

# Free Primary and Secondary Education Policies in the East African Region: A retrospect and prospect

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**Moses Oketch  
and  
Caine Rolleston**

**School of Lifelong Education and  
International Development (LEID)  
Seminar**

**Institute of Education  
University of London  
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# East African Countries of Focus:



# Why focus on these countries?

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- These countries are often held up as countries in SSA that have succeeded in implementing policies of free primary education.
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- ❑ In all three countries the implementation of those policies is leading to new policies for access to secondary education and, in the case of Tanzania, declines in primary enrolment.
  - ❑ All three are DFID priority countries.
  - ❑ They have similar characteristics and historical backgrounds
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# Why undertake this review

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- Detailed empirical work on the determinants of access to lower secondary by the excluded groups may be undertaken at a later stage in one or more of these countries. However, before such studies can be designed we needed a systematic review of studies of :
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- ❑ The formulation of policies of free primary education in the three countries since the 1960s. The following questions are addressed:
  - ✓ What led to those policies and how were they funded?
  - ✓ What was the role, if any, of the international community?
  - ✓ What were the politics and underpinning philosophy surrounding the formulation of those policies and have the policies changed over time, and why?
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# What else is covered?

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- The strategies for implementation (e.g. phased in by grade/all grades simultaneously? pilot/nationwide? Responsibilities? Teacher training?)
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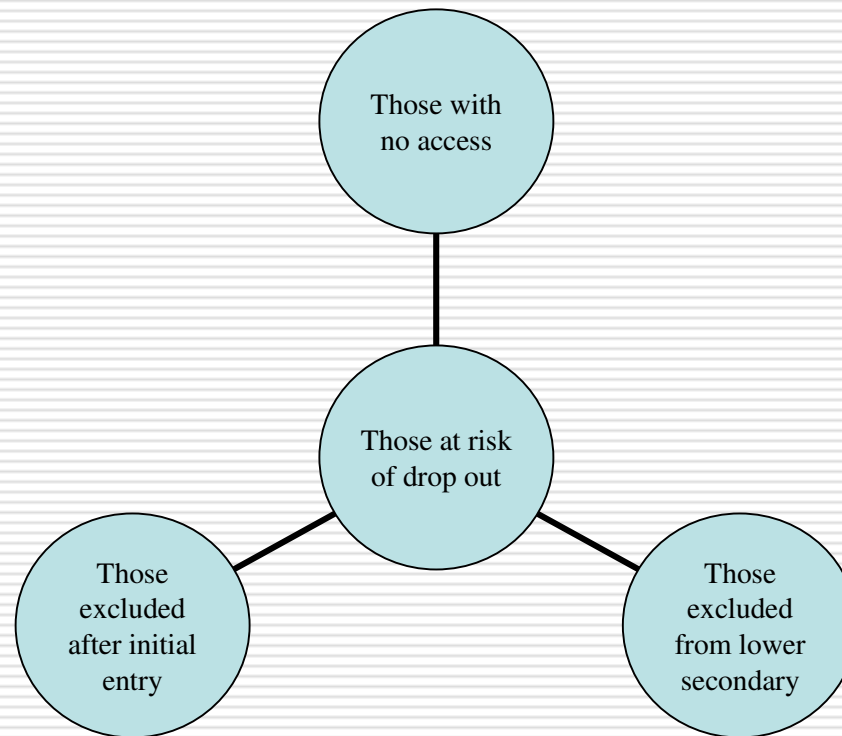
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- The implementation process (supply of school places; social demand; demand by the economic structure, facilitators/inhibitors, pupil flow, retention/dropout, achievement, transition to secondary; excluded groups; analyse in terms of 'zones of exclusion' )
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- ❑ The institutionalisation, replicability and financial sustainability of these policies.
  - ❑ The implications of these policies for the poorest groups.
  - ❑ An overview of recent policies on access to secondary education
  - ❑ All the above in relation to CREATE Zones of Exclusion
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# CREATE Zones of exclusion

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# Methods

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- ✓ Internet and library search of relevant articles, books and reports
  - ✓ Compiling all the relevant references
  - ✓ Reading and taking notes- and preparing annotated bibliography
  - ✓ Writing the review
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# Findings from the lit. review

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- All three countries prioritised expansion of access to secondary and tertiary education in the 1960s against donor intentions which preferred sequencing of the educational access
- UPE was a desired goal in Kenya
- UPE simply happened in Uganda but there is no evidence that it was a desired goal
- UPE was not a desired goal in Tanzania until 1967 'Musoma Declaration'

## policies in the 1960s that improved access by the excluded

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- ❑ Abolition of racially segregated schooling
  - ❑ Scrapping Std. IV examination in Kenya in 1964, and Tanzania in 1966 and 1973
  - ❑ Establishing uninterrupted seven year primary education
  - ❑ Merging six year primary with two year junior sec. to form seven years primary in Uganda in 1967
  - ❑ Fees remained a barrier for the poor
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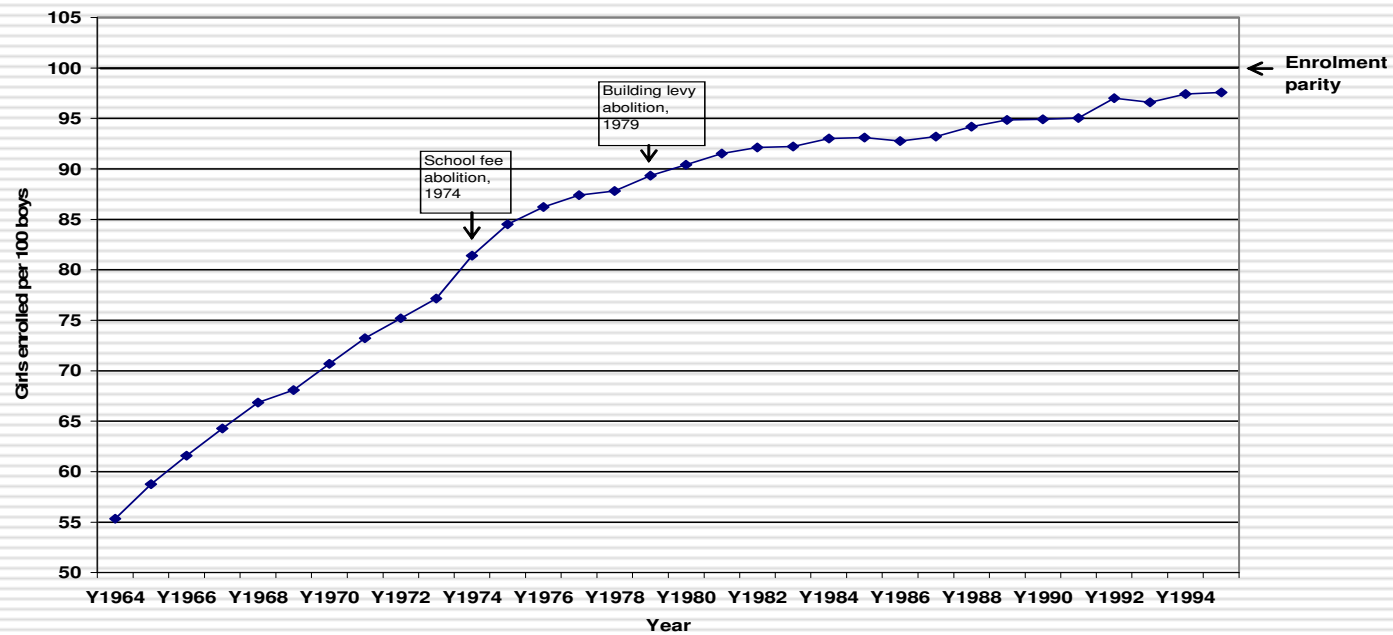
# UPE and FPE policy

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- ❑ UPE in Kenya in 1974 for the first four years; and 1978 for the entire primary
  - ❑ In Tanzania from 1967 following 'Musoma Declaration' and attainment of UPE in 1977
  - ❑ Uganda did not have a policy but enrolments increased
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# Improvement in Gender parity (Kenya)

Figure 1. Kenya: Representation of Girls in Primary School Enrolments  
Girls enrolled per 100 boys, all grades, 1964 to 1995



□ Source: Somerset (2006).

# Policies in the 1980s and 1990s

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- ❑ SAPs led to decline in Enrolment in Tanzania
  - ❑ Growth and then Decline in Kenya as a result of cost-sharing policies in 1988 associated with SAPs
  - ❑ Uganda interrupted by internal conflict until 1987 government white paper on education
  - ❑ Reintroduction of FPE in Kenya in 2002
  - ❑ Reintroduction of FPE in Uganda in 1996
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# Issues to address:

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- ❑ Will FPE lead to greater transition to lower secondary by the poor? Or will it lead to 'bulge' effect?
  - ❑ Can policies that are outlined by the three governments respond to the demand for secondary education by the growing urban (slum) populations and the excluded groups?
  - ❑ Do those policies address the causes of exclusion from lower secondary by the excluded groups?
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# Is Universal Primary education in East Africa Sustainable?

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- What problems have emerged as East African countries have approached or achieved Universal Primary Education?
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# Kenya – FPE programme 2003

NER grew by 22% in the first year of FPE implementation *but* rapid expansion also brought problems:

## *Educational*

- Classroom overcrowding
- Rising teacher-pupil ratios
- Rising drop-out rates
- Increases in enrolment tailing off from 2004.
- Declining teacher morale

## *Financial*

- Large increase in education costs beyond the scope of recurrent budget
- Dependence on donor support
- Disappointing economic performance means rising costs may not be met through economic growth
- Political motivation for FPE may have worked against the need adequate advance planning/resourcing
- Rising population makes FPE goal a moving target and continues to increase budgetary requirements

# Financing FPE

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- ❑ 17.4% increase in education budget in 2003-4 for FPE
  - ❑ Kenya already spent a similar per capita sum on education to that spent by developed countries.
  - ❑ 'Once and for all' abolition of school fees meant a further US\$3.2m per annum would be required from the government budget
  - ❑ Estimates show it would require a further US\$95m to reach UPE at current per capita spending levels
  - ❑ At current school size that would mean 2917 new schools
  - ❑ At current overall education budget levels that would leave only 4.4% of the budget for post-primary phases
  - ❑ It is clear that for the long term, adequate and sustainable financing will depend on economic growth
  - ❑ However, efficiency in resource allocation will also be key
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# Allocation Alternatives

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- Achieving UPE depends not only on increasing the supply of available education but on increasing households' demand for it.
  - The effect of abolishing fees shows that direct costs were a significant barrier to enrolment but other cost barriers remain
  - Estimates show that for the government to bear all the costs to households of education would require a 91% budget increase and would result in a 94% NER.
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- Demand for education also depends on features of educational quality including the number of qualified teachers and the availability of textbooks
  - Estimates in 2002 show that to achieve a NER of 85% through improving these inputs would require either:
    - By increasing the number of qualified teachers – a budget increase of 41%
    - By increasing the volume of text books – a budget increase of 45%
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# Uganda – FPE Programme 1997

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- ❑ Substantial widening of educational access – GER rose 73% in the first year
  - ❑ Gender equity improved markedly to near parity levels
  - ❑ Number of primary teachers in service doubled
  - ❑ Access in rural areas dramatically improved
  
  - ❑ Indicators worsening in subsequent years to levels below those pre-FPE – significant drop-out
  - ❑ Worsening quality indicators including teacher pupil ratio falling from 37 to 65, prevalence of over-crowding and multiple shifts
  - ❑ Worsening performance indicators in primary school assessments
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- ❑ Elimination of school fees
  - ❑ Very high costs to government with primary education doubling its share of the education budget
  - ❑ Finance routed from debt-cancellation, donor-support and economic growth
  - ❑ Around half the primary education budget met by donors
  - ❑ Uptake of private education increased owing partly to quality concerns with implications for equity
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## Unintended consequences of FPE

- ~~Abolition of fees means parents~~ may move away from low-cost informal provision to free state provision placing more strain on state resources
  - Declining quality and overcrowding in state system may prompt wealthier parents to choose higher-cost private alternatives
  - Declining quality may make it more difficult for bright children from poor families in the state sector to succeed, with consequences for equity
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# The Way Forward?

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- Implications of FPE for:
    - demand for secondary education
    - returns to education
    - the labour market
  - Need for a holistic approach which balances investment in primary education with other phases and with other social services, transport, energy, agriculture, industrial policy etc and which takes account of economic growth levels, government capacity and is therefore sustainable.
  - Dangers of ‘big bang’ educational expansion for educational quality, equity, and potentially for employment and rural livelihoods.
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