you pregnant he just leaves you then your life will just be like that *(spreads hands)*. But I see when I'm still in a teacher's place I will learn hard even if I face some of the problems but I know that in my future life I will succeed.
J: And that determination, does it come from inside you or from someone else?
Pup2: It comes from inside me because I am an orphan and I just see that the only person I'm left with is my sister and she is really working hard and you see, if I won't work hard then one day I'll just be lying around the streets.

'I'll like to achieve my goals, I don't want to be a shameful person, I don't want to be an idler. I would like to be my own, someone who is expecting himself to do something. I won't rely to anyone' (Pup4)

'I come to school to achieve more because they used to say that 'education is the key to our life', now we have to learn to achieve more so you can get to live better life' (Pup3)

The pupils, both boys and girls, have high ambitions of white collar jobs such as being a lawyer, judge, journalist, doctor, chef, pilot and engineer. They see school qualifications as the route to achieving these goals and are reliant on good exam scores to gain access to higher forms of education.

- *Pupils aiming for high primary exam performance, secondary school, university and professional occupations.*

Pup2: I hope to become a journalist in future or just a lawyer, that's my hope.
J: So what do you have to do to do that? You'll finish your KCPE and then?
Pup2: First after finishing my KCPE I just hope to get maximum 400 and above so I can go to a very good school, which I'll work very hard for my achievement. After that, when I achieve my goal, I will go for further studies like university so that I can at least become what I wanted to be.
J: So what's the score that you're aiming for in KCPE?)
Pup2: OK, 400 and above
J: OK and when you were in 8 before, what were you getting, roughly?
Pup2: OK I could get 350s, 320s

' My hopes are a bit, yeah my hope for me in the future, I would like to be a chef. So, for me, to achieve it, I need to work hard. After finishing my KCPE I'll join Form 1. I would like to work harder, more than I did in primary so that I can go to a college. After doing my college I think I can do now, I will get more education on what I want to be. So I just need to work more hard so I can achieve what I want to do' (Pup1)

Pupils appreciate that going to school is not a foregone conclusion and are aware of the expectations of their parents and the support other adults provide in keeping them at school.

- *Pupils aware that going to school is an opportunity not to be squandered.*

'Dropping out of school is not good because that opportunity of learning will make me learn so I achieve more so I can help my mother because she is a single parent. Because there are some children, they are crying for that opportunity to come to school. I have to learn and I have to achieve for my parent' (Pup4)

'It is just that Mr X (Headteacher) has been standing with us for the schools fees, what, everything, I say that it is good because some students do not find this opportunity to have this education. So I find it good rather than playing outside becoming street children, so I say that it is good that Mr X is a kind man and generous' (Pup3)

It is normal for these children to have been to several schools, sometimes moving back and forth between rural and urban centers. It is also normal for them to have repeated at least one class and there are a number of children who have repeated Standard 8, the year that should be the final examination year of primary cycle. They are desperate to pass their KCPE well.

- *Pupils experience high rates of movement between schools and repetition of classes.*

'Ok, I've been in this school for about 8 years, since I joined in Standard 2, I've learned up to Standard 7 when my parents passed away. We went to the rural schools, I was taken to a public school where I learned Standard 7, I completed. Then Mr X, the owner of this school, told us to come and join his school because we had problems there in rural areas. So I did Class 8 last year but I didn't do a bit well so I decided to repeat so at least I can do better' (Pup2)

'I've been here for 8 years, before I was taken to rural then I came here. I started in Class 1 then to 8. Before I completed 8 I decided to repeat back to 7' (Pup4)

It is likely that the pupils I interviewed were drawn from amongst the highest achievers, likely to score 300 and above in the KCPE exam, and the more communicative members of their classes as NFS are very performance focused and Headteachers are eager to demonstrate their achievements. In one school the Headteacher insisted that I meet with Standard 4 pupils even though my interest was in the older group. He identified with these pupils as representatives of his achievements as they were all in the baby class

when he became the Headteacher. The primary school pupils I met were extremely focused on their academic goals and were committing long hours on a daily and weekly basis to prepare themselves for the KCPE examinations. They talked of other pupils, friends and siblings, who had not managed to progress through the primary school cycle with the same level of success. I believe, therefore, that the primary school pupils I interviewed represent a particularly resilient group and that while they do represent those who survive in the NFS, may not represent well those who are still excluded from primary education.

Conclusion

My review of the findings from the perspective of roles and responsibilities has confirmed that: officers from some departments of the MoE have established an effective relationshiop with the NFS, through which the standards of school management and some aspects of teaching have been improved; Headteachers are motivated to play a central and leading role in translating the MoE requirements into an operational SMC with elected parent representation; parent representatives are able to interact with school managers and represent the interests of the parent body in regular school meetings and that pupils are eager to learn and likely to extract the maximum educational benefit from any additional resources brought to the school.

I have reservations around the extent to which MoE involvement with NFS can impact positively on the very real constraints on physical school standards that are dictated by the host environment. The motivation of Headteachers is closely linked to the number of pupils who are enrolled and performance in the KCPE examinations. A concentration on

these elements of schooling could have a negative impact if no other counter-balancing factor keeps them in check: overenrollment results in poor teacher:pupil ratios and overcrowding in classrooms and an intensive focus on academic achievement may exclude less academically-successful students and increase rates of repetition. Parents are able to engage on issues relating to children's welfare and some school management issues such as the behavior of teachers. There is no evidence to suggest, however, that parents can, or even expect to be able to, exert sufficient pressure over the Headteacher to reduce fees or demand that school fees be used to pay for trained teachers. Pupils are motivated and hardworking, but face stiff competition if they are to secure a place in secondary school and may still be denied access because of a lack of school fees.

Some issues of concern arose during the analysis of the study findings, specifically: an apparent increase in class size; high levels of academic pressure; high tolerance for class repetition, especially in the senior classes, and the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline. MoE officers did not mention any of these negative features of NFS during interviews and may not be aware of these conditions. The design of the study meant that MoE officers were interviewed before these data were noted at school level.

Chapter 7: Educational Access, Survival, Outputs and Outcomes

In this chapter I describe and discuss the evidence gained during visits to two NFS in the Mathare informal settlement. In each school I met with the School Director and/or the Headteacher, teachers, parents and pupils. This chapter draws on the responses of one School Director, two Headteachers, four teachers, four parents and 13 pupils (six from Standards 7 and 8, three from Form 1 and four from Standard 4) from the two schools. In addition, I interviewed four key informants to investigate the emergent themes of school feeding programs, the provision of non-formal education and the spectrum of non-state provision in informal settlements. The following abbreviations are used for respondents: School Director (Dir), Headteacher (HT), Teacher (T), Parent (P) and Pupil (Pup).

This discussion is structured around Farrell's four dimensions of educational equality: access, survival, outputs and outcomes. For each dimension I present the school level evidence against the sensitizing concepts outlined in Table 9 in Chapter 3 on Research Methodology. The appropriate row of the table is reproduced at the beginning of each topic for ease of reference.

Access and Enrollment

Row 1, Table 10: Sensitizing Concepts Around the Operationalistaion of MoE Support in Terms of Advantages and Disadvantages

Farrell's Four Dimensions of Equality	Indications of Advantage *(and greater equality)*	Indications of Disadvantage *(and less equality)*
ACCESS *Equality of access* – the probabilities of children from different social groupings	- *lower fees* being charged to families because lower school running costs (ie cost of textbooks	- *increases in the cost of schooling* to parents perhaps because supported NFS have a stronger

getting into the school system, or some particular level or portion of it.	covered by MoE grant) are transferred to schools from parents. - NFS *increasing number or value of concessionary places* perhaps because they feel that their role in providing schooling for the poor has been recognized by the government and is valued (ie greater philanthropy).	competitive advantage over non-supported schools (Eg. less tolerance of late or gradual payment of fees; fewer concessionary places; higher fees; new costs associated with meetings of SMC or SIMSC). - *changes in enrollment criteria or introduction of conditional selection processes* against poorest families (eg. new academic entrance tests, only accepting pupils who have been in baby class, stronger demand for uniform etc).

Indications of greater advantage/equality.

Lower fees.

There is no evidence to suggest that fee levels charged to parents have reduced in response to this government support. Paying school fees remains a struggle and parents are frequently unable to pay even though they identify school fees as a priority, following after the survival needs of shelter, food and fuel. A high level of empathy among other parents and tolerance on the part of the school management is needed for children to stay in school in the face of low and unpredictable incomes.

▪ *Fees not decreasing.*

'It is hard, it is hard, due to the hardship of life. It is a struggle to pay the school fees, that's why you can get some 3 to 5 or 10 parents in a class they have not paid for two months. So it is hard for most parents to afford the fees, it is just hard work. But most of the parents, they just try, they try hard' (P1)

J: So, in a Mathare context when you get your money the first thing you pay for is what:
P1: Rent
J: Second thing?
P1: You pay for rent, you pay for even for water, food, then after food, after the rent, food and then for water for useage and you will pay even the electricity.
J: What comes next?
P1: Then comes fees, clothing comes before fees - necessary clothing, but nothing extra.

J: So how do the parents feel when there are 5, 10 in a class who've not paid. Say a parent like you that pays all the time, how do you feel about those that don't pay?

P1: So now you have to, we have to, we know that getting money is hard. So we have to be there with them because there is nothing we can do, you, we have to even talk with the owner of the school. Tell him not to chase away the children because it is not the problem of the pupil it is the problem of the parent and maybe he was working, he's been sacked, there's no job. So it is hard but we don't feel so bad because maybe him, he has been sacked and he has been a parent for 5 years and you know, you are sure he doesn't have a job or she doesn't have a job so it's such like, just forgiving each other, as a community.

The MoE expectation that costs to parents will be reduced through government support is based on the assumption that parents were previously buying books and that this burden has been removed. However, the evidence suggests that only very few parents were buying a few books in the past and that most schools were simply operating without teaching and learning materials. This suggests that the supported NFS are now offering more educational resources, and therefore education with a higher perceived value, for the same or similar fees.

- *Parents previously unable to provide books.*

P1: There were few and most of them were being provided by parents and even the owner of the school was trying to buy books to use in the school. So when the government assisted us we had many, before because we had a few.
J: But were parents generally paying for the books?
P1: No, not most parents.

'That one, it was very like difficult for parents to afford these books from the market or from the shops so it has reduced the burden' (HT 1)

'Er, a few parents were buying for their children so that the children would come with their books, they use, they assist each other in class then they carry it back home again. But you see right now, a child can get access to the book unlike that time when only one book would serve a class' (T2)

The reports that the majority of parents were not previously buying books and the indication that fee levels have not gone down, suggest that the net financial benefit from government grants goes to the school bank account. Essentially, the money that school managers were previously taking from parent fees to buy a few books is now saved at the

same time that more books are being provided and enrollment figures are, as a result of the teaching and learning resources, increasing.

Greater concessions.

Concessionary places in NFS do not appear to operate only as the literature would suggest, in the sense that parents are specifically offered a place in the school at a fixed lower fee level or for free (Tooley, 2004a; Harma, 2009). Concessions are more a part of an ongoing, dynamic relationship between the school and the parents. Factors that appear to affect the likelihood of the school tolerating a delay or absence of fees are the school and community perception of the ability of the family to pay and the pupil's academic strengths. It is not possible to determine from these data whether the number or value of concessionary places has changed in response to the governement's support. The evidence does confirm that there is a high tolerance level for those who cannot pay, those who pay in instalments, those who pay late and those who pay but then have the money returned. However, both Headteachers expressed concern that full fee-paying parents should not learn of the extent to which they waive fee payments for other pupils. Sponsors, whether family members or independent benefactors, have a role to play in keeping children in school by paying fees.

- *NFS receive different levels of payment from different parents.*

HT 1: Hm we have like, I have a list, we have about 150
J: Out of how many?
HT 1: We have about 840.
J: About 150 out of 840 don't pay anything?
HT 1: They don't
J: And all the rest pay full or some pay less?

HT 1: No, others, right now we are asking them for 350 others pay 100, others according to nini[8], they pay 200 and others they pay full. Others pay full but they don't pay in full (*laughter*)

HT 1 subsequently provided a summary of fee rates paid, (see below)

Proportion of Pupils	Fee Rate Paid
50%	Full Fee
25%	Partial Payment
25%	Free

J: So you find they, what is it a month, around 500? (around 500). So you find that they can afford 500 a month when they are working in Eastleigh?
HT 2: No, what we do, there is a … we are accommodative in a way, as much as we put that 5 there is one who will bring 2 or 3 and we continue. Because if you say you have to give 5. . . (*brief interruption*). So the poverty, these are poor parents and a good percentage are single parents also, another percentage are HIV positive. We have the parents, we have the orphans and all that, so compounded with all this, it makes us, when you are asking about the flexibility, that's another flexibility coming in, we just have to accommodate them, you know were it to be, we want to get the cash, if it is 500, we want to get it and if you don't have it you don't get in class, then we would not have the non-formals.

'A private school has better facilities, teachers are well paid but in our case teachers are just volunteering. They are poorly paid and for pupils there are some pupils who are not able even to pay school fees. So, we call meetings, we agree to support them and we advise the Headteacher not to send them away because they don't pay school fees' (P2)

HT 1: Seriously, the same money they have contributed it goes back to them.
J: So the money they've given you, you give them back?
HT 1: Because you cannot allow, she has five children, to go without food or those, the children are not coming back to school tomorrow. So, what you do, is take this 200, this is yours, don't bring back, go, and eat somewhere – free will offering. We call it 'free will offering', because you are not going to call that parent again to ask what …
J: And then do the children keep coming to school when you've given them the 200 for the food, they still bring them to school tomorrow?
HT 1: They'll come, very happy and the parent will go round saying that management is good, if you don't have food they'll give you. I don't want fee-paying children to hear this, we go to an extent we even give them some little foods, go and eat some. The food we cook, we tell them carry, they carry it home.

'You see most of the children have trouble like school fees, when they have been sent home their parents do not have enough money to pay for them, but when our school principal realizes it he decides to sponsor the child. After he has followed them up and seen the problems they are facing, he decides to sponsor the child and him or he is going to learn here until he finishes his education. When he passes, like 400 marks and above, he gets sponsors from other parts of the country' (Pup1)

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[8] *Nini* is the Kiswahili word for 'what' and is commonly used when Kiswahili speakers are speaking in English and cannot immediately recall the English word or phrase they wish to use or when they lose their train of thought.

Indications of greater disadvantage/inequality.

Higher schooling costs.

There was an expectation amongst parents that schooling even in the NFS would be free after the introduction of FPE.

▪ *Parents expected support from the government to cover school fees as well as books.*

'Yeah, it, well immediately we got the first Free Primary education grant it was a challenge. They said, ah, no school fees now from next month so we had to have a meeting with them, we told them no, no, no, this was for ….. no, no, no, we've been told any school that receives any grant from the ministry must also be 'bure'[9]. That is it. So we said, no, no, you just have to chip in. It was a challenge by the way. They said no, this management have received a lot of money now they are telling us that it is only for books. So it is quite a challenge' (HT 1)

There is no evidence to suggest that supported NFS have increased their fees to parents, introduced new costs, or that there is any less tolerance for difficulties in paying fees. According to NFS managers the maximum fee level is determined by their perception of what their parents can afford to pay. Fees remain, however, a barrier to attendance and the inability to pay fees contributes to drop outs and transfers.

▪ *Perceived income levels and 'ability to pay' determine the fee level maximum.*

J: And would you say your fees have gone up since FPE. Are you able to charge more now you have books?
HT 2: We still have that limit.
J: What limits it, what is the limit?
HT 2: We have the 16, the 1,600. (*Meaning 1,600 Ksh per term*)
J: But if you have more books or maybe your teachers are being trained and you're offering more quality, can you charge more?
HT 2: If you charge more they will still not pay (*laughter*) because of where they are coming from, there are many things dictating the limits and all that. These parents are poor, the community that is coming here is so poor so like you get, some are just going to, there's Eastleigh just here, where we have the Arabs and all that. So some just go there everyday to do the washing and after doing the day's washing they are getting, they

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[9] *Bure* is the Kiswahili word for 'free'. The word is often used in relation to the costs of schooling, and specifically the removal of tuition fees. The respondent included the word even though he was speaking in English. There are additional connotations associated with the word 'bure' relating to the perceived quality of anything that is offered free, but these connotations did not appear to be implied by this respondent in this sentence.

are being paid. So you get that they are paid a hundred or so a day, or 200 so when it's done it has to cater for food, it has to cater for rent and other basic necessities, so if you tell these parents I'm doing this then you remain with the empty classes. So that one also dictates how far we are going?

'There are people who have hiked the fee but others have seen that if it is hiked, who will pay?' (Dir 1)

▪ *Fees contribute to children dropping out of school or transferring elsewhere.*

'Most of the parents come from the slums so even paying school fees is a problem. Even a person comes he pays a little amount of money, when you send the children home they don't come back. So they just look for another school where they can go. So they are replaced by others who also do the same, so it becomes a problem' (T4)

J: And so sometimes in your class you just lose children.
T4: Yes, like last term I lost around 7 just because of school fees.
J: And they were replaced?
T4: They were replaced but they are not the same number that was there, I had 56 but now there are 52.
J: And so that's just the fees.
T4: Yes, the fees, that's the problem.

One Headteacher explains that when a substantial proportion of parents cannot pay fees on a regular or prolonged basis the school has to keep its costs down. This may impact negatively on the quality of education being provided as untrained teachers are the only ones that schools believe they can afford.

▪ *Untrained teachers willing to work for lower wage.*

J: How do you cope when they don't pay?
HT 1: So what we do, we say . . . (*laughter*). You see, it forces us to look for some other maybe untrained teachers, that's why we find most of the non-formal schools have untrained teachers to come in and chip in.
J: Because they accept a lower salary?
HT 1: Yeah, lower salary, because when I get a trained teacher, I'll not afford

Enrollment criteria and selection processes.

There is evidence to suggest that places in government-supported NFS are in greater demand than before the provision of IM grants. The enrollment figures in these schools

have been rising since 2005[10] and teacher:pupil ratios, especially in the lower primary classes, are deteriorating. See Appendix II, p.269, for detailed enrollment figures. These figures illustrate the difficulty in identifying enrollment patterns or establishing pupil survival rates as no records are available for class repeaters or school drop outs.

- *Rising enrollment in supported schools.*

'As I said earlier on, the number is increasing day by day, but we find that parents are not responding well in payment and, er, you don't want to be every now and then sending children home for school fees so, but we see that a teacher has got so many children and the staff are few, you see. A teacher has got so many children so it has been a challenge. It's like we find a teacher, one teacher against 60, or against 70. On the higher side, so it has been a challenge' (HT 1)

- *Teacher:pupil ratios deteriorating.*

J: But have you got to the stage where your enrollment is too high for you take any more children or it's still OK?
HT 2: We are reaching now that stage, since we got the Free Primary, classes, because of maybe the classes and all that, there are some classes that maybe it is hard to make another enrollment. Like Standard 6, Standard 5 and other, baby class and all that. It reaches a time there's to capacity and there's not room for expansion for double streams so even there's no room for double streams. But the parents are really willing to continue bringing the children. They would like to bring more but you tell them now it is to capacity, as much as there is congestion, we do admit them, with that congestion and all that. If we go by specification maybe you see like a class of 46, a class of 50 and that is also exceeding the par.

Many pupils transfer in from other schools and, because the data is not held at school level, it is not possible to determine whether the change in enrollment represents a net decrease of school-aged children being out of school. All school-based respondents report that children transfer between NFS, move between urban and rural settings and do, sometimes, come to school having been at home. However, the fact that supported NFS conduct 'interviews' for new pupils that act as an assessment and selection process,

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[10] Post-election violence in January 2008 lead to a large exodus from the informal settlements as these were centers of urban violence and people's lives had been taken and their homes destroyed.

suggests that a child who was previously out of school for any length of time would find some difficulty in entering a class that is consistent with their age.

- *New pupils come from many different educational backgrounds.*

J: Where do the children come from the ones that seek admission in class 5, are they on the street or have they come from another school. Where do they come from?
HT 2: Some from just at home, some may have stayed at home maybe a year or so without going to school and are coming back. And some maybe they are coming from other areas, like rural areas, they come into that. And still some come from schools around, the public schools and what have you. All sorts, various directions.

The pattern of transferring first from NFS into public schools when FPE was announced and later back into NFS, documented by Tooley, 2008, was confirmed during this study.

- *NFS pupils transferred into public schools when FPE was introduced and subsequently moved back into the NFS.*

'So when they said FPE, most of the children who were learning in NFS moved or transferred into public schools, straight, and now these public schools were few. So that became a challenge. After some months the number reduced, the number reduced and now they started asking themselves, why are they gone? There must be a place they are going back because others started complaining, there are no desks in public schools, our children are sitting down, now they say there are books, there are no books. A teacher is handling one hundred and fifty, one teacher against 150, what now? So they started coming back' (HT 1)

Performance during the assessment interview is used to determine whether a pupil is ready to enter the class they have requested. It appears that a pupil's academic performance is a more closely-assessed factor in gaining entry into a supported NFS, rather than the parents' long-term ability to pay the fees. This does suggest a disadvantage to those who are are not performing well for their age perhaps because of interrupted schooling and frequent movement from school to school, both of which could be linked to low levels of family income.

▪   *Academic assessments are conducted as 'interviews' when new pupils seek enrollment.*

'Let me answer as a teacher. OK, when a child comes there's an interview in the first place, after the interview from there you'll decide, is the pupil good for this class. And if she isn't good, just call the parent first and then talk to the parent. According to the interview your child has performed this way so it's like I'll take her back to the other class so that when she is there she can catch up, OK, in this way it depends with the parents. Most parents look at the ages of the children and they say, no, please don't take her back, she is big. So there's these tuition classes, after classes there are special remedials. The parents will now decide, since she did not perform in the interview, please coach her, coach my pupil. From there, if there's an improvement just let her remain in the class but if there isn't still she just needs to go back' (P4/T)

Further school-based findings on access and enrollment.

NFS flexibility.

Despite the fact that NFS offer the formal 8-4-4 curriculum, and do not therefore represent forms of non-formal education, I was interested to know whether the schools do in fact have characteristics of flexibility (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983a; Weyer, 2009) that could be said to help children from low-income families overcome the barriers to attending school. Bock & Papagiannis (1983b) describe elements of this flexibility as a lack of formal, structured instruction characterised by 'little or no formal structure, a highly participative, nonhierarchical and spontaneous learning environment where all participants are both teachers and learners'. In the context of NFS, I speculate that features of flexibility similar to those discussed in the NFE literature might be represented by: offering schooling at different times of the day to allow pupils to attend to other daily chores; offering some kind of 'catch-up' mechanism or tolerance of absences and missed work when children are forced to be out of school for family reasons, or a teacher-learner relationship that is better suited for older pupils who are repeating lower classes.

In this study respondents indicate that they view the NFS as having features of flexibility. Respondents consistently interpret flexibility as ways in which NFS are *different* from public schools. For example, one Headteacher considers the NFS more flexible than government schools because they are less strict in demanding birth certificates on admission and because they are more relaxed with regard to pupils having the correct and complete uniform. NFS school hours are considered more flexible because the schools keep children, especially those in the upper primary classes, for much longer hours than in a public school. As regards flexibile school hours, accommodating absences, offering different learning opportunities or operating with a different perception of the teacher-learner relationship, the NFS do not exhibit more flexibility. The understanding of flexibility described by respondents in this study is not one that indicates substantially improved educational access, survival, outputs or outcomes in a context of socio-economic disadvantage.

- *NFS interpretations of flexibility.*

'Yes, there is sort of flexibility, that is there in terms of even uniform, uniform is not really strict and then there are some things that the government is very strict on maybe like certificate of birth and all that. Which we have not really got fixed to when we're admitting the baby class and all that. But if you go to government schools you must have those documents initially' (HT 2)

'We adopt the normal hours but the flexibility that is there, because the government ones are leaving the school at 3.10, their normal lessons. So some people have tended to add another lesson to extend at least until 3.45. So that's the flexibility on our side. And maybe another flexibility because of the location, we don't have a playing field for maybe PE, physical education and all that. So some centers have opted instead of maybe having that lesson lying on the timetable and maybe there's no field to partake that lesson so some are maybe opted to fix some more lessons for that. That's a bit of flexibility of our non-formal schools' (HT 2)

School feeding.

One of the two schools in my sample receives food on a monthly basis under the government-supported program implemented by the international NGO, Feed the Children (FTC). The Headteacher explained that NFS had only recently become eligible to receive this feeding program and associates this change with the recognition of NFS from the MoE. Pupils in the school confirm the benefits of the feeding program because some children have no food in their homes and also because eating lunch at school saves them time that they can use to keep studying.

> ▪ *NFS benefit from being incorporated in government school feeding program since being recognized by MoE.*

> HT 1: Like now, through the City Education Dept there's a program known as feeding program, Feed the Children through the City Education Dept, they used to feed only public schools. So now when we started coming together through the Feed the Children, City Education Dept, coming to provide food for us.
> *J: When did that happen?*
> HT 1: It started the year 2008 again, 2008 yeah.
> *J: So that's when NFS started getting the program.*
> HT 1: Yes, through the City Education Dept they started having feeding programs.

> 'The support we get from the government is like the food, this food before we got it, children were just staying hungry, but it was one afternoon Mr X (Headteacher) came and told us that the government has brought some beans and maize so we can be eating. First it was rice and we really enjoyed it. So now most of the children, even if they don't eat at home they come at school and at least get something' (Pup2)

> 'Really, actually the government is helping us a lot. First, here, we have some unable mothers, parents so you might get a child she goes home hungry she will just sleep hungry, come back hungry so even she won't even concentrate on what the teacher is saying, because she is feeling hungry. But since they introduced Feed the Children we are now really enjoying because we have been offered food near so we can eat faster, go to our studies. It really helps us in fact for us class 8s it helps us a lot because you can eat for 10 minutes, that you could have run to go home but the food is just around, you just eat and go back to your studies. So it has helped us, including the books, we have been supported with many books so we have many textbooks and in case you want anything to do, you can just come in the office and borrow. And that's the help of the government' (Pup1).

A senior representative from FTC confirmed that the organization was invited to provide food to approximately 200,000 children attending schools in the informal settlements of Nairobi and Mombasa in 2003, following the launch of the country wide FPE initiative. The food items themselves are provided in part by the World Food Program and in part by the GoK. Schools, and therefore parents, have to provide a kitchen area, cooking stove, fuel, water, cooking staff and a secure storage area for the food. For example, in the sampled school, parents pay an additional 150 Ksh per child per month in their school fees for the school feeding program, which provides one simple meal at lunchtime.

> ▪ *Parents contribute to the start up and support costs of running a subsidized feeding program.*

> 'Like we used to ask them to pay 200 shillings a month and we wanted to go from two hundred shillings to three hundred and fifty shillings so what we did is we told them, now we have feeding program, this hundred shillings, this 150 is going to cater for that cook, for that firewood, for that water and so on and the rent, for the store. Before the feeding program, the Feed the Children is not going to come and pay for us rent. So they said, sure, so when they calculated and found that 150 divided by 30 days, how much is that per day, 5 shillings? Now that is a challenge because when you say daily no one is going to get money, because we understand their status. We put it in the fees, the monthly fee, so you make sure that by the end of the month you clear this one. Yeah, this 350' (HT 1)

Potential schools are identified by FTC field officers and the Development Department in the Nairobi City Education Office, which is different from the NFE Department in the national headquarters, which is responsible for verifying and validating schools to receive the IM grants. Schools must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the feeding program:

- be enrolling children who live in the slums, even if the school itself is not located in an informal settlement
- have at least 200 pupils
- be following the formal, 8-4-4, curriculum
- be able to mobilize parents to participate in the program

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- charge 'reasonable' fees, (below 1,000 Ksh per month, around 500 Ksh per month)

(Feed the Children, July 2010)

The main objective behind the extension of this feeding program is to support the FPE initiative, because it was recognized that school attendance suffered when children did not have access to food at school. Providing food at school is seen as a means of improving enrollment and supporting attendance. FTC note both a substantial and immediate increase in enrollment in the schools in response to the feeding program and a much later improvement in the management of these schools once the MoE began engaging with larger numbers of NFS in preparation for the release of IM grants. The role of FTC may now be extended to use their considerable monitoring system to identify issues relating to the quality of education being provided in supported schools. Such monitoring would guard against schools becoming nothing more than feeding centers where children come in the morning, eat, and go home.

- *School feeding in NFS to support FPE, increases enrollment and improves attendance.*

FTC: Um, for the FPE, of course the program was started to support that.
J: So it was actually started to support that initiative?
FTC: Yes because at the time what the government was reporting and even the WFP, because they were the ones who initiated that in the slums, was children would go to school for half the day and for the morning session and then go out and not come back. So some of our objectives are to increase enrollment and to stabilize attendance'

- *Improvements in NFS once they engage with MoE to receive grants.*

FTC: OK, from the moment we, when we started implementation in some schools, not all schools, there was huge impact on enrollment. Some schools there was just a slight, small change in enrollment. And in others you just find it was just students shifting from schools that did not have the program to schools that did. But the greatest change and even the data supports that is in attendance. The average has increased from about 84% of students enrolled to an average of 90 – 92% currently coming practically every day. In terms of management also over time I would say, from the time now the government increased to a large

scale where you heard they were supporting a large number of schools, there has been a change.

J : So that was when, would you say?

FTC: I would say 2007, 2008 is when the volume, or rather the schools we are dealing with that's when we noticed a majority of them were receiving additional support from government and that came along with some changes in the quality of education because . . .

J: That was the kind of support like the books and things like that?

FTC: Yes, yes. Because in addition to that the quality assurance officers of the education department would do visits to the schools, not only to establish that books had been bought and that they were being used but also that the curriculum is being followed.

- *Monitoring schools to ensure they are not simply feeding centers.*

'They are trying, in fact at our last meeting with the Department, City Council, we were talking about how we could incorporate some aspects of quality of education, just the basics, into our monitoring. That way we can alert them to schools we feel are not, and then they can do the follow up, thorough assessment to determine this is genuine now from all schools or just feeding centers. Because you've been there, I'm sure you've noticed some of the places the children come, eat, go home' (FTC)

Interestingly, the challenges that face FTC in establishing and maintaing a feeding program in these schools are similar to the challenges faced in improving the quality of education: school structures are far from adequate, being squeezed inbetween houses and businesses, and low income levels among parents mean that raising the school contribution is an ongoing struggle. Ironically, even though the program is providing food to children, in times when parents cannot pay school fees, children also lose access to this food so the problems of poverty are compounded. FTC has also identified a concern around the provision of support to those children who do not perform well in school, who are more likely to either drop out of school or fail to transition to secondary schools.

- *School conditions and parents' poverty pose challenges in running a subsidized feeding program.*

'In those – sincerely the problems we've had with that is the space. You find schools in any available space, there's a classroom, there's children and the tenure, ownership, is temporary. And these are the huge challenges' (FTC)

'Especially in the non-formal schools? The other challenge is training, teacher training (for them to be able to teach). Yeah, most of them are not formally trained. In some schools you find that the teachers themselves did not even complete secondary education and that itself has a negative impact on what we're trying to do. The other challenges are the usual, running the program, we never had, OK, one or two schools have come to a point where the program grinds to a halt because there's a financial aspect to it. They have to provide the fuel to cook, they have to pay the people for preparation so one or two schools do face the challenge and the program grinds to a halt but overall it's a very small percentage, yeah, but it is still a challenge. Whenever you go, when you talk to the teachers, that is the number one thing, getting the parents to support is a major hassle' (FTC)

- *User fees can exclude children from school and the feeding program.*

'OK, given the, what is being reported as the average income, of course, it becomes one of the greatest expenses. Like last year after the, at the height of the post election violence and the drought when there was now serious food shortages in the, countrywide. One of the trends was a drop in enrollment from the schools, and it's a bit odd because we're providing food, but you see they are also charging fees so parents opt to save on that and use it to take care of other family needs. So I think, yeah, it is still a great expense but the reality is those schools cannot exist without charging that fee and in terms of government support, I don't know, I think the schools are too numerous for them to manage effectively' (FTC)

- *Feeding that is delivered through schools excludes many needy children.*

'We have observed that, the same thing and in fact we have been asked from the time we started working if there is any program we can introduce to support that same category you're talking about, not only the middle and lower performers, but even the students who don't have the opportunity to go to secondary school, because there are still a number who are left out. And, along the same lines, if there are any programs that can support vocational training, but unfortunately we can't. The entire program is designed to support formal education' (FTC)

Conclusion.

In conclusion, supported NFS have experienced substantial increases in enrollment, which respondents attribute to the receipt of government IM grants. There are strong indications that increased enrollment in supported NFS are associated with greater movement between supported and non-supported NFS, between rural and urban locations and even between NFS and public schools rather than reflecting large, gross influx of new pupils. In the sampled NFS there is no indication that the schools have increased the

size or number of classrooms, nor increased the number of teachers. Increased enrollment, therefore, represents a net financial gain to the school and puts pressure on teacher:pupil ratios.

Increased demand for places in supported NFS places greater emphasis on the selection process for new enrollees. Pupils who are not performing at a level consistent with their age are likely to be recommended to receive extra tuition or to repeat a class. Pupils who perform well are welcomed by schools because parents focus on the KCPE exam performance of the school to assess the school's quality. Schools which produce high exam results are more likely to see an increase in enrollments.

Fee levels appear to be more closely associated with the perceived ability of parents to pay and do not appear to have changed since the introduction of IM grants to supported NFS. Supported schools, therefore, benefit from the government support through an increased number of pupils and through a stronger reputation for academic performance, which again secures the enrollment figure. Headteachers operate with considerable flexibility around the payment of fees and do keep some pupils whose parents cannot afford to pay fees. However, the number of pupils effectively given concessions is not made public knowledge amongst the whole parent body.

Supported NFS do not exhibit features of flexibility in the delivery of schooling that can be expected to offset the socio-economic disadvantages of surviving in an informal settlement. NFS operate under longer school hours than public schools, especially for

older pupils in Standards 7 and 8. Since the MoE's engagement with these schools the larger NFS have become eligible to take part in a school feeding program if their parent body can afford to contribute to the start up and running costs. Only educational institutions offering the formal, 8-4-4 curriculum are eligible for the feeding program. The government-subsidized school feeding program managed by Feed the Children is seen as a huge benefit to a school and places on the feeding program are highly sought after. Overall the MoE support to NFS has substantially increased enrollment in supported schools, although this increase includes transferring pupils from other schools or other parts of the country.

Survival and Retention

Row 2, Table 10: Sensitizing Concepts Around the Operationalistaion of MoE Support in Terms of Advantages and Disadvantages

Farrell's Four Dimensions of Equality	Indications of Advantage *(and greater equality)*	Indications of Disadvantage *(and less equality)*
SURVIVAL *Equality of survival* – the probabilities of children from various social groupings staying in the school system to some defined level, usually the end of a complete cycle (primary, secondary, higher).	- *parents valuing schooling more highly* and more willing to send children to school at older ages (esp. girls 9+, boys 13+) - *pupils valuing schooling more highly* and more likely to fight to attend	- *misuse of grants* (eg. poor/non-transparent book selection process that don't support school or pupil needs; purchase of books for lower classes/favoured subjects; spending not reported) - *centrers of power* being created among certain parents, ethnic groups etc and used to gain advantage for certain groups - *parents less supportive of school* because feel the emphasis on exam performance is raising expectations for secondary school rather than functional literacy and employable skills (Eg. math to help at market, ability to write letters) - *loss of well-wishers' support*

		because of assumption that government now supporting NFS, therefore no longer represent the 'poor', (eg. concessions, books, scholarships)

Indications of greater advantage/greater equality.

Value placed on schooling by parents.

Several strands of thought were apparent around how parents value schooling. There is a suggestion that over time parents have come to value the benefits of schooling more highly and this may be associated with contemporary messages around EFA, the MDGs and, in Kenya, the promises associated with the FPE initiative. Against this backdrop of a greater appreciation for schooling, parents do appear to value the materials provided by the government very highly and, as a result, make greater efforts to keep their children in a school that is supported with the IM grants because they expect better academic performance. As one Headteacher explains, when parents see that the government is investing in a supported NFS, support that is evidenced by the presence of textbooks, they have more confidence in that school and its managers and the parents are more willing to add their own support. The same Headteacher believes that the government contributions increase parents' determination to make their own financial contributions, even if they cannot afford the full fees.

- *Increased appreciation of the benefits of education.*

'Long time ago we used to have problems, the parents long time ago, they didn't know the benefits of education. They didn't know. They would say let my child stay at home, or any school is OK, long time ago, as long as he is going to school, as long as he is not staying here. But of late I've come to learn that parents are after good performance, for they have come to learn now that the whole world, particularly in Africa, things are changing and without education you can do nothing. Now the parents are looking for performance, the schools that are performing well, whether in the slum, they were

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looking around, which school in our area is performing well. Immediately the results are up, they are out looking from school to school' (HT 1)

▪ *Parents identify government support and availability of textbooks with stronger academic performance.*

'In our case now, you know, most of them stay. Because when at the end of the year they see these results, you know we are always improving each year. At least we have never gone down. So when a parent sees that Standard 8 is performing good he or she decides to let his kids stay' (P2)

P1: OK, it is good because it cannot be compared with a public school. Every teacher works hard, because the owner is always just here, he's just monitoring them. So, and they know he has to compete with other schools. He has to come up with good marks in the final exams so he cannot get a lot of pupils. So, we like it, this school because of the performance.
J: So where do you compare, where do you find out the information?
P1: We, at the end of exams, after the final exams, the KCPE, we can know how our school is progressing from other surrounding schools and also from our own children. There's a list from the government.

J: Do you think the rate of fee paying has improved. Do you think the parents are more willing to pay the fees or they try harder to pay the fees now you have the books or no change, maybe no change?
HT 2: Yes, there is that one also, once you see it creates a good relationship also, the books. They are feeling that these people are doing what they are supposed to do. You see like when you come and you see like the books are there and all that, you see these are people who know what are they doing. And then there is that element of confidence also, with the parents, in that situation they are saying, let's build it. And in terms, yeah, we cannot deny, it has to improve, as much as you tell them ah can you still support me, can you still support me, they are also willing at least to do something.
J: So, do you think the improved confidence can compete with the poverty and make them take maybe a bit more from the little they have to pay school fees?
HT 2: Yes and realizing. You see there is an element of realizing the importance and all that. You see since we have told them the government is coming this far and also if we want to go another mile and see that these people are getting their right education. So we do not say that it's the poverty versus the confidence making them now to get what they have, but that determination. You see like if you say, if it's 500, you are bringing 100 and we receive it and you are bringing 200, we receive, as much as you have that vigour to say let me continue contributing that it is also a positive thing.

It was noted, however, that the government support has not been consistent in terms of, one, supporting the same schools with each disbursement, two, providing the same per-capita amount per pupil, and three, making the disbursements on a regular basis. As a result NFS have received one or two disbursements and were able buy books with those

funds. Now, however, those books have aged and become worn and the enrollment figures have increased. There is evidence of some concern emerging about what support the government will provide in the future. Some respondents see this disappointment as a challenge, while others believe that parents have somehow invested or saved the money they would have spent on books and are now able to provide a few books themselves.

- *Inconsistency in government support can generate mistrust between the school and parents.*

'We told parents from now you are not buying exercise books and now it stops, they come and say, you told us, now we are buying exercise books again. So then they lose trust in us, they think ah, that money is there, they are eating it. So that becomes like a challenge. That consistency . . .' (HT 1)

- *Some parents able to fill the gaps in the provision of textbooks.*

T2: So parents are really aware and are well prepared to make sure, at least, in case of any shortage, they can cope up with life. But they are praying hard that the government will still bring the books, because these are just children like any children in public schools.
J: Do you think that it's because the parents have become better off, or they've seen the value of the books in the performance? Why are they prepared to buy books when there is a shortage when they didn't buy books before FPE?
T2: Before they started funding for this, they used to live with that life and now that the government took that burden from them they also improved their livelihoods, outside there. That burden was not there for around 4 or 5 years now so some parents did some little savings so that is why they are not finding it very difficult for now but they are hoping that the government chips in. Because even the little savings may run short.
J: So you're saying that while parents haven't had to buy books since 2005 they've been better off, financially, so now when there is a little bit of a shortage they're prepared to chip in until the books come again because they know the bulk is coming.
T2: Yeah, they are willing.

Value placed on schooling by pupils.

The children who are attending NFS show great personal ambition, are ready to work hard and for long hours and to repeat classes in order to achieve a high academic mark in their KCPE exams.

- *Ambitious pupils work hard for academic success and potential employment prospects.*

Pup2: I hope to become a journalist in future or just a lawyer, that's my hope.
J: So what do you have to do to do that? You'll finish your KCPE and then?
Pup2: First after finishing my KCPE I just hope to get maximum 400 and above so I can go to a very good school, which I'll work very hard for my achievement. After that, when I achieve my goal, I will go for further studies like university so that I can at least become what I wanted to be.
J: So what's your score that your aiming for in KCPE
Pup2: OK, 400 and above.
J: OK and when you were in 8 before, what were you getting, roughly
Pup2: OK I could get 350s, 320s

'My hopes are a bit, yeah my hope for me in the future, I would like to be a chef. So, for me, to achieve it, I need to work hard after finishing my KCPE I'll join Form 4 I would like to work harder, more than I did in primary so that I can go to a college. After doing my college I think I can do now, I will get more education on what I want to be. So I just need to work more hard so I can achieve what I want to do' (Pup1)

'I would like me to be a pilot but my father says that I should, he should teach me before I complete my education to be a doctor
J: OK, your father would like you to be a doctor but you would like to be a pilot
Pup3: Yes, for me I would like to follow my career and I would like to see that my family, that my everything is going right.
J: So what score are you aiming for in KCPE?
Pup3: I would like to perform well and it will be about 450 marks' (Pup3)

Children who attend NFS report the high value they place on schooling. They also suggest that children who are out of school would much rather be able to go to school. There is evidence to suggest that the pupils place a very high value on being in school even without books, but that this value increases with the presence of books and the teaching that comes with them. According to the pupils in school, if they had to choose between the food they are given in schools and the books, they would sooner give up the school feeding program.

- *Pupils are determined to continue with their schooling whatever the conditions.*

'I came here and I joined Class 2. I don't know if I'll finish here because my Mum, they are saying I have to get out, but for as me I refused for the first time, they tried again, I said no! I don't know what is going to happen, but I am in Class 6 and I want to finish' (Pup5)

J: What's the one thing that makes you want to come to school most. What motivates you to come to school the most, is it the food, is it the books, seeing your friends, is it the thought of being a pilot, what is it that brings you to school everyday.
Pup1: What brings me to school is I had said it before, I have my achievements, so I want to achieve, so for me to come in school I will come and get what I want. So, I must learn so I can achieve it.
J: So what if the books finish, what if the government stops giving money for the books and the books get old and there are no books anymore, then what?
Pup1: I will try my level best.

J: You'll still come?
Pup1: Yes, I will continue because I want to achieve something.
J: And if there's no food anymore, say they run out of the feeding program.
Pup1: No, no, I can't stop. I have to come because I want to achieve my goal.
J: And what brings you (Pup2) to school, what's the thing that makes you want to come to school most?
Pup2: Aside saying my objectives are to become a journalist and a lawyer, one of them. So, even if there is much trouble I must come to school, even if I face any trouble so as to achieve my goal. Because if I give up then all will be gone.
J: So even if the books finish you'll still come.
Pup2: Yes, I'll still come.
J: Which would be worst to lose the books or the food?
Pup4: Ok, the food, no (*laughter*), the books
All Other Pupils: the books!

The pupils identify school books as the most important factor in their schooling and make full use of these resources. They reflect on how they used to have to run around looking for books to complete their work or were sent home from school if their parents were not able to afford them. Now, they feel they can access books relating to their current and past studies, are able to read independently, are able to refer to the books if they do not understand the teacher and are generally able to use the books to study hard.

▪ *Pupils use books to complete homework, reduce copying from the board, follow up on material that is not understood and for independent review and revision.*

Pup1: Really the, before we had no books so we were really, we were facing some problems because the teacher cannot give all, you have to go and search for the others. So with no books if you want to go anywhere to search you won't get it, but as for now, the books are around. If you have past classes you want one of the books, you just go to the office ask for one of the books, you will check what you wanted and you will really get it. So that is the help we get.
J: So it means you can understand better because you can go back to the book, see what the book said. What do you (Pup2) have to add, how do the books help?

Pup2: When I was in St 4 we were facing some of the difficulties like lack of textbooks so we were forced
to go home and tell our parents to buy for us 8 textbooks. So, when you don't have a textbook you are not allowed to stay in class. Now in standard 5 we were introduced to books, they were brought, now we were happy we were no longer sent home.
J: So it means you can stay in school because you don't get sent home for not having a book.
Pup4: Some teachers had problems in copying the work they were introducing or we were learning so they had to write among a multitude of pupils, for example, 60s there. Those were pupils, he had to write on the blackboard, now I can say that we have textbooks which we use per desk.
J: So now there's not so much copying from the chalkboard, yeah?
Pup3: I can say that the time there were no textbooks the teacher could come in class, explain the notes but you could not understand. Now you could get a problem to understand those notes. From now, if a teacher explained the notes and you're not getting anything you can go to the textbook and refer those notes again.

Headteachers and teachers expand on how the books are used to benefit the pupils. Teachers use the books to set homework, but a mixed picture emerges around whether or not pupils take the books home to complete these set tasks, have to copy the work into their exercise books and complete the work in their time or stay in school for longer hours to complete homework.

- *Teachers use books to set homework and use different strategies to make the books available to pupils.*

T3: The homework, the way I always do it is I teach, I can give the classwork first or some good assignment for 1 to 5. Then I mark immediately to confirm whether whatever I was teaching to confirm whether it is understood or not. Now from then, after realizing that maybe what I was doing is well done or there is work still needed I will allocate some good homework using the same, same topic we were doing. That is the way I always do it.
J: And do they take the books home to do the homework.
T3: Yes, sometimes we give them the books but sometimes, because maybe the number or the books we have cannot cater for every child to go with one, but they can share. I can take every desk then I assign one person who is in charge, who will go with it at home, but others will copy from that book when they are still in school.

'What we always do, initially we used to tell parents to come and borrow books. Come with a copy of ID, they borrow some books, they go with them at home, but some of them who transferred go with the books so getting them becomes too difficult. So we changed the system into whereby we give the children the books in the morning, they sit with them in class, they return in the evening. Yes, because we also started receiving complaints of a child going home with books and they get lost on the way home, you see,

so we say now, to reduce because the same, same parents say they don't have money to buy these books. If you tell a parent we gave your child a book, 5 books, now they are not there, these books are 2,000 they say no, no, then they transfer because of that. So we said let us to be on the safe side, let us be keeping books for them' (HT 1)

Indications of greater disadvantage/less equality.

Misuse of grants.

Parent representatives from the SMC report their involvement in the procurement process and there is no evidence from this study to suggest the widespread misuse of grants. The role played by the MoE in monitoring procurement processes would also suggest that any NFS not using funds well are dropped from the disbursement list. This is supported by the outcomes of the December 2008 verification and validation exercise, after which 12% of previously funded NFS were considered no longer eligible and were removed from the disbursement list. The MoE cites the following as reasons for the discontinuation of funding: schools had not set up an SMC as directed; some schools were charging high fees that undermine the school's classification a a community based organization, (2,500 per term is considered high), and in some previously-funded NFS sanitation and hygiene conditions were found to be too poor. As noted above, however, there are reports that the inconsistency in the government's financial support has lead to suspicions that the Headteachers are 'eating' the grants. Inconsistency in disbursements does undermine the potential for parents to monitor the use of grants, because there is no apparent mechanism of public notification around IM grants for NFS and, therefore, parents have no independent means of confirming information given by the school managers.

Centers of power.

Parent representatives on the SMC do gain both authority and responsibility in the community. The design of this research would not have revealed other parents' views on these representatives as all parent respondents were holding positions as parent representatives. However, parent representatives are voted into position by other parents, the role does involve a considerable commitment of time and some parent representatives have been in the position for successive years, at the request of other parents. No indications of any negative power building effects were given by any respondents.

Parental support.

Parents are consistently and strongly in favour of academic performance. Their desire for their children to perform well in exams, progress to secondary school and 'do better' than themselves, is strong and consistent. Parents are supportive of a school that brings positive academic performance and supported NFS are seen to have improved in performance since receiving the government grants.

- *Parents seek academic results.*

'Yes, after scoring good marks from class 8 in KCPE to join a good school, which in future my son will be able to stay somewhere else, not here in Mathare. That's my aim. And that's why I'm working hard to make sure he is here where he is being managed rather than in public schools' (P1).

'When I brought them in this school I hope, I regretted when I was in government school, I tried but there was no school fees, there was no school fees, a little maybe. I saw let me be near with my children, let them learn in a private school so that they can go ahead of me' (P3).

Parents who do send their children to NFS describe other parents as 'ignorant' either of the value of education or the value of a fee-paying school over a public school. The

parents consider this 'ignorance' one of the main reasons whey some children are not in

school.

> ▪ *Parent representatives in supported NFS regard parents who do not send their children to school as 'ignorant' of the value of education.*

> 'There are some with money but because of the ignorance they just leave their children at the public schools. They have money but they don't want to pay. There are some that cannot afford to pay, they are at public schools. But mostly it is because of ignorance you can get somebody with my age, like this one, he just has his kids here at the public school, he doesn't care. Whatever the results he's not caring. So, let us say, he can afford but because of the ignorance he just doesn't care' (P1)

> P/T4: Not so sure. What I know is if, some people are also ignorant. In some cases they say, you know me, when I was young, I was studying in a government so my child will also school in the government school.
> *J: So they don't look at performance?*
> P/T4: Yeah, they are ignorant.

Well-wisher's support.

Although little was reported about the support of well-wishers or benefactors, one

respondent confirmed that well-wishers still provide support and have recently paid the

school fees for 17 orphans. There has also been an increase in the support NFS have been

given by Feed the Children, as a result of the MoE recognition and involvement with

NFS.

> ▪ *NGOs continue to engage with NFS to support disadvantaged children.*

> 'We have a certain organization called Hope Worldwide, Hope Worldwide is also working with us, like sometimes, this year they gave us almost every child was given, not every child but only the child who is in need, the organization by the Rotary, Rotary brought for us, they were only taking those children with the death certificate. Maybe the parents, when your Dad died, when your Mum died when you have such certificate, they were taking those kids. In fact they gave them uniform and after that they provided us with, almost every child was given 500 from them. Ours we were almost 17 because I was the facilitator for that program' (T3)

> *J: And do you think, having FPE, have you lost supporters because they can see now you have books? Like these NGOs and other benefactors, do you think they look at you now and think the ministry is supporting you now, we don't have to support you and they go away?*

T3: No, I've not in fact experienced that. Like the organization that we were having that we were working with them jointly, is the Hope, but only because that the Coordinator told us that this year the fund was not there, the donor has not, in fact he has not boosted the fund. Now they are just to go with the ones which were there, now that is where now the Rotary came in, the Rotary are working jointly together with the Hope, it is now the umbrella. Now they were working under the Hope but the Hope is still, we are working with them. If any case, we need assistance or any support they will just come to us. They will call us, we will talk with them.
J: So you don't think they've been chased away.
T3: No, they are not.

HT 1: Like now, through the City Education Dept there's a program known as feeding program, Feed the Children through the City Education Dept, they used to feed only public schools. So now when we started coming together through the Feed the Children, City Education Dept, coming to provide food for us.
J: When did that happen?
HT 1: It started the year 2008 again, 2008 yeah.
J: So that's when NFS started getting the feeding program?
HT 1: Yes, through the City Education Dept they started having feeding programs, yeah.

Further school based findings on survival and retention.

Drop outs.

The lack of any quantitative data regarding transfers, drop outs and class repetition makes it difficult to track the survival rates of pupils in NFS or to confirm the contribution NFS are able to make to educational survival prospects. The enrollment figures show that the numbers of pupils in the higher classes (eg Standards 7 and 8) is much lower than the numbers in the lower primary classes (eg Standards 1 and 2). However, this could be a reflection of the overall growth of the schools as pupils tend to enter in the lower classes.

The reasons given for pupils dropping out of school include: lack of fees, need to earn money, family re-location, inability to pay for books when government supplies run out and marriage. Some of these factors result in high rates of absenteeism or irregular patterns of attendance rather than total exclusion. However, such absenteeism undermines performance and may lead to failure to progress from one class to the next. Although no

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quantitative picture of the number of children who drop out is available from this study, it

is clear that dropping out of school is a common occurrence and can be triggered by any

of a number of general life circumstances.

- *Children are exposed to a range of threats to continued school attendance.*

T3: Actually the drop outs, a child possibly, we're living in a society where people act in different, differently. You as a teacher you would like a child to sit from Class 1 up to Class 8. Maybe in the course of the day the child just decided or in conjunction with the parents you just find yourself, like here we are staying in Nairobi, the child just disappeared and you don't know even whereabout the child, now tracing such a child, yeah, because like young people, the death rate is very minimal, that is the truth of the matter.
J: The death rate?
T3: For them you get a child dying, no that one cannot make the Standard or the number reaching Class 8
to come down, that nini[11]. In fact, that one is not there generally. Because one child maybe, a school can go even 2 years without such an incident. Now, I think it is just the community - they go to work, a child can get married. Those are just community factors. They cannot afford the fees, or a parent just decided to use the shortcut for the child, he can even decide let my child go to tailoring course, carpentry course, masonry course.

P1: For these ones, the first reason is children are not coming to school, it is not that they cannot pay, they can pay – or it is free in public schools where they can take their kids. But it is, due to single parents, let us say the father is there and the mother is not there, or the mother is there and the father is not there, that's one of the reasons why the children are not going to school. Because they are at home with one parent, he doesn't care, he's just used to his children at home, he doesn't want to take them to school, so let us say it is not that they cannot afford, they can afford and if he cannot afford there is a school like this one or they can take them to public schools, because of some few reasons – maybe it is one parent who is caring for the children or the parents are careless, they don't care or they are drunkards. He goes to work, comes in the evening, doesn't know whether his or her children went to school or stayed at home. So, it's something like that.

'You have provided, let us say, for example, you have provided for that exercise book so we thought, now we are with the government we are not going to buy exercise books now it is the government job. Now when it reaches the time you are not there, the government is not providing the exercise books, the teachers of the school now demand that the parents buy. So the parent says now they can't afford – the teacher is saying that every pupil should buy the materials, the parent is now, doesn't have money to buy the material.

'You can get that so you lose some of the children from the school' (P1).

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[11] *Nini* is the Kiswahili word for 'what' and is commonly used when Kiswahili speakers are speaking in English and cannot immeditately recall the English word or phrase they wish to use or when they lose their train of thought.

'Some people, you find that their parents are so poor, they live in slums, that they can't afford the school fees for private school. So, this makes them to leave school and go and help their parents in the market' (Pup6)

- *Academic pressure was cited as a source of pressure to drop out.*

'Sometimes when we do an exam and they fail the exam they feel discouraged and they don't want school again' (Pup10)

J: So what about the academics? I understand if you don't have fees it's hard to come to school. All: yes.
J: Or if you don't have food at home it's hard to go to school because you have to go and earn some money to eat.
All: yes.
J: What about the academics, someone who is not getting 400, what about someone who is getting less than 250, do they still want to come to school or what's that like?
Pup4: They are made to repeat.
Pup2: Some will not agree to repeat.
Pup1: Yes, really, some are around us who leave. We have some, but they work, being they are not in school they do labour (yeah). But they don't see, I don't think they can see the effect of this labour, so because they ran out of school it will force them to do it so they can eat.

In environments with high levels of poverty and low levels of security in the home, taking textbooks home may be associated with the risk of loss. The repercussions of such losses may lead children to transfer schools or drop out for fear of punishment. No consistent picture was provided in this study as to whether children were at greater risk of dropping out through loss of textbooks, although schools seem to limit the use of books at home and control the issuing of books by involving parents.

- *NFS either keep books in school for pupils to use or involve parents in signing for books that have to be sent home.*

J: So, if a child takes a book home and they lose the book, what does the child do. Do they come to school the next day with no book. (laughter). Have you had your children ever brought a book home and lost it?
P3: If he or she comes with books home and it gets lost, this textbook he has to pay to replace the book.
J: And does he come to school the next day, does he still come?
P3: He comes to school.
J: But then he has to pay for the book.
P4/T: Before the pupil goes with the book to home it is the parent who comes to sign for the book.

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J: So the parent comes to sign. So do you lose many books?
P4/T: No, not so many.
J: So there are no children who are taking books home and losing them, then they get scared and they don't come back to school. Or they transfer because they've lost books and they think I can't go back to that school. It's not something that happens?
P4/T: Just for the book, if the book is lost the parents will come – my son or daughter has lost a book, please give me time to pay for the book.

'Yes, sometimes we give them the books but sometimes, because maybe the number or the books we have cannot cater for every child to go with one, but they can share. I can take every desk then I assign one person who is in charge, who will go with it at home, but others will copy from that book when they are still in school' (T3)

J: Has anyone else completely lost a book so that it is gone, kabisa? No, not yet. Do you know someone who has lost a book?
Pup11: Like X in our class and her deskmates, they lost the English teacher's textbook.
J: Oh dear, and then what happened?
Pup11: The teacher told them to look for it but they did not found it so the teacher said if you have not found it, you're supposed to go and buy another one or you'll, if you have another textbook of English, you'll take to him. So the teacher left them and they did not even bring.
J: No? So now you have one less English book. So, on their desk do they not have a book?
Pup11: No, they use the book of the desk in front of them.

'You get the same books but if you need any textbook you just come and sign and you'll be given any book that you want and at the end of the day you return or you'll just be given a week and you return and sign' (Pup2)

Corporal punishment.

An unexpected issue that surfaced during discussions with pupils is the presence of corporal punishment in one school. Corporal punishment is forbidden in public schools. For the children who were interviewed they saw this as a positive feature of NFS, interpreting punishment as 'discipline' and reflecting the teachers' commitment to making them succeed. In contrast, according to the pupils, in a public school the teachers cannot be bothered to discipline the children. It is likely that the children who were interviewed represent the more accomplished children and that pupils who struggle

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academically or have more difficult home backgrounds, may face more frequent corporal

punishment.

> ▪ *Being 'disciplined' by a teacher is seen as positive by pupils and refers to being punished, sometimes by beating or caning.*

J: So when you say discipline, what do you mean discipline?
Pup2: Behavior, you see children speak Kiswahili, they don't speak English. They abuse teachers. The way when they meet, passing them, they just abuse and throw stones, but you find here (*in an NFS rather than a public school*) when a teacher sees you, just in discipline cases you'll get very thorough punishment, that is why we are disciplined.
J: You'll be given a punishment?
Pup2: Yes, punishment, a very tough punishment.
Pup1: Just punishment to make you come up, you see that this thing that I did was wrong so I have to do it the correct way.
J: What have you ever done wrong?
Pup1: No, if you are doing such behaviors.
J: But have you done something wrong once?
All: No
J: Never?
All: Yes.
J: What did you do wrong, tell me (laughter)
Pup2: It was just in class I was fighting with my friend when I was given a very thorough punishment and I never repeated it again. Yes (*laughter*).
Pup3: For me it was in Class 1 that I was indisciplined, I would sneak out, not going to school, round around, then I go home for lunch then I go back to play. One day I was found by Mr X and he caned me as a punishment.

J: And Pup4, have you sometimes done something wrong?
Pup4: In Class, they used to beat us when we failed exam, maybe we have been told something and we fail it and then they punish you.

J: And what other reasons do children stop coming to school for? Do they stop coming if they don't want to do their homework – what if you don't do your homework?
Pup10: When you do not do your homework we are being given discipline.
J: What does that mean?
Pup10: We are being beaten
Pup11: Punished

In conclusion, the provision of books to supported NFS acts as a motivator for parents to

send their children to such schools and for pupils to work hard to stay in a school that has

books. However, the reality in the context of fee-paying NFS is that there are only two

ways to survive: a child either has to have someone to pay the fees or appeal to the school

to allow them to stay without paying. In cases where fees become problematic, a child

with stronger academic performance is more likely to attract the support of a sponsor, even when the sponsor is the school itself. The conditions that lead to a child dropping out of school are many, occur frequently, and are readily recounted by all respondents, which suggest that levels of drop out are more substantial than schools initially acknowledge.

Outputs and Performance

Row 3, Table 10: Sensitizing Concepts Around the Operationalistaion of MoE Support in Terms of Advantages and Disadvantages

FARRELL'S FOUR DIMENSIONS OF EQUALITY	Indications of Advantage (and greater equality)	Indications of Disadvantage (and less equality)
OUTPUTS *Equality of output* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will learn the same things to the same levels at a defined point in the schooling system.	- *increase in number of trained teachers* or more stability in teaching staff because teaching materials available - increased *number of KCPE candidates* per school and average performance improved - *teachers more confident* in subjects, able to cover more of the curriculum, better able to answer pupils questions because of textbook provision, better use of class time, setting homework etc - *pupils more confident* (Eg. understand more, able to get more answers from teachers or books, able to study independently or do homework) because of textbook provision - successful lobbying of MoE for *exam center status* of supported NFS (leads to more pupils being able to sit exams because don't need to travel or being able to do	- pupils needing to stay in *school for longer hours or more days* to use the textbooks/do homework - pupils experiencing *'do page ...' style of teaching* or more time left alone by teacher with books - more stringent academic or financial criteria for transition into higher classes (ie. *higher repetition rates or higher rates of coerced transfer* into other schools) because academic performance in supported schools is being more closely monitored by MoE - *deterioration in teacher pupil ratio* because NFS gets more grant if more pupils or because high demand for supported NFS over non-supported - *lowering of teacher morale* because untrained in use of textbooks or greater school/parent pressure to deliver exam results

	better because familiar setting)	
	- successful lobbying either by parents to the NFS or by the NFS to the MoE for *exemption of exam fees* for poorer children or all pupils of NFS	

Indications of greater advantage/greater equality.

Teacher capacity/stability.

Teachers report greater confidence in their teaching both as a result of the books and also through short training activities received from the Ministry. One Headteacher reports greater stability in teachers although this may also be due to the fact that the school has been able to increase the number of months of the year in which teachers are paid – prior to the government support teachers were not paid during the school holidays.

> • *Availability of books boosts teachers' morale and confidence, by improving teaching and employment conditions.*

> *J: With this ministry support since 2005, do you think either the morale of your teachers has changed or the stability of your teaching force? Which way has it worked? How is their morale since getting the Ministry support?*
> HT 1: It was higher
> *J: Morale has gone up?*
> HT 1: Yes, it's gone up. Because this money is meant for the books now the teacher was struggling to get maybe a textbook from another school, from somewhere, to come and teach or maybe teaching without the books. Now, he has a book, it has boosted the morale for sure, it has really boosted. Because also to the management, we were like, every year we sit down and say how many books, like a quarter or a half of the school fees we would go and buy textbooks, now we can say, let us now pay a teacher during the holidays because in the holidays, with us, most of the NFS, they don't pay during the holidays
> *J: Ah, the teachers, but do they come to school or they are off?*
> HT 1: No, they are off
> *J: So then the teachers in NFS have no money in the holidays?*
> HT 1: Yes, they have no money. So, we can now plan for them, so we can say now this December they are going home for Xmas, let us give them their salary, now we can budget for that, yes.

> 'In fact that (confidence) is the most important with the teacher, we rely on the books because whatever we learned maybe it is not in the syllabus' (T3)

'Yes, the books came and found me there. Now, let's talk about the time I went there without books. It was a very rough time. Sometimes we used to teach using past papers, we didn't have these IM so you just go and buy exam papers so you start scheming and lesson planning using exam papers. You don't have the syllabus, don't have whatever so until the time we acquired the syllabus then we started using the exam papers and the syllabus to scheme and lesson plan. It was very, very difficult until the time the government chipped in, they saw a reason why they should sponsor even the non-formal sector. And we do appreciate for their assistance as it does really improve the academic standard of the non-formal sector' (T1)

'My experience is that they are now (with the books) working very hard, the teachers, for the improvement of the school. Pupils are passing well and joining government schools' (P1)

KCPE Candidates.

There is evidence to suggest that the number of KCPE candidates in supported NFS is increasing. However, pupils also report repeating Standard 8 so it is not clear if this is a net increase in candidates.

- *Numbers of KCPE candidates increasing in supported NFS year on year, but some candidates repeat the exam.*

'They are not, but what happens is, but now they are improving now. Initially we would have, initially we started with 6 (*KCPE candidates*) we came to around 10, 11 but the number is improving and is now 20. So the upper classes, you see it's one the element of confidence, the element of performance has to come in for you to have the good number in the bigger classes' (HT 2)

'Yes, like last year, the number that we have now, the current number we are having now it is a bit far, we cannot compare it with last year's number. This one is increasing, no last year's candidates they were 20, the same this year also we have 20, but we also did what we call elimination, we were getting at least those people who can manage that class, that is why some we took back to Class 7, the people who cannot compete, that is not the compete that they could not understand, but we were seeing that their standard cannot fit to that. Because we teacher we believe that if in any case you are teaching a child that is not fitting in that class, you are doing more harm than good to the child. Now we believe that the child should belong to her standard or his standard' (T3)

Teachers' confidence.

Teachers report greater confidence, especially in the area of covering the curriculum and planning. One teacher refers to being able to improve his own knowledge through the

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books and others value being able to refer to more than one source of information to compare notes.

- *Teacher confidence increased.*

HT 1: But for me, the books have really helped untrained teachers because the teaching guides are there and once this untrained teacher comes and finds somebody like me he is trained, it is a matter to prepare the schemes of work and the lesson plans and how to manage time, that is it.
J: So you teach them lesson planning and schemes of work and management of time even before the books or you've been doing that since the books.
HT 1: Even before the books because there is what we call probation, one month, he is not a teacher yet. We say you are coming here, you are untrained so we are going teach you on how to teach first, for one full month. Teach you how to prepare the schemes of work, teach you on how to prepare the lessons plans, lesson notes and then from there we'll take you to class and listen to your ability, how you can talk and that is it. And from there we can gauge somebody, if he is a teacher or not.
J: And then with the book as well in support they can do everything.
HT 1: Yes, so without a book, without textbooks it is very difficult to put this teacher into the system. Now, they are seeing the syllabus, they can't go beyond - (*opens hands*)

'Now from then, from now it is now enlightening our works. And also when you talk about the performance, we saw it is also increasing or is now uplifted. It has lifted the performance, because I was teaching Science in Class 8 last year and we saw the product of the books. Because they were using the varieties, for example, like Mathematics and Science lessons you cannot go with one particular book, you go with a variety. Because we have different authors with different intentions, people are doing different research that is now, from that we saw that when we were using varieties of books you get different ideas then you frame them, then they become one point' (T3)

'You become more, for example, I'm a language teacher when I started teaching that I was not good in communication but I improved my communication skills through teaching, communicating with pupils everyday. Scheming and lesson planning, everything is recorded. So you put your language in order by reading those books, those teacher guides and so on' (T1)

'They get the information from those who are trained, at least those have the idea, we get the information from there, they teach us and once you have been taught at least you can learn now to make plan' (T2).

Pupils' confidence.

Pupils report being able to go back to the books if they have not understood the teacher, being able to re-read material in the books, being better able to do their homework as

they don't have to spend so much time searching for a book and being able to study independently if a teacher is absent.

- *Pupils able to take more control over their learning with access to books.*

'OK, it helps us a lot because for the first time we were not having textbooks, you were to buy yourself and if your Mum doesn't have any money, you move from place to place to ask for a book in order to get the classwork or the homework. You see you could even borrow, some of them they can say I'm using my textbook I won't give it out. So, it was hard for us to cope up with the homework or the classwork because sometimes the teacher usually gets tired of writing on the board. So, later on we got good news that books had been brought. We were happy because of the government thought about us now' (Pup5)

J: You think your records will show an academic improvement.
HT 2: Improvement, yes. Based on your Standard 8 it's showing and I hope the other classes will still show the same.
J: And how long did that take, say from when you got the books, when did you first notice the improvement, was it a year later?
HT 2: A year, an academic year. At least we noted. And we have story books with us and once pupils get to read their story books they're improving also their communication. We can now really communicate well with them in English, than before. They are now getting that reading skills, they are now able to get the reading skills and even the reading culture, it is now being created. You see initially you have to develop the reading culture and if they don't have the materials to read they cannot develop that. But we see now they are developing that urge of saying can I get another story book, I have read this and all that. So they develop that reading culture that will be good for them in the future. And also we have noted an improvement in terms of enrollment. We haven't really, the enrollment has been on the rise ever since the FPE.

'Really, this school is nice, because when you look at our library you can see it has lots of books. We are also happy that the government has provided for us textbooks. When the teacher is teaching the books can help you, when you are given homework instead of moving from place to place searching for a textbook to do the work' (Pup6)

'Maybe for example, lastly, before the books were brought it was that difficult because even the child would go home without homework. It was a hard time, but right now, being that the books are there that is a very good time and we get it easy to give them, even after giving the classwork, we offer the homework. They go with them. At times they also brought the books, they go and read at home. So it has assisted and I think from there we are seeing the improval. The class performance is that good compared to last year' (T2)

'I can say that the time there were no textbooks the teacher could come in class, explain the notes but you could not understand. Now you could get a problem to understand those notes. From now, if a teacher explained the notes and you're not getting anything you can go to the textbook and refer those notes again' (Pup4)

Exam center status.

There is a general acknowledgement that more schools have been considered for exam status since the relationship with the MoE has improved and all schools benefit from this as a school with exam status plays host to candidates from schools that do not have exam center status.

- *Greater acceptance of NFS as potential exam centers.*

HT 2: Yes, there is also another thing. Exam centers, it is easier now, we have more exam centers than before. Initially you would maybe come to one center, you overcrowd there, maybe 10 schools and all that but right now at least there is also that support. And we are also happy that one of our secondary schools, the one you visited there School X, is also having a secondary examination center. That's the first one. But we hope that the government will still look into that and extend that to at least other secondaries that are deserving also.

HT 1: No, no, we used to sit for the same, same exam but they were not being allowed in public schools. We were sitting the same, same exams but they didn't recognize
J: The MoE didn't recognize the results?
HT 1: We were told, no, no, we don't know, they can call other students from other public primary schools and when it comes to NFS, not taken. But now, they are taking
J: And since when is that?
HT 1: 2008, or 2007, I think it came latest in 2008. Because 2007 it was tough, we almost had parents fighting us, saying my child has scored 380, he has not received a letter, what's happening? A parent goes up to Nyayo House, PDE's office, they say no, no, we are giving first priority to public schools. They say what about us, this child who has learned though challenges in Mathare, no desk, sitting down and one who has gone to public school sitting where, eh, with full facilities, this one has got even more books. No light and he has scored 385, give him the first priority. They said, no, no, no, according to the government, public schools have priority.
J: So now it's just done equally on performance, do you think, or is there still some kind of selection process do you think?
HT 1: There's now equal selection
J: It's equal? It's just on your score?
HT 1: I've not learned, because like a child in a NFS they had 320 marks, he was not able to get a school, 320. They were not called so I don't know whether they are using quota system, I don't know. Because I heard some of the Headteachers saying from the public schools, that they should use quota system. I think
that's the reason why the government still or, I don't know, somebody in the Ministry or in the City Education Dept, are still calling us private. Because sometimes they think NFSs are performing well.Somebody somewhere maybe does not want to reveal that one to somebody, that we are performing well. So he says, these are private schools'

Exam fees.

Since the strengthening of the MoE relationship with NFS, the exam fees to sit KCPE

have been halved to equal that of public school candidates.

▪ *Exam fees for NFS reduced to equal those applied in public schools.*

'Number 2, the issue of exams, now they have allowed us, we are sitting for the same
exams, common exam and when it comes to KCPE they used to charge, long time ago,
NFS, double, now when they came
to understand what we are doing, we are now paying the same as the public schools' (HT
1)

Indications of greater disadvantage/less equality.

Hours in school.

Children in NFS are in school for long hours, from 7 am - 3 pm in pre primary, 7 am – 4

pm in lower primary and from 6 am – 6 pm in upper primary. This may be advantageous

for those who have no other role at home or who have parents who are absent for long

hours. It may be less advantageous for those who cannot afford to be in school such long

hours as this is when the children are given tuition and do their homework.

▪ *Pupils may be required to stay in school for long hours, especially in the upper
classes.*

'Six there, now six we hope that all parents are now in, sincerely now, an extraordinary
case, where a person is doing overtime, but the normal working hours now the parents are
home. When the child goes at home and join them the child is to the right hand, than
leaving the child roaming around here in these slum estates. It takes a bit, we have so
many challenges facing them here. Those are now the factors' (T3)

Pup1: Lessons end at 3.10.
J: So from 3.10 til 6 pm, you're studying at school?
All: We have study groups.
J: Who organizes the groups, the children or the teachers?
Pup1: Both, children and teachers. They organize so there you'll be there with someone
you've won him or her in something and she knows something more than you so you
exchange your ideas.

Teachers' use of books.

Generally there seems to be evidence that the teachers are still engaging in the children's school work even with the support of books and that children are not being left to study alone anymore than they were before the government support. There is less writing on the chalk board, which may be an advantage as the boards are in poor condition and difficult to read. The daily presence of the Headteacher, involvement of the SMC and frequent visits to the school and classroom of the parents appears to be effective in keeping teachers on their tasks. However, as the disbursement of grants has not been regular and enrollment levels have increased, the provision of books is not at an optimum level.

- ***Books ease the work of teachers.***

T4: We had been using the books so we had to choose what we knew would be best for the kids.
J: So what difference has that made to your teaching?
T4: To a teacher, I think the books are helpful because now my children can get access to what we've been teaching on the blackboard.
J: So do they read for themselves, the Standard 1?

T4: We have those that can read a whole story book but I also have those that I'm still assisting.
J: So the books have helped them to learn to read? And you as a teacher, how does it help you?
T4: It has easened my work now that I can have more books for references, just like before when I only used to have one book.
J: And in Class 1 do they have homework?
T4: I normally give them.
J: And where do they do their homework.
T4: I write on the blackboard and they copy in their books.
J: And then they do the homework at home.
T4: They do it at home.
J: And do you give them homework every day?
T4: Two homeworks every day.
J: I'm glad I'm not in your class. When do you find the time to mark it?
T4: Marking? When they come in the morning, after having given the lesson out.

'OK, they are kept in the office, in the first office, so when a teacher wants to go in her class to teach he or she must carry books with her and then on the table, since the books are few the books have to be shared among the pupils, so we can read from the book, the pupils can read from the blackboard so it is very easy' (P4/T)

The problem is that the number is increasing, books are going down, the number of books is decreasing and the number of pupils is increasing, now sharing, how – the ratio of pupil per books is increasing. Now you find that there is that problem' (T1)

Academic pressure.

There is an indication that the pressure to perform academically has increased as the average performance of the supported NFS has risen. This may impact negatively on less academically suited children and there appear to be very few educational alternatives for these children.

- *Academic pressure can lead to class repetition and school drop outs.*

'So that's how they are pulling out but if they were not to pull out there would be the same number now from St 1 up to Class 8, the same number. But during that time I'm also convinced, when you are now in those higher classes, reading becomes too much. Yes, the load is too much, and therefore when now, you find that is too much, you can't stand it, for them. So, they walk away or they persuade their parents to do what, to move into other schools where they might think it will be softer. They find it is too hard there than it is here, so they decide now they can't make it, they fall out' (Dir 1)

P1: Mostly the ones that don't have good marks, due to repeating, they keep repeating, they fall out. Then they go to look for work.
J: It seems to me that the ones that do well, they stay.
P1: They progress. But the one who fails, they just drop out before they complete.

'I can say, like class 8 this year, after we did examinations some of them failed, they got 100 and 250 and below so they were forced to repeat. The teachers called the parents after talking to the parents the children also agree to repeat, they are not allowed to run away from home because they have failed, they are just encouraged to repeat so that they can get something from back and come and queue in their classes' (Pup2)

'If it is now we just say we want the marks, if we were to go for the marks, then most will be dropping because of that. We do encourage them to stay even if they are not getting 250 because there are some cases where as much as the academics may be low but other things are changing inside them which are not measured, so we would like to say continue, they are developing in another area also' (HT 2)

Teacher to pupil ratios.

Teacher:pupil ratios are deteriorating in supported NFS and appear to have risen beyond an advantageous level in the younger classes. One pupil reports having 66 children in a

class and a teacher reports experiencing an increase to 52 pupils from four in her class over the last five years. The classrooms in NFS are generally much smaller than those in a public school because the buildings were not created to act as schools and no standards are enforced to regulate the size of classrooms.

- *Class sizes increasing in supported NFS.*

'J: Excellent, it's very exciting. So, tell me about any other changes that have happened in the school since FPE.
T4: Since it started we have seen an increment of children coming, because I was here when the school started. In fact in my class I only had 4 children, when it started. And now it is now in Standard 6 or that.
J: And in your class now you have 52. And many of them came since FPE.
T4: And they are still coming, there is no space where we can keep them, but they are still coming.
J: And what happens, does the school admit them or do they turn them away?
T4: When there is no space they just have to go because we cannot accommodate them in one class, it would be congested.

J: How many are in your class, do you know how many are in your class?
Pup10: In total we are 66 pupils
'Some teachers had problems in copying the work they were introducing or we were learning so they had to write among a multitude of pupils, for example, 60s there. Those were pupils, he had to write on the blackboard, now I can say that we have textbooks which we use per desk' (Pup4)

Teacher morale.

Teacher morale is higher with books than without. There are examples of great dedication and commitment amongst teachers. Many have come from being untrained teachers in the public primary schools, where the impact of the FPE initiative is that schools are no longer allowed to ask parents to contribute to additional teacher salaries. These teachers earned approximately 4-5,000 Ksh in a public primary school and now earn between 3,000 – 4,000 Ksh on a less regular basis in a NFS. In one case the school has been able to pay teachers during the school holidays since the government has been funding the

provision of books. Other teachers are asking that the government provide some payment

to them for the contribution they are making.

> ▪ *Teachers face uncertainty over payment, may be more financially secure in a supported NFS and would like to see the government provide a contribution to their salaries.*

> 'Yes, it's gone up (*teacher morale*). Because this money is meant for the books now the teacher was struggling to get maybe a textbook from another school, from somewhere, to come and teach or maybe teaching without the books. Now, he has a book, it has boosted the morale for sure, it has really boosted. Because also to the management, we were like, every year we sit down and say how many books, like a quarter or a half of the school fees we would go and buy textbooks, now we can say, let us now pay a teacher during the holidays because in the holidays, with us, most of the NFS, they don't pay during the holidays. So, we can now plan for them, so we can say now this December they are going home for Xmas, let us give them their salary, now we can budget for that, yes' (HT 1)

> 'You find that as parents the school fees is a bit little, it's 350 per month. So, not all the parents can pay at once, it has to go for almost, for more than the expected days. For example, 15th the parent can get some money and he or she comes and pays the school fees and that one delays the teachers' salaries' (P4).

> 'Well, I, as a teacher, I need much more, much more expectation. From the government, now some of us are not trained in this institution. But we are delivering, why can't the ministry allocate some of the payments now the salaries, even if means a half of what the government teacher is getting. Why can't the MoE at least think about a non-formal teacher, yeah, this person who is teaching and he is delivering. He is not trained but he is delivering. When you'll come, they are sitting for the same exam, public pupils and private pupils are sitting for the exam. And private pupils are even performing much better, so why can't the Ministry allocate some funds to at least motivate these teachers' (T1)

Further school based findings on outputs and performance.

Performance.

The performance levels are reported by the schools to have improved since the support

from the MoE began. The school records for the two schools in this study show more

candidates sitting the exams each year and a general increase in the top exam score each

year. However, the mean scores do not show any consistent increase over time. These

data indicate the possibility that while individual pupils have been able to perform better

over the years, whether because of the introduction of textbooks, additional personal effort or any other unknown factors, the exam performance levels of the class as a whole have not been raised in a similar way.

Table 19: Performance Data, Nairobi

KCPE performance of a supported NFS over time, schools included in this study:

Supported NFS, school 1:

Year	Candidates	Mean	Highest
2008	25	282	367
2007	21	312	365
2006	21	306	366
2005	19	264	345

Supported NFS, school 2:

Year	Candidates	Mean	Highest
2009	20	282	374
2008	11	266	375
2007	6	307	365

Across 193 Public Schools in Nairobi
2007: Highest KCPE Score: 369.69/ Lowest 176.33

Across 158 Private School in Nairobi, which include NFS
2007 Highest KCPE Score: 409.93/ Lowest 191.39

Source: City Council Education Department. Trial KCPE analysis, 2007

Repetition.

Repetition of classes is a major issue in the supported NFS. All the pupils interviewed have repeated at least one class since joining primary school. Amongst the older children, those in Standards 7 and 8 and those from Form 1 (secondary), there is frequent reference to themselves or others repeating Standard 8. This means that they have sat their primary

school leaving exams, KCPE, once and are now repeating that class to have a second attempt. The intention is to improve their score so that they are in a better position (either through a better exam mark or because finances becoming available) to go on to secondary school.

> ▪ *Class repetition is a common occurrence and pupils also repeat the final year of the primary cycle, ie. sit their primary certificate exam more than once.*

> T3: Yes, possibly, the government still allows that (*repeating the last year of primary and re-sitting the KCPE*). I am seeing the government is still allowing that. Maybe if you don't perform well or maybe, you are because we are living in a society where every person is not equal, maybe the child performed well but the parents cannot cater for the fee, from there the child will just like to come back and rewind and, yani[12], to try the next chance maybe tomorrow – anything that is today will not be tomorrow. Yes, maybe tomorrow will be a better place than today.

> 'I can say, like class 8 this year, after we did examinations some of them failed, they got 100 and 250 and below so they were forced to repeat. The teachers called the parents after talking to the parents the children also agree to repeat, they are not allowed to run away from home because they have failed, they are just encouraged to repeat so that they can get something from back and come and queue in their classes' (Pup2)

> *J: And how do children feel about that, how do you feel when you have to repeat. Has everyone repeated here*

> All: yeah
> Pup2: It's hard when someone repeats it but after sometime you just experience, it is good, the experience is good and you just see the aim of repeating is you are going to get something, but it is very hard to repeat, you feel it.
> *J: How do you feel when you have to repeat?*
> Pup1: Really as for now you know, around us, there are some people who are after me. They see I am big, I am still in primary but I don't care. So, even repeating it is very hard but you just have to understand your parent, you understand what he is going to tell you so you can achieve what you want.
> *J: But do some feel bad and then they want to go home. Some may not be as strong as you?*
> Pup1: Somebody like me, you know I like counseling, we counsel each other. So, I just call him or her and we sit down and we exchange ideas. So after we have exchanged the ideas she or he may go there, get to that place where he is a bit happy.

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[12]*Yani* is a Kiswahili word used to mean 'like', as in 'for example'.

Conclusion.

On the whole people value schooling and see the acquisition of formal qualifications as a benefit, as a route out of Mathare and a step towards wider opportunities. Parents wish to see their children achieve more than themselves and children are ambitious, striving to avoid the fates of those they see around them. Parents are making difficult decisions about their children's education and choose between the provisions on offer, weighing up the economic costs against the anticipated educational outputs.

MoE engagement with NFS is associated with greater opportunities for pupils in NFS to sit exams either because more schools have achieved exam status or because the exam fees have been reduced. There is also evidence to suggest that the provision of books has strengthened academic performance by enabling teachers to plan their teaching in a more comprehensive and methodical way and providing children with an independent means of studying.

However, there are also indications that improvements in exam performance is accompanied by increased academic pressure, resulting in longer hours in school and higher levels of class repetition. While teachers may benefit from having access to more teaching resources this advantage may be undermined by a deterioration in the teacher:pupil ratio. There is also evidence to suggest that while teachers' confidence may have risen with greater access to teaching and learning resources, they may also have raised expectations of government contributions to their salaries in recognition of their efforts and academic successes.

Outcomes and Transition

Row 4, Table 10: Sensitizing Concepts Around the Operationalistaion of MoE Support in Terms of Advantages and Disadvantages

Farrell's Four Dimensions of Equality	Indications of Advantage *(and greater equality)*	Indications of Disadvantage *(and less equality)*
OUTCOMES *Equality of outcome* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling (have equal incomes, have jobs of roughly the same status, have equal access to sites of political power, etc).	- greater access to *MoE support for transition to secondary school* (eg. NFS pupils in supported schools recognized for selection quota into secondary schools or access to secondary school bursaries)	- *continued poor transition or worsening of transition rates* (may also manifest itself as inability to stay in secondary school) - *parent and pupil disillusionment with NFS* despite government support, perhaps in response to heightened expectations from the support (ie. employment or academic transition) - worsening of/ greater neglect of other *forms of NFE provision*

Indications of greater advantage/greater equality.

MoE support for transition.

The MoE is supporting transition in terms of incorporating supported NFS into its bureaucratic systems. Children who have studied in a supported NFS now pay the same exam fees as candidates from public schools and are reported to be considered in the same manner as pupils from public schools for places in secondary school.

- *NFS now pay the same level of exam fees as public schools.*

J: OK, sounds very good. And what about transition, how many do you think do go to secondary school?
P2: At least 50%, yeah 50%. Like last year we were lucky enough, we had one girl who was sponsored by Jomo Kenyatta Foundation and another one by Lewa Watoto. They agreed to educate them until university level so we were happy about that.

HT 2: Yes, there is, there are certain issues that we have got like selection of Standard 8 to join Form 1. Initially our pupils could not be selected but now they are being selected. Yes, now they are being selected to join Form 1 just like the public schools.
J: And do you think it's a fair selection, it's just based on performance. You're comfortable with that? And they're selected into public schools?

HT 2: Yes, it's based on performance. Once you have your achievement – yes, they are selected into public schools. That's an achievement we would say. It's for us to fight and the child to get the required marks, he joins the provincial, the national and all that, regardless of where he is coming from. That's also an achievement, there's a waiver on the examination fee also. Because initially they were charging double, just like the private ones, but we went to argue it out and say these ones are still like the other normal children, they had to waive it.

There is some caution here, with some indications that the tension between NFS and public school over the right for NFS to receive government support is not fully resolved. This may translate into problems surrounding access to secondary schools through the national selection process.

- *Competition for the limited number of places in secondary schools is very high throughout Kenya.*

'So, support of transition into secondary has been very poor, particularly secondary NFSs, comparing the two. No support has been received from the government and you see in every year you hear that there there are 680 candidates for KCPE, they are only admitting 320 in public schools. Where are the others? They are in private schools, when I say private schools, they take very few, very few. They cannot take more than, say 100,000. (This is 680,000 sitting for KCPE and 320,000 go into secondary). Sitting for KCPE, yeah, secondary public schools. Where are these others? They have not also realized that these people are somewhere in schools down there in the slums, see, now when we apply for support, for Free Secondary, they say you are private, and when we are not private, we are not' (HT 1)

'We still have problems with bursary whereby under the bursary they are still calling us private. So according to them, private schools are not supposed to be given bursary but what I am trying to tell them there is no difference between a child in a private school and a child in a public school and then, this is not a private school. For example, when you are asking somebody in secondary 1,000 shillings per month and that there 1,000 somebody is as a graduate teacher now they are in secondary, he is teaching. He has a family you see, how is he going to survive? And that building is supposed to be paid and also other facilities, they are sitting, like now they are finding some cases for example they are sitting there, there are so many requirements that are required for a school to sit for the final exam. So you must chip in for that, yeah. So now that also becomes a challenge' (HT 1)

Tension also remains around the actual and potential performance of NFS and this tension appears to spill into various issues such as the suitability of NFS teachers as exam invigilators of the national KCPE exams.

- *NFS are not fully accepted by all parts of the MoE and suspicion around their intentions and quality remains.*

'And they are now saying, before the invigilation of the KCPE last year, you know they barred all the NFS teachers from supervising. They said no, these people, they walk around they even inform the students of the answers and whatever and therefore they are not the right people to supervise, just imagine' (Dir 1)

Indications of greater disadvantage/less equality.

Transition.

Demand for secondary school places is still high in Kenya and many thousands of pupils do not get admittance. Supported NFS report an increase in pupils seeking secondary school places but finances are a barrier to access. The majority of children in informal settlements cannot afford to go to a public secondary school, which cost approximately 20,000 Ksh per year. Some have sponsors, others pay less to go to a NFS secondary school. There is a difference appearing between the public and the NFS secondary sectors, with the NFS secondary school sector operating as a second choice alternative to the public secondary schools.

- *NFS secondary schools offer places to pupils who achieve lower exam marks than are needed to enter any public secondary school.*

J: And your transition rate, is that changing, are you having more children transition to secondary school now than before FPE? You're still building aren't you, you're a relatively new school.
HT 2: We are relatively new, in fact the parents are determined regardless, like even last year the ones that scored even 200 and something, which is low, they have joined, but now it depends on the class of schools they are joining also. Because we also have like the government schools, we have provincial schools, we have the district schools, we have the low schools and then the non-formal schools. So like there is a cut off in all areas, these two they went to Provincial schools.
J: Yes, with 374 and 365 that's excellent.

HT 2: They went to Provincial Schools and others went to District Schools but these ones below 250 and
all that, that is now the class where now even the non-formals come in to cater for that class. Because if it were not for that like government would say we only want these marks and the Provincial the cut off is this, and when the cut of is that no more than that, so maybe the non-formal secondary schools that have come up maybe they can improve on that and maybe you have seen at School X, once they get these low marks they still work hard and at the end of it we do receive a positive result.

Parent/pupil disillusionment.

At present there is great optimism among parents and pupils about their futures. All pupils want to score '400 and above' and go to secondary school, then to university or college and become lawyers, doctors, pilots as well as journalists and judges. However, the parents who were interviewed have already received both primary and secondary schooling – they were all Form 4 graduates. Yet these same parents are forced to take work as security guards, hairdressers, teachers in NFS etc and have not been able to escape the informal settlement even with their secondary education. One Headteacher reflected on the current trend of having to study other courses after completing secondary level schooling.

- *High employment expectations may not be met through good primary and secondary exam performance alone.*

J: They all want to be a lawyer or a doctor?
HT 3: Yes, they just want white collar job. And they don't exist, they don't.

'The provision of this FPE and again now recently the free secondary education, with the government taking on that, I tend to believe everybody has now focused on letting their children just finish, just get the certificate for Form 4 and then from there they will go to the market to look for the job, which again, need other courses, what you have learned. Joining the college, the vocational college, or go and do other courses that can help you, is the key. Because after even they are finishing Form 4, you know initially, and they don't qualify to go to university, what is happening, they are going back to start the courses (like diplomas) that they needed to have done when they were younger. Yeah, that is happening' (HT 4)

Kleis' research on socio-economic mobility (1974c) suggests that there may be disappointment and disillusionment in store for the future, if expectations of economic returns and social progression are not met.

Neglect of other forms of NFE.

Given that forms of non-formal education have been available in Kenya in growing numbers since the 1970s and the fact that the MoE recognizes Non-Formal Education Centers as well as Non-Formal Schools, I anticipated finding an overlap or interaction between NFS and NFEC, with some children who drop out of the formal system possibly transferring into more flexible NFECs.

The picture on the ground is more complex and potentially disturbing. Respondents, who were identified for their engagement with NFS and not NFECs, presented a view of declining government provision of traditional non-formal education. It appears that non-state providers are more likely to establish schools offering the formal curriculum than non-formal training, even though they may recognize the value of NFE and be interested in providing this training. This may be because the cost of establishing and running a NFEC is perceived to be higher than those associated with offering the formal curriculum. There is also less government support to NFECs than to schools that are offering the 8-4-4.

- *Declining NFEC provision.*

'At one time, if someone can get an average and does not even join Form 1 that one can help that somebody for even to go for these technical things, technical studies. At least he can sit somewhere, learn of tailoring, learn welding, something like this. Maybe they can do better than in classroom. That's why we are saying in the old days, when these technical things, I don't know why the government had to abolish it, it was very good.

Because somebody was feeling he is also expert somewhere, like somebody was doing carpentry can make a very good chair, but when in class can do nothing' (Dir 1)

HT 3: Initially in Kenya we had Youth Centers where the kids would go, they have some little bit of formal, basic literacy skills.
J: Like functional literacy?
HT 3: Yeah, just that, and then they are given, maybe they are taught a trade. So with that basics then they go straight into maybe learning a trade, for example carpentry, tailoring and all that. So, with the demise of the Youth Centers I think this is when the Non-Formals moved in to fill that gap.
J: Those Youth Centers were government run? And they were called Youth Centers or they were called Non-Formal?

HT 3: They were called Youth Centers. They were quite a number and that is where the government actually, it had set up some Centers, all over Nairobi, where those people would go there. And to learn something, literacy skills, basic, and then they were taught some things.
J: And those closed, when did they close?
HT 3: OK, some are tottering on the brink of closure, but most of them have closed down due to financial constraints.
J: And that's where you think the NFSs have come up.
HT 3: OK, some non-formal schools moved into those premises but now they were not doing what the Youth Centres were doing, so they took over. But NFSs have mainly come up because mainly the government schools cannot absorb all the kids, it cannot. And also with the other issue of unemployment on the rise, you find that now here is a teacher, this teacher is trained, has experience but he does not have a job. So what do you expect, he just collects a few kids here and there, puts them in a room and starts running a school. So the NFSs have come in to fill in the gap that, of these kids that are not absorbed by the public schools.

'Many no, there are some, but a few. Most of them are NFS' (HT 2)

▪ *Possible, unsupported interest from NFS to offer more vocational or technical subjects.*

5 M Int: We have not detected any friction between the two and in fact, what we have noted, what I noted recently personally is that a lot of NFS would like to become NFEC. They would also like to become NFEC so that they could provide much more than the academic. They would, if it were possible.
J: And what stops them. What's the biggest problem?
5 M Int: What stops them is lack of funds.
J: For buildings or. . . ?
5 M Int: For equipment, for buildings. For example, there's one school that told us recently they would want to do some carpentry but then that requires expensive machinery which they don't have. Teachers who can teach that course, they don't have the teacher. So those are the challenges. Otherwise they would want to, because they know a lot of these children in the slums … in fact some of them would want to just reach Class 8 and then proceed to vocational training but then they are not able to offer that, which they know would be very attractive to the slum children after Class 8.

Despite this lack of NFE provision, many respondents recognize the need for an alternative to formal education and appreciate the role it plays in equipping young people who do not perform well in the classroom with other income-earning skills.

- *Recognition of the role played by NFEC.*

'Yes, sometimes (*children drop out*). Those may be the few who are grown up and they don't want to continue with the formal education, the 8-4-4 system. They decide to go to do mechanic in NFECs like Undugu Society' (HT 1)

'Yes, there's a problem there. Because you see we sometimes also see there might be that, not all of them can be the same, even at a primary level after finishing Class 8 there are those ones who, academic work, they can't do it. And the best option for this child is to go for a skilled course, a vocational course, which may help him be self-employed. But if this child is insisted to go to the secondary to continue learning, whether he completes or not, may not really be able to sustain himself in the future' (HT 4)

'So basically that is the problem that we are having and you find that our society, and I believe it is Africa in general, you realize that we are so much on this issue of education, academics, academics, we don't look into the other fields. Like I'll give you an example, we have some kids even in Class 8 who are not performing academically but when they go to the field for football, very good, when they do acting – the other day we made a small film here, it is being edited. And the kids were excellent in the acting class, so you find they are talented in other areas but I think due to the setup of our community we now believe that all that a child must excel in academics, nothing else' (HT 3 *in a NFS considered private by the MoE because of its higher fee level*)

There is widespread confusion, both on the ground and within the MoE of whether both NFS and NFECs are operating as expected. It is possible that the number of NFECs and the contribution they are making in terms of providing an alternative option to formal schooling is being underestimated because they are confused with NFS. Alternatively the focus of government support towards those institutions offering the formal curriculum may be encouraging NFEC providers to convert their institutions to NFS.

- *Confusion between NFS and NFECs.*

'You know NFS if somebody is not careful they can easily confuse us with the NFEC. . . I remember when we had a workshop with KIE, the day they were now giving us these syllabus, the last minute, if they had given us the minute we entered, we would not have taken part in that meeting. According to them, we belong here, that's why they called us. According to them, we belong here, but we told them we are using 8-4-4 syllabus, that's

how if you go to some government offices they tell you the fail to understand NFS' (HT 1)

'These NFEC, there are very many but most of them are still offering the 8-4-4 system of education, the normal curriculum. Most of them are still offering that one. What they have, is that they don't have facilities to go far with the vocational training so they prefer using the real curriculum that can lead to the testing and placement of the pupils in our secondary schools. Because if they talk of things like carpentry, they require money, which is not available within the community. They are very few which operate outside the normal, academic curriculum' (7 M Int)

'You see there is like a policy that the government is trying to bring up which is the NFE. And when they were preparing this policy much of its consultation was not on the ground. And so there was a big assumption that what we are offering on the ground here is different from what is being offered in a private or public schools. Because they had to, the NFECs, according to them in the policy, it should be maybe pupils who are over age, maybe 13, 14, 18 who didn't get the education during that specified time. And so when they are developing a curriculum to them they are calling it an accelerated curriculum, so that you can take maybe one year and study two classes and all that. So when we looked at the curriculum or syllabus they had put in place it was not favouring us. Because ours are right from maybe 3 years, or 4 years, very young until 14 years and all that' (HT 2)

There appears to be a more intense focus on the provision of the formal curriculum, albeit within these less than formal conditions. The nature of the MoE support to NFS, along with the more recent financial support to secondary education, along with other factors such as the eligibility criteria for receiving other support, (eg. 8-4-4 to get feeding program), is reinforcing this tendency to focus on formal education provision, even if this is not in the best interests of children from these communities.

- *Focus of support on formal, 8-4-4, curriculum.*

'The provision of this FPE and again now recently the free secondary education, with the government taking on that, I tend to believe everybody has now focused on letting their children just finish, just get the

certificate for Form 4 and then from there they will go to the market to look for the job, which again, need other courses, what you have learned. Joining the college, the vocational college, or go and do other courses that can help you, is the key. Because after even they are finishing Form 4, you know initially, and they don't qualify to go to university, what is happening, they are going back to start the courses, like diplomas, that they needed to have done when they were younger. Yeah, that is happening' (HT 4)

'Non-formal' schools should be offering NFE curriculum. The NFS are only non-formal in their utilities because they don't meet the standards that are set. But when it comes to the curriculum, the NFS feel they will be disadvantaged if they follow the NFE

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curriculum so do the formal one. You can't expect them to then compete on funds' (1 M Int)

Conclusion.

To a certain extent, greater access to exams and more thorough preparation for those exams, means that pupils in NFS have higher chances of qualifying for secondary schools. In so far as sponsors exist to cover secondary school fees, pupils in NFS will experience better educational outcomes. However, the government bursary system does not appear to be an effective mechanism to ensure that more pupils from the informal settlements transition into the secondary school system. NFS with primary units are beginning to open more secondary schools in response to an increased demand for secondary school places when the number of government secondary schools is severely limited. Pupils in Form 1 of a secondary level NFS attached to one of the primary NFS in this study had all graduated from public primary schools and had not achieved an academic level that would have gained them access to a public secondary school (ie. exam marks around 50%). There is a danger here that the secondary level NFS may be developing into a second choice tier of secondary school providers, both in terms of parents placing a lower value on NFS secondary schools and in terms of the lower entry qualifications of new enrollees. At a primary level parents place a higher value on the NFS and the system of academic assessment through 'interviews' for new enrollees in supported NFS suggests that primary NFS are still a first choice option over government primary schools.

Much of the focus in the educational sector is on formal education and the MoE engagement with NFS is an example of this emphasis. To the extent that this focus on the

formal sector squeezes out support for non-formal alternatives the interests of children in the informal settlement may not be best served. It is with concern that I notice a disconnection between the expectations that parents and pupils place on formal education and the reality that parents themselves have experienced. The Headteacher at each school selected the parents and teachers to be interviewed, without any selection criteria other than providing a balance in gender, and all the parent representatives and teachers interviewed in this study assert that they have completed their Form 4 education, ie. graduated from secondary school. Their ambition for their children is that they too should complete secondary level education and, through this academic achievement, be able to create themselves a better life outside of the poverty associated with Mathare. However, even with Form 4 qualifications parents have apparently not been able to secure employment that would provide a life outside of Mathare. Without significant changes in employment prospects it is difficult to have confidence that formal schooling will meet the expectations of parents and pupils.

Chapter 8: Non-Formal Schools and the Private Sector

Introduction

The international literature relating to the non-state provision of education frames debates around the public-private dichotomy of providers, largely on the basis of whether organizations are managed or funded by public or private agents. Those who support a stronger private sector role in the provision of schooling assert that non-state provision extends choice within a context of unaccountable and low-quality government education. Those in favour of public schools argue that profit-driven decision-making leads to an inefficient allocation of resources and widens the gap of socio-economic inequality.

In this study I found that the key agents demonstrate rather different and varied ways of thinking in relation to their decision-making about the provision of private and non-state schools and their patronage of the same: MoE officers differentiate between 'private' and 'community-based' providers of NFS across a number of dimensions, including whether the provider is levying an 'reasonable' user-fee, which is used to cover school costs or levying a much higher user fee, which is returning a significant profit to an individual; parents differentiate mainly between government and all other non-state providers and evaluate *all* providers, including public schools, based on the personal costs of school attendance and the perceived value of the education being received, and NFS providers appear to be driven by a desire to stay in business, which has a greater impact on rising enrollment levels and pressure to demonstrate academic performance, rather than increasing user-fee levels. The views expressed by the three groups of MoE officers, parents and NFS providers are presented in turn below.

MoE Assessments of Private and Community-Based NFS

The responses of MoE officers who have engaged with the NFS in Kenya reflect a wide range of arguments used to justify why some NFS should be classified as 'community-based' institutions rather than private schools. These dimensions include: objectives of the institution; ownership and management structures; registration status, and which children are attending the school.

Profit-making objectives versus covering costs.

Private institutions are typically characterised by their profit-making objectives, which are realized by the charging of service fees. MoE officers, however, differentiate between the higher fees charged by so called 'private' NFS and the lower fee levels set by 'community-based' NFS, which are seen to only cover genuine school running costs. The level of the fee charged is seen as the determining factor and as long as costs are genuine and the associated user-fees are held at a 'reasonable' level, MoE officers see no harm in the levying of charges.

- *Community-based NFS seen to 'cover genuine costs' with user fees rather than generating a profit.*

  Referring to teacher salaries, rent, water, watchman etc - 'So the charges are genuine. I don't see the charges are for profit, for business as such' (2 M Int)

  'Yes, I don't see anything wrong in the charges that the non-formal schools make. So long as they are reasonable and they are from the community' (2 M Int)

  'These are pockets of poverty meaning we have the parents preferring the non-formal schools which are relatively very cheap and cheaper here I'm talking mainly 500 Ksh. This money is used to pay the wages, because actually they are paid very little money. Also to pay for the premises, if it is water …… mainly they don't think about the security. And those ones are the non-formal schools. Actually the main thing is the NFS though they are assisted a lot, er, they do not get enough support' (7 M Int)

Ownership and management.

With regard to the ownership of NFS, MoE officers distinguish between schools that are owned by single proprietors and institutions that are owned by many people or several members of the community. As it is difficult for a community to establish a business per se, MoE officers accept the involvement of community members in the running of a school to indicate community ownership.

- *Community-based NFS are owned or managed by more than one individual.*

  'The other thing is they cannot be seen as private schools because they are not solitary owned, they are owned by many people within the community ….' (7 M Int)

  'the non-formal school must be community based, meaning that the community must be involved in the running of the that school for that school to benefit from our funding' (5 M Int)

  'When you come to private schools, those ones are solitary owned, they are owned by individuals' (7 M Int)

Registration status.

MoE officers assert that community based NFS are a separate category of schools by default, because they do not fit the criteria for either public or private schools. Public schools are established, maintained and staffed by the government. Private schools are registered with the MoE as private institutions and, in order to be awarded this registration, have to meet a number of standards such as a minimum area of land, standard sizes of classroom, and health, safety and sanitation standards. It is argued that many of the NFS in the informal settlements cannot, because of their location, meet the criteria for a private school and so cannot be classified as private institutions. Hence the use of the term 'community-based' NFS for those schools that are not public, yet do not meet the registration criteria for a private school. MoE officers accept that NFS are fulfilling a need that the public sector has not managed to address, by providing

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schooling in otherwise inhospitable areas. The involvement of the community in either

establishing or running the school is a critical indicator of endorsement by the community

of the user-fees charged by these schools.

- *Public schools.*

'those ones which are catered for by the government, there the government pays forms of disbursement or money to buy instructional materials and other money to pay for other things like their maintenance and many areas' (7 M Int).

- *Private schools.*

'When you come to private schools, those ones are solitary owned, they are owned by individuals. These schools offer, er, also go on the normal, er, you can also call them the formal schools, the formal schools is because their registration, just like the one for the public, they have to get the, meet the criteria set by the MoE. One thing includes the ownership of land for the required facilities, also need to have qualified teachers, also the sanitary facilities as per the guidelines' (7 M Int)

- *Non-formal schools/community-based.*

'Then we have the non-formal schools. These ones are mainly found in the slum areas and are set up by the community when the community feel that er, need to set up a place where the children are getting, now that is mainly where the nearby public primary schools, there's no space remaining for the… then these schools are also very near to the residential places and due to the insecurity in the slums parents are more comfortable when the children and much near than where they have to trek for a long distance' (7 M Int)

Serving the poor and disadvantaged.

One of the most challenging dimensions of the justification for categorizing some NFS as

community-based institutions focuses on the children who attend these schools. MoE

officers assert that the children going to these NFS are, in an absolute sense,

disadvantaged and therefore deserve to receive support from the government. The

officers maintain that these children, many of whom fall into categories of vulnerability

such as being orphans, should be supported irrespective of the institution they are

attending. However, the officers do not appear to follow this argument to its natural

conclusion that schooling for such disadvantaged children should not be provided at any cost to those families.

- *NFS are perceived to address the needs of a disadvantaged group of children.*

'even if you went to a private non-formal school that is registered purely as a private school, and you found that 90% of those children are orphans who were not paying fees and what this private person is trying to do is trying to solicit funds from everywhere to feed and educate these children, that's what I'm saying, and why would you not give such children, orphans, books. I mean, what is so private about the orphans?' (5 M Int)

'The government has an obligation to support these schools because we don't have public schools near there and because of the distances, because of the security risks for children who are school age going children, who are very young children, then we need the schools to be closer to children. It is only the NFS that have closed that gap' (2 M Int)

Conclusion.

The thinking of MoE officers around private and community-based status turns the focus of attention away from the objectives of the school provider, and the gains that they derive from running a school or receiving government support, towards the difficulties of supplying schooling in the informal settlements. The central objectives of expanding school access and trying to improve educational quality dominate over concerns of who can afford to pay the cost and what this means from an equity perspective.

While parental involvement is seen as a mechanism that can protect some of the welfare issues of children, there is no evidence to suggest that more or different children gain access to schooling because of the community involvement in the running of the school. Specifically, school fees have not been reduced. Further, other factors that affect educational performance have not been improved through the involvement of parents on the SMC, specifically, class sizes have not been controlled and teacher salaries remain below those of trained teachers in public schools. The findings of this study suggest that

parental involvement is unlikely to address these issues, but these could be influenced through the stronger relationship that MoE representatives have with the NFS since the provision of government grants to some schools.

Views expressed by ministry officers related to the differences between public, non-formal and private schools are summarized in the table overleaf:

	Private Schools	**Non-Formal Schools**	**Public Schools**
		Table 20: Schematic of MoE Conceptualization of NFS in the Context of Public and Private Provision	
Objectives	Run as a business to generate profits *(ie. substantial return over and above attributable direct and indirect costs)*	Run as a community service and covering operating costs *(ie. recovery of attributable direct and indirect costs)*	Fulfilling state responsibility and commitment to Education for All and Millennium Development Goals
Equity and Equality Stance	Available to those who choose not to send their children to public school may choose to pay for a private alternative.	Support the disadvantaged.	Free Primary Education initiative makes primary education free and compulsory for everyone
Management	Sole proprietor	Proprietor and/or community body represented through a School Management Committee	MoE appointed and employed Headteacher and School Management Committee *(as per Education Act)*
Source of Funding	User Fees Private sources	User Fees Benefactors Selective MoE support	Public Funds
Official Registration	Registered with MoE as a private school	Registered with Ministry of Gender (or other ministry) as self-help group	Registered with MoE as a public school
Operating Criteria/Standards	MoE criteria and standards for a private primary school	Do not fall within the MoE criteria and standards for either a public or private school.	MoE criteria and standards for a public primary school
Curriculum	Follows MoE guidelines on what is an approved curriculum	8-4-4	8-4-4
Costs	Unregulated fees Uniform Other costs for activities etc Textbooks may or may not be provided	Fees up to 500 Ksh per month As much uniform as possible Unsupported NFS: parents buy pupil stationery and texbooks where possible Supported NFS: some pupil stationery and textbooks provided by government grants	Uniform (2 sets) Exam or tuition fees Some 'allowable' additional fees Pupil stationery and textbooks provided by government grants

Parents' Decsion-making Around Schooling

From the perspective of officers in MoE, NFS are a category of schools that are different from either public or strictly private institutions. MoE representatives struggle with a definition of NFS that reconciles the fact that NFS levy fees on low-income parents and yet appear to address a need that these parents feel is not met by the public provision of primary schools. Parents, however, view the provision of schooling not as a dichotomy of public versus private provision, but rather as a spectrum of providers who vary in terms of a) cost and b) educational value. Within this decision-making process an element of opportunism exists as various school providers such as NGOs, church bodies and even private NFS, offer some sponored or concessionary places. A child from an informal settlement could, therefore, secure a place in a private school, which levies much higher fees than the family could ordinarily afford.

The amount parents can afford to pay is determined by their economic means, while the educational value placed on a type of school provision is related to evidence around exam performance and a parent's own experience of schooling and subsequent school expectations. Parent representatives in the supported NFS have weighed up the relative costs of attending the NFS with the quality of education being delivered in these schools and have decided that the fee-levying NFS is the best outcome for them. The representatives in this study are satisfied with their choice.

There is an extreme position along both of these two dimensions, positions at which children are most likely to be disadvantaged: those who cannot, because of the

opportunity cost, afford to send their children to any school, (ie. the extremely poor), and those who are not aware of the value of education or who do not perceive it to be of value and are therefore less concerned about sending their children to school. Children from these families are most likely to be out of school. It is noted that people use the term 'private school' loosely and in different ways, but generally refer to government schools as public or city council schools and mean higher fee-charging NFS when they talk of private schools. Some do, however, refer to their own supported and low-cost NFS as a private school.

- *Lack of economic means and low perceived value of education.*

'Yes, I can say that levels, also in Mathare there are levels. There are levels where we find among the poorest there are also the rich. Those who are poor and another one is because of ignorance. They don't want to take their children to school. If you go there and tell them I want to sponsor a child they say, no I'm not poor, leave alone the child. And that is ignorance, so it depends' (HT 1)

- *Families who need their children to try and make a living.*

'Some people, you find that their parents are so poor, they live in slums, that they can't afford the school fees for private (*meaning community-based NFS*) school. So, this makes them to leave school and go and help their parents in the market' (Pup6)

- *Parents who do not perceive value in education.*

'For these ones, the first reason is children are not coming to school, it is not that they cannot pay, they can pay – or it is free in public schools where they can take their kids. But it is, due to single parents, let us say the father is there and the mother is not there, or the mother is there and the father is not there, that's one of the reasons why the children are not going to school. Because they are at home with one parent, he doesn't care, he's just used to his children at home, he doesn't want to take them to school, so let us say it is not that they cannot afford, they can afford and if he cannot afford there is a school like this one or they can take them to public schools, because of some few reasons – maybe it is one parent who is caring for the children or the parents are careless, they don't care or they are drunkards. He goes to work, comes in the evening, doesn't know whether his or her children went to school or stayed at home. So, it's something like that' (P2)

School costs can include actual fees, different levels of uniform compliance, and additional costs such as exam fees. Parents in the informal settlements do not consistently experience public schooling as free, and make their decisions about paying for NFS based on their perceptions of the costs of other alternatives, such as public schools.

> ▪ *Fees charged by NFS are accepted by parents because public schools are not consistently perceived as free.*
>
> 'We're saying that going to a meeting they were only recognizing public and private and basically saying that NFS are private because they charge fees, the answer is, public also charge fees, some of them charge up to 1,000 for tuition, and they are maintaining that they are not private but look at the fee level they charge' (HT 1)
>
> 'Too expensive (*public school*) but though I tried for one child of mine but when it reached the time of FPE the pupils were too many in one class, so it was a problem for a teacher to reach some of them. That is why I preferred the non-formal one' (P2)

At the other end of the scale of costs are the NFS that charge high fees and which the MoE calls 'private'. In addition, schools provided by NGOs or church bodies are experienced as free in the sense that no charges are levied and also offer additional benefits such as free feeding programs and health care. By interviewing key informants in a private NFS and an NGO school, I gained an indication of the range of household incomes in the informal settlements that suggest that the parents sending their children to community-based NFS are neither the poorest nor the wealthiest families in the informal settlements: parents of children who are selected for sponsorship by the NGO school are likely to have no regular form of employment; parents of children who attend a private NFS, charging approximately 2,500 Ksh a month, may run small businesses in the informal settlements and have 'jua kali' (under the hot sun) trades such as in mechanics or welding, and parent representatives interviewed in the community-based NFS were security guards, hairdressers and a teacher in an NFS. A full investigation of the poverty status of families is outside the scope of this study, but the evidence I gathered does

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suggest a spectrum of poverty across the informal settlements and parents sending their

children to community-based NFS are not the poorest families.

- *NGO school parents (no school fees, food provided, healthcare provided, food and vacactions provided).*

HT 4: We have, for example, 50 – that is a list of our orphans, we have quite a number of orphans. And some of them have both parents, others have just one parent, we have very many single parents and some of them are like parents in quotes, because they are so poor and it is like they are also needy themselves. And sometimes they have brought kids there and said 'that is your child', like they are giving them into our hands *J: Like you're an orphanage?*
HT 4: Yes, almost like an orphanage. And for the orphans, they are really, like grandparents, who are also themselves needy, stuff like that.
J*: Do the parents work? Out of your parents, what percentage of them work?*
HT 4: Um, not any proper form of employment.
J: So you don't have any parents who are security guards or hairdressers?
HT 4: We do have a few parents that tailor somewhere with some clothes they are tailoring. And others are selling something somewhere. Others, especially the men, you go out to look for some job, casual labour. They may get, they may not. And stuff like that.

- *Private NFS parents (high fees, some sponsored places).*

J: And then what employment do they have with that education. The parents that bring children here, what kind of work do they do?
HT 3: Some of them are business people, some working in formal and informal sectors.
J: So like kiosks or would it be like taxi company, when you say informal what kind of things?
HT 3: Yes, some run kiosks. When I'm talking about informal I'm thinking about the jua kali[13] business, that is running kiosks and having like a small ka[14] business somewhere, like welding.
J: So maybe mechanic?
HT 3: Mechanic, we are talking about mechanic, there are some who are tailors and all that, carpenters, and
some are just jobless.
J: And those ones still manage?
HT 3: We have two kinds of kids here, there are those who are sponsored and those who are self-sponsored, the ones who are paying their fees.
J: How much do the self-sponsored pay?
HT 3: At least 6,350 per term. That is exclusive of meals. We are talking about lunch and tea. But there are some who are sponsored, who come from the slums around.

J: So the children that come here, not the sponsored ones but the self-sponsored ones, where do they live, in the informal settlement or are they coming from somewhere else?

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[13] *Jua kali* is the Kiswahili term for the informal trade sector and literally means' hot sun'. 'Jua kali' usually refers to tradespeople and artisans who work outside under the hot sun.
[14] *Ka* represents phrasing that Kiswahili speakers use when speaking English to denote the imminent use of a noun.

HT 3: The self-sponsoring ones, most of them they come from, OK some come from within this area, whereby their parents are trying, really struggling so much to pay for them, some, well they come from – you know Huruma is an area of contrast, we have the flats up here and then we have very poor people there. Some come from these flats here. *J: What's the rent in a flat, do you know?* HT 3: It goes, I think it's something above 10,000 Ksh per month

'And you find in the private schools the pupils who are there, their parents do not stay in the slum in the first place and then they earn a lot. Because you will find that the fees in a private school, in one month, they are 5,000 in a month. So it is quite expensive' (Sch1 P4/T)

- *Community-based, low-cost NFS parents.*

'These parents are poor, the community that is coming here is so poor so like you get, some are just going to, there's Eastleigh just here, where we have the Arabs and all that. So some just go there everyday to do the washing and after doing the day's washing they are getting, they are being paid' (HT 3)

'Hm we have like, I have a list, we have about 150 *(out of how many),* we have about 840. *(About 150 out of 840 don't pay anything?).* They don't. *(And all the rest pay full or some pay less?).* No, others, right now we are asking them for 350 others pay 100, others according to nini, they pay 200 and others they pay full. Others pay full but they don't pay in full' (HT 1)

The educational value of a school is assessed by parents based on: number of children in the class, attitude and inputs of teachers, and KCPE exam performance. Parents assess teachers based on whether they are present in class, if they have enough time to give attention to individual children and whether or not they set and mark homework. Pupils are very aware of whether teachers are committed to the task of teaching them or not and place value on the role of the Headteacher in an NFS as the main supervisor of teachers.

- *Public schools are seen as overcrowded, making it difficult for teachers to deliver education that is valued as highly as that provided by the community-based NFS.*

'The goodness of the community schools is they have a few children, so teachers also have enough. With the government they have very many pupils (congested), so the child cannot cope' (P3)

'As compared to the government schools, you know the teachers there are just relaxed because in the long run he'll get his or her salary, without struggling. But here in the community school the teacher has to make sure she or he is in class with the pupils' (P4/T)

'In private schools, they are not like the ones in government, that is because if there is just an example of a city council school here, in one class there are more than 60. So you ask yourself when one teacher enters the classroom will he or she deliver. And here is a case where my pupils are in a private (*community-based NFS*) one, not more than 35 in class so the teacher finds an easy time with the children' (P4/T)

'No, no, no. Not so good (*public school*). There's a lot of disaster there because there's not a lot of, just because there's nobody who is just working, the teachers are not followed so closely like here, where the owner is here, he's the one who pays you so you have to work hard, you have to come with good results. The parents have to see who they are holding from the performance and the results. That's why we came here so that the pupils can get good marks so in future to join a good school' (P1)

Pup2: OK, you see, public schools, how teachers teach it is very differently from private (*community-based NFS*) school. You see in City Council school they don't take their private time to teach pupils but in private schools you see they take children for tuition, like Saturdays, City Council most of the school they don't go for Saturday tuition, but here the teachers sacrifice themselves to teach us until 7[15] (*means 1pm*). Then, that's a bit different, in public schools children behave badly, but you see in private schools children are very disciplined there are few, but disciplined.
J: OK, who else wants to say something?
Pup1: Just something to add on that, here you know teachers they are being followed so they have to do their work so they cannot be asked. Because if they don't do it they'll be asked so many questions. But in City Council schools they will just be seated there, they can sit for even a month and when the month ends they go for their monthly salary. So, here, the teachers are being followed and we really get something.

'Mainly it is due to the KCPE, the final exam in primary. You find that some parents, when they come, what they want to see are the 400s. How many 400s have you gotten? . . . But when you look at it, we did not have 500, I mean 400 and above. Our highest was 377. Our lowest was 231. But you see what most parents were coming to do, they were asking, how many 400s do you have? . . . So that concept about the mean score has not really sunk in our parents, so what they want, they want to see, they want to be associated with the school that gives most 400s but they are not looking at the mean score' (HT 3 *in a NFS considered private by the MoE because of its higher fee level*)

Parents appear to make judgements that balance anticipated educational value against cost. Although there are a variety of positions on whether public schools are free or not, and whether they are more or less costly to attend than a community-based NFS, respondents are more consistent and emphatic in their claims that the public schools cannot provide quality education because the class sizes are too large and teachers are de-

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[15] The hours of the clock are named differently in Kiswahili and it is common for the numbers to become mixed when Kiswahili speakers are speaking in English.

motivated. The over-riding factor that appears to influence parents' decision-making about where to send their children to school, within a certain range of costs, appears to be perceived academic performance.

Conclusion.

Families in the informal settlements represent a wider and more varied range of income levels than that depicted in the literature on low-cost private schooling (Tooley, 2008; Dignitas, 2008b). The provision of schooling in the informal settlements is also varied and reflects a spectrum which ranges from fully-sponsored education provided by NGOs or made available to some individuals as sponsored places at fee-levying schools to relatively high-cost privately-run NFS. Within this range public schools are not perceived as entirely free, but are still cheaper than community-based NFS. However, community-based NFS are believed to provide a greater return by delivering higher academic performance. Parents strive to place their children in the schools that will provide the best chance of academic success and their choices are constrained by their income levels.

Non-Formal School Providers

In the literature surrounding non-state provision, much emphasis is placed on the fact that private enterprises are driven by the objective of making a profit. It is argued that the collective and social benefits of education are not captured in the pricing mechanism and that this results in the inefficient allocation of resources and an under supply of education. There are also concerns that private providers are in a position to exploit

people by overcharging for their services and effectively denying access to what is a human right.

Based on this study I have identified other aspects of the private management of NFS which contribute to disadvantageous educational outcomes. In the context of a government-supported NFS charging relatively low fees in an informal settlement, and operating with a School Management Committee (SMC) with parent representatives, the traditional objective of maximizing profits has little relevance. The upper fee level is constrained by the prevailing poverty among the families who are looking for a school for their children; running costs typically outstrip regular income because of the irregularity in parents' payments, and the use of school funds is monitored and authorized by the SMC. Headteachers' decision-making is more closely related to their personal interest in keeping the school in business and, therefore, remaining with a salary in a context of high unemployment.

- *NFS as a source of employment for the Headteacher and teachers.*

'Yeah, OK, when you look at it, when you look at maybe some of these non-formal schools, uh, let's be honest, it is that the one who put it up there, the one who established the school wanted to create an occupation for himself, OK, that is basically the first thing' (HT 3)

HT 1: The reason being for Mr X, the one talking (ie. himself), to pay rent depends on the number of children he has in his school.
J: To pay rent for the school?
HT : Even my rent.
J: You mean your rent at home?
HT 1: Yes, who is paying me? For me to eat so that parent will bring that 100 shillings so I can budget and I can remain with something little.
J: So do you get a salary or you get ....?
HT 1: Salary, salary, we pay ourselves in form of salary.
J: So do the parents know how much you get? They know your salary?
HT 1: Yes, they know, I also sign, it's a salary.
J: So if there is something extra, do the parents know and do they decide how it's spent?
HT 1: Yes, the SMC they decide.

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The two strongest determining factors in the long term viability of the school are academic performance and enrollment levels. NFS attract and retain pupils by convincing parents of the educational value of the school, which is indicated by past exam performance, confidence in the school managers and the provision of resources.

- *Community-based NFS compete with each other and with private schools within and outside the informal settlements in terms of exam performance*

J: Yes, how do parents measure academic performance?
HT 3: Mainly it is due to the KCPE, the final exam in primary. You find that some parents, when they come, what they want to see are the 400s. How many 400s have you gotten? They don't look at the mean score and a good example is what we have over there, the list. Our mean score was 60, 61, just around there. But when you look at it, we did not have 500, I mean 400 and above. Our highest was 377. Our lowest was 231. But you see what most parents were coming to do, they were asking, how many 400s do you have? And I'll give you an example, they had about four 400s in a private institution, our neighbours down here, I think it's called Pilot or something. They had about 4 kids who got 400 and above. But then, those kids, when you look at the mean score, it was poor, it was 51 or 52. So that concept about the mean score has not really sunk in our parents, so what they want, they want to see, they want to be associated with the school that gives most 400s but they are not looking at the mean score.

HT 1:Long time ago we used to have problems, the parents long time ago, they didn't know the benefits of education. They didn't know. They would say let my child stay at home, or any school is OK, long time ago, as long as he is going to school, as long as he is not staying here. But of late I've come to learn that parents are after good performance, for they have come to learn now that the whole world, particularly in Africa, things are changing and without education you can do nothing. Now the parents are looking for performance, the schools that are performing well, whether in the slum, they were looking around, which school in our area is performing well. Immediately the results are up, they are out looking from school to school.
J: And the results of NFS are posted?
HT 1: Yeah, they are posted.

J: In a newspaper or you post them, how are they posted?
HT 1: It is in the newspaper, for the Divisions, OK, there are booklets from City Education, of which although they are calling us private, they have not yet appreciated, so we can find a private section but NFS are there. But now, we are still talking to them, we are telling them these are two different institutions, schools, this is private, these are NFS, you cannot put us together with Makini, you cannot put us together with Riara or Braeburn or whatever, something of the sort, we are different. So we are telling them please give us our section, give us our part, let us know how our sector, our NFS, are performing so please try and differentiate us. So, they have been trying to also merit us, but I'm telling the truth the NFS are performing better than public schools' (HT 1)
Note: Makini, Riara and Braeburn are high-fee-paying schools outside the informal settlements and fit the more typical profile of private schools for wealthy elite groups.

HT 1: Because we compete among ourselves, right now we cannot compete among the public schools, the only performing public school that has been around here is Muthaiga, but now, they are not in our class.

J: So you compete amongst yourselves?

HT 1: No, we are competing with private now, private schools.

J: The private NFSs?

HT 1: No the private schools – we want to see where is Makini, we want to reach where Makini is, where is Makini? That is it.

▪ *Some sponsorship places or concessions are offered when academic potential is identified.*

'So, it reaches a point, indeed there are some kids who don't pay anything, in total, nothing. But then, when you look at them, you find that they are the bright kids in the society. They are the ones they keep. Even for us here, when a child comes and does an interview, after that child has gone through the interview if the child is bright at times I always recommend that we take the child, because why should we waste that child? OK, so now this child, when he reaches Class 8, he or she will perform and then this institution will be recognized. And what will happen? Many kids will come to that school in order to boost the income of that institution. The enrollment will go up. So basically, the issue about monetary issues, that is there, in most of the schools here' (HT 3)

When community-based NFS increase their enrollment levels they do not appear to make additional investments in more classrooms or teachers. As the school running costs remain the same, an increase in enrolled pupils means that a school is in a stronger financial position and is more likely to be able to retain its teachers and other staff members for longer. An increase in pupil enrollment may also make a school eligible to be considered for either exam center status or to join the subsidized school feeding program, both of which require schools to be above a minimum size. There appears to be no mechanism by which the enrollment level, and associated class size, is controlled or held to a limit. Admission is granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and is increasingly based on performance during an assessment interview. Parents are reported as supporting the enrollment of more children, possibly from the perspective of

community support and cohesion, and may not have yet witnessed the negative impact of

over enrollment on pupil learning.

- *Teacher salaries in NFS are dependent on the number of children enrolled and paying fees.*

HT 1: Now, from that perspective a teacher in a NFS is going to put in more effort, is going to spend and extra time to make sure this child performs well to retain that child next year or to retain other children in lower classes.
J: So that they keep getting the salary?
HT 1: Yeah, because for example if I have 20 children, next year I have 10, it means I'm going to reduce the number of staff, because they are paid through the amount we get. So, what we do with the teachers is we sit down in a meeting and we say what are we going to do now, strategy number one, let us improve, work hard, make sure that the weaker child performs well. That is it. The last child, has very good marks, that is it. So, comparing to a teacher who is in a public school, his pay slip, whether he has come or not is guaranteed, but with us, it is not guaranteed.

- *Headteachers acknowledge that enrollment levels are steadily increasing, even to levels that are not beneficial for the pupils.*

'For example, as I said earlier on, the number is increasing day by day, but we find that parents are not responding well in payment and, er, you don't want to be every now and then sending children home for school fees so, but we see that a teacher has got so many children and the staff are few, you see. A teacher has got so many children so it has been a challenge. It's like we find a teacher, one teacher against 60, or against 70. That's on the higher side, so it has been a challenge' (HT 1)

J: Have you got to the stage where your enrollment is too high for you take any more children or it's still OK?
HT 2: We are reaching now that stage, since we got the Free Primary, classes, because of maybe the classes and all that, there are some classes that maybe it is hard to make another enrollment. Like St 6, St 5 and other, baby class and all that. It reaches a time there's to capacity and there's not room for expansion for double streams so even there's no room for double streams. But the parents are really willing to continue bringing the children. They would like to bring more but you tell them now it is too capacity, as much as there is congestion, we do admit them, with that congestion and all that. If we go by specification maybe you see like a class of 46, a class of 50 and that is also exceeding the par.

Conclusion.

The MoE support program to NFS directly strengthens both enrollment levels and exam

performance in a supported school. However, the MoE is not involved in the

management of these schools and does not employ any of the staff members, including

the Headteacher. As a result, school managers are able to run their schools on a commercial basis without necessarily prioritizing or protecting the educational best interests of pupils. This can lead to increased academic pressure that encourages high rates of class repetition and influences the enrollment selection process, and a significant deterioration in the teacher:pupil ratio. At some point one would expect the worsening classroom conditions to impact negatively on academic performance and for parents to look elsewhere for better quality schooling, but this is likely to be a long and unpredictable process where demand for school places exceeds supply.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

Introduction

The government of Kenya (GoK) is committed to achieving universal basic education and, as part of this goal, abolished primary school tuition fees in 2003 under the Free Primary Education (FPE) initiative. The objectives of FPE are to increase access to basic education, strengthen retention through the primary cycle and improve the quality of primary schooling. In 2005, a further program of support was introduced by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in recognition of the fact that certain groups of children from disadvantaged backgrounds were still excluded from primary education, despite the removal of school fees and the provision of teaching and learning materials to public primary schools under FPE. The groups of children targeted under this additional program of support live in difficult circumstances, such as in urban informal settlements, where unemployment is high and living conditions are severely impoverished. Parents from these informal settlements, rather than sending their children to government primary schools, often choose to enroll them in non-formal schools (NFS), which are non-state schools run throughout the informal settlements by independent groups of people who have strong connections with these communities. NFS exist by levying service charges to parents and provide schooling within conditions that do not meet the normal registration standards governing the space, land tenure, buildings, sanitation and health and safety conditions required by the MoE of either public or private schools. In recognition of the fact that many poor children living in the informal settlements were not benefiting from the FPE initiative, the MoE began providing financial support to NFS in 2005 in the form of instructional materials' grants (IM grants). The objectives of this support are to

increase access to basic education, strengthen retention through the primary cycle and improve the quality of primary schooling for disadvantaged children who are excluded from mainstream educational opportunities by their life circumstances.

In this study I have explored the MoE's strategy of engagement with NFS under the 2005-2010 Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP) and the responses made by schools affected by this investment program. The central research question of the study is:

'Government support to Non-Formal Schools includes three main elements: school verification and validation, changes in school management and the provision of instructional materials' grants. Does this government support to NFS influence the educational experience of the poor to their advantage?'

In previous chapters I have addressed the first two principal questions:

a) What are the objectives, assumptions and expectations that underpin the MoE's strategy of support to NFS?

b) How do school managers, teachers, parents and pupils experience the operationalization of school verification and validation, changes in school management and the provision of instructional materials' grants?

In this chapter I address the third principal question:

c) What do school manager, teacher, parent and pupil experiences of this government support, combined with MoE expectations, imply on issues of equality and equity for the economically disadvantaged?

This chapter is organized around the four dimensions of educational equality outlined by Farrell (2003): educational access, survival, outputs and outcomes. At the end of this chapter the major findings of the study are presented as revised versions of earlier tables in Tables 21, 22 and 23, p.348, 349, and 351, respectively. Before concluding the chapter I provide a reflection on the implication of the non-state provision of schooling on educational experiences. I conclude with recommendations on the direction the MoE's strategy of support should take in order to maximize the realization of its objectives and offer some ideas on areas that would benefit from further research.

Access and Enrollment

The elements of MoE support to NFS that impact on levels of enrollment are: the legitimization of NFS through school verification and validation, changes in the school management structure that invite the closer involvement of parents and the provision of grants to support the procurement of teaching and learning materials.

School verification and validation.

In the densely populated communities of the informal settlements little goes unnoticed. In particular, external visitors draw a great deal of attention and are watched with interest.

When the MoE takes an interest in a local NFS, therefore, the visit becomes local news that spreads with ease. In some cases such a school visit may reveal such poor standards and operating conditions that the MoE takes steps to close down a weak NFS and relocate its pupils in other schools. When MoE officers determine that a NFS *is* eligible to receive support the school takes on an air of legitimacy and the school managers benefit from a strengthened reputation. Parents soon differentiate between those NFS that have been validated through the MoE assessment process and will be eligible to receive MoE support and those that will continue to operate as before, without additional support. Parents' expectations are raised in response to the MoE recognition and they seek to have their children enrolled in schools that are validated by the MoE, often transferring their children from one school to another. In addition, since the MoE recognized the need to support NFS in the informal settlements, this group of schools has become eligible for a subsidized school feeding program. Both the legitimization of NFS by the MoE and the introduction of subsidized feeding in NFS act as stimulants to school enrollment in supported NFS.

School management changes.

When a NFS is validated by the MoE and becomes eligible to receive government grants the School Director and/or Headteacher receive a week's training on school management requirements and the financial management systems and procedures that have to be observed. This recognition by the MoE, the training itself and the subsequent increase in the financial stability of the school through the government grant for teaching and learning resources, serve to empower the school managers. Changes are subsequently made in their school management structures, usually in terms of increasing parental

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involvement in a school management committee. Both the empowerment of the school managers and the increased involvement of parents in school issues raise parental expectations of better schooling and increase enrollment in the school.

Children who are newly enrolled in a supported NFS are not, however, necessarily otherwise out of school and are often transferred from another school. This is particularly apparent when children are being enrolled in any classes after Standard 1, the first year of the primary cycle. At the beginning of the MoE support in 2005 many of these children transferred back into validated NFS from public schools, having enrolled in public schools after the introduction of FPE in 2003. More recently pupils are likely to transfer from non-supported NFS or may be migrating into the city and have come from rural public schools or NFS in other urban centers. The overall picture is one of pupil transfers rather than a gross increase in enrollment. Given the increase in demand for places in supported NFS, school managers are in a stronger position to be selective about new enrollees and to screen potential new pupils. This is done through an 'interview' which is an academic assessment of current ability. Based on the outcome of this interview pupils are either placed in the class they have requested, advised to repeat a year or, sometimes, offered a place in the requested class but with additional tuition.

In the face of such strong demand for places in supported NFS there is no incentive for school managers to reduce school fees and there is no evidence to suggest that costs to parents have reduced. There is also no evidence to suggest that fee levels have increased and this is partly due to the involvement of parents in the school management committee,

but also due to the economic reality faced by families in the informal settlements, which will not support higher fee levels. There are indications that higher enrollment figures, and an overall stronger demand for places in supported NFS, brings greater financial stability to the school itself. It is possible that greater financial stability increases the school's capacity to accommodate greater irregularity in school fee payments, but this would be a matter of discretion by the school managers. Tolerance for irregular or non-payment of fees is influenced by the perceived economic capacity of the family concerned and the academic performance of the pupil. Concessions may be mediated by the school management committee and, therefore, by the parent representatives involved in that committee.

Instructional materials' grants.

The provision of grants to procure teaching and learning materials has a direct impact on parents' expecations of the academic performance of a school and raises the demand for enrollment in a school that is equipped with textbooks. As described above, much of this increase in enrollment is due to pupil transfers and pupils are assessed for their academic ability before being accepted in a school.

However, as enrollment levels have risen there has been no increase in the number of classrooms, nor teachers. As a result the teacher to pupil ratio has deteriorated. Class sizes, especially in the lower Standards, are reaching over 60 pupils and yet these rooms are smaller than the standards applied in government school buildings. The worsening teacher:pupil ratio undermines potential performance and indirectly threatens future enrollment. While Headteachers, teachers and parents all acknowledge that the numbers

of pupils per class is too high, there are no indications that any steps are being taken to slow enrollment rates.

Equality and equity in access.

With respect to school access the MoE support program to NFS stimulates enrollment in supported NFS by increasing parental confidence in the school management and raising parental expectations of academic performance. In addition, the presence of subsidized school feeding also encourages parents to send their children to school. An increase in enrollment alone increases the financial stability of the school by increasing total revenue. Supported schools that receive IM grants also benefit by not having to use parents' fee payments to buy books. The IM grants, therefore, represent a net financial gain to the school account. In some instances this financial strength can be converted into additional benefits to the pupils either by securing the more regular payment of teachers or by under-writing a greater level of concessions for pupils facing economic difficulties. However, these decisions are a matter of discretion by the School Director and/or Headteacher and the MoE provides no guidelines on how financial gains should be allocated.

However, certain potential benefits that one could expect to result from greater MoE involvement in, and support to, NFS, have not materialized. MoE officers provide advice on minimum standards and correct operating procedures when they first visit NFS. Most of the advice, however, is limited to management issues and there is no evidence of changes in school conditions or infrastructure as a result of this support program. Some very weak schools may be closed, but there is no indication that the very poor conditions

of NFS operating in the informal settlements, such as: inadequate sanitation; small, dimly lit and poorly aired classrooms; unsafe structures, and poor health conditions, such as dust from dirt floors and exposure to sewage, have been improved.

As the fee levels and costs borne by parents have not changed in either direction, neither increasing nor decreasing, the composition of families who can afford to send their children to supported NFS cannot be seen to have changed substantively. In addition, the greater demand for places in supported NFS contributes to more stringent selection criteria for new pupils in favour of those who perform better academically. Along with the fact that new enrollments appear to be driven by pupil transfers rather than previously out-of-school children there is no suggestion that the pupil base in supported NFS is either growing significantly in net terms or changing to include more disadvantaged or previously out-of-school children in response to the MoE support program. In addition, supported NFS enroll additional pupils without expanding the school resources and face seriously deteriorating teacher:pupil ratios.

Survival and Retention

The elements of MoE support to NFS that affect the likelihood of children surviving through the full primary cycle are: changes in the school management structure that invite the closer involvement of parents and the provision of grants to support the procurement of teaching and learning materials.

School management changes.

The inclusion of elected parent representatives on the school management committee is a welcome feature of the MoE's involvement with NFS. One of the areas of school life where parents can make a positive contribution is in child welfare. Parents as individuals have a stronger intention of keeping their child in what they perceive to be a 'good' school. Strong management and the availability of teaching and learning resources, along with exam performance, are taken as indicators of quality in a school. Parents in supported NFS are, therefore, likely to reciprocate the support shown by the government with their own support for their own children's attendance and the school as a whole. Parent representatives do engage with issues such as instances of non-payment of fees, cases where pupils have stopped attending school, the general behavior of teachers and observed conditions in the classroom. Insofar as these factors affect retention the involvement of parent representatives on the school management committee can support pupil survival.

However, there is no evidence to suggest that parent on the school management committee represent a strong critical voice with regard to more contentious or financially-sensitive management issues. For instance, there is no suggestion that parents are a voice to protect the teacher:pupil ratio, nor to insist that more trained teachers are employed. Parents are able to play a liaison role but do not appear to be agents for change on critical issues such as the use of corporal punishment or the level of class repetition, all of which may threaten pupil retention.

Instructional materials' grants.

When resources are introduced into an otherwise impoverished environment there is a concern over whether these resources can be expected to be used as intended or to be protected from abuse. The involvement of parents on the school management committee strengthens the likelihood that teaching and learning materials procured with the government grant are used well. Parents are involved in decisions about procuring books, witness the delivery of the resources, advise on how materials should be distributed or stored, help to protect books, contribute ideas on whether and how books should be used at home and generally represent the interests of pupils and their families in the use of the government grants. When NFS are also included in the subsidised feeding program parents on the school management committee play a similar role in monitoring and advising on the secure storage of food and liaise between the school managers and parents over parental contributions.

When the government grants are used well and the procurement processes are followed, with parents playing their part, a supported NFS remains eligible for future grants such that the supply of teaching and learning materials continues for future pupil cohorts. At the same time, when teaching and learning materials are protected, such as through book covers and suitable storage, books are given a longer life and can be help more pupils over more years.

However, greater access to teaching and learning materials is accompanied by raised expectations in terms of exam performance. Some teachers are able to use books to

improve their coverage of the curriculum and some pupils are able to use books to study independently and, through these responses, academic performance can improve. As the school's highest exam scores increase, those who are not able to improve their performance simply through the provision of books, face different academic pressures and competition, including pressure to repeat classes, which may contribute to them leaving school early.

Equality and equity in survival.

The support of the MoE to NFS strengthens pupil survival through the primary cycle by strengthening the individual and collective resolve of parents to keep their children in a supported NFS. The inclusion of parent representatives on the school management committee creates an alternative channel of support for families and children who face some kind of short term difficulty, which may be reflected in a missed payment or increased absence from school. The availability of textbooks increases the perceived value of schooling and encourages pupils and parents to do their utmost to stay in school.

However, the voice of parents is neither strong nor well-informed enough to demand changes that might bring about additional qualitative changes in the teaching and learning experience such as protecting the size of classes, increasing the number of trained teachers or controlling the forms of discipline used by teachers, such that the chances of school survival might be increased or extended to more pupils.

Despite good intentions and a strong resolve, the socio-economic reality of families living in the informal settlements is harsh and unforgiving. Children continue to drop out

of school because of the need to survive, to earn an income, because of illness or death in the family or because of their premature introduction into adult roles through marriage or pregnancy.

With regard to educational survival the creation of a stronger collective identity between the school managers and parents can have some benefits in protecting children from minor or temporary difficulties. The presence of teaching and learning materials can also strengthen the resolve of parents and pupils to stay in school. However, this group of parents, already struggling to survive within their own low economic means, face very real limitations to the resources that are available to meet the very great needs of a large proportion of their community. The persistent and unpredictable threat of poverty continues to undermine educational survival and leaves children at the mercy of chance and circumstance.

Outputs and Performance

The elements of MoE support to NFS that alter performance levels are: changes in the school management structure that invite the closer involvement of parents and the provision of grants to support the procurement of teaching and learning materials.

School verification and validation.

As a result of the recognition of NFS by the MoE, more NFS have been able to register as exam centers. One of the reasons for this is that a minimum enrollment figure exists for a school to gain exam center status and as pupils have concentrated themselves more in a smaller number of supported NFS, so more NFS have reached a size at which they

become viable as exam centers. As the number of exam centers in the informal settlements increase, so do more pupils in non-supported NFS benefit as they have smaller distances to travel for examinations.

In addition, pupils who attend NFS are now accepted by the MoE as being of the same status as pupils in public school with regard to exam fees. This is because NFS are no longer automatically assumed to be private institutions and charged the higher exam fees payable by private students. In effect, this means that the exam fees faced by pupils in the NFS who wish to sit their KCPE exam has been reduced by half. On the whole, these changes in the status of NFS with regard to examinations, has increased the access NFS pupils have to sit their KCPE and gain a certificate of primary school completion.

School management changes.

As discussed above, supported NFS gain financially through the MoE program both because their enrollment figures increase on a sustained basis and because they no longer have to draw on parental fees to buy textbooks. Where the school managers use this improved financial stability to pay teachers more, more regularly or more often then the capacity of the teaching force in a supported NFS increases. Pupils benefit from the boost in teacher morale in terms of their greater dedication to the task of preparing pupils for exams, better attention to the planning of their teaching and closer attention to the work of individual pupils through the marking of homework.

However, this greater commitment to academic results is associated with longer hours in school and more days at school, which may be a disadvantage to children who have

responsibilities in the home. Pupils in the upper primary schools are in school from 6am – 6pm from Monday to Friday and again, in some schools, on a Saturday morning. If the school management endorses such long hours then individual children who cannot be in school that long will be at a competitive disadvantage in terms of school survival and academic performance.

Instructional materials' grants.

All the ways outlined by Lockheed, Vail and Fuller (1986) in which textbooks can improve the teaching and learning experience, were observed in this study. Textbooks are being used by teachers to: a) substitute for gaps in their knowledge and skills, b) promote the delivery of a more complete and coherently organized curricula, c) enable the teacher to make better use of teaching time and d) enable them to assign homework more regularly. In this study I have no evidence to comment on whether the quality of homework has changed through access to textbooks. With respect to pupils, textbooks are acting to: a) provide a basic exposure to written material that is otherwise unavailable in the environment and b) enable students to learn independently of the teacher, particularly through the completion of homework (1986). Unlike Lockheed et al., I did find evidence that textbooks enabled teachers to make better use of classroom time, by spending less time writing on poor chalkboards and that they encouraged the assignment or completion of homework, by reducing the time that pupils spent looking for books.

In addition, teachers and pupils both express an increase in confidence and morale as a result of access to books. Teachers feel better able to deliver against their own expectations of teaching, and pupils reflect greater self-efficacy in accessing the

knowledge that is examined in the KCPE examinations. However, along with greater confidence come higher academic expectations and these are reflected in high academic pressure to deliver 'A-grade' scores and a tolerance for high rates of class repetition.

Equality and equity in outputs.

Access to textbooks is a critical factor in equalizing educational opportunities. The teachers in this study were not formally trained as teachers and yet all shared experiences of how they had been able to use the books to improve their planning and lesson delivery. Pupils use the books to be able to review their learning and to complete work independently. The disadvantages associated with not having access to books, for example teachers planning their teaching from past exam papers and pupils spending large amounts of time running around to find the resources to complete their homework, are severe in an environment where there are no other informational resources available. Insofar as teachers lacked planning skills or knowledge of the curriculum, they have been able to strengthen their teaching. Likewise, pupils who are able to learn independently are able to improve their exam scores.

However, the introduction of textbooks and the associated increase in academic expectations reflected in higher exam scores, has been accompanied by changes that may be seen as disadvantages to some children. Either because more homework is being set or because books are being kept in school, schools are keeping upper primary school pupils in school for long hours. In some instances, for example for children with parents who work long hours and who have no adult supervision in the home, these long hours in school can be a form of protection. For other children, who have responsibilities in the

home or who have to fulfill other tasks alongside schooling, these long hours can become prohibitive. Of greater concern is the widespread acceptance of high class repetition rates, especially in the upper primary school classes. Class repetition is not associated with failing a class, ie. achieving less than 50% marks, but with improving scores from, for example from 65% to 80%. It appears to be widely accepted that pupils will repeat their final primary school year, even after having sat the KCPE exam. The intense pressure to achieve high academic scores that supports high class repetition rates is also likely to act as pressure for lower-performing pupils to drop out of school. Although I was not able to interview any pupils falling into this category, pupils and teachers related instances of children dropping out due to pressure or poor performance (*see page 276*).

Outcomes and Transition

The elements of MoE support to NFS that alter performance levels are: the legitimization of NFS through school verification and validation and the provision of grants to support the procurement of teaching and learning materials.

School verification and validation.

Any factors that improve access to examinations, such as the registration of NFS as exam centers and reductions in exam fees for NFS pupils to the same level as public school pupils, can act in support of NFS pupils progressing to public secondary schools. This is because places in public secondary schools are allocated on the basis of exam results. Also, greater recognition of NFS and familiarity within the MoE with these schools, contributes to reduce artificial delays in allocating secondary school places. While NFS pupils may not have been actively excluded from secondary schools in the past, there are

now more pupils passing well in the KCPE exams and fewer questions surrounding their right to be placed. However, secondary school attendance is still an expensive undertaking, even with government subsidies. Few children living in the informal settlements have parents who can afford these costs and most are dependent on a government bursary or finding a sponsor. Although all children in supported NFS are from families in socio-economic categories that are eligible for bursaries, the bursaries themselves are in short supply and heavy demand. Sponsors tend to make funding decisions based on academic performance as well as socio-economic background and these favour those children who achieve 'A-grade' exam marks.

Instructional material's grants.

In supported NFS, improvements in exam scores are directly related to access to teaching and learning materials. However, when the focus of attention and support is concentrated on materials that support the delivery of the formal primary curriculum, there can be an over-emphasis on formal schooling to the detriment of other forms of alternative provision. In the informal settlements of Nairobi there is a predominance of NFS offering the formal curriculum. There is an indication that the number of Non-Formal Education Centers has declined over time, although it is not clear whether this decline can be attributed to either the introduction of FPE or the MoE support program for NFS. It is clear that the MoE support program to NFS has increased the volume of resources available to support formal education in the informal settlements. Insofar as these two types of institution compete for MoE resources, as they are addressed within the same Investment Program under the KESSP, then an increase in support for formal schooling in NFS reduces the potential support for non-formal education in NFECs. A non-formal

education curriculum has been developed by the Kenya Institute of Education, but it is evident that the growth in NFS and their increased prominence in the informal settlements, has contributed to confusion over the status of NFECs and the distinction between NFECs and NFS.

Equality and equity in outcomes.

The MoE support program to NFS has increased access to KCPE examinations to a number of NFS pupils and there is evidence to suggest that, at least in one school in this study, the top-scoring pupils have performed at a higher level than their counterparts in previous years. However, the mean score of each cohort of exam candidates does not show such a steady increase, which suggests that while the exam performance of some individuals may be improving, the whole class has not benefited to the same degree.

However, these improvements in performance appear to be as a result of better planning on the part of teachers and greater application by pupils. As the improvements are not associated with changes in teachers' pedagogic ability or the provision of teacher training it is unlikely that pupils with a wider range of abilities are facing better academic opportunities. Those who are already suited to academic learning, or who have access to stronger support at home, are most likely to benefit from the MoE support. While opportunities for pupils in NFS have been improved and brought into line with the opportunities provided to pupils in public schools, there is no evidence to suggest that any affirmative action is being taken to offset the greater level or extent of disadvantages that many children living in the informal settlements face on a daily basis.

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Privatization

Responses from the MoE officers, parents and NFS providers interviewed in this study contribute to the equality and equity debate surrounding the public and private provision of education in a number of ways, discussed below.

MoE officers aim to extend the opportunity of access to primary education to disadvantaged children living in places that are difficult to reach, such as the informal settlements. They also wish to see the quality of this education improved. In order to justify supporting NFS, officers respond to concerns over the profit-seeking objectives of private providers by supporting only those that can claim to be charging a modest and reasonable level of fees in order to exist, ie. covering legitimate running costs. However, this approach directs attention away from those who are still too poor to pay the 'reasonable' user fees. The expectations placed on the community as an equal partner in the running of the school may be justified on some issues of child welfare, but are less realistic when the school is operating on a commercial basis. Parental involvement may act as a watchdog over how school managers use government grants, but it does not appear to be extended into other financial issues relating to the running of the school as a business.

Parents with pupils in supported NFS demonstrate that educational quality, at least as far as it is adequately measured by exam performance, is their dominant concern. This is combined with a hope for transition into secondary school and access to further education in order to secure employment at a salary level that will support a higher level of living

than that usually experienced in an informal settlement. Parents with very low and unstable incomes are prepared to commit a substantial proportion of their earnings to pay for primary education if there is evidence of good exam results, rather than possibly pay the same or less for attendance at a school which is believed to be of poorer quality. This behavior reinforces the fact that the removal of primary school fees in public schools, unless accompanied by investments that will protect the quality of the education being delivered, such as building more classrooms and recruiting more teachers, does not result in more equitable access to education. This study suggests that parents who have sufficient income to pay fees and who are actively engaged with their children's educational progress will continue to enroll their children in NFS unless the quality of public schools is improved. Those children not fortunate enough to have such parents have fewer educational options and opportunities to access quality primary education.

The context of widespread and persistent poverty that prevails in the informal settlements sits uneasily with ideas of profit-making in NFS. In reality school managers face a rigid user-fee ceiling, which is determined by the average income of their targeted communities. As fee levels are resistant to change school managers benefit from expanding the enrollment base, which is influenced by parental expectations of academic performance. The MoE focus on user-fee levels and community involvement overlooks the fact that by providing government grants for textbooks to NFS when fee levels remain the same, those who manage NFS receive a net financial benefit. This is particularly significant when parents are too poor to have previously bought books. While this financial gain may well be converted into more teaching and learning resources, there is

no mechanism to ensure that the financial gain is used in a way that will optimize equality and equity. There is a strong suggestion from this study that government grants for instructional materials strengthen both enrollment levels and exam performance amongst individual pupils. While these may appear to be desirable outcomes, there are indications that NFS providers have such strong incentives to maximize enrollment and exam performance that class sizes have reached a detrimental level, class repetition rates are high and the pressure to perform at an 'A grade' level may lead to lower survival rates for less academically resilient pupils.

Most importantly, the findings suggest that even at low user-fee levels which may be 'affordable' to poorer familiers, the fact that even those NFS supported with government IM grants are dependent on fees for their financial survival introduces circumstances that can lead to the deterioration of learning conditions for all pupils, as well as increased pressure on less academically resilient children, which may result in high and inefficient rates of repetition or exclusion from school.

As the government has become a major sponsor of these commercially-run institutions it is reasonable to assume that the MoE could apply further conditions, such as teacher:pupil ratios, proportion of trained teachers, rates of class repetition etc, as part of the eligibility criteria for funding. Without such regulation, it is likely that the learning conditions in supported NFS will become more and more challenging for less academically resilient children in the near future.

Concluding Thoughts on Farrell's Dimensions of Educational Equality

Based on my analysis of Farrell's dimensions of educational access I conclude that while the MoE support program for NFS has brought a situation of greater *equality* between pupils in NFS and those in public primary schools, it has done little to address issues of *equity*. Through the MoE support program certain educational features that are common in public schools, such as the involvement of parents in school management, providing minimum teaching and learning resources, access to a subsidized feeding program and the conditions that surround access to examinations, have been introduced into supported NFS. All of these features represent an improvement in the educational circumstances of pupils in supported NFS from an equality perspective. Those pupils who are fortunate enough to be able to take advantage of these improvements do appear to benefit. These pupils are likely to: already be in school and have been in regular schooling all their lives, albeit with a high rate of transfer from school to school; come from families with sufficient economic resources to withstand both the opportunity costs of schooling and pay for uniforms and school fees; have above average academic ability and, by virtue of character or circumstance, represent the more resilient children growing up in the informal settlements.

Where the MoE support program appears to be less successful is in addressing issues of equity, of actually changing the likelihood of a positive educational experience for a child who is born into a disadvantaged context. Based on evidence that supported NFS are inundated with applications, are assessing potential pupils' academic ability through 'interviews' and place great importance on demonstrating high exam performance, I

conclude that children who have not been in school before or who have experienced high levels of interruption to their schooling, are unlikely to be enrolled in these schools. Increases in the levels of enrollment do not, therefore, appear likely to extend access to children who were previously out of school, but rather offer an additional opportunity to those who were already in school. As the MoE support program has not lead to any reduction in the charges levied in these schools I believe that any improvements in rates of pupil retention are likely to favour those children who come from the more economically stable families and who exhibit greater academic or social resilience, not those who are more vulnerable in any of these respects. Similarly, as high exam scores are being achieved partly by even capable pupils (ie. those already scoring 60% on their first attempt at the KCPE exams) repeating their final primary year, I suggest that improvements in academic performance are also likely to be experienced by those children who are from economically better off or more stable families who can afford to keep their children in school for an additional year. Finally, as places in secondary schools are allocated on a highly competitive basis and the cost of secondary schooling is still extremely high, I conclude that patterns of transition favour those who are academically gifted and who experience a certain amount of good fortune in gaining access to sponsors. So, while the MoE support program reduces some of the barriers to educational success that children from informal settlements have previously encountered, it does much less to alter the status quo in terms of the likelihood of succeeding against pre-existing odds.

However, in the case of the low-cost NFS in Nairobi, the IM grants being offered by the government are introduced within the context of much closer relationship between the NFS and the MoE. As the government grants are also associated with a substantial improvement in the financial stability of supported NFS, I conclude that there is still potential for the MoE to extend the NFS eligibility conditions, such that the interests of pupils can be better protected, particularly in respect of class sizes and repetition rates.

Throughout this study tables have been used to present first the sensitizing conceptual framework and later, the study findings. Here I reproduce the major tables with revisions that reflect the main findings of the study. In the following pages, Table 21 (p.348) is a revised version of Table 17, Summary of Roles and Responsibilities (p.206); Table 22 (p.349) is a revised version of Table 18, Summary of MoE Expectations, Objectives and Assumptions (p.213) and Table 23 (p.351) is a revised version of Table 10, Senstizing Concepts Around the Operationalisation of MoE Support in Terms of Advantages and Disadvantages to Pupils (p.161).

Table 21: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities – *Revised Based on Study Findings*

Agent	Action

MoE:	• engages with NFS in manner noticeable to communities
	• legitimizes validated schools/closes schools operating below minimum standards
	• facilitates inclusion of NFS pupils in other MoE systems (eg. exam fees comparable with public schools; NFS eligible for school feeding program)
	• screens out those schools who are:
	   - below the minimum accepted standards for NFS
	   - not prepared to establish SMC
	   - not prepared to be audited
	   - charge 'high' fees ie above 500 Ksh per month
	• introduces minimum management standards at visited schools
	• provides recommendations on sanitation, health and safety issues
	• provides training on management of IM grants to Headteachers
	• provides access to other ad hoc training opportunities (eg. publishers)
	• continues a constructive relationship with NFS
	• audits use of grants over time

SMCs in the supported NFS:	• Headteachers lead management changes • includes elected parent representatives with secondary school education • meets regularly (at least once a term) • improves child welfare through parental involvement (eg. liaison in cases of non payment and pupil drop out) • liaises between school and parents on issues of finance (eg. notification of changes in fees) • witnesses stages of procurement process/individuals play signatory role in financial transactions related to government grants • may identify cases of teacher inadequacy, deterioration of classroom conditions etc
Parents in the supported NFS:	• play an active role in the SMC when requested • act as external witnesses on softer school management issues • appreciate the government support through provision of textbook grants enough to keep sending their children to school within economic capacity • monitor and value the improved exam access and performance • value the potential for transition to secondary school

Teachers in the supported NFS:	• use the books to:
	   - draw up schemes of work
	   - plan lessons
	   - fill in gaps in their knowledge
	• are committed and motivated
	• tolerate delays in salary payments

Pupils in the supported NFS:	• attend school for long hours • use books to do homework, read independently, practice exercises and revise • repeat classes when performance is below expected level • aim for high academic grades (ie. '400 and above = 80% and above) • use books to perform better in exams • have more opportunities to be selected for secondary school when exam performance is improved

Table 22: Summary of MoE Objectives, Expectations and Assumptions – *Annotated Based on Study Findings*

MoE Objectives, Expectations and Assumptions:

- Greater access, retention and quality in primary education for out of school children, especially the most disadvantaged – *the children who benefit are those already attending a school, possible a previously unsupported NFS, and those whose parents can afford school fees*
- Reduced costs to parents – *not realized*
- NFS in more competitive position with formal schools

Components	Processes of Change *(to be identified)*	Outputs *(to be confirmed)*	Challenges *(to be interrogated)*
NFS Verification and Validation	- MoE provides attention and advice addressing immediate *management* concerns at school level - longer term *(not mentoring)* and supervision of NFS by MoE - greater interaction between NFS and MoE	- minimum standards raised, especially delivery of curriculum *(not health and safety)* - school capacity raised in management and teaching *(in terms of planning and more comprehensive curriculum coverage)*	- limited MoE funds for rolling out training - *untrained teachers rely on trained staff within NFS for 'on-the-job' training in use of books* - differences within MoE over status *of community-based NFS* as 'private' schools and whether NFS can be accountable - NFS not eligible for infrastructure investment
NFS School Management	- parent *representatives* involved in running *some soft elements of* NFS - *parent representatives have stronger identification of selves as partners in NFS* - parents have stronger role as 'owners' of NFS *(not confirmed)*	- *some* higher enrollment - better retention *in a few cases* - better performance – *not due to school management changes* - higher transition rates to secondary – *not due to school management changes* - control over fees – *greater liaison but not control* - higher quality teaching and learning (performance) – *not due to school management changes*	- parents largely illiterate, *but literate parent representatives* - parent *representatives* not knowledgeable on school quality - high turnover of parent *representatives, although some are re-elected year after year* - lack of school data on drop outs and repetition rates

Instructional Materials Grants to NFS	- teachers use books to teach better (curriculum/ planning and scheming) - students learn better through access to material for the curriculum - *students able to do more homework* - *students able to study independently*	- higher enrollment - better retention – *not confirmed* - better performance *amongst the academically capable* - higher transition rates - higher quality (performance)	- over enrollment in supported schools *and deteriorating teacher:pupil ratios* - untrained teachers - teachers not always paid - no *(limited)* fees for secondary school - insecurity for storage of books at school/home – *not confirmed*
Combined Components	- higher enrollment - closer relationship with MoE	- more NFS registered as exam centers - more pupils taking KCPE exams, *because fees reduced* - higher transition *(eligibility for entry)* to secondary *because of better exam performance* - *more children in NFS access school feeding program*	

Table 23: Operationalization of MoE Support in terms of Advantages and Disadvantages to Pupils – *Revised Based on Study Findings*

Ministry Support	Farrell's Four Dimensions of Equality	Operationalization of Support at School Level in the Context of NFS in Urban Slums	
		Indications of Advantage *(and greater equality)*	**Indications of Disadvantage** *(and less equality)*
1) School Verification and Validation by the MoE = school legitimization and new, ongoing relationship with MoE **2) School Management Changes Required as Prerequisite for Grants** = School Management Committee with parent representatives, (SMC) = School Management Instructional Materials Committee with parent representatives, (SIMSC) = new School Bank Account with specified signatories, (SIMBA) **3) Instructional Materials Grant** = fixed amount allocated per pupil = conditional on audited records of correct materials' selection, procurement and management processes	**ACCESS** *Equality of access* – the probabilities of children from different social groupings getting into the school system, or some particular level or portion of it.	*- some very weak schools closed* *- increases in enrollment into supported NFS* because parents anticipate a better managed school and stronger academic performance *- NFS tolerant of difficulties in paying fees.* Some parents pay fees in full, others pay partial fees, some pay nothing. Higher enrollment levels brings greater financial stability to the school. - NFS become eligible for *subsidized school feeding program*	*- no lowering of fees and no reduction in costs to parents* (children from lower income families not reached) *- no substantive change in school conditions* (no changes in sanitation, number or size of classrooms, school structures relating to heat, light, dust) *higher rates of transfer* between schools (from non-supported NFS to supported NFS; from public to NFS; from rural to urban schools) that undermines net change in enrollment *- introduction of conditional selection processes* in favour of those children who perform well academically *- elements of tuition or class repetition* as a result of academic 'interviews' for enrollment *- NFS do not exhibit features of flexibility or adaptability* likely to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend school

	SURVIVAL *Equality of survival* – the probabilities of children from various social groupings staying in the school system to some defined level, usually the end of a complete cycle (primary, secondary, higher).	- *parents valuing schooling more highly* when government provides support and more willing to send children to school when economic capacity allows - *pupils valuing schooling more highly* when books are available and those with academic ability determined to complete primary cycle	- *pupils drop out of school* for range of socio-economic reasons (lack of fees, need to earn to cover survival needs, family re-location, pregnancy, marriage etc) - *increased academic pressure as NFS strive to deliver against raised expectations,* can contribute to drop out - *corporal punishment* used as form of discipline, including for academic failure
	OUTPUTS *Equality of output* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will learn the same things to the same levels at a defined point in the schooling system.	- *more stability in teaching staff* because schools have greater financial stability due to higher enrollment and parental support - *teachers more confident* in subjects, able to cover more of the curriculum, better able to answer pupils questions because of textbook provision, better use of class time, setting homework etc - *teachers higher morale* with books, dedicated to teaching - *pupils more confident* (ie. understand more, able to get more answers from books, able to study independently and do homework) because of textbook provision	- pupils needing to stay in *school for longer hours* to use the textbooks/do homework - more stringent academic criteria for transition into higher classes (ie. *higher repetition rate*) because academic performance in supported schools is being more closely monitored by parents and expectations have been raised by presence of books - *deterioration in teacher:pupil ratio* because parents prefer supported NFS to unsupported NFS and seek to have children enrolled

		- successful lobbying of MoE for *exam center status* of supported NFS (leads to more pupils being able to sit exams because don't need to travel or being able to do better because familiar setting) - successful lobbying for *reduction in exam fees* to same level as public school pupils -- increased *number of KCPE candidates* per school and average performance improved	
	OUTCOMES *Equality of outcome* – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling (have equal incomes, have jobs of roughly the same status, have equal access to sites of political power, etc).	- greater access to *MoE support for transition to secondary school* (ie. NFS pupils in supported schools recognized for selection quota into secondary schools)	- worsening of/ greater neglect of *forms of NFE provision*

Recommendations

Life in an informal settlement is, in and of itself, challenging and an increase in the number of people living in informal settlements is not a desirable goal. In some places the informal settlements have taken on a permanent nature and investments are being made to improve the infrastructure, while in other areas the informal settlements continue to grow in a haphazard and make-shift way in response to the ever-increasing number of new inhabitants. I believe, therefore, that any efforts to improve conditions for those already living in informal settlements should be accompanied by efforts to stem the influx of new residents and support the re-location of families to better environments. Such efforts might include stimulating employment, education and health opportunities in places other than the capital city and developing infrastructure in rural as well as urban centers. It is within this context of a balanced approach to economic development, that I am making recommendations to support children who are currently growing up in the slums of Nairobi.

The Policy on the Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training contains plans to extend support to more NFS and diversify the nature of this support to include the provision of teachers and, where possible, development of school infrastructure. The danger is that this network of NFS will become, with more and more government support, a poorly resourced and problematic private system that runs in parallel to public schooling. I would recommend, therefore, an alternative approach through which existing NFS continue to be verified and validated by the MoE and short-term support, in the form of teaching and learning materials, continues to be provided to those that are able to

operate according to minimum standards. I would not, however, develop plans to provide further support as the longer term objective that will best meet the needs of disadvantaged children is to increase and strengthen the provision of public schooling to replace the need for NFS.

From this study, I recognize several different groups of people with different educational needs. In the first instance, if parents who currently send their children to NFS perceived public schools as offering education of an equal value to NFS (ie. operating with smaller classes and more dedicated teachers), the large majority of these parents would be willing and able to send their children to public schools that are within an acceptable distance of their homes. This is assuming that public schools serving poor communities remain eligible for the subsidized school feeding program that is offered to NFS. This conclusion implies that a substantial proportion of parents who are sending their children to supported NFS are less concerned with the costs associated with attending public schools, than with the anticipated educational returns.

A considerable second group would be willing and able to send their children to public schools if the educational value were improved and if the main cost element, namely school uniforms, were removed. I note that the MoE already has a program under which this issue can be addressed through government grants as they already run a program of support for the Most Vulnerable Children, through which needy children are provided with school uniforms and desks to increase their school access. Children growing up in the informal settlements are likely to meet the criteria used to determine vulnerability,

such as household income and the presence of parents or guardians, which gives eligibility for such grants.

Other children will remain out of school until education is offered in a form that is truly flexible and that can accommodate the demands of survival ie. that requires fewer hours attendance per day, is offered at different times of the day, delivers different outcomes etc.

Still other children will remain out of school unless their families are supported to meet their needs for survival and these children should be cared for under a social welfard scheme, such as a cash transfer program.

Summary of Recommendations

Expand public provision of primary and secondary schools.

The driving force behind the growth of NFS in the informal settlements of Nairobi, is the inadequate provision of public primary education. The main factor that parents identify that leads to their dissatisfaction with public primary schools is the high teacher: pupil ratio and subsequent low morale and poor performance of teachers and students alike. Supporting NFS should, therefore, only be a short term solution. A more equitable solution is to provide sufficient public primary education by building more schools and staffing them adequately. An example exists within Mathare where the land of a former NFS was bought by an NGO, a large school built and then handed over to the government.

Verification and regulation of NFS.

The distinction between NFS that have management structures that include parent representatives and those that do not, is a useful distinction in the context of informal settlements. This is because many of the problems that children and schools face in this environment are not solvable by one individual or even one family. There is a different collective spirit in a school with parental involvement and this inclusion works to the benefit of children. It will be in the best interests of children in the informal settlements if the MoE continues verifying and validating NFS. In addition, no category of schools should operate outside the supervision of the MoE and the task of identifying, assessing and capturing data about NFS should continue with considerable vigour. As poor children will, until acceptable alternatives are found, continue to attend these schools and depend on them for their education, the MoE should continue to provide teaching and learning materials to those NFS that meet set criteria and standards. However, the standards that are currently set should be enforced more strongly in areas of sanitation, health and safety. In addition, the MoE is advised to recognize the net financial benefit that accrues to the schools as institutions when government grants are awarded to provide instructional materials and demand that supported NFS operate according to additional standards. These would include: maintaining a minimum teacher:pupil ratio; increasing the proportion of trained teachers, and adhering to acceptable methods of maintaining academic endeavor (ie. eliminating academic screening for new enrollees, banning corporal punishment and avoiding high rates of repetition). As a condition for its support, the MoE should also require supported NFS to collect and maintain proper data on where pupils have come from when they enter the school, their rates of survival, which isolate

rates of dropping out and class repetition and, to a more limited extent, pupil transitions into more advanced forms of education and training.

Expand NFECs.

There is a need for true non-formal education centers that offer a more flexible and differentiated educational experience, and these should be built within reach of disadvantaged children. An NFE curriculum has already been designed and I would encourage the MoE to complete the establishment of equivalences between the non-formal and the formal curriculum, to fully recognize NFE examinations and to strengthen the provision of this sub-sector.

Increase secondary school bursaries.

Under the Free Secondary Education initiative the government is subsidizing the cost of attending seconday boarding schools. The cost, however, is still approximately 20,000 Ksh (270 USD) a year. While some people can afford this or can find a benefactor to support their child, bursaries are needed to enable children from the poorest sectors in society to transition to secondary level and reach their academic potential.

Areas of Further Research

The informal settlements are still a largely unquantified area and even census data is not accurately held. Yet, without knowing how many children are in the settlements and where they are, it is impossible to plan adequately. One of the main benefits coming from the MoE engagement with community-based NFS is that MoE officers are visiting these areas on a regular basis, know first-hand the conditions that prevail and are beginning to

gather quantitative data on the children who live in the informal settlements and that need access to education. This work of description and quantification needs to be continued and supported by academic bodies.

In addition to reliable data about children who are in schools in the informal settlements, more information is needed on those children who either drop out of school or who are never enrolled. This is a challenging task as the informal settlements are places of high population mobility, however, the community structures in these environments are robust and people who work at a community, rather than school, level are well placed to design strategies to gather information on the young people who are currently falling through the education net.

One of the striking features of NFS, which was outside the scope of this study, is the presence of baby and nursery classes in the primary schools and the large numbers of children who are in those classes. It was brought to my attention that a considerable number of the teachers in the NFS are trained in Early Childhood Development, even though they may now be teaching older pupils. I believe this characteristic may be linked with a) the origins of the NFS as community-based, self-help services, b) the need for working mothers to find child care and b) strategies to keep older pupils in class by accepting their younger siblings. A study on the role being played by ECD in the education of children growing up in the informal settlements would provide further insight into issues of equality and equity.

Appendix I: Interview Schedules

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MoE OFFICERS

DOCUMENT REVIEW
☐ Policy on Alternative Provision of Basic Education
☐ Investment Program Workplan and Budget

CONTEXT
1) Non-Formal Schools (NFS) are included under the Alternative Provision of Basic Education Investment Programme (IP), which includes Non-Formal Education (NFE). How do you think about NFS in the context of/as a form of NFE?

2) NFS levy user fees (charge tuition) and are therefore similar to private schools, although they charge lower fees. How do you think about NFS in the context of the private provision (non-state) of schooling?

MoE ENGAGEMENT WITH NFS
3) The MoE has increased its support to NFS since 2005 under the first Kenya Education Sector Support Plan, (KESSP I, 2005-2010). What do you see as the main objectives of this support?
Probe for:
- whose needs are being targeted/addressed?
- what outputs are expected?
- relationship with MDG, EFA and FPE?

4) The MoE's support to NFS includes three major elements: school verification and validation, school management changes and the provision of instructional materials' grants. I would like to talk about each element in turn.

a) School verification and validation (school legitimization and closer relationship with MoE)
- how do you think this element is manifested at school level? (actual process)
- what advantages do you think it has brought to the schools?
- and disadvantages?
- what role does this element play in meeting the objectives of the MoE's support to NFS

b) School management changes (SMC, SIMSC, SIMBA Account)
- how do you think this element is manifested at school level? (actual process)
- what advantages do you think it has brought to the schools?
- and disadvantages?
- what role does this element play in meeting the objectives of the MoE's support to NFS

c) Provision of Instructional Materials' grants
- how do you think this element is manifested at school level? (actual process)
- what advantages do you think it has brought to the schools?
- and disadvantages?
- what role does this element play in meeting the objectives of the MoE's support to NFS

5) How do you think the MoE's support to NFS, taken all together, influences the key aspects of schooling:
- access/enrollment
- survival/retention
- outputs/performance
- outcomes/transition or employment

6) Who do you think benefits from this strategy of support? Who might be disadvantaged by it?

7)   If not already mentioned, prompt for responses on impact of the MoE support on:

____ fee levels
____ concessionary places
____ enrollment practices/criteria
____ repitition rates/ transfer out of this school
____ transition rations
____ MoE support for transition to secondary school
____ grant useage/ selection and procurement processes
____ support from well-wishers

____ composition of trained/untrained teachers and teacher stability
____ teacher morale
____ teacher pupil ratio
____ number of KCPE candidates
____ average performance in KCPE
____ exam centre status
____ exam fee exemptions

____ parent and pupil expectations of NFS
____ parental involvement (who, how involved etc)
____ parents value for NFS
____ pupils value for NFS
____ use of textbooks by pupils (away from school/homework)

____ changes in the provision of other forms of NFE

8)   Thinking back over our conversation, how might you develop this strategy in KESSP II to have a greater impact on the objectives you've described?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NFS DIRECTORS AND HEADTEACHERS

DOCUMENT REVIEW
☐   Disaggregated enrollment data over longest period possible
-     information on drop outs, how many, where do they go
-     knowledge of whether new enrollees were previously out of school
-     historical pattern related to MoE support?

☐   Records of school management changes, instructional materials selection and procurement etc.
-     profile of parent members of SMC
-     nature of discussions at SMC
-     changes in management style because of parental presence on SMC
-     examples of challenges posed by parents through SMC
-     evidence of financial reports to parents

☐   Confirmation of fee level, percentage of pupils who pay, concessions given etc.
-     number/percentage who pay
-     number/value of concessions
-     whose salaries are paid by the school and value
-     record of other benefactor contributions

CONTEXT

1) NFS levy user fees (charge tuition) and are therefore similar to private schools, although they charge lower fees. How do you think about NFS in the context of the private provision (non-state) of schooling?

2) Non-Formal Schools (NFS) are included under the Alternative Provision of Basic Education Investment Programme (IP), which includes Non-Formal Education (NFE). How do you think about NFS in the context of/as a form of NFE?

MoE ENGAGEMENT WITH NFS
3) The MoE has increased its support to NFS since 2005 under the first Kenya Education Sector Support Plan, (KESSP I, 2005-2010). What do you think are the main objectives of this support?
Probe for:
- whose needs are being targeted/addressed?
- what outputs are expected?
- relationship with MDG, EFA and FPE?

4) The MoE's support to NFS includes three major elements: school verification and validation, school management changes and the provision of instructional materials' grants. I would like to talk about each element in turn.

a) School verification and validation (school legitimization and closer relationship with MoE)
- What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
- How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

b) School management changes (SMC, SIMSC, SIMBA Account)
- What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
- How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?
- What role do parents play on the SMC (issues raised, decisions made, attendance, contribution etc)

c) Provision of Instructional Materials' grants
- What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
- How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

5) Tell me about the textbooks used in your school now? And in the past?
Probe for:
- those bought by parents
- those donated by well-wishers
- those provided by the government

6) For the books bought with the government IM grant?
- who chooses/selects the books? (role of SMC, parents, teachers)
- which books have been provided/bought? (subject and Standard)
- where are the books kept?
- how have the books been used in your school?
- how is the teaching in your school different with these textbooks?
- how is the learning of pupils different with these textbooks?

7) Overall, who do you think benefits from the MoE support? Who, if anyone, might be disadvantaged by it?

8) If not already mentioned, prompt for responses on impact of the MoE support on:

____ fee levels
____ concessionary places
____ enrollment practices/criteria
____ repitition rates/ transfer out of this school

____ transition rations
____ MoE support for transition to secondary school
____ grant useage/ selection and procurement processes
____ support from well-wishers

____ composition of trained/untrained teachers and teacher stability
____ teacher morale
____ teacher pupil ratio
____ number of KCPE candidates
____ average performance in KCPE
____ exam centre status
____ exam fee exemptions

____ parent and pupil expectations of NFS
____ parental involvement (who, how involved etc)
____ parents value for NFS
____ pupils value for NFS
____ use of textbooks by pupils (away from school/homework)

____ changes in the provision of other forms of NFE

9)   Thinking back over our conversation, how might the MoE develop its support to have a greater impact on the objectives we've discussed (access, retention, quality, cost) ?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS
(2 Teachers per school (Math/English, Std 7/8)

TEACHER BACKGROUND
Teacher of which subject and class?
Training?
Length of time as a teacher?
Length of time in this school (others?)
Originating from this community?

CONTEXT
1)   Non-Formal Schools (NFS) are included under the Alternative Provision of Basic Education Investment Programme (IP), which includes Non-Formal Education (NFE). How do you think about NFS in the context of/as a form of NFE?

2)   NFS levy user fees (charge tuition) and are therefore similar to private schools, although they charge lower fees. How do you think about NFS in the context of the private provision (non-state) of schooling?

MoE ENGAGEMENT WITH NFS
3)   The MoE has increased its support to NFS since 2005 under the first Kenya Education Sector Support Plan, (KESSP I, 2005-2010). What do you think are the main objectives of this support?
Probe for:
-        whose needs are being targeted/addressed?
-        what outputs are expected?
-        relationship with MDG, EFA and FPE?

4)   The MoE's support to NFS includes three major elements: school verification and validation, school management changes and the provision of instructional materials' grants. I would like to talk about each element in turn.

a) School verification and validation (school legitimization and closer relationship with MoE)
-        What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
-        How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

b) School management changes (SMC, SIMSC, SIMBA Account)
-        What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
-        How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?
-        What role do parents play on the SMC (issues raised, decisions made, attendance, contribution etc)

c) Provision of Instructional Materials' grants
-        What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
-        How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

5)   Tell me about the textbooks used in your school now? And in the past?
Probe for:
-        those bought by parents
-        those donated by well-wishers
-        those provided by the government

6)   For the books bought with the government IM grant?
- have you used the books in your teaching and how?
- how is your teaching different with these textbooks?
- have your pupils used the books and how?
- how is the learning of pupils different with these textbooks?
- who chooses/selects the books? (role of SMC, parents, teachers)
- which books have been provided/bought? (subject and Standard)
- where are the books kept?

7)   Who do you think benefits from the MoE support? Who, if anyone, might be disadvantaged by it?

8)   If not already mentioned, prompt for responses on impact of the MoE support on:

____ fee levels
____ concessionary places
____ enrollment practices/criteria
____ repitition rates/ transfer out of this school
____ transition rations
____ MoE support for transition to secondary school
____ grant useage/ selection and procurement processes
____ support from well-wishers

____ composition of trained/untrained teachers and teacher stability
____ teacher morale
____ teacher pupil ratio
____ number of KCPE candidates
____ average performance in KCPE
____ exam centre status
____ exam fee exemptions

____ parent and pupil expectations of NFS
____ parental involvement (who, how involved etc)
____ parents value for NFS
____ pupils value for NFS
____ use of textbooks by pupils (away from school/homework)

____ changes in the provision of other forms of NFE

9)   Thinking back over our conversation, how might the MoE develop its support to have a greater impact on the objectives you've described?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS
1 FGD per school with 4-6 participants (parents on the School Management Committee or Parent Teachers' Association and parents of pupils in Standards 7 & 8).

INTRODUCTIONS/BACKGROUND
How long have you had children in this school?
Where else have you sent their children to school?
Where did you go to school themselves? (levels reached)
What roles do you play in the school?

Confirm a common understanding of an NFS (as opposed to public primary school)
What do you call the kind of school we are in now, what do you call a school run by the government?

NFS
1)   What contribution do you think NFSs make in the provision of education?
Probe for:
- increasing access (for whom?)
- improving quality (what type?)
- reducing cost

2)   What do you hope your children will gain/benefit from having been to this school?

MOE ENGAGEMENT WITH NFS
3)   The MoE has increased its support to NFS since 2005 under the first Kenya Education Sector Support Plan, (KESSP I, 2005-2010). What do you think is the main objectives of this support?
Probe for:
-           whose needs are being targeted/addressed?
-           what outputs are expected?
-           relationship with MDG, EFA and FPE?

4)   The MoE's support to NFS includes three major elements: school verification and validation, school management changes and the provision of instructional materials' grants. I would like to talk about each element in turn.

a) School verification and validation (school legitimization and closer relationship with MoE)
-           What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
-           How aware are parents of the relationship between the school and the MoE?
-           How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

b) School management changes (SMC, SIMSC, SIMBA Account)
-           What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
-           How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?
-           What role do parents play on the SMC?

5)   Tell me about the textbooks used in your school now? And in the past?
Probe for:
-           those bought by parents
-           those donated by well-wishers
-           those provided by the government

a) Provision of Instructional Materials' grants

-          What changes has this brought to the school? To the teaching? To the learning? (actual process)
-          How are parents involved in the IM grant process (SIMSC?) - who chooses/selects the books/which books have been bought? (subject and Standard)/where are the books kept?
-          How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

6)   What influence does the MoE support, taken all together, have on:
- who goes to school
- your willingness to send your child to school (any school transfers?)
- the chances of your child staying in school through to St 8
- your child's performance at school (KCPE?)
- your child's chances of going onto secondary school
- your child's employment prospects

7)   Who do you think benefits most from the MoE support? Who, if anyone, might be disadvantaged by it?

8)   If not already mentioned, prompt for responses on impact of the MoE support on:

_____ fee levels
_____ concessionary places
_____ erollment practices/criteria
_____ repitition rates/ transfer out of this school
_____ transition rations
_____ MoE support for transition to secondary school
_____ grant useage/ selection and procurement processes
_____ support from well-wishers

_____ composition of trained/untrained teachers and teacher stability
_____ teacher morale
_____ teacher pupil ratio
_____ number of KCPE candidates
_____ average performance in KCPE
_____ exam centre status
_____ exam fee exemptions

_____ parent and pupil expectations of NFS
_____ parental involvement (who, how involved etc)
_____ parents value for NFS
_____ pupils value for NFS
_____ use of textbooks by pupils (away from school/homework)

_____ changes in the provision of other forms of NFE

9)   Thinking back over our conversation, how might the MoE develop its support to have a greater impact on the objectives you've described?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PUPILS IN SCHOOL
1 FGD per school with 6-8 participants (pupils in Standards 7 & 8).

INTRODUCTIONS/BACKGROUND
How long have you each been in this school?
Which other schools have you been to? (Did they attend a public school?)

Confirm a common understanding of an NFS (as opposed to public primary school)
Do you have a name for this kind of school? And what do you call a school run by the government?

NFS

1)   What are the benefits of going to an NFS instead of public schools? What are the disadvantages?
Probe for:
- increasing access (for whom?)
- improving quality (what type?)
- reducing cost

2)   What do you hope to do after sitting your Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE) exams?

3)   Thinking about the people who used to go to school with you, who has left the school? Where are they now and what are they doing? Why did they have to leave school? And you, why didn't that happen to you?

MOE ENGAGEMENT

4)   The MoE has increased its support to NFS since about 2004 and your school is one that has received this support. What kinds of support do you know about that has come from the MoE since 2004?

5)   I'd like to talk about some of the support the MoE is giving schools

a) School visits to the schools by MoE officers – are you aware of them?
-       What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
-       How aware, if at all, are pupils of the relationship between the school and the MoE?
-       How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

b) School management changes - are you aware of the SMC or of meetings that the school calls your parents to?
-       What changes has this brought to the school? (actual process)
-       Do any of you know parents who are on the SMC? Have there been any issues your parents have raised at the SMC?
-       How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

6)   Tell me about the textbooks used in your school now? And in the past?
Probe for:
-       those bought by parents
-       those donated by well-wishers
-       those provided by the government

a) Provision of Instructional Materials' grants
-       What changes have these books brought to the school? To the teaching? To the learning? (actual process)
-       Do you know who chooses/selects the books/which books have been bought? (subject and Standard)/where are the books kept?
-       How have these changes affected access, retention, performance, transition, costs and quality?

7)   What influence (positive and negative) do the things we've talked about, taken all together, have on:
- who goes to school
- your willingness to go to school (any school transfers?)
- the chances of you staying in school through to St 8
- your performance at school (KCPE?)
- your chances of going onto secondary school
- your employment prospects

Appendix II: Enrollment Figures, NFS 1

CLASS	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007[16]	2008	2009	2010
ST 1: Term 1	25	40	37	56	162	41	51	81
Term 2	37	42	42	56	162	50	51	81
Term 3	40	40	40	116	168	50	88	
ST 2: Term 1	34	45	40	65	107	41	66	83
Term 2	42	43	43	70	107	61	66	83
Term 3	45	43	43	84	107	61	68	
ST 3: Term 1	31	48	43	79	112	36	69	94
Term 2	48	48	48	79	112	59	74	94
Term 3	48	48	48	85	115	59	88	
ST 4: Term 1	40	46	48	76	67	40	63	80
Term 2	45	45	45	76	67	63	63	83
Term 3	51	51	51	77	67	63	80	
ST 5: Term 1	44	45	5	57	67	32	59	79
Term 2	46	46	46	57	67	44	59	79
Term 3	49	49	49	60	69	44	57	
ST 6: Term 1	41	45	45	44	44	33	33	78
Term 2	44	44	44	44	44	33	49	78
Term 3	45	45	45	36	48	33	44	
ST 7: Term 1	38	36	44	50	54	48	48	75
Term 2	39	39	39	50	54	48	48	75
Term 3	46	46	43	37	54	48	50	
ST 8: Term 1	23	30	46	25	28	30	39	58
Term 2	30	30	23	27	28	30	39	58
Term 3	30	30	25	26	30	30	25	

[16] National elections took place in December 2007, which resulted in widespread civil unrest. In Nairobi the informal settlements were sites of violence and destruction. Many people were killed and properties destroyed. Both during and after the post-election violence, many people left their homes and resettled elsewhere. This movement of people is reflected in the large drop in enrollment figures between 2007 and 2008.

Appendix III: Classroom Observations

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

<u>School:</u>   2   <u>Subject</u>:   *Science*   Class: *7*   <u>Time</u>:   *10.00 am*

<u>Teacher</u> -   Present (Yes)
  -    Punctual (Yes)
  -    Prepared (Yes, very

<u>Students</u> –   Present   (B= 23 , G= 15   )
  -    Punctual (Yes)
  -    prepared with books, pencils etc (Yes)

PROCESS	Teacher	Pupils
0-10 min	Recap of previous lesson	Question and answer
11-20 min	New material introduced through talking and some notes on the chalkboard	Question and response
21-30 min	Practical demonstration (Batteries in parallel sequence)	Observation Some participation
31-40 min	Practical demonstration (Batteries in serial sequence)	Observation Some participation
41-50 min	Exercise from book of anticipating outcome of circuits through talking and notes on chalkboard	Question and answer, reading along with the book

<u>Observation of exercise books</u>
Comprehensive notes in exercise books, typical style of wasting no space on the page and neat handwriting.
Frequent exercises with questions
All work marked in red, including corrections.

<u>Homework setting</u>
To finish the exercise by the next lesson.

<u>Classroom conditions</u>
Light – *very poor*
Air – very poor
Desks/benches – *present but squeezed*
Smell – *unpleasant*

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

School: 1   Subject: *English*   Class: *7*   Time: *12.00*

Teacher -   Present (Yes)
         -   Punctual (Yes)
         -   Prepared (Unclear, used textbook throughout)

Students –   Present (B= 25 , G= 18   )
         -   Punctual (Yes)
         -   prepared with books, pencils etc (Yes)

PROCESS	Teacher	Pupils
0-10 min	Recap of grammar (tenses) Not very clear explanation	Listening
11-20 min	Expanding on grammar with examples Sentences read from the textbook	Question and response
21-30 min	Exercise from the book started by pupils in written form.	Pupils work in groups per bench
31-40 min	Teacher called on pupils to each read a sentence with the correct answer. Corrections not clear	Individual pupils answer
41-50 min	Teacher calls on pupils to read a longer passage	Individual pupils reading out loud

Observation of exercise books
Comprehensive notes in exercise books, typical style of wasting no space on the page and neat handwriting.
Frequent exercises with questions
All work marked in red, including corrections.
Homework exercise already written in the book with blank spaces for the answer – pupil confirmed he had copied the exercise from the textbook because he would not be able to take the book home because they were sharing books.

Homework setting
To make sure the exercise is completed for next lesson

Classroom conditions
Light – *poor*
Air – *acceptable*
Desks/benches – *some parts of the room squeezed*
Smell – *acceptable*

Stayed in the classroom for lunch – 'githeri' in a margarine tub, served from a 'debi'. I was given some slices of avocado as visitor and an orange by a pupil. Children very excited to have me eat lunch with them.

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