

Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg  
Erziehungswissenschaftliches Seminar

**The Contribution of Non-Formal Schools in Enhancing  
the Provision of Basic Education in Kenya**

**Inauguraldissertation zur Erlangung des Grades eines Dr. Phil  
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**Dedication**

For my mother  
and my Sister Christine  
the pillars of our family

## Abstract

The drive to access basic education to school aged children, has preoccupied successive governments in independent Kenya. This has been evidenced by a series of activities aimed at boosting school enrolment and learning ranging from heavy allocation of the national budget to education, currently standing at 6.3% of the GDP, to the current implementation of the free primary education policy. Yet despite all this effort attaining EFA has remained illusive. So while primary school enrolment in 2003 rose from 5.8 to 7.1 million, it is estimated that there are still 2 million non-enrolled children. It is this reality of OOS children, that has over the years prompted a number of individuals or organizations, operating outside the formal system to initiate endeavours offering formal education. From individual cases in the 1980s, these initiatives multiplied in the 1990s and came to be formally recognised as Non Formal Schools (NFS). Policy documents exalted their role in reaching specific populations of excluded children and hence achieving EFA. However, no detailed study had been conducted on NFS in terms of their numbers, education provisions, to whom they are offered, how they are offered, their viability of replication and their overall place in the primary school education plan in the country.

The task of this study was therefore to investigate how alternative learning approaches, such as NFS contribute to the provision of basic education in Kenya. This was done by examining the characteristics of NFS with respect to school orientation and classroom culture and how this enhances the attainment of basic education skills. Specifically, the study sought to (a) identify and analyse NFS according to school category and functions (b) understand their learning processes and factors impacting on them and (c) thereafter posit the contributions NFS are making towards enhancing the provision of basic education in Kenya. The study designed to answer the above objectives adopted an interactive research design comprising the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. First an institutional mapping survey comprising 30 institutions was conducted. Thereafter 8 cases were selected for detailed study. Additionally a desk review of NFE approaches targeting school aged children in selected countries was undertaken. The selection of the sites was informed by the fact that NFS are visible from a geographic point of view as they are mainly to be found in rural-remote districts and urban poor areas. Hence NFS in Samburu and Marsabit to represent Rural and Kisumu and Nairobi too represent Urban were studied.

The data collection, analysis and presentation procedures were guided by the “nine building blocks of education” framework suggested by Anderson (1992) who suggests that optimum outcomes in education are the result of effective interaction among the 9 blocks viz. the learners, teachers, time, place, curriculum, pedagogy, community participation, administration and finances.

On the whole, the study reveals that there has been an overly romanticism of the role of “alternative provisions”. NFS are ascribed a big role without accompanying changes in policy and

financing and without a full examination of its ability to provide an equitable learning experience. The schools are envisioned to augment the countries basic education plan and yet they have not been properly empowered to do so. Government documents depict a lack of clarity of the place of NFS in the overall basic education plan. For instance, they are quoted to be complementary institutions but the findings suggest that the majority of NFS, especially in urban are parallel institutions, competing against FE rather than complementing it and operating in a vague and uncoordinated linkage with formal institutions (e.g. primary schools, examination council) offering basic education. The wording “non” has been used to justify difference which unfortunately has taken the shape of “just teaching” questionable content using equally questionably pedagogical skills. It is evident that NFS needs streamlining and this study makes suggestions on a more comprehensive educational plan that would accommodate vulnerable children and their quest for formal education. In this sense, this work belongs to the broader theme of school reform.

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## Table of Contents

|          |   |           |
|----------|---|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <hr/>    |   |           |
| 1.1      | BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM   | 1         |
| 1.2      | STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM  | 6         |
| 1.3      | OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY   | 7         |
| 1.4      | RESEARCH QUESTIONS  | 7         |
| 1.5      | SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY   | 8         |
| 1.6      | SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY  | 8         |
| 1.7      | OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS   | 9         |
| 1.8      | CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK  | 10        |
| 1.8.1    | AN OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC THEORIES OF (UNDER)DEVELOPMENT                          | 10        |
| 1.8.2    | APPLICATION OF DEPENDENCY/DEPRIVATION THEORIES TO NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ANALYSIS | 11        |
| 1.9      | ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS  | 15        |
| <b>2</b> | <b>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| <hr/>    |   |           |
| 2.1      | NON-FORMAL EDUCATION: TRACING THE ROOTS   | 16        |
| 2.1.1    | PRIOR TO ESTABLISHMENT OF FORMAL EDUCATION (SCHOOLING)                          | 17        |
| 2.1.2    | WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF WESTERN FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS                          | 17        |
| 2.1.3    | NFE AS AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY  | 18        |
| 2.2      | ACCESSING BASIC EDUCATION   | 19        |
| 2.2.1    | THE INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE   | 19        |
| 2.2.2    | EDUCATION FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?                                       | 21        |
| 2.2.3    | DEMAND FOR EDUCATION  | 22        |
| 2.3      | NON FORMAL SCHOOLS: “THE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH?”                                 | 24        |
| 2.3.1    | DESCRIBING THE TERM “NFE”   | 24        |
| 2.3.2    | EXPLAINING THE SUBORDINATE STATUS   | 30        |
| 2.4      | NON-FORMAL DELIVERY APPROACHES IN LATIN AMERICA, ASIA AND AFRICA                | 32        |
| 2.4.1    | NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA   | 32        |
| 2.4.2    | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN ASIA   | 36        |
| 2.4.3    | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN AFRICA   | 37        |
| 2.5      | EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION                                       | 39        |
| 2.6      | SUMMING UP  | 43        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>   | <b>45</b> |
| <hr/>    |   |           |
| 3.1      | THE RESEARCH DESIGN   | 45        |
| 3.2      | KENYA: SITUATING THE RESEARCH   | 47        |
| 3.3      | THE SELECTION PROCESS   | 48        |
| 3.3.1    | INSTITUTIONAL MAPPING SURVEY: SELECTING THE RESEARCH SITES                      | 48        |
| 3.3.2    | SELECTING THE NON-FORMAL SCHOOLS:   | 48        |
| 3.3.3    | SELECTING THE INFORMANTS  | 49        |
| 3.3.4    | CASE STUDIES: SELECTING THE CASES FOR STUDY                                     | 51        |
| 3.3.5    | SELECTING THE INFORMANTS  | 51        |
| 3.4      | VENUE OF DATA COLLECTION  | 53        |
| 3.5      | LANGUAGE OF RESEARCH  | 54        |
| 3.6      | RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS  | 54        |
| 3.6.1    | KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWS:  | 55        |
| 3.6.2    | PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION:  | 55        |
| 3.6.3    | FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION:   | 55        |

|            |   |           |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 3.6.4      | PROJECTIVE/REACTIVE TECHNIQUES:         | 56        |
| 3.6.5      | PICTORIAL REPRESENTATIONS:              | 56        |
| 3.6.6      | DOCUMENT ANALYSIS:                      | 56        |
| 3.6.7      | VALIDATING THE ACCURACY OF THE FINDINGS | 57        |
| <b>3.7</b> | <b>DATA AND INFORMATION ANALYSIS</b>    | <b>58</b> |

## **4 THE ANALYSIS OF NON FORMAL SCHOOLS IN KENYA**

59

|            |   |           |
|------------|---|-----------|
| <b>4.1</b> | <b>INTRODUCING NON FORMAL SCHOOLS</b>                   | <b>59</b> |
| 4.1.1      | PROLIFERATION OF NFS: DISCERNING THE MOTIVATION         | 60        |
| 4.1.2      | RURAL: "A NON-RESPONSIVE FORMAL SCHOOL TO LOCAL WAYS"   | 60        |
| 4.1.3      | URBAN: "THE PLIGHT OF THE CHILDREN"                     | 62        |
| 4.1.4      | THE ECONOMIC MOTIVE?                                    | 62        |
| 4.1.5      | A PREVENTIVE DRIVE                                      | 64        |
| 4.1.6      | NAMES OF THE INSTITUTIONS                               | 64        |
| <b>4.2</b> | <b>EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES</b>                           | <b>66</b> |
| 4.2.1      | URBAN: "TO OFFER LEARNING"                              | 66        |
| 4.2.2      | RURAL: "REROUTING BACK TO FORMAL SCHOOLS"               | 67        |
| <b>4.3</b> | <b>STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRES/SCHOOLS IN STUDY SAMPLE</b> | <b>68</b> |
| <b>4.4</b> | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                                       | <b>69</b> |

## **5 THE SCHOOL**

71

|             |  |            |
|-------------|--|------------|
| <b>5.1</b>  | <b>THE LEARNER</b>   | <b>71</b>  |
| <b>5.2</b>  | <b>THE LEARNERS' CHARACTERISTICS</b>                                 | <b>71</b>  |
| 5.2.1       | URBAN: "THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT"                                   | 71         |
| 5.2.2       | RURAL: "THE SOCIO-CULTURAL DISCREPANCIES"                            | 73         |
| 5.2.3       | AGE  | 75         |
| 5.2.4       | IMPLICATIONS OF FAMILY SIZES: "DIVIDING CHILDREN BETWEEN NFS AND FE" | 76         |
| <b>5.3</b>  | <b>LEARNER ADMISSION AND VERIFICATION PROCESSES</b>                  | <b>77</b>  |
| 5.3.1       | URBAN  | 78         |
| 5.3.2       | RURAL  | 79         |
| <b>5.4</b>  | <b>ENROLMENT TRENDS</b>  | <b>80</b>  |
| 5.4.1       | URBAN: "EXPLAINING FLUCTUATING ENROLMENT"                            | 82         |
| 5.4.2       | RURAL: "THE TOLL OF TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE"                           | 85         |
| 5.4.3       | EXPLAINING HIGHER FEMALE ENROLMENT IN NFS                            | 87         |
| <b>5.5</b>  | <b>SUMMING UP</b>  | <b>88</b>  |
| <b>5.6</b>  | <b>THE TEACHERS</b>  | <b>90</b>  |
| <b>5.7</b>  | <b>TEACHER NUMBERS</b>   | <b>90</b>  |
| 5.7.1       | TEACHER - PUPIL RATIO  | 91         |
| <b>5.8</b>  | <b>RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES</b>  | <b>92</b>  |
| 5.8.1       | THE RECRUITING TEAM  | 92         |
| 5.8.2       | THE VOLUNTARY SPIRIT   | 93         |
| 5.8.3       | ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS  | 94         |
| 5.8.4       | PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS  | 95         |
| 5.8.5       | TEACHER MOTIVATION   | 98         |
| 5.8.6       | TEACHER ORIGINS  | 98         |
| <b>5.9</b>  | <b>TEACHER CAPACITY BUILDING</b>                                     | <b>99</b>  |
| <b>5.10</b> | <b>PAYMENT OF TEACHERS</b>   | <b>102</b> |
| 5.10.1      | SPONSORS   | 103        |
| 5.10.2      | PARENTS CONTRIBUTION   | 103        |
| 5.10.3      | HARAMBEEES   | 105        |

|             |                                       |            |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 5.10.4      | THE GOVERNMENT                        | 105        |
| 5.10.5      | INCOME GENERATING PROJECTS            | 105        |
| 5.10.6      | TEACHER VOLUNTEERISM VERSUS TURNOVER  | 107        |
| <b>5.11</b> | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                     | <b>111</b> |
| <b>5.12</b> | <b>THE PLACE</b>                      | <b>113</b> |
| <b>5.13</b> | <b>THE NFS PREMISE</b>                | <b>113</b> |
| 5.13.1      | IMPACT OF PREMISE QUALITY ON LEARNING | 115        |
| 5.13.2      | THE CLASSES                           | 117        |
| <b>5.14</b> | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                     | <b>119</b> |
| <b>5.15</b> | <b>THE TIME</b>                       | <b>120</b> |
| 5.15.1      | URBAN: “CONVENTIONAL TIME SCHEDULES”  | 120        |
| 5.15.2      | RURAL: “THE FLEXIBLE TIME PLAN”       | 121        |
| <b>5.16</b> | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                     | <b>123</b> |

## **6 CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY IN NFS** **124**

|             |  |            |
|-------------|--|------------|
| <b>6.1</b>  | <b>CURRICULUM: “WHAT IS TAUGHT”</b>              | <b>124</b> |
| <b>6.2</b>  | <b>CURRICULA VARIETIES IN NFS</b>                | <b>124</b> |
| 6.2.1       | RATIONALISING THE NFS CURRICULUM                 | 126        |
| <b>6.3</b>  | <b>SUBJECT RANGE</b>                             | <b>129</b> |
| 6.3.1       | THE CORE SUBJECTS                                | 129        |
| 6.3.2       | OTHER ACADEMIC SUBJECTS                          | 130        |
| 6.3.3       | THE INNOVATIVE SUBJECTS                          | 131        |
| 6.3.4       | THE VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS                          | 131        |
| 6.3.5       | LEARNERS SUBJECT PREFERENCE                      | 133        |
| 6.3.6       | OFFICIALLY RECOMMENDED SUBJECTS                  | 136        |
| <b>6.4</b>  | <b>LEARNING MATERIALS</b>                        | <b>137</b> |
| 6.4.1       | TEXT BOOKS                                       | 137        |
| 6.4.2       | WRITING MATERIAL                                 | 139        |
| 6.4.3       | PARENTS AND PROVISION OF LEARNING MATERIALS      | 139        |
| <b>6.5</b>  | <b>EXAMINATIONS</b>                              | <b>140</b> |
| <b>6.6</b>  | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                                | <b>142</b> |
| <b>6.7</b>  | <b>THE PEDAGOGY: “HOW IS IT TAUGHT”</b>          | <b>144</b> |
| 6.7.1       | TEACHING STYLES IN URBAN                         | 144        |
| 6.7.2       | TEACHING STYLES IN RURAL                         | 149        |
| <b>6.8</b>  | <b>LANGUAGE OF TEACHING</b>                      | <b>152</b> |
| <b>6.9</b>  | <b>CLASSROOM CONTINGENCIES</b>                   | <b>155</b> |
| <b>6.10</b> | <b>LEARNERS VOICES: “THE WAY TEACHERS TEACH”</b> | <b>159</b> |
| <b>6.11</b> | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                                | <b>160</b> |

## **7 THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES** **162**

|            |  |            |
|------------|--|------------|
| <b>7.1</b> | <b>COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION</b>   | <b>162</b> |
| <b>7.2</b> | <b>COMMUNITY OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS? “ANALYSING THE PROCESS OF INITIATION”</b> | <b>162</b> |
| 7.2.1      | VENUE OF SCHOOLS   | 162        |
| 7.2.2      | PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOLS  | 164        |
| 7.2.3      | ANALYSING USE OF PERSONAL VERSUS COLLECTIVE PRONOUNS                       | 167        |
| 7.2.4      | TYPES OF INITIATORS  | 169        |
| <b>7.3</b> | <b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO THE CENTRES</b>                                    | <b>170</b> |
| 7.3.1      | CASH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARENTS  | 170        |
| 7.3.2      | COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPISTS  | 171        |
| 7.3.3      | CONTRIBUTIONS IN KIND  | 172        |

|             |  |            |
|-------------|--|------------|
| 7.3.4       | PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT            | 172        |
| <b>7.4</b>  | <b>INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN’S SCHOOL ENDEAVOURS</b> | <b>173</b> |
| 7.4.1       | RURAL: “PASTORALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION”   | 174        |
| 7.4.2       | URBAN: “THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT”            | 176        |
| <b>7.5</b>  | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                                  | <b>179</b> |
| <b>7.6</b>  | <b>ADMINISTRATION</b>                              | <b>181</b> |
| <b>7.7</b>  | <b>STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION</b>                  | <b>181</b> |
| 7.7.1       | NATIONAL (GOVERNMENT) LEVEL                        | 181        |
| 7.7.2       | REGISTRATION STATUS                                | 183        |
| <b>7.8</b>  | <b>MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRES.</b>                  | <b>184</b> |
| 7.8.1       | RURAL: “MANAGING THE SMALL SCHOOLS”                | 184        |
| 7.8.2       | URBAN  | 185        |
| <b>7.9</b>  | <b>SCHOOL COMMITTEES</b>                           | <b>186</b> |
| 7.9.1       | RURAL  | 186        |
| 7.9.2       | URBAN  | 187        |
| 7.9.3       | RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS              | 188        |
| 7.9.4       | STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEES                            | 191        |
| 7.9.5       | COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES.                         | 191        |
| 7.9.6       | FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS                              | 192        |
| <b>7.10</b> | <b>THE NFS TEACHER</b>                             | <b>193</b> |
| <b>7.11</b> | <b>THE NFS LEARNER</b>                             | <b>193</b> |
| <b>7.12</b> | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                                  | <b>194</b> |
| <b>7.13</b> | <b>FINANCING IN NFS</b>                            | <b>195</b> |
| <b>7.14</b> | <b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>                              | <b>198</b> |
| <b>7.15</b> | <b>SUMMING UP</b>                                  | <b>200</b> |

## **8 THE CONCEPT OF NFS IN KENYA** **202**

|            |  |            |
|------------|--|------------|
| <b>8.1</b> | <b>EXPECTATIONS OF NFS CLIENTELE</b>                           | <b>202</b> |
| 8.1.1      | SCHOOL UNIFORM   | 202        |
| 8.1.2      | SCHOOL TIMING  | 205        |
| 8.1.3      | CERTIFICATION/NATIONAL EXAMINATION                             | 206        |
| <b>8.2</b> | <b>DESCRIBING NON-FORMAL SCHOOLS</b>                           | <b>208</b> |
| 8.2.1      | PARENTS VS TEACHERS: “COMPARING FORMAL AND NON FORMAL SCHOOLS” | 208        |
| 8.2.2      | LOWER STATUS FOR NFS   | 209        |
| 8.2.3      | URBAN HEAD TEACHERS: “ADVOCATING FOR VOCATIONALISATION”        | 210        |
| 8.2.4      | DEFINING NFS   | 211        |
| <b>8.3</b> | <b>TOWARDS A MODEL OF NON-FORMAL SCHOOL TYPES IN KENYA</b>     | <b>213</b> |

## **9 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS** **216**

|            |  |            |
|------------|--|------------|
| <b>9.1</b> | <b>MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> | <b>216</b> |
| 9.1.1      | MOTIVATION FOR INITIATING NFS            | 216        |
| 9.1.2      | THE LEARNER                              | 217        |
| 9.1.3      | THE TEACHER                              | 218        |
| 9.1.4      | THE PLACE                                | 220        |
| 9.1.5      | THE TIME                                 | 220        |
| 9.1.6      | CURRICULUM                               | 221        |
| 9.1.7      | PEDAGOGY                                 | 222        |
| 9.1.8      | COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION                  | 223        |
| 9.1.9      | ADMINISTRATION                           | 224        |
| 9.1.10     | FINANCES                                 | 225        |
| <b>9.2</b> | <b>LESSONS FROM SELECTED SYSTEMS</b>     | <b>226</b> |

|            |   |            |
|------------|---|------------|
| <b>9.3</b> | <b>RECOMMENDATION</b>                         | <b>228</b> |
| <b>9.4</b> | <b>RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH</b> | <b>230</b> |

## **10 REFERENCES 231**

---

|             |                             |            |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| <b>10.1</b> | <b>BOOKS</b>                | <b>231</b> |
| <b>10.2</b> | <b>ARTICLES IN JOURNALS</b> | <b>233</b> |
| <b>10.3</b> | <b>RESEARCH FINDINGS</b>    | <b>234</b> |
| <b>10.4</b> | <b>PAPERS</b>               | <b>235</b> |
| <b>10.5</b> | <b>DISCUSSION PAPERS</b>    | <b>235</b> |
| <b>10.6</b> | <b>POLICY DOCUMENTS</b>     | <b>236</b> |
| <b>10.7</b> | <b>INTERNET</b>             | <b>237</b> |

## **11 APPENDICES 238**

---

|             |   |            |
|-------------|---|------------|
| <b>11.1</b> | <b>LIST OF INSTITUTIONS IN STUDY SAMPLE</b> | <b>238</b> |
| <b>11.2</b> | <b>RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS</b>                 | <b>240</b> |
| 11.2.1      | INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS          | 240        |
| 11.2.2      | INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS                | 241        |
| 11.2.3      | FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSION WITH PUPILS       | 242        |
| 11.2.4      | FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS      | 243        |
| 11.2.5      | CLASSROOM OBSERVATION                       | 244        |
| <b>11.3</b> | <b>SAYING IT WITH PICTURES</b>              | <b>245</b> |

## List of Figures

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Fig. 1: The Nine Building Blocks of Education                                      | 14  |
| Fig. 2: The Study Design   | 45  |
| Fig. 3: Map of Kenya: Location of Study Sites                                      | 49  |
| Fig. 4: Head of institutions sample by designation                                 | 50  |
| Fig. 5: Learners sample size by gender and class/level                             | 52  |
| Fig. 6: Teachers sample size by area   | 52  |
| Fig. 7: Parents sample size by designation and gender                              | 53  |
| Fig. 10: The Learners Characteristics  | 71  |
| Fig. 12: Pupil Figures: Disparity in Field and Official DEO Sources                | 80  |
| Fig. 13: Pupil increase since the initiation of Institution in Individual Cases    | 81  |
| Fig. 14: Drop Out Class level and Current Placement                                | 82  |
| Fig. 15: Gender Disparities in Pupil Enrolment                                     | 87  |
| Fig. 16: Teacher numbers by gender   | i   |
| Fig. 17: Teacher numbers by year of inception and 2000                             | 91  |
| Fig. 18: The recruiting person/s   | 92  |
| Fig. 19: Salary/Token Source      Fig. 20: Urban: Lowest and Highest Salaries      | 102 |
| Fig. 21: Individual Teachers' years of service                                     | 109 |
| Fig. 22: Owners of the NFS Premise      Fig. 23: Quality of the Buildings (Kisumu) | 113 |
| Fig. 24: Classroom type      Fig. 25: Class levels by district                     | 117 |
| Fig. 27: Range of vocational subjects in NFS                                       | 132 |
| Fig. 29: Language Preference as Medium of Instruction                              | 152 |
| Fig. 30: The Changing Venues of Schools  | 163 |
| Fig. 31: Initiator Types   | 169 |
| Fig. 33: The Urban NFS Management Structure  | 186 |
| Fig. 34: School Committee Responsibilities   | 188 |
| Fig. 35: Sponsors in NFS   | 195 |
| Fig. 36: The Nine Building Blocks in an NFS Context                                | 213 |
| Fig. 37: A situation analysis of the NFS types in Kenya                            | 215 |
| Fig. 38: Suggested model for education of vulnerable children in Kenya             | 229 |

## List of Tables

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Table 1: Gross Enrolment rates in primary Schools by Gender, 1990-2003 | 5   |
| Table 2: NFE Educational Approaches                                    | 12  |
| Table 3: Formal/Non-formal Education Characteristics                   | 28  |
| Table 4: Type of Household   | 75  |
| Table 5: Age range of NFS learners                                     | 75  |
| Table 6: Total number of siblings                                      | 76  |
| Table 7: Current Size of Pupil Enrolment                               | 81  |
| Table 8: Size of Pupil enrolment in Initiation Year                    | 81  |
| Table 9: Causes of dropout   | 89  |
| Table 11: Teacher – Pupil Ratios                                       | 92  |
| Table 12: Teacher availability per centre                              | 108 |
| Table 13: Subject Frequency Count of Mentions by Informants            | 136 |
| Table 15: Classroom Observation – Multigrade teaching                  | 151 |
| Table 16: Language Use in the Observed Lessons                         | 154 |

## List of Abbreviations

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| AAK     | Action Aid Kenya   |
| ASAL    | Arid and Semi Arid Lands                                   |
| BEE     | Business Education and Entrepreneurship                    |
| BRAC    | Bangladesh Rural Appraisal Committee                       |
| C       | Community/Chairpersons                                     |
| CBO     | Community Based Organisation                               |
| CC      | Cursos Comunitarios (Primary Education for Rural Children) |
| CCF     | Christian Children Fund                                    |
| CIDA    | Canadian International Development Agency                  |
| COPE    | Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education            |
| CRE     | Christian Religious Education                              |
| DAE     | Department of Adult Education                              |
| DDC     | District Development Committees                            |
| DEO     | District Education Office                                  |
| DICECE  | District Centre for Early Childhood Education              |
| FE      | Formal Education   |
| EFA     | Education for All  |
| EO      | Education Officer  |
| EN      | Escuela Nueva (The New School)                             |
| FGD     | Focused Group Discussions                                  |
| GER     | Gross Enrolment Ratio                                      |
| GHC     | Geography, History and Civics                              |
| GOK     | Government of Kenya  |
| GTZ     | German Technical Co-operation                              |
| HT      | Head teacher   |
| IRE     | Islamic Religious Education                                |
| KAACR   | Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children's Rights    |
| KCPE    | Kenya Certificate of Primary Education                     |
| KIE     | Kenya Institute of Education                               |
| MINEDAF | Ministers of Education of Africa Conferences               |
| MFP     | Ministry of Finance and Planning                           |
| MOEST   | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology              |
| NFE     | Non Formal Education                                       |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| NFS    | Non Formal Schools   |
| NGO    | Non Governmental Organisations                                   |
| OOS    | Out of School  |
| OSP    | Out of School Programme  |
| P      | Parents  |
| PP     | Pupils   |
| PO     | Programme Officer  |
| PRA    | Participatory Rural Appraisal                                    |
| PROPEL | Promoting Primary and Elementary Education Project               |
| PUNE   | Part-time Primary Education                                      |
| P900   | Programme of the 900 Schools                                     |
| S      | Sponsor  |
| SEE    | Social Education and Ethics                                      |
| SFP    | School Feeding Programme   |
| T      | Teacher  |
| UNECA  | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa                    |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Education Fund                         |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development               |

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the Problem

The need to improve the quality of life and enhance human freedom and equality is a widely upheld ideal. This notion was especially pronounced in the period after the Second World War that witnessed a bruised world affirming itself to the maintenance and provision of peace, freedom and equity. A new spirit of emancipation captured the world. For Africa, it entailed not only liberation from colonialism but also a concerted fight to free the continent from the perceived bondage of “ignorance, poverty and disease<sup>1</sup>”.

Setting the pace for this wave of idealism was the UN brokered *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948 that proclaimed amongst other things that “everyone has a right to education” This avowal, which was operationalised in Africa in the 1961 Addis Ababa *Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa*, provided education a central position in moulding the newly decolonised nation-states. In the 1960s, the urgent needs were (a) the creation of qualified and specialised human resources with aptitudes for modernisation and development, (b) enhancing access to educational opportunities, (c) increasing relevance in education and (d) the solidification and legitimisation of young nation-states. High demand for education by the populace compounded with general belief by governments that it was the sure avenue for socio-economic development meant that formal education acquired a central position in the budget and national development plans (MOEST 2001, Wolhuter 2000, Hildebrand 1991).

The undisputed belief that economic backwardness could be lifted through acquisition of formal education was informed by economic theorists and governments from the North. Economic theories prevalent then viz. the modernisation and human capital theories professed education to be the best spur for economic growth. This premise was based on the experiences of achieving such development during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in developed nations (Wolhuter 2000, Torres 1996, Lind & Johnson 1990, Winchester 1990). Hence, for Africa, the two pronged approach of eradicating illiteracy and universalisation of primary education (UPE) was suggested for growing systems of education. Indigenous forms of education or non-formal approaches were largely ignored as they were not deemed able to cultivate the “modern man” who would stimulate modernisation and development just as indeed there was a negative attitude, by the populace to any form of education that was not entirely academic.

Giving directions to developments in education in Africa from the 1960s was a series of Ministers of Education of Africa Conferences (abbreviated to MINEDAF) which were organised under the auspices of UNESCO and other arms of the UN. The Addis Ababa conference was the

---

<sup>1</sup> These three words summed the perceived evils cumbering Kenya and other developing countries and represent the socio-political vision of the country.

first of the series. Some of its main themes were the qualitative and quantitative expansion of the school system, eradication of illiteracy and increasing teacher capacities. The Addis Ababa conference was followed by MINEDAF II in Abidjan (March 1964) which, while re-echoing the previous concerns also stressed on the functionality of the Adult literacy programmes. MINEDAF III in Nairobi 1968<sup>2</sup> in turn, additionally addressed the issue of language of instruction calling for inclusion of indigenous languages. These meetings hoped not so much to reform but to guide the educational expansion which was to characterise that era.

The development of education in Kenya followed the strategy dictated at the international and regional fronts discussed above. After the attainment of independence in 1963, the government reaffirmed its commitment to the provision of basic education to her citizens. This witnessed the drive for UPE that registered sharp pupil increments. Primary school enrolments rose from 891, 553 in 1963 to 1,816,017 by 1973<sup>3</sup> (MOE 1984), that is a 103.7% increase. The Presidential Decree of 1973 providing free education to all children up to standard four further increased the enrolment from 1.8 million in 1973 to 2.8 million in 1974. Yet despite this, an estimated one million children were not enrolled in school (Muhoho 1975). The main educational concerns that seemed to have captured the attention of educationalists were (a) adult illiteracy and (b) the school leaver and dropout problem that had resulted from the dramatic expansion of schools after independence. For these groups, Non-Formal Education (hereafter referred to as NFE) was earmarked for them.

Both Adult illiteracy and the school leaver problem received some concerted effort. To address illiteracy, the Board of Adult education was established in 1966. This was followed by the first literacy campaign of 1967<sup>4</sup>. The NCKK report *After School What* (1966), the UN International Commission on Educational Development Report *Learning to be* (1970) and the ILO Mission (1971) particularly dealt with the alarming problem of school leavers and dropouts alerting on the need to provide these children with an education that would not only help avoid a literacy lapse but also provide them with functional skills. Institutions targeted for this role were Village Polytechnics, Youth Centres and the National Youth Service. As can be discerned, the focus of these institutions was on practical skill acquisition (Kipkorir 1974, Elkan 1968).

It should be noted that with regard to the unschooled population, the emphasis was on adult illiterates under the overall aim of “national illiteracy eradication”. Little attention was paid to the basic literacy and numeracy skills of non-enrolled children, the adult illiterates of tomorrow. Efforts by Youth Centres - which admitted both primary school leavers, dropouts and those who had never

---

<sup>2</sup> MINEDAF conferences are now held every 5 years. To date 8 such conferences have been held. These are in addition to the three already mentioned; Lagos (1976), Harare (1982), Dakar (1991), Durban (1998) and Dar es salaam (2002).

<sup>3</sup> Primary school enrolment by 1983 was over 4,3million; 1997 – 5.7 million and by 1999 there were 6.0 pupils enrolled. The introduction of the Free primary education in 2003 saw enrolment increase to 7.1 million.

<sup>4</sup> The second literacy campaign was in 1979. Actively supplementing the governments efforts are religious inclined organisations such as Bible Translation and Literacy and Literacy and Evangelism.

been to primary school - to provide primary school equivalent literacy programmes were met with the view that “as quasi primary schools, Youth Centres are a poor substitute” (Elkan 1968:11).

By the 1970s however, a crisis in education was unfolding. The formal school expansion that had begun in fervour in the late 1950s seemed to be reaching a breaking point. Formal school systems were cumbered with flaws of inequality and inefficacy. The rural remote and other vulnerable groups were not being reached or were being pushed out of the school system. The unemployed graduate problem was growing (Ekundayo-Thompson 2001a, Shaeffer 1992, Coombs & Ahmed 1974a). Indeed, in many countries, education seemed to be in a continual state of crisis. Faced with a largely dysfunctional educational system, the realisation was growing that “there must be a parallel process of ensuring that those outside the (formal) system also have their needs met” (Townsend-Coles 1994:13). Already developing countries in Latin America and Asia (viz. Venezuela, India, China, the Philippines) grappling with basic education provision had resorted to alternative schools (Ranaweera 1989). In Africa, the continents readiness to embrace alternative forms of education was declared at MINEDAF V held in Harare in 1982. However, given cuts in public expenditure,<sup>5</sup> governments had fewer resources available for education. More and more NFE programmes leaned towards organisations, communities and other sympathisers for financial base.

In Kenya, involvement of non governmental organisations (NGOs) and international agencies in education was premeditated as early as 1965 in Sessional Paper No. 10 on “*African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya*” This policy document , in addition to successive sessional papers and national development plans, emphasise the complementary role of various players and partners in the provision of education (MOEST 2001). So while the government concentrated on the formal school sector, the bulk of NFE activities were left to non governmental organisations, communities and other philanthropic agencies. At this time, NFE programmes had two general components: literacy programmes for adults and vocational training for both youths and adults. In 1975 however, an NFE centre, Undugu Basic Education Programme (UBEP) was conceived with the aim of “providing literacy and skills for youth from slums and other low income families” (Asiachi 1986:4). The UBEP differed significantly from Adult Literacy Programmes in that it was “strictly planned” with a “structured programme” suitably designed to meet the needs of children and youth. Undugu clearly differed from previous NFE endeavours. It sought to address both the basic education needs of non-enrolled children as well as their vocational training needs (Ekundayo-Thompson 2001b). It is this basic education focus for school aged children that precipitated its categorisation as a **Non-Formal School**. According to Asiachi (1986) UBEP marked the genesis of an alternative education structure system in Kenya catering for non-enrolled

children in need of a basic education. But other than sporadic efforts by a few organisations, the provision did not really catch the governments eye. The impetus for commitment and expansion of these schools ideally received a boost after the Education For All (EFA) call announced at the Jomtien Conference.

The 1990 Jomtien *World Conference on Education for All* (EFA) formed an important platform for countries of the world to reaffirm their commitment to the provision of education. The conference could be said to have marked the global highlight of educational concerns countries had been grappling with, for in Kenya, concern with relevance, quality and equity issues had prompted a number of education commissions and task forces over the years<sup>5</sup>. The Jomtien conference came at a particularly difficult period in Kenya's history. The country was reeling from the effect of the Structural Adjustment Programmes; the economic recovery programmes whose most obvious outcomes – with implications for education- seemed to be less public expenditure accompanied by rising costs of education. It was an era characterised by a widening social and economic disparities that evidenced “increasing levels of mass pauperisation” (Ekundayo-Thompson 2001b:2). The HIV/AIDS pandemic was beginning to take its toll. Of alarm to educationists was the existence of a growing number of children not served by educational establishments. The EFA declaration (Article 3), of which Kenya is a signatory, noted the problem of access to education particularly among vulnerable groups and in Article 5 states that “basic learning needs...should be met through a variety of delivery systems”. The EFA proclamation further asserted that basic education for all could only be attained if countries employed innovative expansion policies targeting especially those not benefiting from the already established formal education system. The *World Education Forum*, Dakar 2000, reiterating Jomtien, is concerned with the army of vulnerable and disadvantaged children not able to access and/or receive quality education. Dakar therefore comes up with targets to be achieved by 2015 (UNESCO 2002). The essence of these two world meetings is that they put on the map the urgency for employing alternative measures to meet the education needs of those especially being denied one.

The surge in Kenya for a refocus of education policies and practice has been necessitated by the emerging educational challenges. Since 1990, national gross participation in primary education, as the Table 1 depicts, after ebbing in the 1990s is currently witnessing a boost due to the implementation of the Free Education policy in 2003.

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<sup>5</sup> Fluctuating oil prices of the 1970s resulted in countries borrowing heavily from international sources in an attempt to level up. The impact was felt in the 1980s with rising international debts and inflation and generally speaking, stagnated economies and hence fewer resources for services like education (Hallak 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Before 1990, these were the National Commission on Education objectives and Policies (Gachathi Report of 1976), The Presidential Working Commission on the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> national University (Mackay Report of 1981) and the Presidential Commission on the Development of Education for the next decade and Beyond (Kamunge Report of 1988).

**Table 1: Gross Enrolment rates in primary Schools by Gender, 1990-2003**

|                | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Average</b> | 102  | 91   | 91   | 88   | 89   | 87   | 86   | 88   | 89   | 94   | 93   | 91   | 92   | 104  |
| <b>Boys</b>    | 104  | 93   | 92   | 89   | 89   | 87   | 87   | 89   | 89   | 94   | 94   | 92   | 93   | 105  |
| <b>Girls</b>   | 100  | 90   | 90   | 87   | 88   | 86   | 86   | 87   | 88   | 93   | 93   | 89   | 92   | 103  |

Source. Ministry of Education, Statistics Section, 2001

The above statistics as they stand are not deplorable. However, when unearthed by region and gender, a different picture emerges. For instance, in 2003, the highest gross enrolment ratio (GER) was recorded in Western province and stood at 108.4 (107.1 girls) while the lowest GER was a paltry 15.9 (girls 11) in North Eastern province. The latter gives an adequate picture of participation in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL), most of which are pastoral regions and educational participation is generally low and more so for girls (MOEST 2004). Blanket statistics in provinces that house major towns such as Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu cover the fact that in these towns, between 40-60% of children living in slum areas do not go to school (MOEST 1999c). Compounding the situation is the high wastage that revolves around absenteeism, repetition and finally dropout. Completion rates have consistently been below 50% over the years increasing the numbers of out-of-school (OOS) children.

In response to the learning needs of OOS children, be they dropouts or non-enrolled, Non-Formal Schools have continued to emerge. These schools are found primarily in two types of locations viz. low income areas in the main urban centres and in remote-rural areas. The earliest non-formal school in urban slums, as earlier mentioned is Undugu started in 1975 followed by Pandpieri in Kisumu in the early 1980s. Thereafter a number of schools sprouted up in the late 1980s such as St. Johns in Nairobi. In rural-remote districts, the first non-formal school is identified as *Lchekuti*<sup>7</sup> OOS programme located in Baragoi, Samburu district, Rift Valley Province. This school was initiated in 1992 to cater for the nomadic children who could not participate in the established formal schools (MOEST 1999b). Non-formal schools are run by NGOs, local communities, religious organisations and other philanthropic agencies. These schools have emerged out of a need to serve the educational requirements of the local communities. In effect, the out of school learning is a response to the demands of the immediate situation for a functional or compensatory education rather than projected deliberate educational planning. The schools aim at instilling basic literacy, numeracy and lifelong skills by emphasising on functional learning; learning by doing and learning what is useful (MOEST 1999b, Ruto 1999). An estimated 124 schools have sprouted up mainly in slum areas in Nairobi, Mombasa has 28 schools, while Kisumu has 51. The rural-remote district of Samburu has 15, while Turkana, Marsabit and Moyale have a couple of schools too (Ekundayo-Thompson 2001a, MOEST 1999b, DEO-Kisumu/Samburu 2002 Field Visit).

Unlike other East African countries where non formal school programmes have arisen from within the Ministries of Education (cf. COPE<sup>8</sup> in Uganda and COBET<sup>9</sup> in Tanzania), the situation in Kenya is somewhat different. The MOEST recognises that Non-Formal Schools can and do inherit a vast clientele of children and youth who have never been in school or have dropped out before completing primary school. This realisation, coupled with prioritisation and a financial boost from UNICEF in 1994 and GTZ in 1997 led to the creation of the NFE project on the one hand and the development of a draft policy on NFE and the formulation of a “draft curriculum” for NFE on the other (MOEST 1999c). The ministry of education also set up a desk in 1994 -which has subsequently been upgraded to read as the NFE unit under a deputy director- to coordinate and implement NFE programmes. Despite this, the MOEST has not been proactive in incorporating these schools into the mainstream of educational planning. As a result, Non-Formal Schools are excluded from public funding and other privileges enjoyed by formal schools. They do not benefit from inspection and supervision services, continuous curriculum development or teacher education like their formal counterparts do. Indeed, these schools operate outside the policy framework and could therefore be surmised as illegal. There seems to be a confusion as to which ministry they really fit, whether it is the office of the president – because of their NGO affiliation - , the ministry of culture and social services or the ministry of education.

NFE schools appear to be haphazard as they are neither graded nor standardised. The teachers are viewed as second rate probably due to their lack of academic and/or professional credentials. As Adudu (1998:15 Col.3) puts it, “their mode of operation, quality of teaching, subject content and assessment criteria are as diverse as the organisations” providing the services.

Despite this, non-formal schools in the country are proliferating. NGOs, local communities and other sympathisers continue to support their endeavours. But for non-formal schools to be effectively utilised, something needs to be known about their numbers, education background, education provision and functions. Details are needed of the programmes, how they are offered, to whom and their viability for expansion and replication so that non-formal schools can be strengthened as an alternative learning approach complementing other structures in the overall basic education provision.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Recognition is growing on the essence of viewing formal and non-formal education, not as competitive entities, but as mutually dependent sectors that can contribute to the achievement of the

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<sup>7</sup> Lchekuti in Samburu language means Shepherd. It therefore describes the target of the schools i.e. the young girls and boys who herd the livestock and later come to search for formal education.

<sup>8</sup> Complementary Opportunity in Primary Education.

<sup>9</sup> Complementary Opportunity for Basic Education in Tanzania

goals of education and subsequently the overall development projections of the country. This recognition has been propelled by such current realities. There is a growing army of children and youth, estimated at 12% of the eligible cohort, who are out of school (MOEST 2001). This segment of the population - mainly from ASAL, coastal areas and urban slums and identified as orphans (due to for instance the HIV/AIDS pandemic), street children, working children, nomadic children, girls and formal school dropouts - cannot or will not be served by the formal system. The OOS children therefore personify both a qualitative and quantitative inadequacy of the formal school system, in that not only is formal schooling not accessible, but when it is, schools are unable to provide a useful learning experience that can retain the children in school. If this significant population is continually excluded, not only will it affect their life chances and participation in the modern economic sector, but also on a national level, it will adversely affect the projected development prospects and plans. Therefore, noting that the country has committed itself to achieving EFA by the year 2005, and accepting that education for all cannot be achieved through the existing formal system, it was imperative to look towards non-formal education, and specifically non-formal schools, for alternative options.

The task of this study was therefore to investigate how alternative learning structures and approaches, as found in non-formal schools in Kenya, contribute and can be strengthened as an alternative approach in the provision of basic education. This was done by examining the characteristics of non-formal schools with respect to school orientation and classroom culture and how this enhanced the attainment of basic education skills.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the different non-formal school types that exist.
2. Analyse how in-school factors (such as the curriculum, pedagogy, teacher preparation, school administration, timing etc) shape learning.
3. Determine how out-of-school factors (such as community participation, finances, school policy etc) influence learning.
4. Identify successful traits that strengthen non-formal school delivery of basic education provision and which can be the basis for replication.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What school categories are available?

2. How do school and class related factors (such as curriculum, pedagogy, administration) foster the acquisition of basic literacy, numeracy and practical skills?
3. How do out of school factors (such as community participation, financing) impact on learning?
4. Are Non-Formal Schools of significance in basic education provision, thereby warranting its need to be strengthened as an alternative delivery approach that has “parity of esteem” with formal structures?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Formal schools in Kenya are not only poorly distributed but also in a sense screen people by selecting those to enrol and even continue. In the lower levels of education, this is apparent through (a) the economic barrier that levies, uniform and textbook requirements portend, and (b) the irrelevant curriculum, inflexible school routines and rigid administrative styles that fail to adapt the schools to the prospective clientele. The result is the existence of people not affiliated or served by formal education agencies; more so the rural populations and the economically disadvantaged. For the latter, their solution is beyond the scope of this study as it necessitates far reaching economic measures that can uplift the general poverty levels. However, for those excluded due to related inadequacies, non-formal schools would be an apt solution. For non-formal schools to be exploited, as an alternative in its own right rather than a “sweeping up operation” of the ills of formal education, they need to be systematically studied on their character, operations and possibilities. Such a detailed study would also serve as a springboard for policy directives.

NFE as a concept can expand our ability to visualise education possibilities by showing that education – or more precisely learning – need not be bound to the model provided by schooling. Viewing learning beyond the limits of schooling reveals a broader, more complex and richer notion of education. Such a view presents us with the possibilities for improving the formal education by borrowing those richer aspects of non-formal schools. This study will therefore not only contribute to the general body of knowledge and pedagogical debates in the field but also in exploring possible positive aspects useful for formal education.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Non Formal Education is a broad concept that invariably covers a wide spectrum. This study was limited to the study of non-formal schools with a specific reference of examining basic education provision. As such, institutions that only offered skill acquisition with no attempt at literacy and numeracy skill provision did not form the sample. This is because non-formal schools primarily offer basic education with a strong fuse of practical skills.

The research process was cumbered with two hitches. The first regarded the inaccessibility of certain centres in Samburu occasioned by the heavy rains and resultant impassable roads on the one hand and insecurity due to banditry on the other. As such the research was forced to fall back on convenience sampling for some institutions. The second limitation regarded the lack of cooperation from some centres. One centre for instance demanded a “research fee” while another claimed that it did not, as a policy allow research to be conducted about it. This centre was therefore willing to offer only an interview, yet ideally, it was innovative in approach and had been focussed for a more in-depth study.

## **1.7 Operational Definition of Terms**

Non Formal Education: Refers to those deliberate education activities that are not discharged by formally designated education agencies but have a distinct clientele to serve and education objectives to achieve. NFE programmes cover a wide array: adult education, life long education, skill training programmes to non-formal schools. They can be identified by their flexibility, diverse and practical orientated styles (La Belle & Ward 1996, Coombs & Ahmed 1974a).

Non-Formal Schools: Belonging to the broader umbrella of NFE, non-formal schools refer to institutions that resemble formal schools in that they aim at transmitting basic education aptitudes and skills. However, non-formal schools differ in their organisation, financing, the programmes they offer and the clientele they target.

Basic Education: Refers to the offering of fundamental skills in reading, writing and numeracy as well as education that will positively impact on the knowledge, attitudes and practice of the recipients. In non-formal education, this education should be functional, that is deemed utilitarian to the recipients.

Equity: This concept in education refers to fairness and justice in the education system in the provision and distribution of education services. Equity would therefore invariably include access and the availability of education to all as a basic human right. As non-formal schools attempt to provide education to a specific clientele, they fit well in the broader issue of equity and access of education to all.

Stakeholders: This refers to the people who have a special interest or right to an issue or programme. In the case of non-formal schools, the primary stakeholders are the participants (children, teachers, parents), the sponsors and the government.

## 1.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study adopted the analysis frame utilised by La Belle (1976, 1986) where he situates non-formal education approach and practice within the broader interpretations of underdevelopment in Latin America viz. (a) deprivation theories and (b) dependency theories.

### 1.8.1 An Overview of Economic Theories of (Under)Development

The end of the Second World War marked an era of heightened hope for development (viewed as fast economic growth) and it is to this era the modern theories of development emerge as key concepts. The modernisation paradigm viewed development in an evolutionary manner<sup>10</sup>; that societies advanced from traditional to advanced stages. Therefore development was described in terms of visible differences between industrial nations and poor countries (Nolte 2001, Blomström & Hettne 1985). Development implied bridging this gap and achieving, within a set number of years, an industrial status. Lack of development was ascribed to slowness or failure of countries to adopt patterns of efficiency characteristic of modern societies (Dos Santos 1993, Portes 1993). Hence, development could only be achieved if there was desired attitudinal and value conversion reflective of a “modern man” ( Cf. Inkeles & Smith 1993).

By 1970, the modernisation paradigm had lost ground as a model of economic growth. It was viewed as not only Eurocentric but too tied up to capital formation and linear explanations. The general dissatisfaction paved way for more attention to be paid to the dependency theories that had been gaining legitimacy in Latin America (Blomström & Hettne 1985).

Dependency theories arose as a criticism and alternative perspective to the modernisation paradigm. The dependency thesis views countries as existing in a world economy. Patterns of relationship in this international economy are unequal and exploitative resulting in underdevelopment. Unlike the modernisation paradigm that viewed underdevelopment as a consequence of lack of dynamism within a country, dependency theorists relate it to external factors. Dominant self-sustaining countries, that is countries in the core, condition the development and expansion of weaker countries, those in the periphery. Countries at the periphery are dependent on decisions made by the economically dominant countries. Hence, developing countries are held by the dictates of the industrialised nations and must abide by decisions made by the latter (Dos Santos 1993, Porte 1993, La Bella 1976).

By the 1970s, the enthusiasm associated with dependency theories had subsided as they failed to lift countries out of their economic quagmire. This resulted in a revival of modernisation

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<sup>10</sup> Rostow for instance came up with the five stages of economic growth viz. (1) Traditional society, (2) Pre-Take off stage, (3) Take-off stage (4) Road to Maturity and (5) Society of Mass Consumption

paradigm “in a reformulated framework of...multiculturalism” (Cf Nolte 2001). In this respect, the core has shifted from economy to culture, that is focussing on the attitudes and beliefs that shape modernity. Postmodernism is reflected by its rejection of uni-linear explanations and recognition of difference and “plurality in ways of being and knowing” (Patton 2001). Within an education model, this calls for acceptance and respect of diversity in the planning of education and the content of learning.

### **1.8.2 Application of Dependency/Deprivation theories to Non-Formal Education Analysis**

The core of the **Dependency** thesis revolves around the unequal and exploitative relations which can be viewed from two levels: external and internal. External dependency concerns itself with the unequal relations between countries at the core and those at the periphery. In internal dependency, the modern sector, through various institutions in society (school, church, the media) seeks to control and manipulate the traditional sector by transmitting its attitudes and values. For these countries or groups of people to forge ahead, they must seek to **liberate** themselves.

Dependency-Liberation proponents who have influenced theory and practice of NFE can be analysed in two groups. Ivan Illich, Everett Reimer and Paul Goodman see schools as having an antisocial effect in society. They are rigid, and transmit an alien westernised value system irrelevant to developing countries' needs but instead suited to continuance of domination by the West. Schooling therefore results in underdevelopment in third world countries. They see the solution to this educational void to be development of educational alternatives that are more responsive and suitable to the needs of developing countries. Paulo Freire views schools and other institutions in society as oppressive. Liberation can only be achieved through a conscious effort by the oppressed. He advances “conscientisation” or awareness raising as an essential step for mobilisation, transformation and empowerment.

**Deprivation** thesis is based on the assumption that “progress is achieved by spreading modernism to backward areas through the application of technology and capital” (La Bella 1976:329). As traditional social structures and value systems cannot be used to achieve modern society goals, the emphasis is placed on the creation of a literate and skilled human resource. Deprivation theories view education as a mechanism for creating skilled personnel who will contribute to **development**.

La Belle (1976) analyses that dependency-liberation NFE oriented programmes are linked to theories of social change while deprivation-development thesis follow the psychological approach. The former rely on conflict theories while the latter on equilibrium theories. The psychological approach to NFE targets the “content of the mind”. It however falls short of confronting societal rules and structures which are potential obstacles for long term change. Theories of social change

however link individuals, institutions and the environment rather than only the internal psychology of an individual.

NFE programmes following the dependency-liberation line of thought are therefore geared towards critical reflection and gradual socio-economic change. They are proactive with a bottom-up approach usually at micro level. They defend the value of community based knowledge, national languages and cultures. The concept of “**popular education**” is a good example (Bosch 1998, La Belle 1987, Grossi 1984)<sup>11</sup>.

Programmes following the deprivation-development approach on the other hand seek to change peoples attitudes so that they can fit in the “capitalist marketplace”. The targets are the marginalized who are offered different forms of “**adult literacy/ fundamental/community education**”. This human capital approach prescribes remedial education for integration (Bosch 1984) though there is no effort to link the experiences learnt/gained with the wider social system. “Participants are left with the difficult task of utilising new, and probably inappropriate, behaviours in a physical and human environment which has continued to exist without alteration” (La Belle 1976:333).

The above conceptualisation was utilised to analyse the current study as follows. Available literature (Hoppers 2000:9 and Evans 1981:20) illustrates that NFE approaches can be categorized into four:

**Table 2: NFE Educational Approaches**

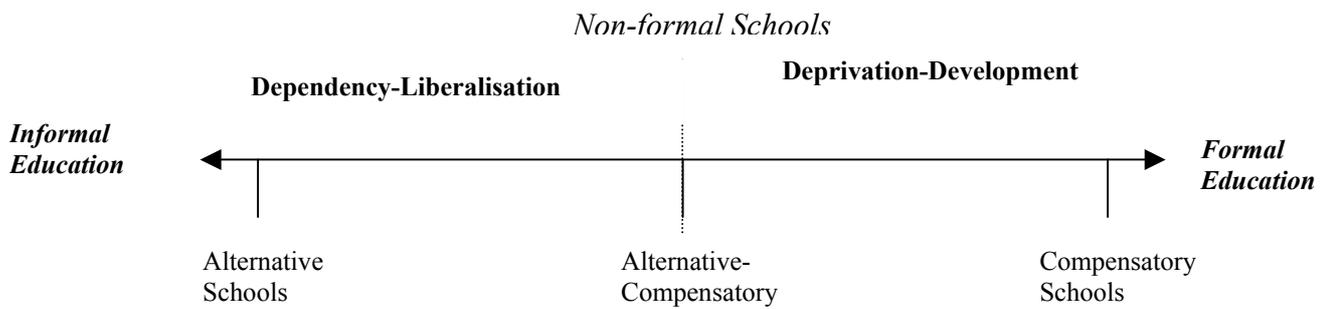
|                                 |  | <b>Examples</b>  | <b>Target Groups</b>   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Complementary Provisions</b> | Complements or completes education offered by formal school. Influenced by <i>deschooling society</i> that sought to remove the school from the ivory tower and involve it more in community activities  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Young farmers</li> <li>➤ Science congress</li> <li>➤ 4K clubs</li> </ul>            | Those concurrently enrolled in school system<br><b>(Targets Advantaged)</b>                |
| <b>Supplementary Provisions</b> | Follow up activities that come later in life and “add on” to formal education. Generally aim at skill provision/improvement or enrichment, apprenticeship . This provision can be situated within broader context of continuing/lifelong education                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Skill training</li> <li>➤ Apprenticeship</li> <li>➤ Continuing education</li> </ul> | School leavers, employees<br><b>(Targets Advantaged)</b>                                   |
| <b>Compensatory Education</b>   | Seeks to compensate lack of/little access to formal schooling. Provides formal school curriculum aimed at rerouting back to formal school. Often has little or no support from the state prompting it to be viewed as “second rate” due to the difficult conditions it is provided in. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NFS</li> </ul>  | Marginalized groups e.g. rural-remote, urban poor, girls<br><b>(Targets Disadvantaged)</b> |
| <b>Alternative Provisions</b>   | Intentionally aims at creating an alternative provision that is more relevant and suited to basic education needs of targeted populations. It is the most appealing provision.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NFS</li> <li>➤ Adult education</li> </ul>   | Marginalized children and adults<br><b>(Targets Disadvantaged)</b>                         |

Of concern to this study are the last two categories viz. compensatory and alternative provisions. These two approaches can be said to cover both sides of the spectrum. Alternative approaches that

<sup>11</sup> In other words this is a multicultural approach and it finds credence too with the post-modernists.

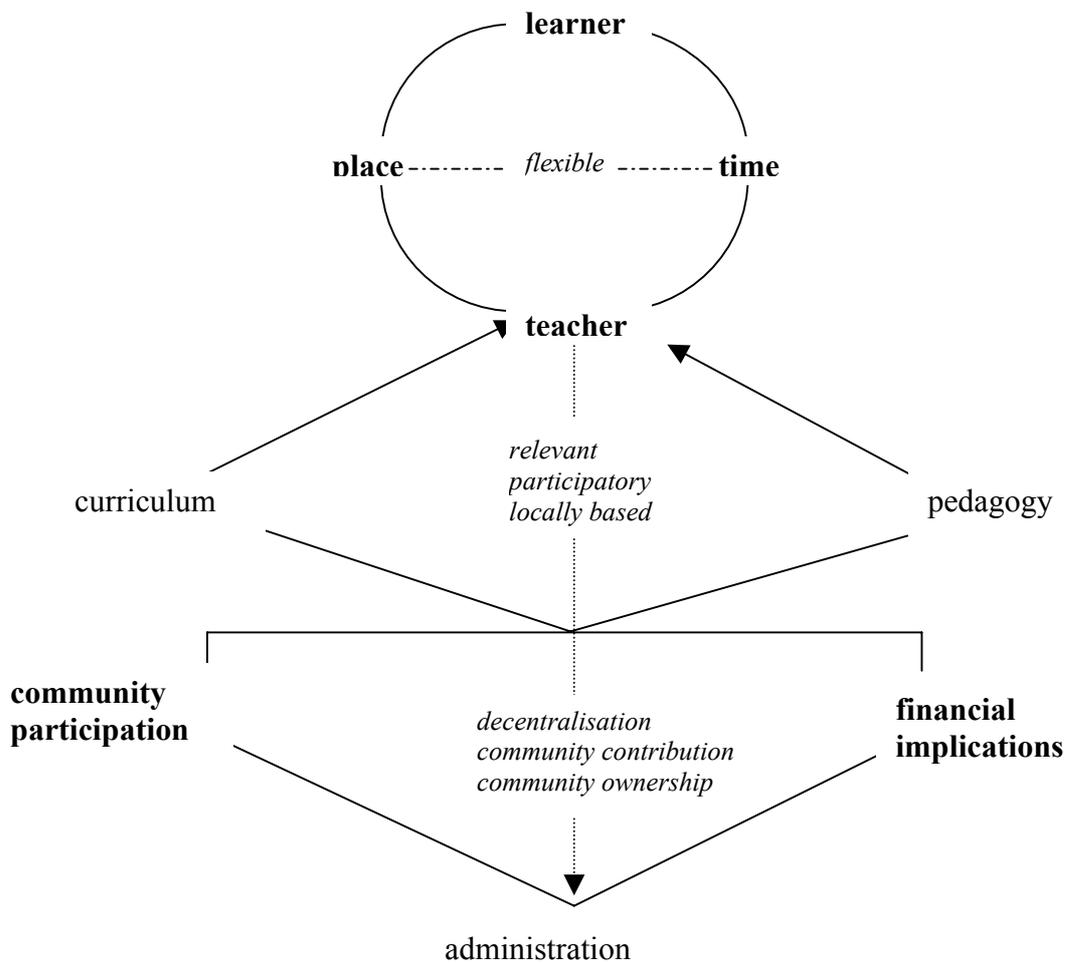
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are intentionally designed as an alternative, with a distinct community related curriculum and philosophy related to the needs of the clientele. Such schools respect diversity and according to the model would fall within the dependency-liberalisation paradigm. Compensatory provisions do not have clear distinctive features. These schools are formal schools in all aspects; the differing point being that they target low income groups. Such schools, as offering remedial education therefore fit within the deprivation-development paradigm. Diagrammatically, the model that guided the categorisation of the schools was a schema as follows:



Analysis of the schools into either of the categories, was augmented by the model suggested by Anderson (1992) on "the building blocks of effective education". This model identifies nine key elements in the learning environment that foster educational achievement.

**Fig. 1: The Nine Building Blocks of Education**



This model guided the study in the following way: The first four elements, -the learner and teacher and the place and time- were considered to be the most basic, which when present established the basic conditions that could enable learning to occur. The next two blocks comprised the curriculum and the pedagogy. These were considered to be perhaps the most distinctive features that defined the character of the school. The final three blocks were the administration, finances and community participation. These were considered to be crucial support elements that helped shape up the provisions within the school and the overall management of the school. The features that were examined within each block are addressed in the second chapter.

The nine “blocks of education” in corporation with the theoretical schema of the non-formal school types earlier presented therefore guided the research instrument items and subsequent analysis. The model and schema provided the framework for identifying and analysing non-formal schools and assessing if and how they contributed to the provision of basic education in Kenya.

## **1.9 Organisation of the Thesis**

This study has been organised in 9 chapters as follows. This chapter introduces the study after which chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature. Chapter 3 presents the methodology that guided the study. These first three chapters are therefore largely introductory. The analysis of the empirical data forms the bulk of the writing and covers chapter 4 to 8. The main conclusions and recommendations are finally presented in chapter 9, the final chapter.

## 2 Review of Related Literature

This chapter comprises five broad sections based on the following justification. The first section sets the context by providing a brief history of the evolution of non-formal education. It is shown that NFE services have mainly been a domain of adults, and it is only in later years, to help achieve the goals of EFA, that NFE has spread to cover school aged children. This preoccupation of basic education, leads to the next broad theme.

The second section devotes itself to the issue of basic education. It seeks to understand why, despite high spending by governments, basic education for all has not been realised. This section has been included as non-formal schools try to make basic education accessible to the excluded, so it is vital to understand the rationalisation driving it.

The next section contains a discussion of the concept of NFE for school aged children. The review of literature does not stress on non formal adult education or vocational training studies which were the main focus of early studies. Rather, mainly studies on or that touch on NFE services for children are reviewed. A discussion of the concept, its possibilities and limitations are attempted to inform on how the provision can and/or contributes to the provision of basic education.

Non-formal primary education programmes have been extensively implemented in many countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa all grappling with the question of how to improve basic education provisions in their countries. This section therefore provide an examination of NFE programmes in selected countries. The purpose of this is to provide a comparative basis for understanding, informing and possibly reforming Non Formal School (NFS) programmes locally which was an objective of the current study.

Finally, the last section presents a discussion of empirical research studies, both national and international, that have been conducted. A variety of scholarly and professional literature on NFE basic education programmes exist but these mainly concentrate on provisions for adults and is therefore outside the area of focus of the present study. This section therefore analyses empirical studies on non-formal basic education provisions for children and points out the gaps the present study addressed.

### 2.1 Non-Formal Education: Tracing the Roots

The evolution of NFE can be said to have occurred in the following three phases<sup>12</sup>:

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<sup>12</sup> This description has been used in Edirisingha (1999) analysis of the “The History of Non-formal Education in Thailand”. Evans (1981) also adopts a similar analysis pattern.

### **2.1.1 Prior to Establishment of Formal Education (Schooling)**

It is an agreed fact among scholars that the concept of NFE is as old as man and that it superseded formal schooling. Before the introduction of the current formal education, which is usually modelled along western styles, traditional societies had a distinct education system that took the forms of (a) informal education, (b) non-formal education and (c) formal education.

The major mode of learning was through informal educational strategies and this was a life long process. Children learnt from everyday living and doing. Peers, older children, adults and elders were the teachers. A variety of learning methods were used ranging from imitation to use of riddles and proverbs. To support these educational experiences were the more specific activities with a set time schedule, designated teachers and learners. Such deliberate NFE efforts occurred for instance in evening sessions around the fireplace where the elder men shared the history of the tribe with younger men, or where grandmothers told stories with moral teaching to younger children. A more formal type of learning with a systematic curriculum and evaluation method can be singled out in the initiation schools in many communities in Africa as would the apprenticeship systems such as those related to medicine or crafts. Lastly, formal schooling that included literacy teaching existed albeit to a small extent. These were religious inclined as in the case of Koranic schools or the Buddhist temple based education found in Asia (Edirisingha 1999, La Belle & Ward 1996, Sifuna 1984, Fafunwa 1982, Evans 1981, Coombs 1976).

The NFE forms in this era were prestigious and functional. However, this NFE cannot be said to be a pedigree of present day NFE. The main purpose of the brief historical reminiscence is to draw attention to the features and qualities found in indigenous systems that NFE may deem useful today such as relevance and functionality.

### **2.1.2 With Establishment of Western Formal Education Systems**

The introduction of formal systems as the chief instrument for acquisition of education heralded a new definition of the purpose and function of NFE. A distinct demarcation between those served by formal and non-formal institutions emerged. Children and the youth were expected to be reached through formally established institutions whereas NFE largely remained the domain of adults. Formal institutions became the mainstream while anything outside it was seen as falling in the area of non-formal education. The cross-lapping between the two, or evidence of NFE activities in schools while present, were not always pronounced.

NFE strategies during this era received their greatest impetus from a variety of practitioners. These were persons who worked in the areas of health, nutrition, agriculture and education with the overall objective of poverty alleviation (Evans 1981). Their efforts were often described under other labels such as:

- Life-long education

- Adult education
- Community development
- Literacy/functional literacy
- Rural/urban development
- Farmer education
- Agricultural extension
- Health extension
- Population education
- Nutrition education
- Family-life planning and education and
- Conscientisation (Bhola 1992:50, Evans 1981:18)

As it may be discerned, the primary target group for these programmes were adults and especially those who had previously been deprived of formal schooling. The importance of NFE in this era was recognised and indeed the mass literacy campaigns<sup>13</sup> carried out in various countries are a case in point. The programmes therefore attempted to provide the adults with basic education, mainly skills in literacy and numeracy as well as education in health, economic advancement and development issues.

The reality of the situation, regarding school aged children, was that there were many who did not access formal institutions. Yet, in developing countries, all attention was reserved for enrolled children at the expense of the non-enrolled. Governments put all their faith and money in the linear and homogeneous expansion of formal school structures. This resulted in unprecedented problems in the formal schools system which were compounded by the rigid hierarchical structures and resulted in inequity of provision. Hallak (1990) outlined the educational predicament as (a) declining quality but increasing costs and expenditure, (b) curriculum mismatch with socio-economic realities (c) imbalance between supply and demand of human resource, school leaver problem and (d) widening gap between rural and urban areas. The expansion of the school system that had begun in fervour in the 1950s had now reached a breaking point. Schools failed to meet their development promises. Coombs (1968) summed up this scenario as the **World Educational Crisis**. It is within this background that interest in NFE as a probable alternative and/or complementary approach in meeting basic education needs was rekindled.

### 2.1.3 NFE as an Alternative Strategy

Discontent with the purpose of education and direction of education is a recurring theme in educational discourse. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it took the shape of progressive education, which meant seeking to reform the defects of universal education (Lenhart 2001). However, it was in the 1970s that doubts about education and schooling were at its height (UNESCO 2000). This

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<sup>13</sup> A precursor was Russia at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century followed closely by a number of Latin America countries. In Africa, Tanzania is a good example.

crisis in formal education systems in effect set the stage for third phase in the development of NFE. The crusaders proposing a new kind of education stemmed from four angles:

- Private initiative: Local communities, individuals or organisations who identified an educational gap and tried to fill the void through alternative institutions
- Educational Planners: International education policy makers who were based within the UN, multi or bilateral organisations. They recognised and tried to face the crisis in the formal school systems
- Critics of schooling: Personified by Illich, Reimer and Freire<sup>14</sup> who voiced their dissatisfaction vehemently, some calling for the abolishing of schools on the one hand, or the reforming of the school system on the other and,
- International instruments that have continually reiterated the right of education to all. In the last decade, the Education For All Summit, Jomtien of 1990 is particularly prominent. It presented an expanded vision of education that envisioned the formal and non-formal sectors working together. This vision was echoed once more in the World Education Forum-Dakar of 2000.

This historical recounting serves several functions. First, one can draw a direct correlation to the evolution of NFE in Kenya. NFE in Kenya was biased to education for Adults until 1994 when the government widened its focus to include OOS children. Hence, the above account gives clarity to the character envisaged for NFE, as stated in the “Draft Policy Guidelines” (1999c) that it ought to be outside of government control and financing and “within the community, NGOs and other providers”. In other words, the responsibility is thrust to the “crusaders” of NFE noted above. Secondly, the account depicts that NFE is ascribed with an ameliorative function. It is expected to access basic education to excluded groups.

## **2.2 Accessing Basic Education**

From the above introduction, it is discernible that the chief focus of NFE, be it for adults or children, is to provide basic education. This section therefore examines this subject, particularly addressing the question why, despite the undisputed belief in education for all, its attainment has remained elusive.

### **2.2.1 The International Discourse**

The end of the Second World War marked the emergence of a new world order determined to protect humanity and preserve human freedom. It was an era of idealism that witnessed the nations

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<sup>14</sup> Ivan Illich (*Deschooling Society* 1971) together with Everett Reimer (*School is Dead* 1974) and Paul Goodman (*Compulsory Miseducation* 1962) have a complete mistrust for institutions such as schools. Where other critics call for transformation, reformation or restoration, Illich and Reimer call for deschooling. Paulo Freire (*A Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 1970) mainly criticises traditional models of education that reinforce existing socio-economic power structures. His alternative pedagogy is liberation education whose key is dialogue.

of the world affirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that proclaimed among other declarations that “everyone has the right to education”<sup>15</sup>. This affirmation of the right of all to equality and equity of provisions and dignity of humanity has remained a tenet guiding international discourse as revealed by the international conventions and agreements over the years (Lenhart 2003, Lenhart & Savolainen 2002, UNESCO 2002). Nation states of the world, Kenya included, have been signatories to these instruments therefore binding themselves to ensuring their implementation.

With the UN at the helm, UNESCO was mandated at the dawn of the new era to give direction to education and cultural matters. For emerging, recently decolonised young governments, the policy planning focussed on battling “ignorance, poverty and disease” as a strategy for socio-economic development and the general betterment of the populations. In turn, governments immensely invested in education. This era was characterised by a strong political will to widen access to education as well as a high social demand for education. There was undisputed belief that education would foster national unity, satisfy social justice and was a prerequisite for economic growth (Hallak 1990).

And so, with optimism, developing countries like Kenya invested in literacy and education provision to its citizenry as they awaited magical returns in socio-economic progress. With the exceptions of South East Asia and some socialist countries, the projections regarding school participation have remained a myth. While the gross number of children in school has considerably grown<sup>16</sup>, governments are still far from achieving UPE. Instead, a fashion apparently has emerged where the UPE target years (in Kenya) are continually being shifted from 1980, to 2000 and lately to 2005 (MFP 2002-2008, MOEST 2003).

Despite the discouraging statistics, and the sometimes daunting odds of poverty, debt, corruption, civil strife besetting especially the most needy countries, the global community still has faith in achieving basic education for all if the international meetings are anything to go by as hereby reflected. Additionally, the UN declared 1995-2004 the decade for Human Rights Education, reaffirming the right to education amongst others and perhaps to be reflective of the

#### **The Standard Setting Instruments**

**1948:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**1960:** Convention Against Discrimination in Education

**1966:** International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights

**1979:** Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

**1989:** Convention on Technical and Vocational Education

**1989:** Convention on the Rights of the Child

<sup>15</sup> Lenhart (2003) provides an analysis of Human Rights Education documents for the last 50 years but with a special focus on instruments of the 1990s. He suggests that the first generation instruments (of the 1948 and after) were futuristic whereas the later documents are more actively stated.

<sup>16</sup>Based on EFA assessments submitted to the World Education Forum-Dakar, it is estimated that 17 million more children are in school compared to 1990 (Unesco 2000).

decade, a number of human rights related declarations have been made<sup>17</sup>. International enthusiasm, convergence in different cities worldwide to reiterate commitment to universalising education does not however suppress the fact the targets of yester-years are far from being reached. Today in Sub-Saharan Africa, 42 million children are out of school, almost 60% of them being girls, up to two-thirds of the children in conflict areas are not getting education, the pupil-teacher ratio has risen in the past decade with average number of pupils per teacher in some countries (e.g. Mali, Chad) being 70. In addition, 40% African adults are illiterate. In some countries in West Africa, female illiteracy is as high as 80% (WEF-Dakar 2000). The question then that must be posed is: why has the attainment of basic education and literacy, at national and international projections, been so dismal for most developing countries?

**Basic Education Related Policy Documents/World Summits in the 1990s-2000**

- 1990:** World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien)
- 1990:** World Summit for Children
- 1994:** World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (Salamanca)
- 1994:** International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo)
- 1995:** World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen)
- 1995:** Forth World Conference on Women (Beijing)
- 1996:** Mid-Term Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (Amman)
- 1997:** Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg)
- 1997:** International Conference on Child Labour
- 2000:** World Education Forum (Dakar)

### 2.2.2 Education for Socio-economic Development?

First, it seems that too high expectations and belief was put on the solid impact of basic education and literacy. Increased education was advocated as it was rationalised to positively impact on economic and social development, health, to lower fertility rates and so on. Indeed, literature abounds on the supposed correlation between education/literacy achievements and development (Bamgbose 1992, Bhola 1992, Carceles 1990, Lind & Johnson 1990, Wagner 1990). These proponents base their assertions on trends in modern economic history which show that education enhances economic productivity and claims from economists who link increased educational attainments of the labour force with economic growth (Cf. Psacharopoulos 1988). Their contention is that education creates aptitudes necessary for development. As it were, the “world map of illiteracy and poverty are congruent” and hence the view that education is an agent of economic growth. This viewpoint is in fact overtly expressed in documents by UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank supporting EFA and may imply their belief in the human capital theory within the framework of the modernisation theories such as certification (Torres 1996).

Alternative thinking has now emerged to challenge this assumption (Mundy 1993). While agreeing that widespread literacy has extensive consequences, Wagner (2000) warns that it is a

<sup>17</sup> The are: World Plan of Action (1993); Declaration and Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy (1995); International Plan of Action (1998); Guidelines for National Plans (1998) and Amnesty International Human Rights Education Strategy (1996); (Lenhart 2003).

myth to claim that “literacy leads to modernisation”. More needs to be known about the functioning and uses of literacy and how it is linked to productivity before one correlates literacy and economic growth. Winchester (1990:38) further contends that there is no causal relationship between educational attainment and socio-economic progress. He states that

Under some circumstances, a primarily oral society in which only few are literate might be equally or more successful in economic and social matters...(and) crime, poverty and ignorance will not necessarily decrease and industrial production (or agricultural production for that matter) will not necessarily go up just because a society is made universally able to read and write. Indeed, the reverse may just be as likely.

That large parts of Africa are registering regression or retarded growth despite the heavy and continued investments in education may give weight to the above contentions. The drive for education has to be motivated and sustained from within if it is to succeed. Indeed, UPE success stories in Europe and Japan attest to this. Education programmes should be dictated by the socio-economic needs and progress of a country. The philosophy of international educational documents guiding educational provisions for newly independent states did not stress on education for its own sake or as a tool for self empowerment, or “liberation education” as Freire would have it, that would enable one take control over the environment. However, certain authors view it as an education that was tilted towards satisfying the economic needs of Europe (Cf. Illich, Reimer, Freire, Fanon, Rodney<sup>18</sup>). Indigenous needs and wants may have been overstepped or ignored in the face of the internationally propelled agenda. This may be the educational nemesis besetting the so called third world countries like Kenya. There is need to be clear on the objective and prognosis of education. The appeal for basic education programmes can only be heightened if they relate to the actual rather than perceived realities of a people.

### **2.2.3 Demand for Education**

The place of basic education, its appeal and prospects also need to be located within the broader picture. A major phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been globalisation. Under globalisation, countries of the South have been impoverished further. Human development has suffered most with the poor facing the brunt and being reduced to the “new underclass” (Bhola 1997:488). In the last decade, social desirability of education and literacy has been rendered to its lowest ebb. Reasons explaining low demand for basic education can be summarised as follows:

- **Poverty Vs Low Public Expenditure on Education:** Economic recovery programmes recommended by the Bretton Woods<sup>19</sup> institutions for developing countries: the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s to the present Poverty Reduction schemes have

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<sup>18</sup> Franz Fanon (*The Wretched of the Earth* 1961) and Walter Rodney (*How Europe underdeveloped Africa* 1981) represent a category of African writers concerned with the cultural imperialism and the rooting of neo-colonialism using, for instance, modern economic arrangements decided upon by the more powerful nations.

resulted in less expenditure in social services and resultant shift of the burden of schooling to parents. Considering that vulnerable groups are mainly confined to the rural areas and the urban poor, these populations are now more concerned with daily survival than acquiring education. SAPs tended to be most harsh to the feeble in society and they are the group lacking basic education. Indeed, it is non adjusting countries such as Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Seychelles, Lesotho and Namibia that have made more gains in basic education (Brock-Utne 2000).

- **Prospects:** Studies reveal that “illiterate” school age children and parents are aware that education will not necessarily result in personal advancement, or opportunities for advancement. So children are unmotivated to complete their education. A serious demotivating factor is also the presence of unemployed “graduates”. Given this, an attitude has developed where school age children prefer or are pushed into the informal labour market where they can earn ready money for their parents and later on for themselves.
- **Relevance:** An issue bedeviling African education systems has been the question of relevance. Curriculum development in most countries is centralised and often assumes an urban, eurocentric content basis. That a considerable amount of educational aid in terms of materials, equipment and experts comes from countries of the North further makes education a “foreign” experience rather than a “learning” one as it does not necessarily relate to local conditions. Arriving at flexible curriculum content, with a practical and relevant focus, is crucial in raising the demand for basic education

Brock-Utne (2000) argues that international documents (such as the Jomtien) explain and assume that the low enrolments, completion and attainments in primary education are due to questions of supply, location and quality of provisions rather than demand for it. However, today, it is imperative to examine the question of social demand for education for as argued above, other matters impede participation in basic education programmes.

In conclusion, this section has shown that on the one hand, the belief in education is high, but on the other, its provision to all has not been realised. It is in an effort to meet this objective of EFA that NFE makes an entry. This rationalisation of NFE, especially for school aged children, that it attempts to correct the ills occasioned by formal school systems, is a daunting job. For NFE to succeed, it has to relate to the actual rather than perceived needs of the people. This implies relevance, affordability and usefulness. This study again sought to investigate how NFS in Kenya was achieving these aims.

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<sup>19</sup> The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) were established at an international conference in 1944 at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, and hence the name.

## **2.3 Non Formal Schools: “the alternative approach?”**

Since the 1970s, educationists have increasingly looked towards non formal alternative approaches (such as NFS) as an avenue that can enhance access to education of vulnerable and inaccessible groups. This section will therefore provide a review of literature on the concept of NFE, its possibilities and limitations as a basis upon which to argue how and/or if non-formal school programmes can genuinely contribute to enhancing the provision of basic education for school aged children. This section will therefore (a) discuss the definition/description of NFE and NFS in particular and (b) present some views to explain why NFS have not transcended to an alternative status. While the contributions have mainly stemmed from the international arena, an attempt will be made to present contributions and findings from Sub-Saharan Africa and Kenya in particular.

### **2.3.1 Describing the term “NFE”**

The term NFE was coined in the late 1960s. It emerged as a response to general dissatisfaction with conventional schooling. This label was used to categorise the variety of out of school challenges and responses that had emerged in the areas of education (literacy), health and other community developmental issues (Colletta 1996, La Belle & Ward 1996, Torres 1996b). It is however in the 1970s that the term NFE received a popularity boost. This was due to several reasons. First, the term was not only made visible but also provided a link and legitimacy to the diverse educational activities which ranged from consciousness raising in Latin America to Vocational training in Africa. Secondly, the term was popularised by the research attention it received from international education planners and universities. This academic scholarship predominant in the 1970s (Cf. Coombs & Ahmed 1974a, Brembeck 1974, Grandstuff 1976, La Belle 1976, Evans 1981) resulted in some consensus regarding the features and parameters of viewing NFS viz.:

- the formal school - non formal distinction
- deliberate/systematic learning as opposed to incidental/informal learning

In other words, there is an explicit agreement on the demarcation between incidental/informal/non-formal and formal education. Coombs, Prosser & Ahmed (1974b), some of the forerunners in the NFE debates, provide descriptions to distinguish formal, informal and non-formal education which subsequent (international) researchers seem to qualify rather than deviate from. They propose that:

- informal education (IFE) is that lifelong process where attitudes, values, skills and knowledge are acquired from daily experience. It is mostly unorganised and unsystematic.
- Formal education (FE) is the hierarchically structured graded education system running from primary to university education and

- NFE is any organised educational activity outside the established formal system...whether operating separately or as an important feature of a broader activity...that is intended to serve identifiable clientele and learning objectives (p10).

These scholars caution on two things. First, these definitions overlap and can not be said to be distinct entities and secondly, they are derived from western concepts and therefore have a Eurocentric inclination such that when applied to non conventional educational forms found especially in developing countries, the definitions are not fully encompassing.

The above concern finds credence when viewed in relation to explanations of informal, non-formal and formal education that were advanced by educationists (Cf. Sifuna 1990, Fafunwa 1982, Indire 1974) from Africa/Kenya. These descriptions are offered within the concept of traditional education (see section 2.1.2) and hence denote a particular timeframe in the past. IFE strategies were seen as a life long process of learning from everyday life. NFE was described as those activities that were more specific with a set time schedule, designated teachers and learners and a systematic curriculum. Examples of FE are the Koranic schools. While certain features and qualities found in indigenous systems may be deemed useful for NFE today, the descriptions can hardly be said to capture NFE practice today. Hence, for a delineation of present day NFE, we must look to the ideas of other scholars.

Lenhart (1993) following in the footsteps of his predecessors (Coombs et al 1974a,b), pinpoints that formal, informal and non-formal education can be differentiated by the level of organisation, functionality and the education processes. Colletta (1996) further elaborates on the latter; that the three forms are concerned with the transmission of knowledge, attitudes and skills. However, they can be distinguished by the method of transmission and what is stressed during the transmission. The author argues that FE is mainly concerned with knowledge. IFE stresses on attitudes while NFE stresses on skill acquisition. While both FE and NFE involve deliberate and systematic transmission, IFE tends to be incidental. Evans (1981) expounds more on this component which is hereby summarised:

|                |                    | <b>Incidental</b> | <b>Informal</b> | <b>Non-formal</b> | <b>Formal</b> |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Source</b>  | Conscious/Intended |                   | √               | √                 | √             |
|                | Not conscious      | √                 |                 | √                 |               |
| <b>Learner</b> | Conscious/Intended |                   | √               | √                 | √             |
|                | Not Conscious      | √                 | √               |                   |               |

Both FE and NFE are consciously planned. In incidental learning, education just happens but both the provider and the recipient do not plan it. IFE is that education where either the provider or the recipient intentionally seeks it, but not both at the same time. Lenhart (1993) further qualifies this aspect arguing that the border between IFE and socialisation is rather thin. Adding on, La Belle & Ward (1996) distinguish the three using the degree of structure. Casual conversation or reading a

book, they argue, is an informal activity. However, when it assumes more structure and purpose directed towards changing attitudes or behaviour then it acquires a more non-formal character. This structure in NFE retains flexibility. NFE, they add, exclude programmes with, “state sanctioned curricula associated with credits, grades, certificates and diplomas” (p230). These belong to the formal school framework.

In addition to the Coombs & Ahmed 1974a definition provided above, the following have been advanced.

La Belle 1986:2 defines NFE as “any organised systematic educational activity carried out outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups of the population”.

Grandstuff (1976:294) asserts that NFE “includes all of what we call education save for that fraction that takes place in identified schools”. This definition has however received criticism as negatively including all and sundry and therefore not being useful (Lang-Wojtasik 2001, UN-ECA 1984).

To what extent can these definitions be said to delineate NFS in Kenya? To answer this, an examination of Africa/Kenya specific literature will be attempted. In Kenya, literature depicts the appeal for NFE was advanced against the backdrop of the overall shortcomings of the formal system in providing relevant education and training especially for rural development (UN-ECA 1984, Kipkorir 1974, Elkan 1968). After the so called first development decade (1960-1970), the most obvious evidence of school expansion was the primary school leaver problem. These issues dictated the description and thrust of NFE activities given prominence in this era. For example, Kipkorir (1974) gives an overview of NFE in Kenya in the 1970s, including some in-depth coverage of individual institutions. He specifically analyses NFE in Kenya to be in three categories viz. complementary provisions (emphasising value/attitude inculcation– e.g. YMCA/YWCA, Boy Scouts/Girl Guides, St Johns Ambulance, The Red Cross), Supplementary follow-up Provisions (stressing on skill acquisition– e.g. CITC, NYS, VPs) and Alternatives (stressing on basic education– e.g. Adult Literacy Education). The first two provisions are outside the scope of this study. The latter however receives mention by Indire (1974:81) who describes NFE - amongst other things - as supplementing “...formal education as in adult literacy classes and youth clubs”. Mention of youth clubs is of significance here as these institutions admitted a school aged population and attempted to provide primary school equivalent literacy programmes (Elkan 1968). Recognition of the role of Youth Centres therefore extended the concept of NFE to include provisions for school aged children. It marked the emergence of interest in NFS as an alternative to formal schooling especially for “those whose (basic) education needs were not being met” (UNECA 1984).

Today in Kenya, the definition for NFE – in reference to out-of-school provisions for school aged children - adopted by official government documents (e.g. MOEST 2000, Draft Policy Guidelines 1999c) is that which was advanced by Coombs and his colleagues more than 30 years ago. This definition, as it is, does not adequately capture the case of provisions for school aged children due to several reasons.

The torch bearers projected an international outlook in their discussion and definition of NFE. They may have based their views on research findings from Kenya and other parts of Africa (like Coombs, Ahmed, Prosser 1974a, 1974b) but the overall aim was to merge the findings and define NFE universally. Additionally, the emphasis of NFE programmes in Kenya, when this definition was arrived at, mainly comprised complementary provisions (such as scouts), supplementary provisions (skill training) and alternative basic education programmes for adults (literacy). The problem of OOS children was beginning to cause apprehension (cf. Coombs et al 1974a, 1974b, Kipkorir 1974) and indeed some institutions were beginning to target them by default. But as an emerging concern, OOS basic education programmes were not actively captured in the definition.

There was therefore a need to capture the description of NFE for school aged children based on local research studies. This was essential because since the 1970s when the definition was advanced, the field has seen considerable changes. Hitherto excluded elements such as basic education provisions for school aged children are now an active component of NFE. In the past, NFE activities were outside the framework of the formal school giving credence to Coombs and La Belle's definitions. However, today, many schools identified as NFS are contrary to the above definitions in salient ways. Some NFS offer the same curriculum as formal schools leading to national examination, timing, learning methodology is no different from the formal education system (Ekundayo-Thompson 2001a). Do such schools then belong elsewhere or is the current description of NFE not encompassing recent developments?

The inadequacy of the existing definition on NFS is further evidenced in the rather contradictory stance adopted by policy and research documents when explaining the practice of NFS. For instance, the "Policy Guidelines on NFE" (MOEST 1999c:6) define NFE as "any organised systematic learning activity outside the formal school system" but goes on to admit that some NFS follow regular primary school curriculum, and recommends that the Kenya National examination Council ought to develop and administer examinations for them. These two issues of curriculum and examinations bring NFS within rather than outside of the formal school system as indicated in the definition. Ekundayo-Thompson (2001a) in his study of non-formal schools in urban Kenya defines NFE as "a curricular, organisational approach to the provision of basic education in Kenya" (p xi). However, his findings show that NFS are not "markedly different from

normal primary schools in curricular content” and herein lies the limitation of his definition. These two examples serve to depict the gap between definition and practice of NFS today in Kenya. It was crucial to examine, based on evidence from both rural and urban based NFS, if in effect the non-formal school variations in place dictate a different description or whether it is the practise of NFS schools that needed streamlining. The current study attempted to address this gap.

To further demarcate the field and relieve NFS of an “identity crisis”, a number of authors have provided characteristics to distinguish NFE and FE. For purposes of discussion, ideas of three scholars spanning a 20 year period viz. Grandstuff (1976), Fordharm 1993 and Rogers (1996) are summarised.

**Table 3: Formal/Non-formal Education Characteristics**

|                          | <b>Non-Formal Education</b>   | <b>Formal Education</b>   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Participants (Learners)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied learner characteristics</li> <li>➤ non-enrolled or dropouts</li> <li>➤ Socially/ economically marginalised groups e.g. young mothers, urban poor</li> <li>➤ have occupational roles e.g. working children, house girls, house wives</li> <li>➤ defined by geographic placement e.g. rural-remote, urban poor</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School aged population, often urban in outlook</li> </ul>  |
| Staff                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary/part-time/full-time</li> <li>• Lower remuneration, status</li> <li>• Can tap experts in the community (not necessarily literate)</li> <li>• Paraprofessionals</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training, certification used as basis for placement in primary/secondary/tertiary sectors</li> <li>• Mostly full-time</li> </ul> |
| Organisational Structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector with many components</li> <li>Organised at micro level and hopefully more responsive to local needs</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hierarchical, graded, sequential system</li> </ul>   |
| Location                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can use borrowed or no facilities.</li> <li>Efficient locale utilisation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed</li> <li>• Urban preference</li> </ul>   |
| Time                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Often part-time</li> <li>• Short term and present oriented</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed</li> <li>• Future oriented</li> </ul>  |
| Content                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task/skill centred and should be dictated by functional needs</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic and reflects status quo values and attitudes</li> <li>• Results in certification or accreditation</li> </ul>            |
| Learning Methodology     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community based</li> <li>• Multi grade and multi shift</li> <li>• Peer learning</li> <li>• Discovery learning</li> <li>• Learner centred curriculum</li> <li>• Aims at empowering learner/conscientisation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardised knowledge transmitted by teacher to learners</li> <li>• Method dictated by training or education policy</li> </ul>  |
| Cost and Financing       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied depending on programme but often lower than formal education</li> <li>• Financing by NGO, self and sometimes communities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardised costs that increase hierarchically</li> <li>• Financing by government</li> </ul>                                    |
| Administration           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run by NGOs and philanthropic organisations</li> <li>• Decisions made at programme level</li> <li>• Mole local control and decision making</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National system co-ordinated from the centre</li> <li>• centralised</li> </ul>   |
| Societal Valuation       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often used as second alternative</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly prestiged by society</li> </ul>   |

Grandstuff (1976)

|                        | <b>Non Formal Education</b>   | <b>Formal Education</b>   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Purpose</b>         | Short term and specific<br>Non-credentials based                                      | Long term and general<br>Credential based   |
| <b>Timing</b>          | Short-cycle, recurrent, part-time   | Long cycle, preparatory, full-time  |
| <b>Content</b>         | Individualised, output centred<br>Practical<br>Clientele determine entry requirements | Standardised, input centred<br>Academic<br>Entry requirements determine clientele                             |
| <b>Delivery system</b> | Environment based, community related<br>Flexible, learner centred and resource saving | Institution based isolated from the environment<br>Rigidly structured, teacher centres and resource intensive |
| <b>Control</b>         | Self-governing, democratic  | External, hierarchical  |

Fordham 1993

|                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| <b>Target</b>        | Mainly adults, those interested, voluntary, open  | Mainly young, universal, compulsory, selective  |
| <b>Time scale</b>    | Part time, secondary activity   | Full time, primary activity   |
| <b>Relevance</b>     | Integrated with life in community, in all kinds of settings   | Separate from life in special institutions, in sole purpose buildings   |
| <b>Programme</b>     | Participatory, excludes nothing   | Run by professionally, excludes large parts of life   |
| <b>Curriculum</b>    | Education to meet learner defined needs<br>Open curriculum<br>Integrated<br>Problem solving<br>Controlled by learners | One kind of curriculum for all<br>Set curriculum<br>Compartmentalised<br>Subject centred<br>Controlled by the teacher |
| <b>Methods</b>       | Learner centred, much is oral   | Teacher centred, much is written  |
| <b>Objectives</b>    | Promotes independence, set by learners, collaborative, collective   | Conformist, set by teachers, competitive, individualistic   |
| <b>Orientation</b>   | Present   | Future  |
| <b>Relationships</b> | Egalitarian   | Hierarchical  |
| <b>Validation</b>    | Continuing, validated by learners   | Terminal at each stage, validated by professional   |

Rodgers (1996) as quoted by Sprouk 1999

The above tables confirm the view that it has been fashionable to assume that NFE is more functional, relevant, learner centred, flexible and contains all the other positive attributes listed above. A critical examination however shows that in practice, the distinctiveness of these attributes may be difficult to uphold. For instance a number of government sponsored NFE programmes<sup>20</sup> are administered from the ministries of education “with the resulting tendency to bureaucratise and infuse NFE with formal school values and processes, thus muting its distinctiveness” (La Belle & Ward 1996: 232). So while it is granted that the decentralisation of NFS as an education strategy strengthens its appeal and effect, it is accepted that NFS cannot exploit its potential if planned and managed in isolation from the often centralised mainstream (UNESCO 1992). The solution then will be to achieve a delicate balance between the two.

It therefore becomes evident that the features suggested by the three scholars should be viewed more as a grid for differentiating FE and NFE rather than as an exact reflection of what is on the ground. This stance is legitimate especially when viewed in relation to features official government documents espouse. MOEST (2001:49-50) bemoans lack of accreditation/certification

<sup>20</sup> For instance COPE (Uganda)

which in an NFE debate ought not to be an issue. The same document as well as the Draft Policy Guidelines (1999c) urge for a common curriculum which then throws into disarray the NFE maxim of flexibility and tailor made curriculum. A gap this study sought to address was to tally whether the above features were what “ought to be” or what really is. Each section of the analysis therefore contains a comparison of the attributes advanced by the scholars in the field and what the NFE Policy Guidelines state examined vis-à-vis the findings from the field.

### 2.3.2 Explaining the Subordinate Status

Despite the recognition of the limits of the formal school to perform the varied educational functions on the one hand, and the potential usefulness of NFS on the other, NFS has not essentially been transformed to stand as an “alternative” in its own right achieving certain educational goals in society (Hoppers 2000, La Belle & Ward 1996). NFS is still not viewed as an approach with “parity of esteem” with formal structures. Indeed NFS is mainly regarded as the “sector of the poor<sup>21</sup>”, perhaps because it was conceived in the first place to address their plight and has tended to remain in the periphery (MOEST 1999c, DSE 1993).

One trend of thinking argues that the inhibiting factor to NFS transition to an “alternative” status lies in its conception and definition. It has been argued that, first, the term does not describe anything new (Colletta 1996, La Belle & Ward 1996, Evans 1981). It overlaps with other terms already in use such as “out-of-school education”, “functional literacy” and so on and therefore many have difficulty in “differentiating non-formal education from other educational modes” (Colletta 1996: 229). Secondly, the definition seems to reflect the broader categories of structure rather than describe content or pedagogy of the educational activity (Hildebrand 1991). The presupposition is that content and pedagogy provide a clearer distinction. Thirdly, the wording of the popularly accepted definition of NFE is thought to fuel the conceptual vagueness. The NFE definition that it is *...an organised educational activity outside the established formal system...* advances “ein verstandnis von NFE als Restkategorie” (Lang-Wojtasik 2001:11). This means that whatever is not FE is supposedly NFE. Yet there are many ways, as already noted, of categorizing educational activities outside school so this results in what Evans (1981:13) terms as conceptual confusion. The fact that NFE defines itself by negation or as Hoppers (2000:9) contends, it “defines itself by what it is not...thus leaving the formal system as the default setting” and giving formal systems authenticity over NFS. In this vein, perhaps the best NFS can do is offer compensatory education to those unwillingly excluded from the formal system. In effect, NFS is rendered a “mopping up operation” of an ineffective formal system.

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<sup>21</sup> The Policy Guidelines of NFE in Kenya sees NFE as a solution to address education needs of disadvantaged children therefore confirming this view

The programmes under scrutiny here are the non-formal school compensatory approaches favoured mainly by practitioners in Africa and Asia. In these countries, NFS catering for marginalised school aged children have emerged. Their growth has emerged due to failure by nation-states to offer basic education to the school aged. Critics view these schools as a provision to “cool down” aspirations for formal schooling. Often, these schools are found in low economic areas wanting in human resources and physical facilities. These schools are not in the mainstream of government planning and financing. They rely on low/unqualified teachers. Participation in these schools is not an end in itself but they present a chance for one to reroute to formal schools. For participants in NFS, the yardstick for success remains formal schools (Cf. MOEST 1999b, Ruto 1999). It is mainly this form of NFS that is labelled as “second rate education” or “second alternative.

NFE proponents are uncomfortable with the existence of these kinds of schools due to the limited notion of NFE they represent. Coombs (1976:284) attacks what he calls “the myopic notion that the sole function of NFE is to provide the equivalent of regular school subjects and skills through out-of-school channels, for the benefit of unfortunates who were deprived of **real** schooling earlier”. For if this be the function of NFE, then the call should be the transformation of the formal school system to make it inclusive of all in society. Calling for these schools to stand as an alternative is seen to be the same as advancing the legality of dual education systems that stratify society according to socio-economic canons. In other words, it is a promotion of a system that legitimises inequality (Torres 1996, Evans 1981). When viewed within a human rights framework, one sees the contradiction this poses.

International education documents (e.g. *World Education Conference* Jomtien 1990) seem to view compensatory provisions as temporary solutions for providing education for the hard to reach. It is other supplementary provisions (post-primary, adult education) or complementary provisions (innovative, non-conventional programmes within the aegis of conventional education) that are discussed in the light of an “alternative”. This depicts the discomfort compensatory provisions relay when discussed from a rights and equity point of view. Gaining legitimacy for NFS provisions may require that from the onset it provides an equitable learning experience. In view of the above, it was vital to establish exactly what type of schools we have in Kenya and if they can stand on their own right as alternative rather than low quality parallel institutions. This question was answered by the NFS mapping exercise that attempted to classify NFS by school type and category.

The final reason why NFE has not developed into an alternative system stems from the question of intent. The question has been, can NFE really meaningfully contribute to development more cheaply and effectively or is it a reformist ploy designed to maintain an unjust social and economic order within countries and thereby sustain conditions of dependency of poor nations upon

the more industrialised states? (Bock 1976). Participation in NFE does not result in certification with recognised socio-economic value. Often, NFE graduates are limited to working in the lower and poorly paid sectors in society. They can scarcely gain access to white-collar and other professional jobs. They could never compete in an international market. They can hardly influence policy in areas that affect their own lives. Educationists have also alleged that NFE clients have low aspirations and are demotivated from participating and excelling as they are aware of the limitations participation in the sector denotes (La Belle & Ward 1996). Ahmed (1993) perhaps puts the lid to this argument when he states, with his hindsight of two decades of researching in the field, what seems to have been ignored is that NFE can actually accentuate existing divisions and inequalities rather than redress them.

To sum up, this section on the concept of NFE is useful in shaping up arguments regarding the place for NFS. The concept shows why it is important to see beyond the ameliorative function NFS serve. It is important to check on the equity and quality issues for no education system should consolidate socio-economic stratification.

## **2.4 Non-Formal Delivery Approaches in Latin America, Asia and Africa**

It is within the drive for “Education for All” (commenced in 1990) that many developing countries seriously begun to embrace educational alternatives as a way of primarily complementing formal school provision. The embracing of alternatives was reflected by (a) growth and/or expansion of previous micro projects to become national programmes and (b) adoption and increased support of the alternatives by governments through respective ministries of education.

Current literature available belongs to two strands. First are the full fledged empirical research studies that have been conducted on existing programmes. Secondly are the brief descriptive write-ups, available through UN agencies whose mandate is to inform on practice in other countries. This section will marry the information from these two sources, presenting a review of innovative non-formal primary education programmes in selected countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The essence of this section is twofold (a) to inform on innovative practices in place as such information can be the basis for replication, reformation and revitalisation of basic education programmes in Kenya and (b) suggest research issues which are of relevance to the present study.

### **2.4.1 Non-Formal Education in Latin America**

Latin America has had the longest and most radical history in non-formal approaches. These approaches are mainly found in the area of adult education or other out-of-school approaches such as “popular education”. Primary education programmes, along the fashion of NFE basic education programmes of the 1970s are rather unfamiliar in Latin America. These remain a hallmark of Asia

and to a lesser extent Africa. Latin American countries have instead excelled in developing not alternatives **to** but alternatives **within** the formal school system (Torres 1992, UNICEF 1992). Three such programmes listed below shall be used as illustration points:

- Colombia's Escuela Nueva or (The New School)
- Chile's Programa de las 900 Escuelas (Programme of the 900 Schools) and
- Mexico's Cursos Comunitarios (Primary Education For Rural Children).

First, the programmes will be briefly introduced after which features pertinent to the present study will be raised.

The New School Programme, Escuela Nueva, (hereafter referred to as EN) has its roots in the Unitary School System of the early 1960s: a programme that was supported by UNESCO in several Latin American and African countries. In Colombia, the Unitary School System took the shape of improving rural school education (Psacharopoulos et al 1993, Torres 1992). This process started from one school, to 150 pilot schools in the mid 1960s and later extended to cover all "single-teacher schools" in the country. The actual genesis of EN is dated to 1975 and was supported by USAID. EN was founded under the aegis and experience of the unitary school movement. It was motivated by the need to access education to disadvantaged children who were the rural populations. Like its predecessor, EN expanded in stages. In its first four years of inception, it covered 500 schools in three administrative areas (departments). By 1985, there were 8000 EN schools across the country. During this time, the Colombian government "decided to adopt EN as a strategy to achieve universal rural primary education" (Torres 1992:3). This led to rapid expansion of the programme to 17,984 schools in 1989 to 20,000 in 1991. The target is to reach all the 27,000 rural schools. It has taken EN over 20 years to enlarge from a micro programme to stand as a national plan. This expansion has not only been in stages but also was informed and banked on experiences of previous similar endeavours (Schiefelbein 1992, Torres 1992).

The programme of the 900 schools, Programa de las 900 Escuelas, (hereafter referred to as P900) commenced in 1990 with support from the Swedish and Danish governments and later in 1992, World Bank joined the fold with their finances. However, the idea, initial negotiation and formulation for P900 is attributed to two prestigious Chilean NGOs specialising on educational research and university centres. The goal of P900 is to distribute quality education equitably. It concentrates on the first four grades in selected schools both in rural and urban areas (UNICEF 1992).

Community Courses, Cursos Comunitarios, (hereafter referred to as CC) is a primary education programme for rural children targeting especially those that are hard to reach. While it was started in 1973, its beginnings are traced to the Rural School movement of the 1920s/30s established by the post revolutionary government (Rockwell 1992). CC is a national programme

funded and managed by the government. It has however not been able to reach its target of going to scale and the number of courses it offers have declined from 17,198 in 1981 to the current 7000 courses (p12).

#### *2.4.1.1 Lessons to Learn from EN, P900 and CC Programmes*

The initiation and expansion of the programmes in the three countries were urged by the vision of universalising education. This meant targeting hitherto neglected groups which implied the rural population and -in the case of Chile - the urban poor through flexible alternative approaches integrated in the overall education plan (in terms of curriculum, transition etc). Two issues emerge here of pertinence to the present study. For non-formal educational approaches to expand and stand as national programmes addressing educational issues in a country (a) political will and commitment is necessary to propel it and (b) there is need for a linkage and complementarity of FE and NFE so that both support each other.

The resilience of the programmes could be attributed to the fact that they are a growth of previous similar programmes. Hence the programmes had a basis in experience, knowledge and obstacles to learn from. They were not implemented in a vacuum. The direction of expansion (EN and CC) reveals a progressive expansion from micro stage to stand as a national programme. This has implications for the Kenyan scene where NFS expansion has been left to other players - NGOs, individuals, communities- with peripheral participation from the centre (ministry of education) thereby limiting its progression to stand as a country programme.

All the three programmes adopt what they term as an integrated approach. This entails concentrating on all the elements of education: from the actors (learners, teachers, community), to curriculum and pedagogical issues to other support mechanisms. For instance, EN adopts the systems approach comprising four components: curriculum, training, administration and the community (Psacharopoulos et al 1993, Torres 1992). P900 uses an integrated approach comprising seven components and all these are geared towards improving quality and effectiveness of learning as well as including local communities in the process. The seven components stress on improving infrastructure and equipment, supporting teacher and enhancing educational materials (UNICEF 1992).

The curriculum adopted is of significance to the current study. For example in CC, concerns with equity and mobility issues dictated that the curriculum offered be uniform with other primary schools. However, a balance had to be struck because a national curriculum did not necessarily imply a relevant one (Rockwell 1992). Like CC therefore, if NFS in Kenya especially in rural remote areas wants to sustain interest in their schools, they must attempt to achieve a delicate balance between achieving both national equivalence but retaining local relevance in the

curriculum. In addition, a curriculum similar to formal school is necessary in order to ease transition of pupils from NFS to formal schools.

The three programmes put emphasis on pedagogical strategies. Other than infusion of local cultural knowledge, teaching methods all stress on multi-grade learning and group work (e.g. preparing joint reports on the basis of previous individual work). This concept involves a change of stress from teaching to learning. In EN for instance, self-instructional guides are utilised. Teachers are trained to allow active learning and participate in month meetings to refresh themselves (Psacharopoulos et al 1993, Schiefelbein 1992). In CC, the learning process is guided by the concepts of discovery and dialogue. It tries to retain its flexible nature and community participation using young paraprofessionals from the local community. The lesson from the three programmes is that one must invest in teacher preparation if the instructional programme is to be improved.

While funding and management of the programmes is shared by external agencies (for EN and P900), the government and internal organs such as NGOs and universities, the running of the programmes is executed by the government. The merit of such an arrangement is that there is internal commitment and ownership in implementation. There is administrative and supervisory support from the centre with expertise from experts of the land. Good funding enables a wide geographic coverage and reaching of targets. The CC programme which is solely run by the government has not been able to reach its target and this could possibly be due to financial limitations. The point here is that centralised direction – from government – is essential in achieving wide coverage.

Two programmes, EN and P900, have succeeded in reaching their targets and this has been made possible by external funding. CC, which largely relied on government coffers has not been that successful. This observation suggests the rather precarious future for NFS which has never featured in government budget plans. On the other hand, NFS cannot with certainty look towards external sources as organisations that actively supported it have now either pulled out and refocused to Eastern Europe or turned their attention and finances directly to poverty reduction programmes or to their own problems of homelessness and unemployment (La Belle & Ward 1996, Torres 1996). Given this scenario, the NFS programmes have to look within for rejuvenation. For it is herein that the vision of hope, of the future and of a transformative education lies; in alternative small systems that are critical, functional and inclusive. But such systems are “likely to remain relatively under funded and marginal” (quoted in Hildebrand 1991:25). This is the dilemma facing non-formal school provision when viewed as a national programme.

### 2.4.2 Alternative Education in Asia

NFE approaches in Asia are dated to the early 1970s, with a marked increase in the 1980s (UNICEF 1992). More recently, the EFA call increased their urgency and appeal. The sub-region has a high number of school aged OOS children which by the year 2000 was estimated at 84.2 million of the official school age group (UNESCO Statistical Issue, March 1991). The school aged children either not attending school or doing so infrequently have been identified as girls, working children, populations in rural/mountainous/desert regions (India, Thailand), tribal minorities, children of lower castes, snake charmers (India), garbage collectors (Pakistan) among others. It is for these groups that a variety of NFS programmes have been developed to cater for their basic education needs. A summary of the non-formal approaches reviewed is as follows:

| Country     | Programme              | Year of Establishment | Sponsor                       | Target Population   |
|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Bangladesh  | BRAC                   | 1985                  | UNICEF, USAID                 | Rural poor, Dropouts  |
| India       | PROPEL<br>PUNE         | 1979<br>1979          | Central government,<br>States | Girls, dropouts, working children,<br>children of lower castes. |
| Pakistan    | Home<br>Schools        | 1981                  | UNICEF                        | Girls   |
| Philippines | Mobile Tent<br>Schools | 1985                  | World Bank<br>UNICEF          | Ethnic minorities in mountains                                  |
| Thailand    | Hill Areas<br>Project  | 1980                  | USAID                         | Children in mountainous areas                                   |

The programmes in Asia are wide and varied in approach and they range from local level to national programmes. The **Mobile Schools** of the Philippines and **Home Schools** in Pakistan are micro projects designed to serve specific groups. The former aim at providing basic education to ethnic minority groups in the remote mountainous regions while the latter, located in a slum settlement at the outskirts of Karachi, targets girls (UNICEF 1992, Lassam 1990). On the other hand are the programmes with a more national outlook such as Promoting Primary and Elementary Education Project (**PROPEL**) in India and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (**BRAC**). While PROPEL is managed and executed by government through the India Institute of Education, BRAC is the largest single non-governmental education programme in Bangladesh (Guttman & Kisonen 1994, Ahmed et al 1993, UNICEF 1992).

The provisions have an integrated community development approach as opposed to Latin America that has an integrated school approach. For instance, the Home School is part of an integrated community development approach that has a health component, adult classes for women and pre-school. BRAC contains a variety of rural development, credit and health programmes, the NFS programme only being a part of it.

The ultimate goal of the NFS provisions generally leans towards attaining formal school equivalencies. Provisions such as the Part-time Primary Education (PUNE) or PROPEL in India or BRAC aim at providing a bridge for children to join the formal school (Samir 1999, UNICEF

1992). As such the curriculum, for instance in PROPEL and BRAC have been structured such that it covers the first four grades and five grades of formal primary schools respectively. Additionally, the BRAC curriculum is based on the formal school one but with infusion of local relevant knowledge. These factors are expected to aid the transition process to formal schools. The Hill Areas Project in Thailand provides primary school certificate to students who have completed 6,000 hours of study in the course (Edirisingha 1999).

Structurally, the programmes (e.g. PUNE, BRAC and the Mobile Schools) are divided into grade/levels. Student numbers range between 20-30 per class (BRAC and PROPEL). The provisions put emphasis on use of participatory, child centred methodologies and multi-grade teaching that can cater for the varied age groups. This presupposes effective teacher preparation which has been achieved through an initial and annual in-servicing (BRAC).

The non-formal provisions try to adapt to the learners conditions rather than vice versa. The mobile school programme for instance entails a mobile teacher who moves from one village to another. The programme is appealing because it is adapted to the culture and lifestyle of the people and it is an efficient way to reach the scattered school aged children. The Home schools have flexible school hours starting at interval hours of 8.00, 11.00a.m., 2.00 and 5.00 p.m. Flexibility in time and location is therefore a hallmark of these provisions.

In terms management on NFS, Asia reveals a variety of models. PROPEL and the Hill Areas Project are managed and executed by the ministry of education. BRAC, as an NGO has its own internal management arrangements though it works in liaison with the MOE. Local communities have been brought into the management fold too as in the case of the Home, Mobile Tent schools and PROPEL. PROPEL inculcated a strong community presence through emphasis on action research that succeeded in mobilising and encouraging community active participation.

Most provisions, as the table depicts, are however sponsored by external agencies again proving that NFS programmes are often outside of central government financing

### **2.4.3 Alternative Education in Africa**

Non formal educational approaches in Africa resemble those of Asia. They however mainly differ in extensiveness of adoption and ownership especially by government agencies. Like Latin America and Asia, NFS in Africa largely depends on external funding and support coupled with some local initiative. Like in Asia, the provisions mainly proliferated in the 1990s to serve the army of OOS children in Sub-Saharan Africa. National programmes are few. Two programmes will be used as illustration points as follows:

| Country | Programme        | Year of Establishment | Sponsor           | Target Population                                    |
|---------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| Mali    | Ecole du Village | 1992                  | Save the Children | Children in Lolondieba District                      |
| Uganda  | COPE             | 1996                  | UNICEF            | AIDS/War Orphans, street children, rural populations |

Uganda's Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education (**COPE**) and Mali's Ecole du Village (**EDV**) are representative of the two kinds of programmes found in Sub-Saharan Africa. COPE is a joint venture of the Government of Uganda and UNICEF and is executed by the ministry of education (Republic of Uganda/UNICEF 1997). EDV on the other hand is housed by an NGO and it is only now that the ministry of Basic Education has declared interest on the EDV model (UNICEF 1992).

The two programmes have basic similarities. Both provide condensed three year programmes designed to ease rejoinder back to the formal system. The learning centres are managed by the community and these members are supposed to oversee construction, ensure school attendance and so on. There is a strong gender emphasis practice pro girls that ensures that they form at least 50% of the total population. The school year and hours are also flexible to ensure maximum attendance by the learners.

While COPE teachers are paraprofessional instructors, EDV utilises adult literacy trainers from the respective villages who are then given a one month refresher course.

#### *2.4.3.1 Lessons from Asia and Africa*

Asia and Africa have many similarities hence this section presents lessons from the two. Circumstances under which NFS children learn does not permit full-time daily attendance meaning that the content, load and duration of the curriculum is condensed. There is a stronger community "perspective" in the curriculum with the environmental needs and aspirations of pupils taken into consideration. The children are of different levels in terms of their educational background, hence the aim of the education is to provide them with life skills.

Non-formal classes are marked by their heterogeneity of age, educational and social backgrounds. The classes are therefore multigrade with flexible entry and exit points. Learners progress at their pace, teaching principles are associated with lifelong education such as "self-learners, inter-learning and self-directed learning" (Juma1998:5). The teacher ideally is the facilitator. There are however certain pedagogical concerns when trainers for adults are brought in to teach children as in the case of EDV. The break away from conventional structures as the case of the mobile tent schools makes it is a recommended practice as the school reaches the children and is therefore assured of more success.

Non-formal education approaches in Africa and Asia have tilted towards provisions outside of the formal school with varying degrees of linkages, formalised or not, with the latter. A

disadvantage with this arrangement is that children who aspire to join formal schools may fail to do so due to limited space in formal schools. This has happened to graduates of the Home Schools in Pakistan. Hence, the lesson here is that it is important to think through the transition possibilities of these pupils in the planning stages of the provisions.

## **2.5 Empirical Studies in Non Formal Education**

This section limits itself to analysing only those studies on NFE services for children. As such, NFE adult education or studies only on vocational training are outside the focus of this study. NFE for children is a new field of study that has emerged mainly in developing countries where the inadequacies of conventional schooling and high costs of education have impeded on the ability of formal systems to access education to all (Hamadache 1994). In turn, attention has been turned to NFE as a probable solution.

A precursor in NFE research at an international level was a series of studies by Coombs & Ahmed (1974a), Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1974b). These studies examined mainly skill-training and literacy oriented NFE programmes in selected countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The objectives of these studies were threefold: (a) they provided a working definition for NFE that has guided activities in the field (b) they advanced NFE as a viable research area, and of significance to the current study is (c) they were supposed to provide information on how to access NFE especially to rural out of school children and youth. The findings of these studies have however been overtaken by events. First, the education needs for children are basic (literacy) as well as supplementary (training) and secondly, within the umbrella of needy children is the urban child too.

The study by Ranaweera et al (1989) followed in the tradition of the above study in its cross-country approach. This study sought to document innovative basic education approaches and analyse the conceptual and practical issues that arise in arriving at linkages between the two. Kenya is one of the countries covered in the survey. The study observed that in Kenya, NFE is not really popular and has been relegated to be an NGO affair. The clientele are mainly street children, the poor and orphans. The study mainly analyses the NFE provisions such as Youth centres. Since then a variety of new NFE forms have developed in the country. And as this was a cross country survey, it had implications on the depth of coverage implying the need for a detailed country specific study.

Detailed studies have been written on specific national programmes with practical as well as theoretical relevance for the current study. Ahmed et al (1993) undertook a comprehensive study on Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) non formal educational programme. The methodology of the study entailed using secondary data from prior donor funded evaluations of BRAC and primary data from a household survey commissioned for the study. The objective of the

study was to analyse the BRAC NFE programme and its potential and discern elements that might be useful to other countries. This study is very comprehensive and includes a wealth of knowledge useful to guide research studies in NFS. Although Kenya lacks a country programme such as BRAC, it would be interesting to compare how our projects fare in comparison with BRAC especially from a programme element<sup>22</sup> point of view.

Samir (1999) adds pertinent contributions to the BRAC experience in his study where he compares the educational experiences of (a) children attending the BRAC NFE programme, (b) those attending formal schools and (c) those who have never been to school. The study, covered 720 randomly sampled children. The main instrument used was interviews. His study observes that BRAC NFE children performed significantly better than their counterparts in formal schools in life skills and writing and concludes that the programme has a positive impact on basic education in rural Bangladesh. This study was concerned with comparing level of skill acquisition. It did not delve into the process in which these skills are acquired. The current study, in examining how learning is conducted will therefore contribute a different angle to the field.

The rationale propelling NFE studies have all related to their essence as a provision that can complement formal schools in enhancing equitable access to basic education opportunities. The studies have addressed NFE as an avenue for widening access to disadvantaged populations and have addressed the issue of female education since, culturally, formal education was not a priority to them (cf. Mehrah 1995, Reinhold 1993, Makagiasar 1990). Other studies point to the organisational and implementation problems of NFE and the necessity of streamlining funding, co-ordination and planning activities for NFEs potential to be realised (cf. Edirisingha 1999, Ahmed et al 1993, Gonzales & Pijano 1997). Lastly, UNICEF and UNESCO have been active in especially documenting innovative, often small scale ventures evident in other countries who have valuable lessons to offer (cf. Non-formal approaches compiled by Torres 1992, Ranaweera 1989).

In Kenya, a variety of studies have been conducted with specific emphasis on non formal schools. These research studies have been conducted mainly by two groups: the MOEST who have been facilitated through various partners who funded the research and NGOs active in NFS who want to inform on or evaluate their programmes. The research activities have been particularly pronounced since the 1990s: a period that witnessed a renewed effort to address the issue of widening access to educational opportunity for all.

One of the first studies to succinctly address the problem of OOS children was the Comprehensive Education Sector Analysis (CESA) research report of 1994. This study was commissioned to address issues of access, equity and relevance in the education sector especially in

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<sup>22</sup> That is examining issues like clientele, schedule, instruction site and approach and curriculum

the face of declining participation. The CESA<sup>23</sup> report especially brought to the fore the education needs of economically disadvantaged children particularly in urban slums. The contribution of the study was that it ably (from a national point of view) isolated OOS as a group in need of education services. It acknowledged non-formal educational approaches as a viable option and urged that NFE be perceived more broadly rather than only in association with literacy programmes (MOEST 1999b). However, as a precursor, it suggested more research gaps than answered them. The research did not delve into the specific details of the alternatives already in place. This was attempted to an extent through the “Needs Assessment Survey” conducted by KIE in the same year, 1994.

The KIE survey, funded by UNICEF, was mandated to identify the learning needs of OOS children of 6-17 years. The survey was carried out at a period marked by a steady proliferation of NFE schools and centres. The survey, conducted in a number of districts brought to the fore valuable information regarding characteristics of the provisions and general quality. It strongly recommended the need for an NFE policy as well as more ministerial involvement in the sector. The KIE survey is however rather sketchy and does not back up its statements with evidence from data. It also mainly concerned itself with elements of the centres such as human and physical resources, the providers of NFE but does not delve into what the learners want or the learning processes as the present study did.

The same year (1994) was to produce another study, this time funded by Britain’s Overseas Development Administration (ODA)<sup>24</sup>. SPRED Operational Research 1 (GOK 1994) gives a good account of the causes of dropout and argues for the need to cater for this population. It is however SPRED 2 (GOK 1995) that addresses NFS. The study evaluates seven NFE schools/centres situated in different parts of the country (2 in ASAL, 3 in low residential areas and 2 in slum areas). Data collection tools consisted mainly of interviews schedules and document analysis of secondary data. Unlike the previous studies, SPRED 2 has a qualitative aspect and is methodologically more compact than the KIE survey. The study observes that the education initiatives are significant as they attend to boys and girls who have “historically, socially and economically been disadvantaged in shelter, health and educational provisions”(MOE 1995:40) The study concludes that although the centres are small, they have made remarkable achievements in improving access and retention of disadvantaged children. SPRED 2 however poses pertinent questions of relevance to the present research. Are children happy with their provision? Have they been rerouted back to formal schools? Are the centres increasing or decreasing? (p41). These are questions the present study will address.

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<sup>23</sup> The CESA Report 1994 draft report has been quoted extensively in government documents such as the **Master Plan of Education** (1998), **Policy Guidelines on NFE** (1999c) as it adeptly addressed education issues for out of school children. However, the printed version of 1999(d) hardly refers to out of school children. It instead reserves all mention for literacy and skill programmes for adults.

<sup>24</sup> ODA has since changed names and is now referred to as the Department for International Development (DFID).

The “Report on Formal and Non-Formal Education in Parts of Samburu, Turkana, Marsabit and Moyale Districts” (1999), supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is a study that is informative on the status of educational opportunities for children in pastoral areas (MOEST 1999b). The study sought to document alternative but complementary provisions in place. Data collection procedures mainly entailed use of interviews and questionnaires. The survey adds new information in the field. It describes the nature of the alternatives in the four districts. It also identifies the different kinds of schools in place viz. feeder, shepherd and mobile schools and touches on methodology of teaching such as multi-grade and multi-shift teaching. However, because it describes both formal and non-formal endeavours, there is a tendency of the former to overshadow the latter. For instance, in Turkana district, statistics of only formal school participation are given in terms of number of schools, student and teacher population and district administrators. Non is provided for the NFE sector. The study also states that certain methods are used to teach, however it is not clear from the research how this information was derived. As it is not stated whether actual observations were conducted, one can conclude that the researchers relied on what their respondents told them. This is however not enough to validate the responses. The present study, by focussing entirely on NFS, was therefore able to (a) build on the knowledge advanced through this survey, distinctly categorising the centres by school type and (b) conduct classroom observations and therefore comment on classroom pedagogy in terms of innovation or lack of it.

While the above study has its focus on rural-remote Kenya, Ekundayo-Thompson (2001a) concentrates on “Non-Formal Education in Urban Kenya: A Study of Kisumu, Mombasa and Nairobi” funded by the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), the study represents by far the widest coverage in that it studies 88 NFE schools/centres in the three towns. The study methodology is twofold. It entails document analysis of NFE studies and the actual survey where questionnaires were utilised. Classroom observations were done in a number of schools. Random sampling was used to select the centres. The study has a rather “top-bottom” approach in that it captures views of key informants such as proprietors, head teachers, education offices. Views of primary stakeholders, the learners and parents are not provided. Given its wide coverage, the study does not address certain qualitative issues. In this way, therefore, the present study will be useful in addressing this gap. Secondly, Ekundayo-Thompson (2001a) was able to build a profile of urban non-formal schools as the study covers a wide spectrum. The current study, by additionally focussing on rural remote districts, contributed to building a profile of NFE in Kenya.

Complementing the above studies have been the small scale researches undertaken in the field. These have mainly been funded by the organisations supporting those projects. Active has been Action Aid-Kenya (AAK) that supported two evaluation studies of the NFE programmes in

“Kyuso Rural Development Area” (Juma 1996) and “Kibwezi Rural Development Area” (Ekundayo-Thompson 1996). The two studies were basically supposed to evaluate the AAK undertakings. They offered significant information on the curriculum, teaching methodology and impact of the project. However, these studies have been driven by a practical need to improve/evaluate the project. They have therefore been examined from a project point of view implying that relevance of the findings is tilted towards similar projects and cannot easily be replicated to centres that had differing objectives.

The more academic studies conducted in the traditions of university research in the area of NFE are few. The NFE studies have tended to focus on women’s participation in non-formal educational activities (Juma 1991, Kimokoti 1990). This is understandable as the prior focus of NFE was on literacy - an area women’s participation was high – and skill acquisition. By focussing on NFE as a viable provision for school aged children, the current study will therefore add substantial knowledge to the area especially regarding its implications on availing an education that is considered useful to the recipients.

## **2.6 Summing up**

In the review of literature, an examination of the concept, nature and practice of NFE has been attempted. It has been shown that the appeal of NFS is overly romanticised. NFE is ascribed a bigger role without the accompanying changes in policy and financing and without a full examination of its ability to provide an equitable provision. It has also been shown that the practice of NFS does not fit into the description of the field advanced mainly by international scholars. Certain features, such as certification, are de-emphasised in the NFE debates yet they seem to be accommodated by Kenyan NFS. Hence, the review has shown the essence of using local empirical data to assess if the practice of NFS lives up to the concept of NFS and vice versa.

The study on selected NFS examples results in various lessons of importance to the Kenyan case. The information on the teacher and pedagogy of learning shows that effort must be invested in preparing the teacher in non-conventional learning strategies as these are the cornerstones of effective learning. Regarding the curriculum, the tendency has been to adapt the formal school one due to the preoccupation that the curriculum ought to ease a re-entry back to the formal school system or that it should ensure national equivalency. In terms of financing and management the examples show varied degrees of involvement by the MOEs, NGOs and local communities. It is evident that for NFS to succeed to reaching all vulnerable groups within a country it must be expanded into a country programme. The role of the government is hence vital, even if there is a danger of centralised entry muting some of the distinctiveness of the programme. However, to ensure local relevance, participation and ownership of the programmes it is vital to encourage

community participation. Regarding finances, NFS is mainly sponsored by NGOs naturally rendering its sustainability shaky.

The other findings depict a distinct difference between Latin America on the one hand and Africa/Asia on the other. Latin America has alternatives within the formal school as opposed to Africa/Asia that have alternatives to formal school with later transitory points. The Latin America case is suggested as the better practice since it seeks to reform the deficiencies of formal school within the formal school paradigm, by introducing some non-formal approaches. The children attend a similar school system hence the possibility of an occurrence where there is a parallel system for socio-economic victims and another for the rest of the population does not arise.

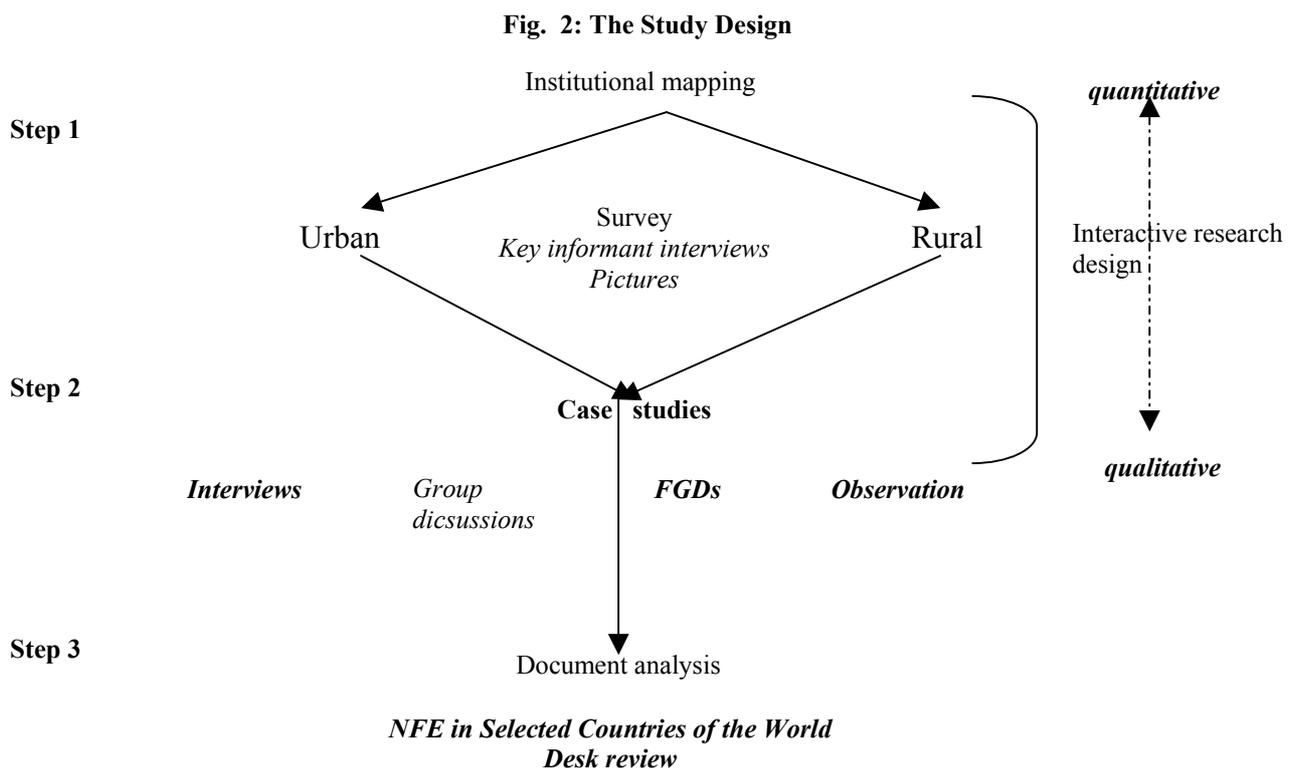
The empirical research studies reviewed indicate that NFE has been a favoured study area by mainly international organisations and planners. The local large scale evaluations of non-formal schools have been made possible through partnership with MOEST and funding agencies. These studies have resulted to a wealth of information. However, they have certain limitations. The cross-national studies do not present detailed and in-depth analysis of country specific projects, as this is not their primary objective. Hence such studies are mainly useful in providing overall trends. The MOEST surveys have tended to stress on programme elements but not so much on school and classroom processes. The current study therefore attempted to fill certain gaps as follows: Being an essentially qualitative study, it provided voices of the primary recipients. Perceptions of the primary stakeholders were an important category that had not been delved to by prior studies. By focussing on classroom practices, it informed on pedagogical concerns. The study of school practice resulted in more knowledge on the school types. Based on such research stress, the current study was therefore able to posit on the contribution of NFS in uplifting the provision of basic education in Kenya.

### 3 Research Methodology

This section presents the study design that guided the research on non-formal schools in Kenya. The research locale, research sites and their justification, research techniques, sampling criteria and methods of analysis are discussed as well.

#### 3.1 The Research Design

The task of the study was threefold: (a) to identify and analyse non-formal schools according to school category and functions (b) to understand their learning processes and factors impacting on them and (c) thereafter posit the contributions non formal schools are making towards enhancing the provision of basic education in Kenya. The study designed to answer the above objectives was conceptualised in three stages. The first objective was answered by an institutional mapping survey while the second involved an in-depth analysis of selected cases. This was the empirical research phase that encompassed a survey, which belongs to the positivist traditions of quantitative research and a case study analysis, which is basically qualitative in approach (Creswell 2003, Seale 1999). The empirical study therefore adopted an interactive research design comprising the quantitative (institutional mapping survey) and the qualitative (case studies) paradigms. The institutional mapping survey was first conducted and it was from this broad sample that specific cases were selected for detailed study. Finally, a desk analysis of relevant literature from selected countries was conducted to inform on the Kenya case. The study design therefore encompassed both an empirical study, of a quantitative and qualitative nature, and documentary analysis. The research design can diagrammatically be presented as follows:



Mapping (social cartography) is a method of presenting the different ways in which people experience, perceive, understand, and conceptualise phenomena (Paulston 2000, 2003, Liebman & Paulston 1994:240). Grounded in postmodernism, it encourages “reading the narrative” and mapping the social-cultural relations thereof depicted for “by naming and classifying, maps help us to know something so that we can see something different (Paulston 2000:310). In other words, visualising social phenomena can sharpen our critical abilities and in this study facilitate school reform. With the ultimate aim of mapping the NFS types, the study opted to use open ended instruments to collect data as this offered a better opportunity of capturing and evaluating the NFS trends for while NFS can be said to be a singular unit, the schools as available literature indicates, differ sometimes fundamentally in rationalisation, function, approach, curricular content etc. A “multi-venue” survey was essential in establishing the different school types available. This study sought an understanding of NFS based on the “narratives” from the informants. This information was then analysed based on the conceptual framework (discussed in chapter one) to map the NFS types/categories available in Kenya.

A case on the other hand, is examined to provide insight into an issue. A case study methodology was adopted for this study because it was anticipated that it would advance the understanding of the learning processes in NFS and how these schools enhance the acquisition of basic education skills. As a case is studied “in-depth and its contexts scrutinised” (Stake 1994:237), it was possible to gain an understanding of the pedagogical process in non-formal schools in Kenya and factors that affect it. In addition, while the “case” is singular it has subsections. To arrive at a holistic understanding, one needs to undertake an examination of the various subsections. Within the selected NFS a “multi-site” study was utilised comprising the classroom, outside the class (school) and the community to a limited extent. The classroom is perhaps the single most focal point of pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher interaction. It is here that learning actively takes place. Hence this is where active data on the pedagogical process was attained. Outside the classroom occur factors that impact on the learning processes such as administration, financing and timing of lessons. The community role in education could only be gauged by focussing on them hence their inclusion in the sample.

Due to the recognition that comparative analysis is vital in informing on local standards, as well as reforming practice, the study included a study of NFS in selected countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, who have introduced alternative approaches to support the quest for basic education. The selection of the Country cases was dictated by the level of institutionalisation of the NFS programmes as well as the availability of literature.

### 3.2 Kenya: Situating the Research

The empirical research was conducted in Kenya, hence a brief sketch of Kenya's socio-political and economic context relevant to the present study, is provided.

Kenya is situated in East Africa and has an area of 582,366 km<sup>2</sup>. Colonised by the British between 1895 to 1963, Kenya gained its independence after a bloody liberation struggle. On independence Kenya inherited a racially segregated education system, and rather than overhaul it, the system was instead reformed and expanded. The commitment to enhancing educational participation in Kenya, as accorded by both the government and the population, has generally been perceived to be high. This is exemplified in the legal framework<sup>25</sup> the government has instituted to govern education and by community based self-help initiatives such as *Harambee* schools (literally meaning "lets pull together") that seek to supplement the limited existing educational facilities. Despite this collaborated effort, a problem facing Kenya today is inequitable provision of education.

Inequitable access to education provision is more visible when seen from a geographic and demographic point of view. First, about 80% of the country, mainly covering the northern and eastern regions has been classified as ASAL. 25% of the human population and 50% of the livestock population is located in this region (MFP-NDP 2002-2008). ASAL is mainly inhabited by pastoral peoples. The region suffers from perennial droughts. Cumbered by the traditional practices which do not often augur well with the strongly centralised school provision, the pastoral communities today are the least served by the formal education system and pose a special problem. Secondly, the 1999 census put the population in Kenya to be 29,549,000. About 40% of this population are youths below 15 years and are therefore within school age and should be benefiting from educational provisions. The majority of Kenyans live in the rural areas, and depend on agriculture for sustenance. However, the country's three cities viz. Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and a number of fast growing towns continue to face escalating rural-urban migration. A poorly performing economy has meant that the towns' amenities cannot cope with the growing numbers, leading to the multiplication of urban slums. Slum inhabitants are economically disadvantaged and are preoccupied with basic survival, schooling being perhaps least in the list and they too pose a special educational problem. It is these two groups, the rural remote and urban slum populations that have mainly resorted to non formal schools. The rural remote districts with NFS are Samburu, Turkana, Marsabit and Moyale while in urban NFS are particularly prevalent in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu.

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<sup>25</sup> Vital policy and statutory documents (1963-2003) of relevance to the study are: KANU Manifesto 1963 – committed itself to eventual UPE; TSC Act 1967 – Established a single employer and unified terms for teachers; Education Act 1968 – Gave MOE responsibility for education; Kenya National Exams Council Act 1980 – Established a single body to administer exams outside university and Children's Act 2001- reconfirms the right to education.

### **3.3 The Selection Process**

#### **3.3.1 Institutional Mapping Survey: Selecting the Research Sites**

The mapping survey was conducted in Kisumu district, to represent urban areas and Samburu district, representing the rural-remote districts. Kisumu was selected because it has the highest prevalence of absolute poverty in urban centres in Kenya that has shot up from 45% in 1994 to 63% in 1997 (MFP 2002-2008)<sup>26</sup>. The poverty escalation has been accompanied by a mushrooming of non-formal schools in Kisumu from 3 schools in 1993 to 51 schools by 2002. As non-formal schools are mainly to be found in economic poor areas, Kisumu offered a good site to study the nature of these schools. Additionally, a bigger variety of non-formal schools was found by focussing both in the town (predominantly slum schools) and in the outlying rural area neighbouring the town.

Samburu district on the other hand was selected because it is a forerunner in alternative approaches in rural remote districts having been the first to establish a NFS in 1992. Non-formal schools in the district have therefore been in existence for ten years. From one school in 1992, there are now 15 schools scattered all over the district. Samburu district has been documented as being a strong advocate of non-formal schooling (MOEST 1999b). It is assumed that non-formal schools have attained a degree on institutionalisation and may have valuable lessons to offer. Secondly, of the rural-remote districts that have NFS, it is the most accessible.

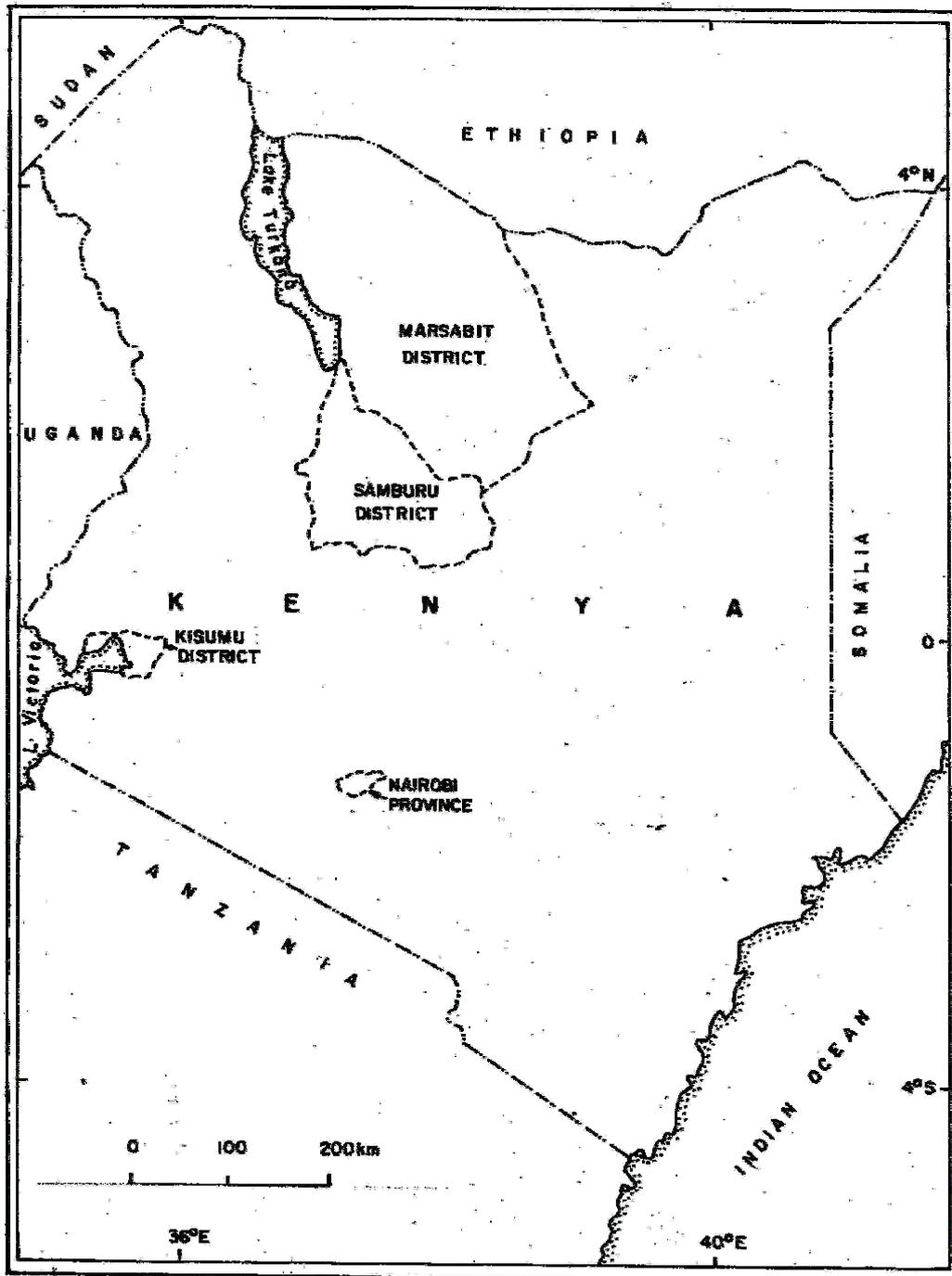
#### **3.3.2 Selecting the Non-Formal Schools:**

In both Kisumu and Samburu districts, quota sampling guided the selection of the schools for the mapping survey. Quota sampling is a procedure of looking for schools with specific characteristics. In the current study, features identified in the literature review (p28/9) such as participant type, teacher characteristics, timing, curriculum type, learning methodology, community participation and sponsorship were used as the basis upon which the selection of a variety of NFS was made. To facilitate the selection process, the assistance of the NFE officer in the respective districts was enlisted. On several occasions, the visited schools recommended other schools they knew. Hence, snowball sampling was used to complement the quota sampling. These two sampling methods were preferred as they ensured “information rich” material with variety and heterogeneity.

The institutional mapping survey covered 21 (41%) NFS in Kisumu (of a total of 51) and 7 (46%) schools in Samburu (of a total of 15). The number of institutions was dictated by the freshness of the data being collected, such that when a point of saturation was reached, the research was concluded. Two other institutions outside the geographic zones of Kisumu and Samburu, but fitting within the broader urban/rural paradigm were included in the sample. The institutions, one located in Nairobi and another in Marsabit were included in the study due to their uniqueness. In

total, 30 institutions formed part of the sample for the mapping survey. The below map (figure 3) gives the location of the four districts covered in the study.

Fig. 3: Map of Kenya: Location of Study Sites



### 3.3.3 Selecting the Informants

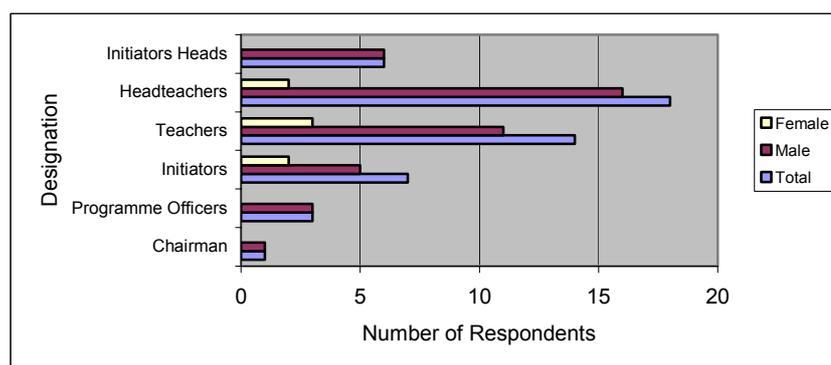
The key informants in the institutional mapping survey in both districts were the head teachers and initiators. The head teachers/initiators were purposefully selected for the study because they are the

<sup>26</sup> After Kisumu, is Nairobi with 50%, followed by Nakuru 41% and Mombasa with 38% absolute poverty prevalence.

persons who hold an overall knowledge on the institution ranging from the history of the institution, recruitment policies, curricular and instructional issues, community participation and school financing and management. This data was crucial in categorizing the school. In all but three institutions in Kisumu, the research was successful in interviewing either the head teachers, the initiator or people who had been involved with the institution right from initiation. The three interviews comprising only teachers had many gaps, as the teachers could not provide all the information. The advantage however was that the teachers were less guarded than the heads or initiators, hence there was a fresh quality in the data derived from them. The ease recorded in accessing the heads and/or initiators in Kisumu is attributed to the NFE officer who volunteered not only to show the location of the institutions but also broke the ice by introducing the researcher. On three occasions however, the NFE officer sat through the interviews. The merit was that he was able to elucidate on matters pertaining to his ministry as they arose, but the demerit was that some informants were more cautious in their responses. Hence effort were made in the other interviews to avoid the presence of the officer during the interviews. In Samburu district, formal schools are the custodians of the non-formal schools in the district. Hence in all cases, the head teachers, and/or the formal school teachers who assist in the programme were interviewed.

In 21 cases, solo interviews were held but in the remaining 9 institutions, the main informants invited others to join, hence group discussions of sizes ranging from two to four persons were held. The duration of the interviews/discussions was as follows. Three lasted less than half an hour, 16 were between 30-60 minutes, 8 lasted between 60-90 minutes and 2 interviews took more than two hours. The following is a summary of the informants interviewed in the mapping survey.

**Fig. 4: Head of institutions sample by designation**



While Samburu district was more homogenous in the designation of heads of institutions, where either head teachers or teachers were interviewed, the case was different in Kisumu. For instance, institutions that had other programmes like rehabilitation or orphanages had programme officers taking overall charge of the school. Four of the initiators were pastors and they too were interviewed.

### 3.3.4 Case Studies: Selecting the Cases for Study

In total, 8 NFS that had already been covered in the institutional survey, were then selected for detailed study. This comprised 3 cases each from Samburu and Kisumu and the Marsabit and Nairobi cases. Generally, institutions that had a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve as non-formal education institutions were short listed for further study. A key consideration was the innovativeness in curriculum planning and implementation as well as resourcefulness in pedagogical processes. Questions posed here were for instance, how relevant is the curriculum to the perceived needs of the learners/community? Are learning methods normally associated with the NFE paradigm such as multi grade and multi shift, peer learning, discovery learning, group work in play? The level of community presence and involvement, clientele characteristics and school type also dictated selection of the cases for detailed study. In schools where the sponsor had a marked impact on the curriculum planning, teacher training and other school related provisions, then a school under their sponsorship was selected for study. Lastly, NFE officers were also asked for their views on schools they considered to be well performing.

The selection of cases proved to be complicated as the head teachers presented a better picture of their institution than was the reality. For instance, one school in Kisumu claimed to have 7 teachers, all under very favourable terms and services and a very strong community presence. Another school professed, as a school policy, to tap pupils back to the formal school. These points were considered to be progressive given that most schools in the district had poor terms for the teachers or are quasi-formal primary schools respectively. The detailed study however was not able to confirm these allegations.

### 3.3.5 Selecting the Informants

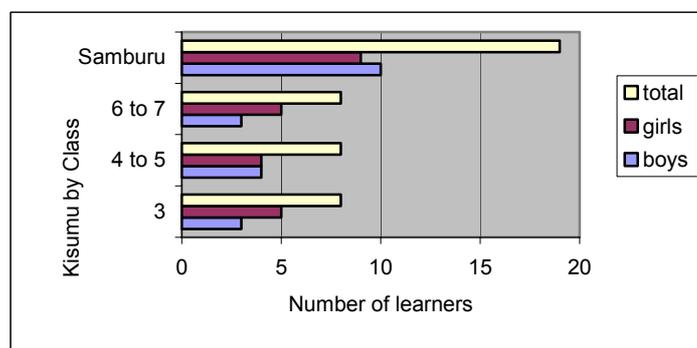
In each case study the learners, their teachers, and views of the community, via the parents and the school committees, were enlisted. A “bottom-up” approach was utilised where perspectives from the primary actors, the learners, were first enlisted and thereafter the teachers and parents. The informants were purposefully selected based on the information needed.

Learners Sample: In urban areas, learners who formed the sample came from mixed classes. In the rural areas, there were no class divisions as learners were grouped in levels. Where possible, the older learners were targeted but in some instances, the learners in attendance were few, hence the whole class was included for the focussed group discussion (FGD). The sample targeted the older learners for they were able to ponder on the issues. It was also hoped that older learners would be able to understand Kiswahili, thereby avoiding a language problem. While this was the case in the urban areas, in Samburu, the local languages, interspersed with sporadic Kiswahili, were dominant. In such conditions, the teachers acted as translators. Although this had its limitations, it was not felt so much among the older learners who were closer to age with the teacher and viewed

him/her as an age mate or community member. The younger respondents were not active and had to be continually prodded. Hence, the nature of the FGDs can be said to have been mixed class, and mixed age, with age having the biggest impact on the quality of the data.

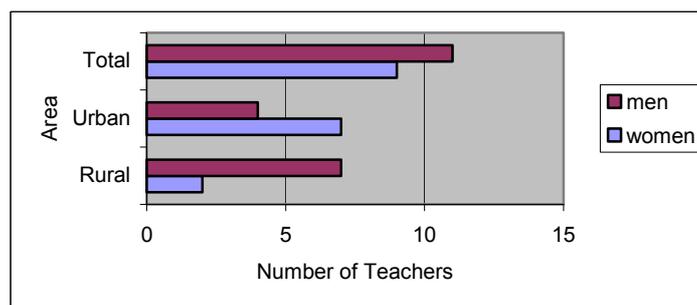
In each case, one FGD of mixed gender was conducted. In one case however, only one boy had attended school on that day and hence the discussion was dominated by girls. The duration of the FGDs ranged from 30 minutes to slightly over one hour. The intention was first to conduct classroom observations and thereafter, hold an FGD with a number of the learners. This worked in all but one case where a teacher declined to be observed. The following is a summary of the pupil sample.

**Fig. 5: Learners sample size by gender and class/level**



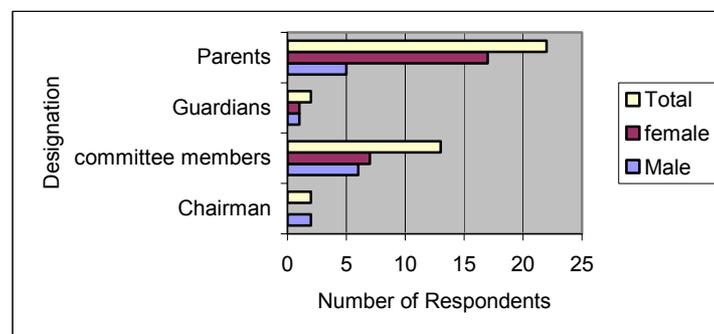
Teacher Sample: Teachers whose classes had been observed were targeted for the informal interviews, mainly to discuss issues related to how they teach/had taught and factors that affected them in the execution of their duties. Additionally two group discussions were held in institutions that had more than two teachers to further clarify the pedagogical processes. The interviews also covered other areas like pupil characteristics and their inclination to schooling, parents, teachers’ terms of service etc. This information had already been received from the head teachers and the essence was to counter check its validity. In total 9 teachers (2 women) and 11 teachers (7 women) in rural and urban respectively were interviewed. Five interviews lasted less than half an hour, 5 between 30-60 minutes and one took over an hour. The teacher summary is illustrated below.

**Fig. 6: Teachers sample size by area**



**Parents Sample:** Accessing parents was not often an easy task. Hence, though the intention was to hold at least two FGDs one with parents only, and the other with committee members, satisfaction was registered for whoever was willing to give their time for the research. In total 7 FGDs -of group sizes ranging from 3 to 7- and 2 interviews were held. The former, in 5 cases comprised both parents and committee members while only parents participated in 2 FGDs. Interviews were conducted only with chairmen of the committees. Discussions with parents, who coupled up as committee members were more insightful and perceptive as opposed to the parent only FGDs. The FGDs were of mixed gender, and though some gender dynamics<sup>27</sup> were at play, it did not seem to affect the quality of the information. Three discussions lasted between 30-60 minutes and 6 took over an hour. The following is a summary of the parents' sample.

**Fig. 7: Parents sample size by designation and gender**



**MOE/Sponsors Sample:** This is the last category of informants that was targeted. First, sponsors who had been mentioned by the head teachers as contributing to the institutions be it in capacity building, curriculum planning, sponsorship of pupils or payment of teachers were targeted for interview. Secondly, the MOE, being the ministry that houses NFS was included in the sample. In particular, the DEO and the NFE officers were targeted. As officers on the ground, these officers were considered crucial in explaining or clarifying issues that had arisen from the other informants. They also provided an overview of NFS in their districts and the role the government was/should play in enhancing the provision. In total, two sponsors and four MOE officers (of whom two were NFE officers and two DEOs) were interviewed. All were men. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes.

### 3.4 Venue of Data Collection

Kisumu had a more heterogeneous array of venues as opposed to Samburu. As NFS are housed within formal schools in Samburu, discussions were held in the head teachers' offices or the classrooms or alternatively at the initiators' homes. Parents and pupils preferred to sit under the

<sup>27</sup> In one case in Samburu, the men opted to give their comments after the women had spoken. They claimed that it was the practice to let women speak first. Hence, two in one FGDs were held as the researcher had to start afresh asking the questions.

shade of a tree hence the discussions were held outside. In Kisumu however, urgency in terms of space was felt especially for the less established institutions. Indeed, on five occasions, one had to resort to neighbours, who kindly rendered their premises for the data collection. In institutions where there was open space, discussions were held under the shade of a tree. Normally “the shade” coupled up as the staff room or classroom. The venue of the office was also used. The office should not be understood only in the conventional sense. On occasions where the church had donated its building for learning, the pastor’s inner room functioned as an office for the teachers on weekdays and would revert to its intended purposes on Sunday.

Three issues can be noted regarding the venue where the research was conducted. (a) One can already gauge the flexibility of non-formal schools where boundaries between the school and outside the school are not rigidly adhered to. (b) There is maximum utilisation of available space, even if it is borrowed space. (c) The initiators donate their premises for school purposes.

### **3.5 Language of Research**

The language used for data collection followed a similar pattern in all the districts. Persons with Form 4 certificate and over, like the education officers, sponsors and some teachers and initiators were interviewed using the English medium. Teachers who had only a primary school certificate, or had dropped out before completing their secondary education preferred to use Kiswahili. The parents and learners in urban areas also used Kiswahili. In rural settings, the main medium for the parents and learners was the local language, in this case Kisamburu, interspersed with some Kiswahili. Hence spontaneous translation into Kiswahili was undertaken by either a teacher or a member of the committee. Thereafter, the researcher translated the Kiswahili discussions into English. A slight difficulty faced regarded translating pronouns as Kiswahili tends to use generic pronouns in conversation hence one is not clear whether it is a “she” or “he” being referred to. For example in a phrase such as “Sipendi hesabu kwa sababu ukimuliza mwalimu chochote, hakujibu”, one cannot tell the gender of the teacher in an English translation that would read “I do not like Maths because when you ask the teacher a question, s/he? does not answer”.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

An interactive research paradigm demands “multi-technique” utilisation. Hence, a variety of instruments were used in order to attain data on varied aspects in pursuing different research questions. Different research instruments also targeted the same population as a way of counter checking the information and therefore establishing its validity. The following constituted the information gathering instruments that were adopted.

### **3.6.1 Key Informants Interviews:**

Key informant interviews were the main data collection instrument for the institutional mapping survey. A key informant interview is a purposeful conversation carried out with persons who have a certain quality of information that is deemed paramount. In this study the head teachers/initiators, sponsors and government officials, due to their positions, were considered to have vital information and hence they were targeted. The interview instrument essentially contained guiding questions and probing points. Hence it was very open-ended. This is because it was assumed that there might be other factors at play that the researcher was not aware of, but which could be prompted via an open-ended but in-depth instrument. Effort was made to exercise the interview as a conversation rather than, as Scott (1997:165) says, as “interrogative questioning”. The former enabled a freer and open environment. With fluent and perceptive speakers, a narrative interview sufficed. The interviews with the head teachers/administrators (Appendix 11.2) sought information on all aspects of the school viz. growth of the institution, recruitment policy, curriculum and the instructional process, management, financing and community involvement. Sponsors’ interviews centred on the rationale of involvement in the NFS sector and extent of that support. Interviews with government officers focused on an overview of NFS in the districts of study.

### **3.6.2 Participant-Observation:**

Participant observation was utilised in the case studies. This technique includes “an array of field collection methods...including observation, various kinds of interviewing, checklists”(Russel 1984:137). The current study conducted observations followed by informal interviews specifically with teachers. Both classroom and out-of-class observations were made. Classroom observations focused on learning/teaching methods, classroom dynamics and how these shaped learning. Out-of-Class observations concentrated on the premise of learning to gauge its impact on learning. The informal interviews centred on teaching styles adopted and factors that affected teachers in the execution of their teaching.

This study adopted the “observer-as-participant” mode in which the researcher “sets limits to the amount and type of contact” with the respondents (Scott 1997:166). So while observations were conducted in and out of the classroom and interviews were used to gather more information about what had been observed, not much effort was made to interact with the respondents. The observer-as participant mode was deemed the best means of being in a position to be part of what is being observed but also a part from it to enable an impartially record of the happenings.

### **3.6.3 Focused Group Discussion:**

Focussed group discussions (FGDs) were used in the case studies to derive a general understanding of the issues at hand. The advantages of FGDs are that it is “inexpensive, data rich, flexible,

stimulating to respondents... and elaborative over and above individual responses” (Fontana & Frey 1994: 365). In this respect, the aim of the FGD lay more in the gaining perspectives held by the group than in enlisting factual data or individual standpoints. FGDs were conducted among learners, parents and the school committees. The discussion with learners centred on their perceptions of the subjects and teaching styles. Parents’ views on learning, financing, management, timing of non-formal school were sought. Each FGD consisted of between 6-12 persons purposefully selected on the basis of age, gender, class or focus question.

#### 3.6.4 Projective/Reactive Techniques:

These were used primarily with children before or during the FGDs. In particular drawing and essay writing was utilized. The learners were expected to draw their anticipated future roles or write about it and what they produced formed the basis of the discussion in terms of relevance of what they are learning to their future roles.

#### 3.6.5 Pictorial Representations:

Images are a valuable technique in capturing data. However in the past, images have been unfashionable probably due to positivistic tendencies in research that uphold numbers and have no time for the non-numeric and non-verbal techniques as pictures (Stiles 1999). This study utilised pictures as a validating technique to support what was recorded during observations in and out of the classroom. Hence, classroom photos, for instance collaborated data on number of pupils, seating arrangements, presence, quality and type of furniture, all these being factors that affect learning.

#### 3.6.6 Document Analysis:

This was the main method used for the third step of the research which entailed studying selected systems in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Content analysis of publications, grey literature and journals was made. Additionally, official and institutional documents in the “case studies” were analysed to enable an analysis of the educational context of the cases in terms of the history of the institution, population, growth etc.

The following is a summary of the study sample:

|                              | No. of Schools          | Informants                 | Female | Male | Research Technique  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------|------|---|
| <b>Institutional Mapping</b> | 22 (Urban)<br>8 (Rural) | Head Teacher/<br>Initiator | 8      | 38   | Interview<br>Pictures   |
| <b>Case Study</b>            | 4 (Urban)<br>4 (Rural)  | Pupils                     | 23     | 20   | Observation/FGD/Projective Techniques<br>Participant Observation/interviews |
|                              |                         | Teachers                   | 9      | 11   | FGD   |
|                              |                         | Parents                    | 18     | 6    | FGD   |
|                              |                         | School Committee           | 7      | 8    | Interview   |

|                   |       |                     |    |    |           |
|-------------------|-------|---------------------|----|----|-----------|
| <b>Government</b> | MOEST | Kisumu NFE Officer  | -  | 1  | Interview |
|                   |       | Maralal NFE Officer |    | 1  |           |
|                   |       | Kisumu DDEO         |    | 1  |           |
|                   |       | Samburu DEO         |    | 1  |           |
| <b>Sponsors</b>   |       | AAK                 | -  | 1  | Interview |
|                   |       | CCF                 |    | 1  |           |
| <b>Total</b>      |       |                     | 45 | 90 |           |

### 3.6.7 Validating the Accuracy of the Findings

Validity in qualitative research is considered a process of checking the “authenticity” or “credibility” or “trustworthiness” of the data (Creswell 2003:196). The current study adopted three procedures to establish the accuracy of the findings viz. triangulation, the method of recording and lastly checking bias in data collection and analysis processes.

Triangulation: Triangulation is a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning or verify repeatability. Kane (1994) urges that effective triangulation entails several fronts: methodological triangulation, data triangulation and researcher triangulation. These three forms of triangulation were utilised in the study as follows: A variety of methods, that built on each other, were used in the study. Several methods targeted the same informants and therefore other than yielding different data also provided a chance to countercheck the data. Additionally, different informants were targeted with similar questions yielding the same results and in this way, the data was either confirmed or contradictions emerged. The method and data triangulation enabled one to establish the credibility of the information. A research assistant aided in the data collection process, hence researcher triangulation was used as well. This was ideally a process of comparing notes. Hence, triangulation during the research process allowed the contradictions to emerge after which clarifications were sought.

Method of recording: All the data from the interviews/discussions was captured via tape recorder after which the texts were transcribed. Tape recording was particularly valuable in shedding more light to meanings and therefore advancing the authenticity of data. For instance contradictions in the transcriptions emerged, as in one interview where an informant claimed to have a school committee but later on in the interview asserts that he was trying to form one. Additionally, as the transcripts captured everything that was said, it was possible later to do a content analysis of, for instance pronoun usage and this gave crucial information on the role of the community versus the individual.

Checking Bias: In order to check the bias the researcher brings along to the field which affects the validity of the study, the data collection process was conceived in such a way that content, direction and emphasis of the research instruments were determined by the information and weight the informants gave. Hence, the research instruments were open ended and discrepant information, that was counter to the mainstream thinking was encouraged and is presented in the analysis. To avoid a scenario where the views of persons in authority formed the basis of

discussion, data collection in the case studies begun with the primary actors (pupils) and thereafter branched out to other stakeholders. Views from the primary actors formed the basis of the questions for the others. Finally, bias in the analysis was checked through presenting verbatim expressions or “voices” of the informants and in this way some accuracy in interpretation was achieved.

### **3.7 Data and Information Analysis**

In this study analysis was an on-going process. Field notes based on the interviews, discussions and observations were noted on a daily basis and detailed out the log. This formed the preliminary analysis during the active data collection phase and the basis for shaping further questions. The second stage involved transcribing the tapes and noting down emerging trends. This aided in the final stage which entailed coding and analysis of the data using MAXqda, a computer aided qualitative data analysis package. For the more statistical information, or in order to quantify the qualitative data, SPSS and Excel respectively were utilised involving simple statistics.

The data was therefore analysed thematically as much as possible capturing the voices of the respondents. Content analysis of relevant sections was done. Where necessary, data was quantified and tabulated or illustrated in diagrams.

## 4 The Analysis of Non Formal Schools in Kenya

The analysis of the data is presented in the subsequent chapters as guided by the objectives of the study which were to:

- Identify the non-formal school categories and the functions they serve
- Assess the teaching and learning processes and how they fulfil the objective of providing basic education to the recipients
- Posit the contribution NFS are making towards enhancing the provision of basic education in Kenya and suggest necessary reforms needed to streamline the sector.

These objectives were answered through the empirical study conducted in Samburu and Marsabit (hereafter referred to as **Rural**) and Kisumu and Nairobi (**Urban**) as well as the desk review of NFE approaches. The analysis of the field data is discussed within the framework of the “nine building blocks of education” discussed in chapter 1 which guided the conceptualisation of the study and ultimate data collection. The nine blocks address the school, classroom and community dynamics and hence represent the school as an institution of society. A harmonious relationship among these components is necessary to make the school both functional and effective. To ease the discussion therefore, the analysis is presented in 5 chapters as follows:

- Introducing the Non Formal Schools (hereafter referred to as NFS) in Kenya
- The learners and teachers in NFS and place and time of learning
- The Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Community participation, Administration and Financing
- The concept of NFS

A characteristic pattern of the presentation lies in the thick descriptions utilised, based on data from the various informants. The following is a key of the informant type: HT – head teacher, T – teacher, PP – pupils, P – parents, C – Committee/Chairpersons, P – proprietors, S – sponsors and EO – education officers. In total, 69 transcripts are referred to. A reference such as “HT2:2002” therefore refers to the informant, transcript number 2 and the year the research was undertaken. For clarity purposes, some of the qualitative data is quantified and presented in figures or tables as is the numeric information.

### 4.1 Introducing Non Formal Schools

This chapter, by way of setting the context, explores the motivation for the establishment of NFS in Kenya. This is deemed a necessary prerequisite in understanding the nature of these schools, for instance in management styles, and the educational emphasis they have evolved.

#### 4.1.1 Proliferation of NFS: Discerning the Motivation

**Fig. 8: Year of Establishment of the Centres**

Available literature indicates that prior to 1990, the number of NFS in Kenya were negligible. The impetus for growth of these schools ideally received a boost after the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education. Diagram 8 confirms this statement and shows that the majority of the schools in the study sample were established in the second half of the 1990s. Previous efforts, though present, were sporadic.

The proliferation of NFS in this period can be explained, from a broad national perspective, by two factors. First, the government became more proactive specifically in administration and curricular needs of non formal schools<sup>28</sup>. Secondly, UNICEF entered into a framework of cooperation with the government initiating the NFE Project (1994-1998). UNICEF's entry coupled with its financial/material support seems to have had more impact in Kisumu where they directly established some schools or influenced others to do so. The government and UNICEF, can therefore be said to have created a conducive atmosphere for other initiators (individuals, groups, organisations) to plunge in.

The nature of NFS, that they operate outside the formalised system, that the preconditions to be satisfied or guidelines to be followed for establishing the schools are practically non-existent, has encouraged a "free for all" mentality. That the schools do not feature in the Education Act, the legal framework for education provision in the country, means there are fewer bureaucratic hurdles that hamper their establishment. It is due to this reason that literature has assessed the school types to be as varied as the initiators. In order to unearth the initiator types, this section would like to address what motivated them to start the schools. Motivation for initiating NFS has a clear rural/urban demarcation and will hence be discussed in these two categories.

#### 4.1.2 Rural: "a non-responsive formal school to local ways"

The stimulation for initiation of NFS was more homogeneous in rural areas than in urban areas. In Samburu for instance, the seven schools visited traced their origins to Councillor Letipila, a retired curriculum specialist indigenous to the area. The councillor was motivated to start a different kind of school due to his experience of growing up as a child of two worlds, i.e. the formal school system

and the traditional life style. Both worlds had advantages, though the latter seemed somewhat undermined and unexplored. Said the councillor

When I was a child, I was the only child who was going to school then. And all along when I went, I always came back a stranger because the boys I left behind always told me a lot of adventures of what they had been doing. Later on I realised these boys, some of who were very bright were also interested in going to school but their parents were completely against it. They could take care of those animals, they could count them, knew the ones that were sick. They could do many things, you know, diagnosis and say what animal was sick from what kind of disease and required a particular treatment. When I came back home, I learnt a lot from these kids, about the trees, the environment, this tree is bad it has poison, this tree has medicinal value for the stomach... So there was a lot of education in the village which I did not get in school. There were a lot of things these children knew that I did not know.... And our culture is so rich in its own self that you do not want to leave that kind of education to go to waste because, I who had the western education, there is a lot of education I did not have. Now, it is from that basis, that made me think of how to give them both. How can I give people who take care of these animals, given the economic set up of our society, which these people are not farmers, how can I give them an education? (P31:2002)

Following a car accident in 1990 that resulted in his early retirement, Mr Letipila plunged into politics and was elected as a councillor in the 1992 general elections in Kenya. As a political leader, he gained further legitimacy. Armed with the conviction that formal schooling could be accessed without disrupting the socio-economic lifestyle of the people, the Councillor in 1992, set about implementing his ideas. The target group were primarily the young herders known as *Lchekuti* in Kisamburu. He organised for learning sessions in a community called Bendera that comprised several *manyattas*<sup>29</sup> that had been forced to come together due to the insecurity in the area. This modest start marked the genesis of non formal schools in Samburu district, or what is known there as the ***Lchekuti Out of School Programme (OSP)***. His idea later spurred others in the district, like teachers, with varying degrees of support from the ministry of education and donor groups (AAK and CCF) to mobilise the community to start similar programmes in other parts of the district.

The one school located in Marsabit that was researched upon was started and is sponsored by two philanthropists (man and wife). They were driven to start the school due to the stagnant or backward development they had witnessed since 1975 when they first visited the area. Wanting to make a more sustainable difference, initiating what they called a **Nomadic School** seemed the best answer.

Things are a lot worse than they were 25 years ago up there. Everyone is living on food aid. There are only about half the number of animals that used to be up there...I felt we needed to do something and giving food was not really the issue because that does not help people survive... there is nothing else you can do in that area but have camels. You cannot grow anything. There is no water and even if you had water, the soil is infertile. So its like school seems the only way to improve life there, at the moment. (P29:2001).

<sup>28</sup> In terms of administration, a non-formal desk was set up in MOE in 1994 and officers assigned to monitor NFS in the selected districts with such schools. KIE on the other hand set about developing a curriculum for these schools.

<sup>29</sup> Nomadic communities in Kenya live in temporary settlements comprising family members and these settlements are known as the “manyattas”

Samburu and Marsabit districts have certain features in common. The vast albeit arid lands are suitable for the pastoral life predominant there but in terms of education, pastoralism has had a negative impact in terms of enrolment. All the initiators therefore stated the aim of hoping to increase school enrolment, and more so for the girls who were hard hit, as their overall objective. Strategies employed by the government, such as setting up boarding schools, had not had a recognisable impact. Hence *“as they could not bring their children to school, our question was...is it possible for us to take education nearer to them? (HT30:2002)”*. Two initiators felt strongly about the essence of the child being able to learn at home and live with their families even if *“eventually, with their education, many of them will leave their traditional ways but at least they will have a knowledge of where they came from (P29:2001)”*. Taking the schools nearer to the people literally implied introducing learning in the *manyattas*. The result was that the school became visible to the community. Bringing “the school” closer to the people is crucial in an environment where formal learning is alien to the people’s lives. If one wants to induce the community to be allies in providing formal education, then the people need to have an idea about what the school is.

#### **4.1.3 Urban: “the plight of the children”**

The Urban informants advanced multiple reasons to explain their motivation. The overwhelming ground stated was concern with the predicament of the children for as one head teacher put it *“I would say it would be good if the government would find a way of helping these children, those who are destitute or orphaned and roam around the streets. It is because of such children that the communities feel the need to start schools such as these (HT5:2002)”*. Other than two centres, one offering Koranic education and the other targeting juvenile delinquents, the other 19 (86%) institutions in Kisumu were principally motivated to found the organisations by the plight of what they invariably termed as *“the poor, children of single parents, teenage mothers and widows, street/roaming children, orphans, dropouts and non-enrolled children”*.

#### **4.1.4 The Economic Motive?**

Probing further on what prompted their entry into non-formal school, five initiators termed their motivating factor as *“a vision”* or *“a call from God”* or *“an inspiration”* or *“a burden from God”*. As one head teacher clarified; *“... for you to be in this issue, it needs a call. You find that you are touched in the heart...So since we had the call or the vision from the lord, it became a burden for us when we would see the children loitering, some of them were going to the streets (HT6:2002).* While it would be improper to pass judgment on ones alleged call to a vocation, data collected points to strong economic considerations lacing this “vision”. For example, an emerging trend in Kisumu is that of splinter groups. Three schools visited had split up. The head teacher whose vision is quoted above, on disagreeing with the former proprietor over salary/token payment, simply

walked out with other teachers, sought a pastor from whose church they could operate, and started the school.

To further expound on the economic motivation, an analysis of such individual initiators (who comprised 7 current head teachers, a pastor and 2 programme officers) is made. Seven of the ten initiators interviewed were in the prime age of 40 years or less, while the other three were between 45 and 50 years old. Of this group, three head teachers aged 30,32 and 55 and the pastor aged 45 laid claim to the “vision” motivation. Five of the seven head teacher initiators are young men aged between 29 and 34 who have completed formal schooling. All did not have any professional training and were jobless prior to initiating the NFS. Such teachers hoped to contribute to the general community development as this quote shows

I was myself initially teacher in a private school.... But then I lost my job... Immediately I thought, I could be useful to my community in several ways. I had friends, my age mates who had gone to school to various levels...we actually discussed the idea together and we discovered that what we should do is to become more organised and focussed and that is what led to the formation of the group and organising the group and registering the group and going practically from to mobilise the children. When we started we were four (HT 20:2002)

The formation and registration of their group as a self help organisation or the active mobilisation of children point to an economic consideration. The same informant in fact further stated “*we sat down with those who are responsible for the children and we agreed that first of all we ourselves are not going to be donors (ibid)*”. These quotes show that they hoped to support themselves from the services rendered as school teachers. They expected parents to sustain the provision. Indeed the school space is rented and paid for by contributions from parents just as the token payments for the teachers are. Initiating the school was therefore not entirely philanthropic or propelled by a “vision”.

The two programme officers on the other hand were aged 39 and 40. Both had “A” level certificates and a variety of professional certificates, and had worked elsewhere before entering into NFS. Both headed centres that had been able to tap donor support and did not necessarily depend only on parental contributions. Indeed one centre included a full fledged orphanage while the other had a variety of self-paying vocational courses in addition to the NFS. The thesis advanced is that these initiators were aware of the social and educational gaps in their local communities and being enterprising young men, they cashed in on the situation to establish a school where they could make some sort of a living or further enhance their earnings. This thesis is particularly valid when viewed in relation to the fact that “*there are some people that establish NFS in the hope of attracting donor funding (HT22:2000)*” introducing us to the role of donor groups in the proliferation of NFS.

The monetary gain available through donor groups is a crucial motivating factor that cannot be ignored. Two informants in Kisumu, representing the critical voice, felt that donor groups had encouraged the proliferation of institutions by subtly implying that they were ready to fund philanthropic endeavours and trustingly doing so in the face of a “creative proposal”. Said a

programme officer who has been working in a children's programme for over 20 years and a government officer respectively:

Kenya is loved by so many donor agencies, so much money is coming in there. I can just sleep in my house, write a nice proposal...and the donors will just give money without basically coming to see what is happening, and even sometimes when they come, the whole thing is just dramatised to the extent that they just give money for individual activities. So that is why people run ghost programmes, to satisfy their own needs. (PO17:2002).

What I have learnt along the line is that when UNICEF came in, some people thought that maybe some money would be shared out and that to an extent this has contributed to the birth of many of these centres...some people took advantage and went round telling people that money will be brought...That was just a misunderstanding (EO62:2002)

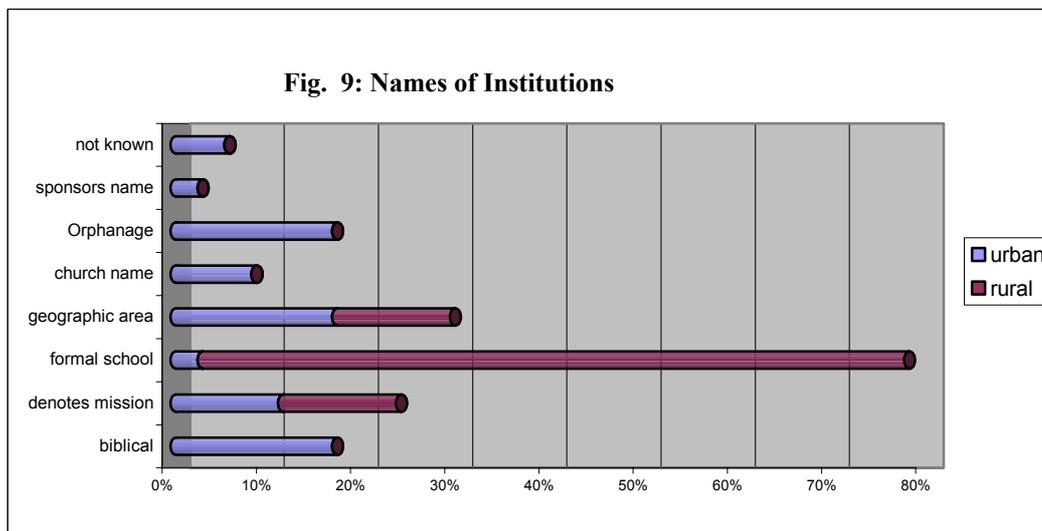
It is therefore not surprising that many heads of institutions repeatedly spoke about “*writing a proposal to AA (HT 30:2002) or to UNICEF (HT 8: 2002)*” “*looking for a donor to put up for us some buildings (HT 18:2002)*” or complained that “*none of these organisations have ever come down here...GTZ came but they did not do much. It is just that they took us to seminars...(HT 23:2002)*”. This donor mentality, the expectation of the right to receive, that was predominant with some interviewees, does not auger well for community sustainability of the school. Indeed, as the critical Voices show, some initiators had taken advantage of the donor trust to run “ghost programmes” or what is colloquially also referred to as “briefcase NGOs”.

#### **4.1.5 A Preventive Drive**

Institutions that run street children rehabilitation programmes or had orphanages had a more preventive type of objective. They argued, “*we sat down and said, what should we do with the street children and orphans...were we to wait for a child to go to the streets and then rescue? Some children go to the streets because they are lacking education or they have nothing to do. So that is why we started the school (PO19:2002)*”. But once again, three institutions in the sample that had an home/orphanage deemed it more economically viable to initiate and run a school rather than sponsor the children to other formal schools. Said one administrator “*looking at the costs and the fact that we were getting more of these children, we thought it more economical to run a school from within (PO1:2002)*”. Some money could also be earned by targeting the children in the community who could otherwise not afford the more expensive formal schools. The organisation with a distinct objective (2 in the sample) did not have this salient economical angle, but in fact offered free education and were very specific about whom they admitted to their programmes.

#### **4.1.6 Names of the Institutions**

A supplementary but perhaps telling aspect that can reveal the underlying motive of establishing an institution and/or depicts how these institutions would like to be viewed by the public lies in the names given to the centres.



As Figure 9 indicates, there is more heterogeneity in Urban than in Rural regarding the naming of the centres. Rural had three naming patterns. In Samburu all the NFS had names denoting its mission, that it targets herders. The schools admitting Samburu speaking learners, 6 in the study sample are known as Lchekuti OSP. Since these schools are housed by a formal school, they officially assumed the name of the formal school. The 7<sup>th</sup> centres in Samburu district admitted Turkana learners and was known as Nkeyoko OSP<sup>30</sup>. This centre is not attached to any formal school and uses this name only. The centre in Marsabit uses the name of its geographic location, that is Rendille Nomadic school.

In Urban, 7 centres had a name derived from the bible. These names; “*Agape*”, “*Salem*”, “*the Good Samaritan*” “*Canaan*”, “*Judea*”, “*St Johns*” “*St Daniel*” denote the guiding principle of the centres, that they are guided by undying, unquestionable love (Agape), and hope to offer peace (Salem) similar to that which was in Judea or that they hope to be plentiful as in Canaan. They view themselves as the Good Samaritans. The names therefore stress the Christian spirit which is a philanthropic one, which one can argue gives a positive picture and facilitates support from others. Two of these institutions were initiated by missionaries and the rest by individuals. The other big proportion of names (6) denoted the geographic location. All the three peri-rural schools in the study sample, located in Kisumu, fall in this category. The geographic name of one centre which is also the official name of the church under whose patronage the centre is, has an interesting meaning.

This place is called Pandpieri which literally means “hide your back” ...the direct explanation of Pandpieri is that in the olden days, the Luo's used to wear skins. The skins were so expensive that you could only get a piece which would only cover one part. So they would tie the skin on to a piece of rope...They would use the piece to cover their back ...The explanation was that whoever is coming in front of you, you will always see, but whoever is coming from behind you, you will not see. So when they saw somebody they would remove the piece of skin and bring to

<sup>30</sup> Baragoi division of Samburu district, in addition to the Samburu peoples, has a large Turkana presence. However, these two communities are traditional rivals, raiding each others livestock. Each community attends its own NFS and hence the different naming.

the front and when they pass that person, they put it again. So literally that is what Pandpieri means (PO 17:2002).

Three centres were named after the churches sponsoring them. Two of these centres were also invariably initiated by pastors. Another three centres in Kisumu had names denoting their mission or target group (street children or teenage mothers). One centre actually labelled itself as a skill training institution, but in reality, it did not offer any vocational training at all. The same case applied to four of the six centres that had included “orphanage” in their name. These centres, at the moment did not have the means or expertise but hoped, one day, to be full- fledged orphanages or skill training centres.

## 4.2 Educational Objectives

What is the educational objective and eventual goal of NFS? What did the initiators hope to offer to the children? Once again, there is a distinct rural/urban demarcation regarding the educational objectives and how these evolved.

### 4.2.1 Urban: “to offer learning”

In Kisumu, the educational function of the institutions does not seem to be a question that was well thought out, or one that is receiving critical attention at the moment. Centres were started with the honourable, but rather vague intention, of “*offering learning to those who cannot afford*” or “*so that children would not be idle*” or “*to keep children busy*” or for those who were more precise “*to help children know how to read and write*”. In 19 institutions visited in Kisumu, the specifics of what exactly would be taught, to whom and to which level, how it would be taught and over and above, why it should be taught was not given weighty consideration. The exception in this case were three centres, two based in Kisumu and one in Nairobi and all coincidentally initiated by missionaries, which had a clear objective of what they hoped to achieve, as is reflected below in these examples of the two most established institutions in the study sample.

Source: (HT 22:2000)

|  |
|--|
| <p>Nairobi</p> <p><b>1957:</b> Initiation of Wider Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Development Programmes (Evangelism, Social mobilisation, Social Welfare and later HIV/AIDS)</li> <li>• Education programmes (School of tailoring and dressmaking, Secretarial College, non-formal education -NFE)</li> <li>• NFE: Offering evening classes to adult learners</li> </ul> <p><b>1988:</b> Change focus to non-enrolled children: The seeds for initiation of non-formal school laid</p> <p><b>1992:</b> Non-formal school begun in earnest.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Non-enrolled, dropouts, house girls, children from the community</p> <p><b>Age limit:</b> 9 years</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Main aim is to offer vocational education after the literacy and numeracy education</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 7 years</p> |
|--|

Source (PO17: 2002)

|  |
|--|
| <p>Kisumu</p> <p><b>1979:</b> Initiation of Wider Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bible Postulate group</li> <li>• Basic Health Programme (HIV/AIDS, Counselling) and Community Based Health Care (Nutrition, balanced diet)</li> <li>• Street Children’s programme, community outreach activities (under 15 football league)</li> <li>• Educational programmes (carpentry and non-formal school)</li> </ul> <p><b>1980:</b> Start providing day classes to children from the municipal market and community</p> <p><b>1983:</b> Establishment of the non-formal school</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Actual street children and children from the community</p> <p><b>Age Limit:</b> 11 years</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Main aim is to offer technical training after the literacy and numeracy education</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 3 years literacy, 3 years skill training.</p> |
|--|

The non-formal schools in the two centres are later off shoots of wider community/ health/ development/educational programmes offered by the institutions. The genesis of the schools was dictated by two basic needs (a) the existing educational void of school aged children living in the sprawling slum areas, where the two centres are located. As was clarified

In 1988... it was realised that most of the adult education learners were not actually adults, but children; children who should be in school, in formal schools ...it was realised that what was needed is not an adult education class or school for that matter. What is needed is a school for these children...who are not attending formal school in the day time (HT 22:2000).

And (b) by the need to prevent children from drifting into the streets and becoming seasoned street children.

...we started realising there are many children from the shanty areas who are going to the streets during the day and going back in the night. So we thought we should be able to hold these children not to go to the street...(as) once there, some of them got introduced into permanent street life (PO 17:2000).

Having identified the target groups, the two centres took about four years to streamline their operations and it is within this period that the educational objectives were laid down. The educational objectives in these two institutions can therefore be said to have evolved over time, as informed by their experiences, and the vision these centres had for the learners.

In both cases, the vision was to offer basic literacy and numeracy skills before focussing on skill training for the needy target group they had identified as “*children who we really know there is no hope for them* (PO 17:2002)”. This clear objective, with a skill training emphasis, the age limit and strict recruitment procedures are crucial elements that the two NFS have installed which set them apart from formal schools and in effect renders them an alternative status.

#### **4.2.2 Rural: “rerouting back to formal schools”**

The function of NFS in Rural was more specific. Seven of the eight institutions visited had a clear objective of “*rerouting/tapping the learners back to the formal system*”. Said one teacher “*the community sat down and thought that we need to start an out of school programme which might enable the children who are looking after the animals, called Lchekuti in our mother tongue, to be tapped back to school* (HT 23:2002)”. Hence the schools were clear about the curriculum these children were to be offered, it was the official curriculum used in formal primary schools. Whether this curriculum was condensed or adapted to local needs or used just as it was, the ultimate goal was to enable a smooth transition to formal schools.

It is only one centre located in Samburu that stated “*offering learning* (HT 28:2002)” as the aim of the institution. Unlike the other centres that are either in close collaboration, or are seeking the collaboration (the Marsabit centre) with formal schools, this centre operated more as a solo enterprise and just offered literacy and numeracy skills. Questions like for how long, or to which standard, or what would happen to the learners after they were proficient enough in the literacy skills are questions that remained unanswered.

### 4.3 Structure of the Centres/Schools in Study Sample

A greater variety of programme types was reported in the Urban study sample as opposed to the Rural one. In Urban, four broad categories can be discerned. The first type represents the most established programme type with a structured administrative style. Two centres already detailed (p66/7) belong to this group. Both are coincidentally managed under the auspices of two different but established churches (i.e. the Anglican and Catholic churches). The top most authority is therefore the bishop and the standing committee of the church who can be said to be the executive angle of management. Thereafter, is the director or executive manager. The more mundane issues pertaining to the institution are handled by heads of various departments, programme officers and so on. These heads of department, the executive manager and the topmost authority therefore form the board of management. This kind of structure seems to have resulted in a certain management style found to be similar in the two centres. The centres had a certain degree of independence in running and managing their programmes. Both did not necessarily rely on the church coffers but solicited for their own funds. They were however answerable to the church. This therefore had a certain streamlining effect. The different departments too had independence on sectoral management. They were however united by frequent and participatory meetings.

The next organisation structure, again represented by two Urban centres, was not as distinct as the above cases. Both centres stated they had a board of directors, some of whom happened to own and manage the centres. Multi programmes, in the same categorisation as the first group were available. The difference however was that all the programmes seemed to be handled by a central figure whom they termed as a programme officer (in one case employed by the sponsor, and in another the proprietor himself). Secondly, the potential of offering skill training to the non-formal school graduates was not inbuilt in the programme objectives and had been left to chance. The impression was therefore a lack of cohesion. The varied programmes, despite the fact that they were managed by the same individual, were being handled as isolated ventures. Hence for example, children in the NFS were not assured of being absorbed into the skills training programmes yet all the programmes were under the management of one person.

The third structure is represented by 2 Urban centres and comprised an orphanage on the one hand, and the school on the other. The main target is therefore orphaned children who are primarily offered some basic education. The centres actually started off as homes and later, when it was deemed economically more viable, the schools were started. In both instances, the proprietors had overall management but had employed head teachers to whom some duties were delegated.

The fourth and final type of structure, found in the remaining 15 (68%) Urban centres is the non-formal school. The proprietors managed the schools whose main objective is to offer the academic subjects.

In Rural, there are two visible types of organisation as found in the AAK sponsored schools on the one hand and the more community run schools on the other. The AAK schools have been conceived from a wider project level that have three interrelated components viz. the income generating projects, the sustainable school feeding programme (SFP) and the community education outreach programmes that includes both the OSP and Adult Education. The programmes therefore target the community as a whole and seek to address both survival (food, income) and educational needs. The community sponsored schools differ from the AAK sponsored schools in the two ways: First Community run NFS primarily target school aged children while AAK sponsored schools have developed programmes for both school aged children and adults. Secondly though the two types of schools are managed by formal primary schools they are attached to, the AAK sponsored schools additionally have other centres situated right in the *manyattas* (still administered by the formal school). The formal school therefore serves as the centre with satellite outposts. These satellite outposts target members of the community in need of literacy and this ranges from the children, youth to adults. In this sense therefore the centres acquire the character of a community school.

#### **4.4 Summing up**

In conclusion, it is evident that the motivating factors for initiating non-formal schools has a distinct regional face. In Rural it can be said to be a non-responsive education system to the social-cultural ways of the people. As such two school types have been initiated; the *Lchekuti* OSP and the nomadic school. In Urban there are multiple motivating factors urged by the need to alleviate the suffering of the children. However, the economic factor should also be taken into consideration as NFS is seen as a source of employment by those especially in the prime age group. The financial possibilities accrued by the presence of donors also plays a key motivating factor. The religious zeal evident in institutional naming or in describing motivation has implications on school provision. These terms are derived from the Bible and stress on the “Christian spirit” which is a philanthropic one. Certain parents therefore take advantage of this to expect free services while heads of institutions expect an equally philanthropic attitude from the teachers. It would therefore not be totally wrong to say that the initiators seek legitimacy under the church wings and religious vocabulary and would prefer to be viewed as humanitarians. If there is any monetary advantage at all, they feel compelled to conceal it. Additionally, certain centres labelled themselves as orphanages or skill training centres when in reality they were not. So at best one has to conclude

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that there is unrealistic optimism that they can be what they hope to be or at worst, there is a conscious duplicity in institutional naming.

The findings further reveal that a clear objective is vital in shaping the educational provision. In Rural, the NFS by seeking to reroute the learners back to formal schools, have curved out a distinct character as a feeder school which brings them back to the formal education (FE) rather than the NFE paradigm. On the other hand, the Urban centres with skill training emphasis fit within the supplementary provisions identified in NFE. The rest of the Urban schools, though filling an important educational void, lack a clear objective. This in essence leads to an ad hoc educational provision. Lack of a clear aim results in a quasi provision giving them a quasi-formal primary school appearance.

## 5 The School

This section details four aspects of “the nine building blocks of education” namely the learners and teachers and the place and time of learning. It has been rationalised that when these four elements are present, they constitute the basic rudiments of a school as the initial conditions for learning are set in place.

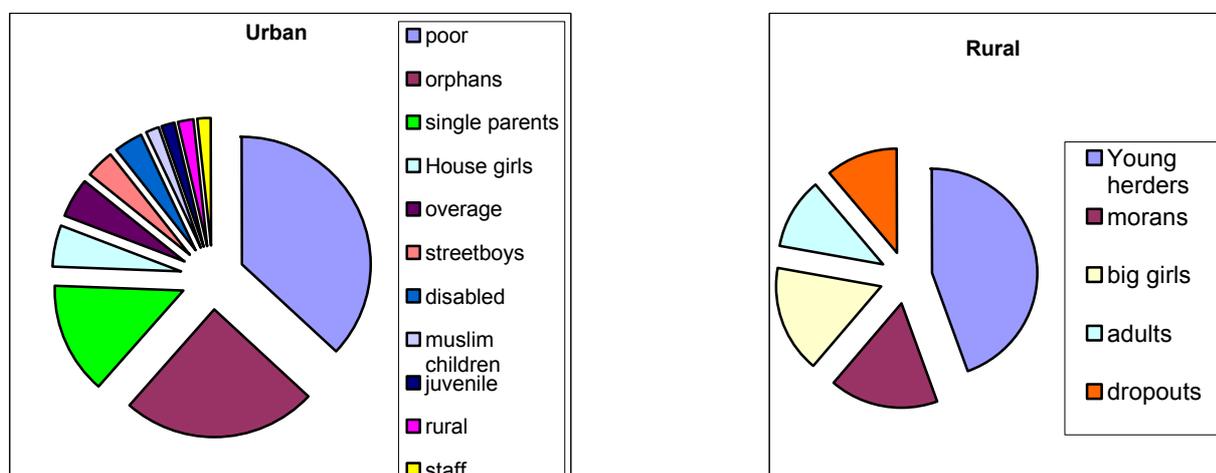
### 5.1 The Learner

Findings on learners in NFS are discussed under three broad themes. First the description of the learner in NFS, regarding characteristics, age and family background is presented. Secondly is an examination of the admission processes into NFS, followed lastly by a presentation of enrolment trends in NFS and the factors impacting on it.

### 5.2 The Learners’ Characteristics

As other studies have documented, NFS are attended by a cross section of learners who are often socially and economically vulnerable. The present study confirms this and notes that the target characteristics can be geographically defined along the urban/rural demarcation. Diagram 10 portrays the target group characteristics identified in Urban and Rural respectively as attending the centres. The labels identified and used by the informants have been retained.

Fig. 10: The Learners Characteristics



#### 5.2.1 Urban: “the socio-economic impact”

In Urban, all the institutions visited reported they admitted poor children who, due to the high cost of formal education and the escalating harsh economic situation, had either dropped out of the formal schools or had not enrolled in the first place. As was explained “*there are so many dropouts not only in Nairobi but the whole country because of this 8-4-4 system<sup>31</sup>. It is quite expensive and*

<sup>31</sup> Independent Kenya has had two systems of education: the 7-4-2 system lasted to 1984 and was largely based on the British system. Thereafter it was replaced by the 8-4-4 system, whose supposed distinctiveness was the practical emphasis.

*most of the parents who live in the slum areas cannot simply afford to take their children there (HT 22:2000)*". That a majority of these schools are located in slum areas, lends credence to the fact that high cost of formal education and harsh economic realities have resulted in lower participation in formal schools.

The second largest learner category reported in 15 (68%) centres in Kisumu was that of orphans whose number had multiplied due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Kisumu District stands at 38%, the highest in the country (MFP-KDDP 2002-2008). Since 1984, it is estimated that 1.5 million people in the country have died due to the disease, leaving behind 1.3 million orphans (MFP-NDP 2002-2008). Support structures for orphans in Kenya are limited so that at best, the orphans are expected to be absorbed by their extended families. If the economic status of the "new" family is wanting, it correlates with the orphans' increased vulnerability both socially and educational as this quote confirms: "...you know that usually, if you stay with other children, when you are serving food, will you not serve your children first? Your sister's child is here, your brother's child is here, even though they will eat, they will be the last ones to eat. And it is like that with education (C58:2002)".

Children from single parents were also singled out as a significant group. The single parents were predominantly women and girls. The former were either unmarried women or widows while the latter were teenage girls cum mothers who were still living with their parents. Some of these children had been left to the care of grandparents. These children, just like orphans, bore a double economic disadvantage and were more liable to transform to other groups such as street boys and house girls due to the unfavourable conditions at home. As the informant explained

Some children belong to girls who have given birth while still at their parents homes. I am a father, I have many children. My daughter gives birth while still at home. Do you think I will educate my child's child or will I educate my own child? Who will I educate? Mine. So this child of my child, will s/he not stay at home?... This school therefore has many such like children. (ibid)

It is interesting because most of our children come from families where sometimes the men have died and the mothers leave these children either with their grandmothers who are too old to do anything or even provide for them or they are left at the mercy of relatives or she gets married again and the child is rejected by the new family. They thus begin by going to the local market, then drift into the town where they think there is money and they end up in the streets. (PO 1:2002)

The street boys and house girls phenomenon is adverse but the former is more visible. Street boys were therefore the target of two of more well established institutions while house girls were present in three centres. Other learner labels identified in Urban were *the disabled*, who were often rerouted to respective schools for the disabled. One centre targeted children from rural areas who migrated to town, where the economic situation was severe and eventually ended up as street children. To arrest their transformation to the street, they were targeted by the centre as a preventive measure. One

institution, a Madrassa, additionally targeted Muslim children while one admitted only juveniles. Lastly, one centre admitted children of the staff members.

All the institutions visited in Kisumu, other than the one that admitted juvenile delinquents, admitted children with at least two or more of the characteristics mentioned above. The following example, from the only institution in the sample that had detailed, up to date and available school data offers an adequate picture of learner characteristics in a typical NFS in urban. This case had a total of 35 children enrolled. 23 of these children had siblings ranging from one to four in the same school. Sixteen (46%) of these children (from a total of nine parents) were orphaned, followed by 8 (23%) children from single mothers and 7 (20%) from poor homes. Four children, from the same family came from a home with sickly parents.

### **5.2.2 Rural: “the socio-cultural discrepancies”**

In Rural, the learner characteristics reflect the inconsistency between inbuilt traditional socio-economic and cultural lifestyles of the pastoral communities on the one hand and formal education on the other. In order to understand the learner types in rural-remote districts, it is important to examine the traditional life. The rural-remote districts, though varying in aridity occupy some of the largest terrains of semi-desert scrubland in Kenya. Less than 10% of this land is arable. The rainfall per annum ranging from 300 to 700 mm is too low to support rain fed agriculture. The majority of the peoples who occupy these regions, are therefore a nomadic people of a pastoral nature. These peoples have evolved a way of life that is attuned to the environmental conditions. Arid land is however harsh land to inhabit. Living in this vast terrain of semi-desert scrubland and managing to compete with wild animals<sup>32</sup> in search of grazing land for the huge numbers of cows, camels, goats and sheep is a mastery the pastoralists have had to achieve in order to survive. To illustrate the pastoral lifestyle, the case of the Samburu, where 75% of the sampled schools in Rural were drawn, shall be utilised.

The Samburu uphold their livestock and life can be said to revolve around it. Social life is divided in age sets and each age set has a specific predefined duty to perform as is hereby explained.

Boys have a role to play, girls have a role to play, everybody's role is set upon birth. When you reach the age of looking after goats kids, you go. When you reach the age of caring for sheep you go, like that! You do not wait to be told. You graduate into those roles. Nobody teaches you... After caring for these you are taken to care for the calves. From there you herd cows. Then you go away from home and go far where you go and stay as a moran and this has different responsibilities altogether. So, with this social structure we have, The young children's main role was set up around the manyatta -herding goats, fetching firewood, water and most of the time they are within the homes (P31:2002).

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<sup>32</sup> The gazetted national parks in Kenya, that boast a variety of wild animals are traditionally the homes of these pastoral communities.

Kids/lambs, goats/sheep, calves and cows are cared for respectively by persons ranging from young children, young herders, boys to *morans*<sup>33</sup>. The youngest children stay closest to the *manyattas* while the cows herded by the *morans* can remain yonder for even six months. Each animal has a specific usefulness in the economy; that “...if you want to live a happy life, you have to have enough camels or during drought goats, because they are the day to day cash. If you want to have some ready cash you sell a goat. So you need them because you do not just sell a cow every two weeks! You do not sell a camel after every 3 months. So this is the economic nature of our society (ibid)”.

Livestock rearing can be said to be labour intensive as different animals of different sizes require a shepherd. So “if you have three children and you have goats and cows and calves... you have to have three shepherds. If the calves and kids are nearby, those can be herded by elderly people. But cows go far, one child has to go with them (C57:2002)”. Hence it is clear that everyone is needed to satisfy their economic roles. Interfering with the age set duties is tantamount to disrupting the livelihood amongst the Samburu. Formal schooling requires full attendance, from 8.00 am and this is not feasible from a pastoral perspective.

From the above presentation, one can surmise that every sector of the nomadic populations may lack formal schooling. The NFS in Samburu has however primarily been conceived to attract the young herders also known as the *Lchekuti*. They are defined as such; “*lchekuti to us is anybody who is able to look after goats or calves (P31:2002)*”. In Marsabit, the primary target are the young herders too. The NFS has however proved to be appealing to the older groups and therefore bigger girls and boys, *morans* and adults (married men and women) who had missed out on education attend NFS. In some cases, both mother and child attended the same school and were taught by the same teacher.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that both the rural and urban informants, semantically, viewed their target learners differently whereas the tendency in available literature and official government documents is to use similar terms. A good example regards the issue of poverty. The “Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” (2001:14) describes the poor in Kenya as “the landless, people with disabilities, female-headed households, households headed by people without formal education, unskilled and semiskilled casual labourers, AIDS orphans, street children and families including beggars, subsistence farmers, urban slum dwellers, unemployed youth and pastoralists in drought prone ASAL districts”. Other than the last description, these categories are befitting and indeed were readily identified by the informants in Urban. In ASAL, despite documentation that 60% of the pastoralists (ibid) are “poor”, they do not view themselves or their target learners as poor. Urban informants readily labelled their learners using this term but not so for the rural informants.

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<sup>33</sup> *Morans* are young men between ages 15-30 who have undergone the rite of passage but are still unmarried.

The learner characteristics in Rural can also be said to be primarily age-set defined (Lchekuti, morans) as opposed to Urban where socio-economic conditions are more fluid and therefore impact on the families more (orphans, children of single mothers). Indeed, the learners FGD, Table 4, revealed that in Rural, the learners belonged to nuclear families as opposed to Urban where female relatives of the expanded family cared for the children rendering the households types in Urban to be more diverse.

**Table 4: Type of Household**

| frequency | Type of House |        |             |      | Total |
|-----------|---------------|--------|-------------|------|-------|
|           | parents       | mother | grandmother | aunt |       |
| Rural     | 22            | 0      | 0           | 0    | 22    |
| Urban     | 10            | 2      | 3           | 3    | 18    |
| Total     | 32            | 2      | 3           | 3    | 40    |

### 5.2.3 Age

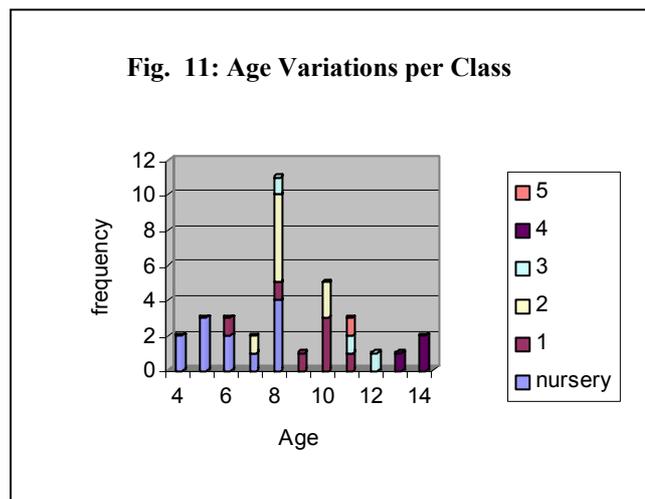
The age group attending NFS in Urban and Rural seems to be influenced by two factors (a) the educational objectives of the centre and (b) the traditional definition of age. The age range of learners in Urban was between 3-24, while in rural, they started out older, between 6 to over 30. The older age entry in Rural was influenced by their cultural notion of age. The Samburu, for instance, conceptualise that “...if you are able to take care of goats you automatically become a Lchekuti member. So you qualify to go to school. Once you are able to look after goats, you have a degree of independence which means you can have the same in school. Normally they are 7,8,9 year (P31:2002)”. In Urban however, the children started out younger as other than increased awareness on the essence of pre-school education, these institutions keep the children occupied for a specific duration hence offering parents some free time. Some of the centres, especially those that offered a similar curriculum to formal schools, indeed had preschool classes and these were attended by the 3-5 year olds.

The upper age limit in Urban was determined by presence of vocational training where learners tended to be older and in Rural, by the presence of morans/married men and women. In one class in Rural for instance, the youngest was a child of 12 while the oldest was a man of over 30. This age difference naturally added challenges to class management. Table 5 gives a summary of the oldest and youngest learners attending NFS as reported by the heads of the centres.

**Table 5: Age range of NFS learners**

| <b>Youngest learners Admitted: Age Group</b> | <b>3-5</b>   | <b>6-8</b>   | <b>9-12</b>  |                |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Number of Institutions : Urban               | 8 (36%)      | 11 (50%)     | 3 (14%)      |                |
| Rural  | -            | 5 (63%)      | 3 (33%)      |                |
| <b>Oldest Learners Age Group</b>             | <b>12-14</b> | <b>14-18</b> | <b>18-24</b> | <b>Over 25</b> |
| Number of Institutions : Urban               | 5 (23%)      | 13 (59%)     | 4 (18%)      | -              |
| Rural  | 2 (25%)      | 2 (25%)      | 2 (36%)      | 1 (12%)        |

Age did not necessarily correlate with class level. The majority of the cases (90%) were flexible about age requirements. Sentiments such as “*we do not look at the age so much. So long as the child is ready to continue to learn, we give them the chance (HT6:2002)*” show that the essence for admission to NFS was the will to learn. This practice is a divergence from formal schools where the practice is to admit 6 year olds. Formal schools therefore lean towards homogenous age groups in the class. In NFS however, the age variation per class is more diverse as this example (figure 11) of one of the centres depicts. This centre has a total of 36 pupils distributed between nursery and class/Std. <sup>34</sup> 5. The majority of the pupils are between ages 8-11. They are present in all the classes.



#### 5.2.4 Implications of Family sizes: “dividing children between NFS and FE”

Family size; the number of siblings available, had different implications for the rural or urban child. Data on family size was availed through the learners and parents who participated in the focussed group discussions.

**Table 6: Total number of siblings**

| frequency | Total number of siblings |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    | Total no. of respondents |
|-----------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|--------------------------|
|           | 0                        | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 11 |                          |
| Rural     | 0                        | 0 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1  | 22                       |
| Urban     | 1                        | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1  | 18                       |
| Total     | 1                        | 1 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 2  | 40                       |

As Table 6 depicts, there is no significant difference in the family sizes between Rural and Urban. Majority of the families have between 4 to 7 children. For persons without a steady income, maintaining such a family size in formal schools can be an unbearable burden. Families seem to have adopted dividing children between NFS and FE as a coping strategy. The main motivation in both cases is economical, but from differing angles.

In Urban, the overwhelming reason for placing children in either NFS and FE is the money factor. One parent for instance, who had a total of 8 children (2 in secondary school, 5 in primary and one in NFS) explained that he had opted for NFS, the cheaper alternative due to inability to pay school fees and sustain other school needs for the other children. In other cases, lack of a vacancy in FE forced the parents to seek an alternative in NFS. The experience of these parents shows the effect of rural-urban migration on education; “*This one was learning at home, when I brought him*

here, I tried to get him a place in Migosi but was told that it was during the term. So I decided to enrol him here rather than have him stay at home (P52:2002)".

In Rural, children were needed to satisfy their economic duties. Irrespective of distance or location, all the parents raised the same point regarding children, education and livestock.

We have a lot of livestock so if we enrol all our children in school, we will not get anyone to take care of our animals. So we put one half in school and the others we leave as Lchekuti. They will come later and learn when they are finished with herding. Because we can not throw away our livestock!... That is what we depend on (P54:2002).

These parents explained that "*wealth is an important thing for us Samburus. To throw away wealth is difficult. And we also know the need of education (C56:2002)*". The livestock is their wealth and when man is separated from his wealth, life is destabilised. The solution therefore was to divide the children between FE and NFS implying that if the child did not have siblings, then the child would first and foremost be expected to satisfy his/her age set duties. The parents however insisted that placing some children in NFS did not imply they were being discriminatory or that they regarded these children less. The criteria used to decide where to place a child was summed up in the proverb: "*a mother knows which child can run and which one cannot (C56:2002)*" or as was expounded in another FGD

Some children you can really push them to learn but they are not intelligent, they do not even know how to read or write. You just see them lagging behind. So you tell them to go to herd and you remove the one who has knowledge for school and you take the child to school, and the one who is knowledgeable in herding you tell the child to herd. So there is no discriminating children (C57:2002).

Given the parents value for their livestock, it becomes evident that the probability of a child from a pastoral community entering, surviving and persisting through formal education was determined by this child's aptitude and will for formal education. Quotes such as "*the parents are not willing to help these people. The learners just come here because of their own will (T47:2002)*" or "*many of the children come alone (C56:2002)*" or "*they tell their parents they want to go to primary*" confirm that it is the child's initial interest that can open the way for school participation. Indeed, the parents in Samburu were quick to point out that a child's continued participation in school depended on "*the child's intelligence*" or "*if bright*".

### 5.3 Learner Admission and Verification Processes

As has been discussed in the preceding sections, NFS serve a specific clientele. The clientele is largely in tandem with the Policy Guidelines on NFS in the country which classify the NFS target group as "children who have never attended formal school, who have dropped out of the formal system... children in especially difficult circumstances and in need of special protection" (MOE 1999c:11). To ensure that only eligible children are admitted, the Policy Guidelines propose that

<sup>34</sup> Primary education in Kenya consists of 8 class levels, commonly referred to as standards, or in short Std.

“selection of learners shall be done by respective management committees (6.4ii)”. Indeed, the district offices try to comply with this provision

According to the policy guidelines, the schools are not just supposed to admit anybody. They are supposed to have a committee to verify the backgrounds of the learners before they admit them here. One is that...the parents must be so poor that they cannot afford the levies. Two, orphans...the issue of the orphan background has to be verified thoroughly using the provincial administration...and three we do not encourage them to admit children from formal school because that has caused problems (EO62:2002).

This section presents results from the study sample which shows that the institutions had varied recruitment, admission and verification processes ranging from structured to more ad hoc mechanisms. The findings are presented under the urban and rural banner.

### 5.3.1 Urban

In Urban the parents/guardians mainly sought places themselves. 5 centres actively went out in search of admissions while two centres used *barazas*<sup>35</sup>. This was a case with a more structured form

There are two methods that we use. One the parents come asking for vacancies and if there are vacancies, we offer them. The other thing is that when we are recruiting for std 1, we announce in all the villages, in Barazas, in meeting and even we take posters out there and we hang posters along the way. We tell them to bring their children for interviews on a certain date (HT 22:2000).

The policy guidelines envisage a central role for the school committees in the selection of learners. In Urban 19 (83%) institutions claimed to have school committees. However, of these 19 committees, only 3 were actively involved in pupil admission, one of them in a rather unspecific way. In the two most established institutions<sup>36</sup>, the school committee, as a school policy, played a crucial role. The committees spearheaded the first phase of the selection based on predetermined guidelines which from the data can be summarised as:

- Catchment Area: Both centres were located in the sprawling slums and drew their clientele from this neighbourhood. One centre served 8 villages, while another had organised the slum dwellers into 42 Christian groups who formed their target. Each village/group had a representative in the committee who was involved in selection of learners.
- Gender: In one case group leaders were expected to identify a girl and a boy to be admitted to the non-formal school. Hence some sort of “positive discrimination” is practice for “*if a community has only two boys and no girl, then we would not allow the two boys...if two girls and there wasn't a boy, then we would allow the girls because we wanted to give the girl-child more opportunities (PO 17:2002)*”.
- Age: The two centres had instituted age restrictions of 9 and 11 years respectively. Both centres rationalised the age limits as such:

A child who is 9 years should be in Std. 4 or 5 in the formal school. But now, if a child has never been in school, and the child is 9 years old, we are very sure that this child is not going to be

<sup>35</sup> This is an official public gathering normally organised by the provincial administration to inform the public about government policies.

<sup>36</sup> The evolution, objectives and structure of these two institutions have already been presented in pages 66-8.

taken to a formal school, so we consider this one a very needy case (HT 22:2000).

Our aim was that by the end of the day, we should be able to do technical training. But then we took children from 9 years... They were still not mature for technical training after 3 years. So we decided to take from 11 years. But we were strict on the level of children we were taking, and the level of education. We would take children of only class 1. Our reasoning here was that a child of 11 years who has the academic level of class 1 has got no hope because they can never fit into a normal school (PO 17:2002).

In these two centres therefore, the inclusion of the school committee, delimitation of the target areas and age and gender restrictions all contributed to ensuring that only the needy learners were admitted. To further authenticate the learners claimed status these two centres, as did another two in the sample, made follow-up visits of the children. A social worker made home visits and validated the children's backgrounds. Case histories of the child were built and the institution was able to develop a clear picture not only of the child but the family background. This rigorous pattern was followed "*so that we do not help people who do not deserve* (PO 1:2002)".

In the rest of the centres, admission was basically a matter between the centre and parent/guardian. It therefore becomes important to examine what mechanisms had been put in place to verify backgrounds, especially sorting out the "poor" children. Varied methods were in place. Six centres relied on the provincial administration. Parents were expected to bring along a letter from the Chief who liaised with the village elders. As this informant explained "*basically it is the village elders who know that so and so is orphaned, so and so is unable. He will take the name of that child to the local administration, that is the Chief... the Assistant Chief will take the name to the school head and the child will be admitted* (T15:2002)". Another 3 institutions "invited the mother" for a talk after admitting the child. Six centres did not have any verification mechanism. This means that they solely relied on the information given by the parent. The danger of purely relying on parents word of mouth is the difficulty in sieving out the "disadvantaged children" spelt out in the policy guidelines (2.2 ix). Not everyone who attended NFS was a needy case and as one education officer emphatically stated; "*I would say at the moment that the majority may be coming from very humble family backgrounds... but what I want you to underline is that not everybody who goes there cannot afford to pay school fees* (EO 62:2002)". Indeed the fact that at least one centre in Kisumu admitted children of staff members is a case in point. For some parents, the largely tough economic times were further fuelled by their general laxity and despondence. This then implies the need for stringent recruitment and verification policies if one is to abide by the Policy Guidelines.

### **5.3.2 Rural**

In Rural, mainly educational campaigns or *barazas* were utilised to encourage enrolment. The occurrence of learners individually seeking admission was also prevalent, more so where the learners were adults and liable to make their own decisions. Non-enrolment in Rural is very widespread and this category therefore readily fits with the specifications in the policy guidelines.

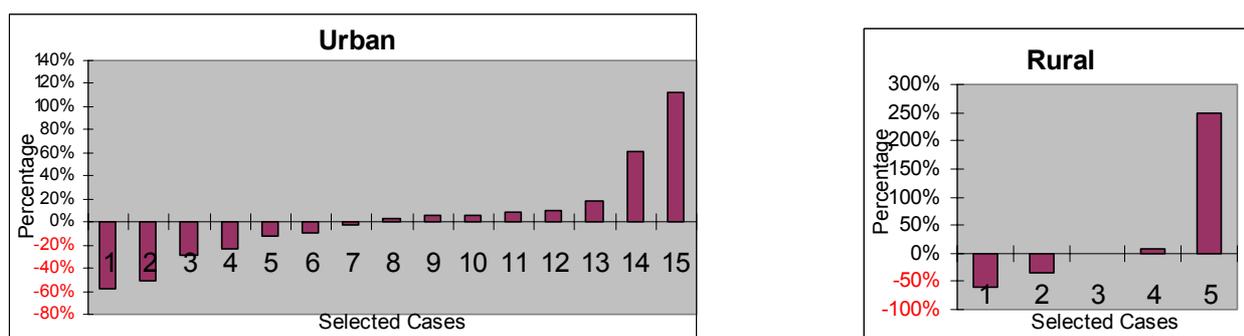
This fact also dictated the role of the committees, which were present in seven of the eight centres in the sample. The committee role was to encourage parents to send their children to school.

In Samburu, the two possibilities of herding and schooling that NFS offers made it more appealing than formal schools. Parents could be tempted to withdraw their children from formal schools. As this head teacher of a formal school explained “...that was the danger, what if those learning in normal schools could now deviate and go to NFS centres? So we passed a rule that no admission of a school going child who was learning in a normal school. But we allowed admission of those from the centres to the normal schools. Not from the normal schools to the centres. (HT30:2002)”. The only admission criterion therefore witnessed in Rural, was that no child already in formal school would be admitted to an NFS.

#### 5.4 Enrolment Trends

During the field research, effort was made to access learner enrolment data, for the period the institutions had been in existence from two main sources: the institutions and the district education offices (Kisumu and Samburu). Accessing of the figures in both sources was problematic. The respective education offices were able to avail a complete least of only 2001 enrolment while in the centres, some proprietors kept the records in their homes. Additionally, concern with reliability of the learner statistics emerged as some institutions did not keep (regular) records and the heads mostly provided off head numbers. The discrepancy in the figures from the two sources was sometimes very high meaning that either the figures were tampered with or guesswork was used.

Fig. 12: Pupil Figures: Disparity in Field and Official DEO Sources



For instance 2001 pupil enrolment in Samburu and Kisumu, in selected centres where the statistics were available, as illustrated in diagram 12 show that sometimes the education office (the bar graphs below the x-line) or the centres (bars above the line) had higher figures. That the difference is rather glaring, 20% or more, implies that (a) the pupil enrolment analysis and results may need to read with caution to perhaps indicate broad trends rather than specific details and (b) statistics management in both the district education offices and the individual centres is an area in need of attention. Irrespective of the absolute reliability of the data, one can draw certain indications related

to the growth and sustainability of the programmes. Currently, total learner populations in the varied centres stands as follows in these groups:

**Table 7: Current Size of Pupil Enrolment**

|              | 0-50      | 51-100    | 101-150 | 151-200 | Over 201 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| <b>Urban</b> | 5 (25%)   | 2 (10%)   | 6 (30%) | 2 (10%) | 5 (25%)  |
| <b>Rural</b> | 7 (87.5%) | 1 (12.5%) | -       | -       | -        |

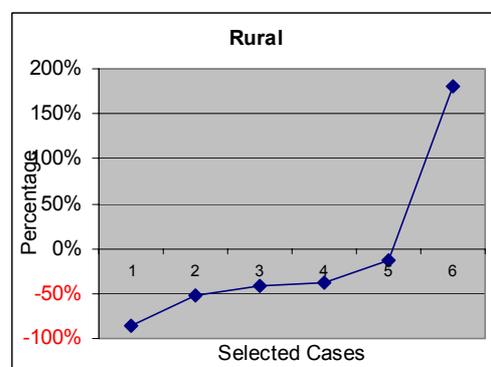
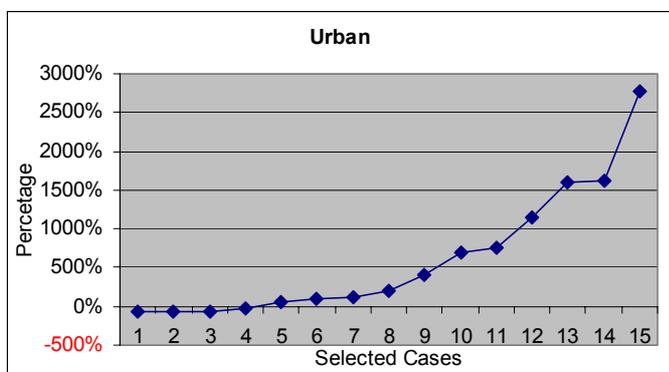
In Rural, no centre had more than 100 learners. In fact 87.5% of the centres had enrolments of 50 or less. This is the direct opposite to Urban where only 25% of the centres had 50 or fewer learners (table 7). When one compares the current pupil enrolment with that of the initiation year of the institution, a slightly different picture emerges especially in Urban as institutions had been able to multiply their pupil numbers. On the contrary, the Rural institutions have retained learners enrolment numbers below the 50 mark. The details are contained in Table 8.

**Table 8: Size of Pupil enrolment in Initiation Year<sup>37</sup>**

|              | 0-50       | 51-100  | Over 100  |
|--------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| <b>Urban</b> | 10 (66.7%) | 3 (20%) | 2 (13.3%) |
| <b>Rural</b> | 6 (75%)    | 2 (25%) | -         |

In order to get the picture of the growth rate, or lack of it, of the selected centres that availed the figures, the percentage of difference in pupil numbers between the year of establishment and 2002, is presented in Figure 13.

**Fig. 13: Pupil increase since the initiation of Institution in Individual Cases**



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The highest growth rate reported in Urban was a 2764% increase. This case gradually grew from 11, 50, 100, 110, 125, to 300, 315 pupils over a 12 year period. In fact, in Urban all the institutions that had pupil increases witnessed expansion by two times or more the previous enrolment. The soaring pupil numbers witnessed in 73% of the centres in Urban can be explained by three possibilities. First, it has been documented that poverty levels, especially for urban slum dwellers have been escalating (MPL 2001:13). The urban poor often lack adequate and/or regular jobs meaning that such amenities, like formal schools are pushed out of their reach. It is therefore not

<sup>37</sup> The discrepancy in the total number of centres between this table and the previous table is due to unavailable data from 5 urban centres.

<sup>38</sup> Time, as a factor is not catered for in the calculations hence a 12 year old, and 5 year old centre are calculated on the same maxim. The essence of these calculations is ideally to depict the fledging enrolment which is cumbering NFS.

surprising that during this period, enrolment in NFS, the cheaper alternative, has increased. Secondly, most centres had a modest start. They, however, solidified themselves, got known, erected their own buildings. As the centres became more visible, parents in their droves sought admission in these institutions. Thirdly that NFS is a “school” offering numeracy and literacy skills may suffice, hence the “non” in NFS is either ignored or assumed and parents enrol their children expecting an equivalent basic education provision.

In Rural the highest increase recorded was from 10 to 28 (180%) pupils. However this was an exception case as the Rural trend was marked by pupil decrease in 80% of the centres (as opposed to 27% in urban). The highest decline recorded was from 74 learners to 10 (86% decline). It can therefore be conclusively seen that whereas the majority of institutions in Urban seem to have witnessed a (big) increase in pupil enrolment, the reverse could be said of Rural where most of the centres seem to be struggling to survive.

This leads to the question, what is affecting NFS school participation? This question is valid in both Rural and Urban as the pupil increase in the latter should not be understood to imply that NFS are able to retain the pupils long enough for them to complete the cycle or fully benefit. Just as many join as they drop out of school. The drop out rate systematically increases as one goes up the academic ladder as these figures from one centre in the study depicts; Std. 1 to Std. 7 respectively had 52 pupils, 55, 54, then 44, 41, 28 and lastly 16 pupils. It therefore becomes important to examine why these learners leave NFS and where they proceed to.

#### 5.4.1 Urban: “explaining fluctuating enrolment”

To amplify the reasons for pupil dropout, this case is presented. This centre was started in 1999 and had a total enrolment of 101 pupils. By the end of 2000, one fifth of the learners had left the school. At the beginning of 2001, 76 pupils were enrolled and they gradually dropped out such that by 2002 the centre had an enrolment of 36 pupils.

Fig. 14: Drop Out Class level and Current Placement

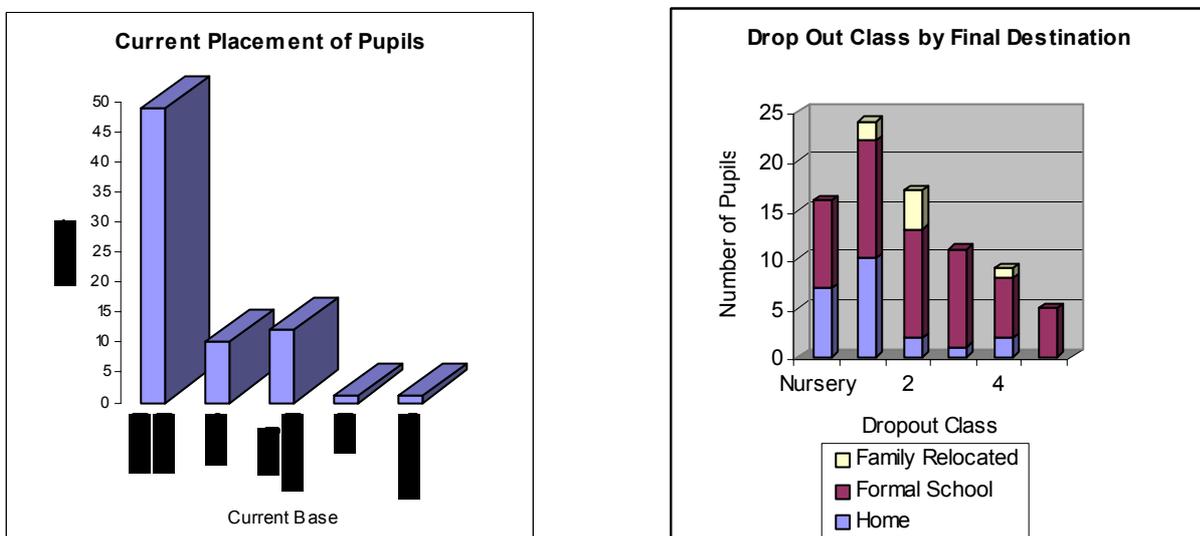


Figure 14 above shows the current placement of the 65 (64%) of the learners who have left the school and the class level at which they departed. This case illustration reveals that the majority of the learners left the NFS and joined formal primary schools (6 different schools). These departures were drawn from all classes. Three factors may have determined the pupil exit to formal schools. First, this centre goes only to the fifth class. The concern with “after Std. 5 what” prompted the children to seek other schools that could offer them longer prospects. Secondly, attendance in NFS may have been an eye opener on the value of education. As this teacher affirms

These children are enthusiastic to learn because we had some we transferred to the normal schools last year. We had 8 of them here from the same family...they were not going to school due to the ignorance of the parents...these children could now work, they were planting their own vegetables, so that they could sell and go to school...The children bought the uniforms, and paid the school fees alone for themselves. They were even keeping hens, selling them and paying for their school fees (T64:2002).

Where parents “absconded” their duty of educating their children, the children took their destiny in their own hands and worked to support themselves in the formal schools. Stimulating the pupils’ will to learn is indeed a positive outcome of NFS. Additionally, the government employees, in this case the Community Development Assistant (CDA) encouraged the children to join formal schools much to the chagrin of the chairman who reported “*she came and tried to convince some of the parents to take their children away from here. I did not understand why and what her intention or main aim was*” (C59:2002). This situation amplifies the mixed expectations of the role of NFS from the different players be it proprietors, the parents, the pupils or government officials.

The second largest category opted out of school to stay at home. These departures occurred mainly in nursery and Std 1. It presents a worrying trend because whereas dropouts from formal school may find salvation in NFS, those in urban based NFS drop off to join the army of non-enrolled children. Their dropout may have been influenced by the fact that some parents seem to have absolved themselves of any responsibilities to their children. In this centre, like other NFS, parents are required to contribute money to enable the school meet the costs of offering education, like buying chalk or giving the teacher some token payment. This centre had agreed on a flat rate of Ksh.50/- irrespective of the number of children one has in the centre. Rather than pay “*some decided to run away. This was particularly due to the fact that we were trying to press the parents and guardians...to contribute Ksh.50/- per month per home* (C59:2002)”. Additionally, dropout was reported to have increased due to management differences between the chairman and his vice, which were viewed to have got out of hand such that “*many parents and guardians took their children out of the school* (T64:2002)”. For those who relocated with their parents, majority of whom were mothers, it is not clear whether the children enrolled in any school. Given the harsh economic times, these children at best may have enrolled in other NFS, where available.

The above case presentation introduces us to the causes of dropout as found in urban areas pointing that the reasons stem from varied angles ranging from school management, expectations of

learners to parental responsibility. To further illuminate these causes, explanations advanced from other centres are provided. School dropouts are higher as one progressed the education ladder. As the children grow older, they become more independent and can be lured to undertake non-school related activities. The grounds for dropout can be analysed along gender lines.

Girls, as was explained “...*get pregnant, they get married, they get employed as house girls, they start their own businesses, commercial sex work* (HT22:2000)”. The issue of girls getting pregnant, or them having to earn money, either by working as house maids or participating in commercial sex is not always of their own accord. In one centre for instance, the learners benefit from a feeding programme. Good nourishment and a conducive social and physical environment have a positive impact on the girls aura. This does not go unnoticed and makes them prey of male suitors. As was explained,

Just like a few months in the programme, girls are just big and you can imagine in this area there is a lot of rape and a lot of careless sex. It is most likely that young men, and even elderly men start running after them and that is a very big danger. The girls do not just grow fat, but if you look at their faces, they just start to shine (PO 17:2002).

Whereas girls drop out of school to enter the labour market, or due to pregnancy, boys tend to prefer the independence of the street where they engage in petty crimes “*the boys, now they are strong enough to snatch things here and there...and pick pockets* (HT22:2000)”.

The destructive social environment influenced children to opt out of school. Children, by default or as a necessity are introduced to “adults only” scenes at a tender age. The circumstances of having no job, being a parent, often a single mother reduces one to taking the few options that are available. This often means living in the slums, participating in commercial sex work and sometimes exploiting children. The correlation between involvement in income generating activities and decreased school participation and eventual dropout was evident.

The parents will involve the children in income generating activities be it selling chang'aa<sup>39</sup>, selling miraa<sup>40</sup>, going to the market to sell fish, others will even involve them in commercial sex work, those kinds of things. So now when the children are growing up, when they are old enough, then there is a lot of market out there for them (ibid).

Not only was the family environment unfavourable but also generally, the social setting was not conducive for children especially in slum areas where the realities of life are harsh. The negative impact of the social environment on school participation is presented in more detail in chapter 7.

In conclusion, the factors causing dropout from NFS are on the whole negative rather than positive. The positive cases are those who join formal schools or “*get sponsors and take them to vocational training*”. The majority of NFS dropouts do not however continue with school. Some migrate when “*life in Nairobi is just too much they would like to go upcountry* (HT22:2000)”. Alternatively, pupils become very unruly such that nobody can control them. The pupils

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<sup>39</sup> Local illicit lethal spirit with very high alcoholic content (+ 40%). It has high market value in low income and rural areas.

themselves confirmed that *“like in this school, when a pupil wants to leave school, they just leave like that “rough”!* (PP34:2000). The pupils and parents may also despair especially in NFS that do not offer national exams. They lose hope *“So if we would be told that after 2 years, there would be Std. 8 here, there is no parent who would remove their child from this school (P55:2000)”*. The causal factors for school dropout therefore cover the whole spectrum from the child, to the parents, the slum environment and the school management. Very critical is the economic situation of the families and the unstable family set-ups.

#### **5.4.2 Rural: “the toll of traditional lifestyle”**

In Rural, the main reasons for drop out are to be found in the nomadic life, which is still not attuned to requirements of NFS (and vice versa). Factors affecting school attendance and subsequent dropout have certain gender demarcations. Boys’ participation in school is dictated by the pastoral duties and the climatic conditions. Herding far away from the homes is often a domain for boys. The non-sedentary nature of the people was emphasised *“we are people who herd, and we have no shamba<sup>41</sup> where we keep our cows like in other areas (C56:2002)”*. Nomadic peoples in Kenya inhabit arid areas. Often, as the dry season encroaches, *“when there is drought, animals move far away from the villages, and so do the herds boys. So we lose them for two or three months (P31:2002)”*. In other words, the children remain yonder for the said season and as there are no mobile schools, they do not attend school during this period. So unless the child has a strong perseverance and willingly returns back to school on return from such herding trips, the periodic non-attendance ultimately leads to quitting school.

For girls, adherence to cultural practices and rites of passage has the biggest toll on their participation in school. While school participation for nomadic children is generally low, that for girls is lower. Practices such as female circumcision and early marriages have severely impacted on girls’ participation in formal schools. As one of the proponents for formal schools says *“the biggest problem to me was the girls because naturally our girls do not go to school. At a certain age they have to be married. And when a person gets married other matters are paramount and school can stay. If one goes to school bride price diminishes...(ibid)*. That this respondent uses “naturally” shows that whereas exceptions may be made for the boy child to attend school, girls are expected to do their chores, face female circumcision and thereafter get married. That is the natural thing. Hence, it is not uncommon for girls who had found their way to formal schools to be withdrawn and married off. In some cases, the young brides, if permitted by their husbands, try to attend school. Three centres in Samburu reported that they serve married girls. Their new status, is however not in

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<sup>40</sup> Khat is a psychoactive substance, grown in Meru, Kenya, and traditionally popular among the Somali. Its use has steadily been expanding to other social groups.

<sup>41</sup> This is a Kiswahili word which in this sense is used to denote a farm

tandem with student life for as it was aptly put “*when a person gets married, other matters are paramount and school can stay* (P31:2002)”. So it is often a matter of time before the girls drop out of school.

Attendance in NFS had the side effect of increasing the girls’ vulnerability as victims of early marriage. Through attending NFS, girls acquired a certain knowledge as their outlook and horizons changed. This made them more “marketable”, and “*the wazee (old men) are happy* (P31:2002)”. Indeed, the parents confirmed that when a suitor came, marriage would be more paramount than school participation “*when a girl becomes big, someone comes for her hand in marriage. The person sees that this girl can run a business, can calculate the profit of her business. If her father sells a bull and the daughter can count, if another man comes for her, we cannot refuse* (C56:2002)”. Because of this social set up few girls, especially the older girls can be retained in school long enough to fully benefit. One girl had this to say about her chances in NFS

We would really like to learn if it is possible. But with us Samburu’s we get married. But if it was just me, I would have gone to school properly so that I could know how to run my business, so that even if I get married, I can be able to fend for myself and my children. I am not married now, but when the time comes, or a suitor comes, I will have to get married. I have no alternative. That is why if it depended on me... If I had the ability, I would first learn here in Lchekuti, then join primary and continue and if I succeed, I would go to secondary...but only if possible. With us Samburu’s we get married when we are still young (PP37:2002)”.

With exasperation, the initiator still ponders “*How do I retain them and make them go to the normal primary school system? And I do not get many girls. Very few girls have succeeded because our structure is still very...It is hard. It is very hard* (P31:2002)”.

Classroom related issues have also contributed to dropout, specifically class management. Gender rivalry, that “*whenever a girl could do better than a boy, it could mean a fight* (HT 27:2002)” had its toll on attendance. Later, the school solved the crisis by separating the genders into two different classes. Additionally, a red X, as normally used for wrong answers was enough to make a *moran* drop out of school. The older learners also tended to be aggressive to girls and the younger children. The expectation of the older male learners to show leadership as they have been socialised, or to be treated with the respect associated to their age group, meant that they failed to view each other first as learners first. A situation that these girls/children may be of a higher level in the school matters was therefore not plausible to them and caused classroom management problems. Classroom realities are different. This implies a lack of fit with the framework of the life they are used to.

Another key reason relates to the arid nature of the land. A very basic reason that resulted in dropout is hunger. Low rainfall and concentration in livestock means that the ASAL districts often have food shortages. These districts have continually benefited from the World Food Programme (WFP). Children in the formal schools are sustained by a School Feeding Programme (SFP), supported either by WFP, the government or other NGOs. Because NFS are not registered, the

children are not eligible recipients of the SFP. These children therefore often come to school directly after herding without eating anything. In order to encourage school attendance and arrest dropout, one ingenious head teacher said;

So I had started attracting mine by giving them food. They come from herding straight to school. My view was if I give them food here, they would see that they are catered for and they would like to come in greater numbers. And that is exactly what happened even when the conditions were not very good here. They used to come, reach home, and come this way because they knew that there was something they were going to get here and that brought them back to school (HT 26:2002).

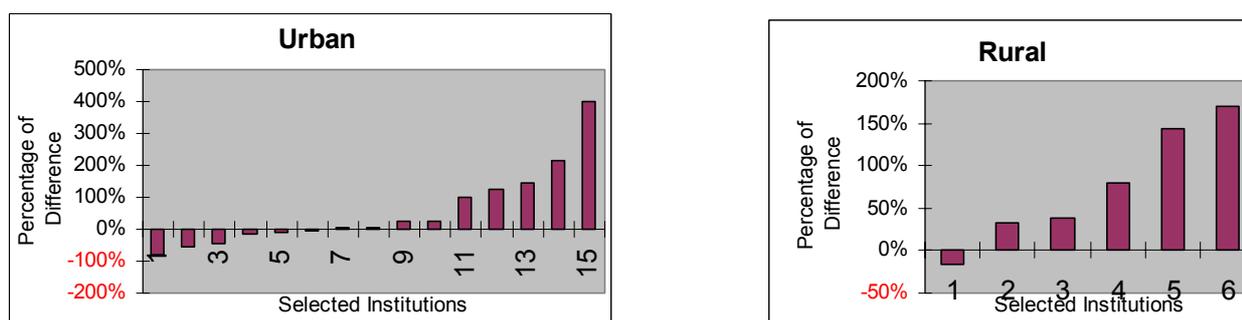
Unfortunately, other head teachers in the region have not taken the initiative and are restricted by the official demarcations that stipulate only registered formal school children as beneficiaries. Eventually, hunger dampens the children's effort of seeking school based education and the child quits school altogether.

Lastly, lack of sustained interest in formal education is fuelled by irrational expectations "that they were expecting something especially from the donors (HT25:2002)". Equally, quick expectations of the yields of formal education causes exasperation. When these expectations do not come to pass, and the fruit is not in sight, as those of education are rather intangible and require many years to ripen, then it is easy to see why interest in formal education can fade away.

### 5.4.3 Explaining Higher Female Enrolment in NFS

In both Urban and Rural, the general trend was that the enrolment of girls was higher than that of boys. Figures 15 give the impression from selected cases where the data for 2002 was available. The bars graphs below the x line represent higher boy enrolment while those above the line indicate higher girls enrolment.

Fig. 15: Gender Disparities in Pupil Enrolment



In Urban, of the 15 centres that availed the data, 6 (40%) had higher boys enrolment. Two of these 6 institutions catered primarily for street boys while another for inmates, a majority of whom are always boys. Some informants attributed the generally higher girls' presence to demographic patterns, that "I do not know whether it is because the birth rate of girls is higher than boys, that is something which is proven (HT22:2000)". Further analysis however shows that certain biases against the girl child are still prevalent "traditionally people do not prioritise the education of girls

*that is why we want to give the girl-child opportunity (PO 17:2002)*". When resources are scarce, the girls may not be enrolled or "*maybe due to inability sometimes, some households give preference to boys (EO 62:2002)*". Collaborating with this view, one head teacher clarified

girl children are many...and what makes them mainly come to this school is that they drop out of formal schools and are employed as maids, or work in the hotel here in the beach. And boys are fewer who go to work in the beach. Boys are mainly in formal school. Those we mainly see roaming around are girls (HT 5:2002).

Another factor why girls' enrolment was higher was that they persist more in school. Two reasons were advanced. First, life outside the home is challenging and it is the boy child who seems to have developed survival mechanisms "*...if you look at the survival of girls out there, they do not survive much out there like boys. Boys are hard, they can do their own things out there and survive. And that is why you will see that the streets of Nairobi, most street children are boys because the girls find it very tough to survive there (HT22:2000)*". Secondly, girls were said to be more manageable than boys "*the boys are not easily controlled. They say I am dropping out of school altogether, it is very difficult to control them and put them back to school all together. But girls, with girls you can easily do that (ibid)*".

In Rural the majority of the institutions (83%) had higher female enrolment. The reason was traditional exclusion of girls from education "*in these arid areas, our ladies are always ignored. They are not taken to school. You see even in our primary schools, the enrolment of ladies is always very low. So when we started the OSP, the biggest number is female (T23:2002)*".

## **5.5 Summing up**

The section on learners' characteristics shows that learners types in Urban are illustrative of the socio-economic impact as opposed to Rural where they depict the socio-cultural and economic discrepancies with formal education. Indeed descriptions of the learners types in Rural are derived from age set definitions. The learner types are generally in tandem with other sources and policy documents. However more emphasis is given to Urban learner types as opposed to Rural learners who are simply lumped as "nomadic". This wide characterisation is blind to the gender and age group demarcations in nomadic areas which are of critical concern in planning educational programmes. Age variation within the classes was also the norm. Hence for a teacher not versed with the relevant teaching methodology, such as multi-age, it was bound to result in classroom management issues. Lastly, the family background had an impact on the children. In Urban, NFS was viewed as a cheaper alternative whereas in Rural, due to the predefined livestock duties children were expected to fulfil, NFS was the better alternative (for the parents). As livestock came first followed by formal school, participation in NFS ultimately depended on the learners will for formal education.

The section on the admission processes depicts that, if one is to strictly stick to the official

guidelines which sets the tone for admissions that NFS should essentially admit only disadvantaged children, then a problem exists in Urban for those centres without stringent verification methods in place. In particular, questions must be asked regarding how they identify a “poor” child and whether it is enough to rely on a parent’s word of mouth. Findings from Rural show that they are in tandem with the policy guidelines. The fact that the only admission criterion in place in Rural is that learners are expected to flow from NFS to FE and not vice versa further confirms these schools as operating as feeder schools rather than alternative provisions.

Several conclusions can be derived from the section on enrolment patterns. First it is evident that statistical management is an area in dire need of attention both at institutional and district education office levels. Secondly, in terms of general enrolment trends, Urban centres have on the whole witnessed higher pupil admissions while the reverse has occurred in Rural. Learner retention, however, is a problem in both rural and urban settings. The causes for dropout have a regional face. The summary is presented in the following table (9) where the reasons on the left column mainly pertain to Urban, and the right column Rural.

**Table 9: Causes of dropout**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Unconcerned parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep children at home</li> <li>• Do not pay school fees</li> </ul>                                 | School management issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally insensitive seating arrangement</li> <li>• Class practices e.g. marking</li> </ul>     |
| Unconducive environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video shows</li> <li>• Non-school going children</li> <li>• Slum environment</li> </ul>        | The pastoral economy (boys) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long distances in search of grazing land</li> <li>• Periodic absence during drought</li> </ul> |
| Truancy (boys) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefer the independence of the streets</li> </ul>   | Climatic conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aridity</li> <li>• Exclusion from school feeding programme</li> </ul>                                  |
| Working children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House girls</li> <li>• Commercial sex workers (girls)</li> <li>• Selling alcohol and drugs</li> </ul> | Traditions (girls) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female circumcision</li> <li>• Early marriage</li> </ul>  |
| Expectations of learners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No examination class</li> <li>• Join formal schools</li> </ul>                                | Expectations of learners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despair because they expected quick yields</li> <li>• Age set expectations</li> </ul>             |

The policy guidelines envisage NFS to give hope to the excluded. However the high dropout rate shows that this may be fond hope rather than proven fact. Both the Urban and Rural based child is affected. Perhaps the worst hit is the rural based girl, for whom the barriers that come with the cultural practices seem somewhat insurmountable.

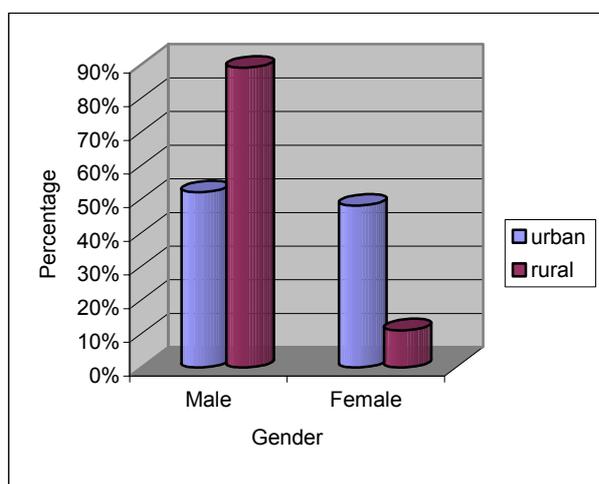
## 5.6 The Teachers

The teacher plays an essential pivoting role in the instructional process. The teacher can make or break the learning process. That is why, in the history of the systematisation of the school, a lot of attention was paid to professionalising the teacher; empowering the teacher with the right content, skills and attitudes to enable an effective and efficient delivery. In the light of this, this section presents data on the NFS teachers, regarding their numbers, academic and professional qualifications and terms and conditions of service and how these impact on the teaching-learning process.

## 5.7 Teacher Numbers

The highest number of teachers per centre reported in Urban was 15 teachers (9 male) while the lowest was one teacher per centre. In Rural, the teacher numbers ranged from one to four teachers per centre. Table 10 gives a summary of the teacher numbers by institution. Whereas teacher numbers in Urban were spread from one to over 10, the Rural centres basically had at most two teachers per centre. The fewer teachers present implied that teachers often had to handle varied ages and levels. The demands on the individual teacher were high as there was no one to share the responsibilities with. Existing literature (Philips 1997:235) suggests that such an occurrence where there are fewer teachers than the grades/levels can be classified as a “small school”.

**Fig. 16: Teacher numbers by gender**



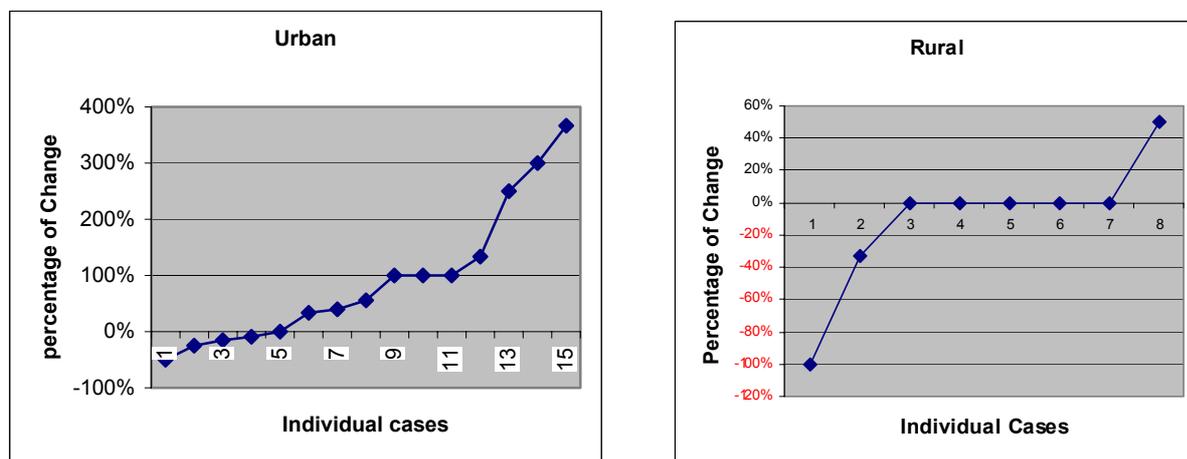
**Table 10: Teacher numbers by institutions**

| Teacher Numbers | Urban Centres | Rural Centres |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1-2             | 4 (18%)       | 6 (75%)       |
| 3-4             | 4 (18%)       | 2 (25%)       |
| 5-6             | 2 (9%)        | -             |
| 7-8             | 6 (27%)       | -             |
| 9-10            | 2 (9%)        | -             |
| 11+             | 4 (18%)       | -             |

Figure 16 shows that, in terms of gender 52% of the total teachers in Urban are male as opposed to 89% in Rural. There is therefore more gender parity in urban than in the rural setting where the NFS teacher can predominantly be said to be a male teacher. There is a correlation between few female teachers and girls' continued participation in school especially for the rural girl child. Husbands of the married girls are more comfortable with female teachers. Additionally, there are fewer role models for girls to emulate yet this can contribute to sustaining the girls in school.

A comparison of the current teacher numbers with those of the year of inception was made in 15<sup>42</sup> centres in Urban and all 8 institutions in Rural. The calculation shows that whereas most Urban institutions (10 or 73%) have seen a steady increase, the Rural centres (5 or 63%) have tended to remain the same while 2(25%) have witnessed teacher declines. The evidence is availed in Figure 17.

Fig. 17: Teacher numbers by year of inception and 2000



The stagnating and declining teacher numbers especially witnessed in Rural is a worrying trend. One centre, which had 3 teachers on inception, had declined by 100% such that there was no teacher at the time of the research. At its height, this centre had over 70 learners. At the time of the research, the head teacher of the formal primary school housing the NFS reported that about 10 learners had reported at the beginning of the term but as they were not being taught, they ceased, with time, to turn up for school. Many informants stressed the core role of a teacher, whose presence first and foremost encouraged pupils to converge in a school. As the NFE officer in Samburu summed it up “*as long as the teacher is there, the pupils will always go for these classes (EO65:2002)*”.

### 5.7.1 Teacher - Pupil Ratio

Majority of the centres in the study sample had a low pupil teacher ratio. The highest case reported was one teacher per 82 pupils. This teacher admitted the difficulty in teaching such a large class saying that “*You find that as an individual, I cannot cope with these numbers (T11:2002)*”. Other than this extreme case, both Urban and Rural centres had ratios of one teacher for 30 or less pupils. This is ideally considered a good pupil number which a teacher can teach comfortably and with ease especially if the learners are of a similar level. A summary of the pupil sizes per one teacher is provided below in Table 9.

<sup>42</sup> The teacher statistics in 7 centres in urban were unavailable.

**Table 11: Teacher – Pupil Ratios**

| Pupils per teacher | 0-10      | 11-20    | 21-30     | 31-40   | 40+    | Total Centres |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------|--------|---------------|
| Urban              | 2 (9%)    | 12 (56%) | 4 (18%)   | 3 (14%) | 1 (6%) | 22            |
| Rural              | 1 (12.5%) | 6 (75%)  | 1 (12.5%) | -       | -      | 8             |

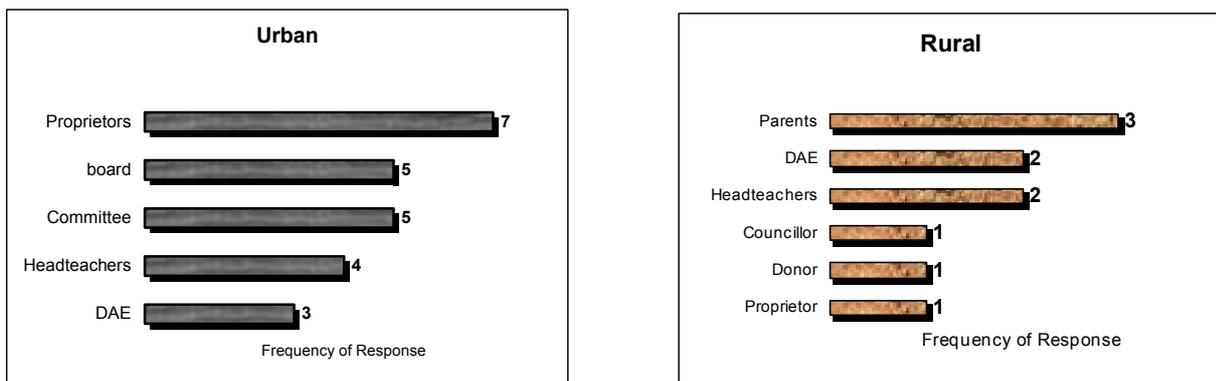
### 5.8 Recruitment Procedures

If there is one area in which the policy vacuum in NFS was felt, it is in delineation of teacher recruitment criteria. The staffing procedures followed and their justification seemed to be principally dictated by the financial base of the institution. Given that the institutions do not have a stated policy, this section will present the recruitment practice in place followed by an analysis of data on the current academic and professional status of the teacher.

#### 5.8.1 The Recruiting Team

The “Policy Guidelines on NFE (8.2c)” state that teachers will be hired by “communities, NGOs and other providers of NFE”. This statement in effect opens the door to a variety of players, to recruit teachers. The data revealed that hiring of teachers was conducted either individually, primarily by the proprietors and head teachers or more collectively, by committees, boards or parents. The only government wing mentioned was the department of adult education (DAE) who provided some teachers. The two figures (18) below present the frequency of the individuals or groups mentioned who took charge of recruiting teachers in the respective schools.

**Fig. 18: The recruiting person/s**



The approach used to recruit the teachers varied. One proprietor admitted that “*basically we have not had a system that we can say ‘this is the system that we use’. All we do is advertise for the kind of person we want or tell people the kind of person we want but when they come it is on the basis of whether they are able to handle that kind of a situation... (PO21:2002)*”. Another stated that “*we do not really say it is recruitment because it is voluntary work (P3:2002)*”. These quotes sum up the predominant recruiting measures in existence and are in congruence with the experiences of the teachers who participated in the individual or group interviews. The teachers’ voices are now presented to corroborate the above statements on the recruitment approaches.

Teachers were often approached and invited to teach (without pay). One urban based teacher explained that *“I was a neighbour of Mzee (the proprietor) and he used to see me around and then he told me I can help to teach and then I agreed. He told me that I would be joining as a volunteer, then I said yes (HT-F4:2002)”* as did her rural based counterpart, that *“Action Aid people came to look for me...They told me that there was a project on out of school programme that was going to be started...They spoke with me, and I accepted to teach without pay (T-F50:2002)”*. In Samburu, the (formal school) head teachers requested teachers indigenous to the area to assist in the NFS. As one of them confirmed *“we were selected by the headmaster. There is no payment. We became volunteers because we come from around (T23:2002)”*. Most of the recruiting persons (in both urban and rural) used this approach to get teachers.

Other teachers sought employment themselves after learning about the existence of the school *“someone who knew about the school informed me and I came here and was accepted (T-F43:2002)”*. The established centres (whose recruiting was made by the boards) also relied on self applications or put out formal adverts. This approach was mainly evident in Urban. Lastly, some teachers simply offered their services to fill in the gap they were seeing in their society. As was explained, *“we stay with these Lchekuti at home. They would tell me that they would like to go to school, if only there was someone to teach them. They would say had we known before, we would have joined school a long time ago but now how will we get an education and now we are too old? So I told them, there is no problem. If you want to get education, let us go to Lchekuti. Lchekuti is a school (T46:2002)”*.

In summary, it can be seen that only the more established centres had formal approaches. Otherwise teacher recruitment is mainly conducted informally. The proprietors either seek out the teachers or the teachers themselves go job seeking. The overriding criteria that determines whether they will teach or not seems to be the readiness to volunteer.

### **5.8.2 The Voluntary Spirit**

The “willingness to volunteer” cited in 14(64%) centres in Urban seemed to be the most desirable quality of an NFS teacher. That the heads of the institutions first mentioned volunteerism, that *“first they are moved by the plight or desperation of the community. Secondly they want to exercise their talent as well as to assist the children with the knowledge they have (HT12:202)”* and other qualities before coming to the more tangible facts like academic and professional qualifications confirms that the philanthropic spirit, the willingness to serve purely and freely without expectation of a return ranked as the first criterion. During the interview, the more “humanitarian” teachers were sieved out from those seeking employment as these quotes exemplify

So when they come we try to share the vision with them and those who have the burden have been continuing with us. But maybe you find somebody will come expecting to get...a good salary, so in such a line, they are not able to continue with us (HT6:2002)

So we were requesting those who would like to volunteer to teach the children freely without being paid. So those who agreed came. That was the main thing....we invited them if they could teach for free. Second criteria was that you needed to be a member of the church. (HT18:2002)

In Rural, volunteerism was present. However, unlike Urban, the volunteers were predominantly serving nursery or primary school teachers often requested by their head teachers to serve in the programme. These teachers agreed because due to feelings of community responsibility (section 5.8.5).

The big difference between the Rural and Urban based volunteer teachers is that in the former, most of the teachers, as serving primary or nursery or adult teachers have a regular income from their salaried jobs. Their Urban counterparts though have no other income yet they were expected to come to school daily and teach. It is however not realistic to expect these teachers to give their sole and undivided attention to the school for as was pointed out "*these people also have daily needs. They need food and...they are human beings who should have a means of survival (EO62:2002)*". It is not clear how this voluntary stress came to be so predominant in NFS. The Kisumu NFE Officer perplexed, admits that "*it is not even put down on paper. In fact I do not know how it came about, but when I came into the administration of NFE, that is what I found going on (ibid)*". The Policy Guidelines put the onus of payment of NFS teachers on the various providers. However, NFS was formally housed within DAE. So perhaps, the volunteerism associated with the adult teacher (Ilsey 1990) may have been carried over to NFS since there is nothing else to guide the practitioners.

### 5.8.3 Academic Requirements

There seemed to be overriding acceptance by the head teachers and the MOEST officers, that the minimum academic requirement for the NFS teacher was the primary school certificate. As one proprietor explained "*...the MOE standard is that anyone who has completed Std. 8 can be a teacher in a non formal school. That is what it says. But that kind of education cannot work here. That is why we insist on a minimum of "O" level and above*" (PO19:2002). Another head teacher confirmed that "*...the MOE told us no need of asking for trained people who would want to be paid something, but let us take from form 4 downwards. They were giving us up to class 8 - a dropout can come and help. They allowed us. They were not strict on that* (HT8:2002)". It is not clear from where the district education offices drew this demarcation, as the Policy Guidelines are silent about the basic qualifications needed for any NFS teacher. It is however possible that the minimum requirement of a primary school certificate followed in Adult Education, where NFE has traditionally been housed, has been transferred to NFS.

The findings depicted that Urban NFS teachers had the whole array of academic levels ranging from primary to high school certificates. All the institutions had at least one teacher with a Form 4 certificate. Some institutions, normally the more focussed ones, insisted on this as the basic requirement. However, for the majority, there was no prior academic demarcation implying that a whole variety was to be found. Six (27%) centres had teachers with a primary school certificate while 7 (39%) centres employed secondary school dropouts. Another 4 (18%) centres had teachers with form 6 certificates.

In Rural more thought seemed to have been placed on the basic academic requirements the NFS teacher ought to have. They would be “...*formal teachers that have been trained, that have gone to college...nursery teachers that have volunteered to teach...*(S60:2002)” or they would be “...*school leavers from our community that are not doing anything...a boy who is interested and who has no job* (P31:2002)”. These two quotes delineate the academic levels of teachers found in Rural. The majority of teachers (7 centres) had form four certificates. The nursery school teachers were mostly secondary school dropouts. One centre additionally had a teacher with the primary school (Std. 8) certificate only. One exception reported in one school was using the current Std. 8 pupils to teach when the NFS teachers failed to avail themselves. As the head teacher explained “*If I am so committed I use the head boy or one of the Std. 8 pupils to give something...because when they come and find there is no teacher, they also complain* (HT 26:2002)”.

The essence of having reasonable academic qualifications is imperative as these people are being hired to teach. The quality of what they teach and how they teach can possibly be elevated with good academic grounding. An issue is hereby made of the primary school leaver teachers. One such teacher, who participated in an FGD, could hardly speak English and yet he claimed to teach it and could not understand, nor fill out the brief bio-data questionnaire given to him. The teachers who had completed secondary school on the other hand confidently conversed in either English or Kiswahili and filled out the questionnaires with no problem. A secondary school certificate, Form 4, therefore seem to be a rational basic academic qualification that ought be required of any NFS teacher.

#### **5.8.4 Professional Requirements**

In Urban, five different types of professional qualification were evident. Five (23%) of the centres had P1<sup>43</sup> teachers, 4 (18%) had university graduates (half of whom were graduate teachers) and 2 centres had instructors holding various Government Trade Tests. Another 3 centres were staffed with teachers from DAE. Lastly, one centre had a teacher trained in Islamic religious instruction.

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<sup>43</sup> Meaning Professional Teacher 1. These teachers normally participate in a 2 year professional training and are groomed to serve in formal primary schools. Previously, those with lower academic levels were accepted in teacher

These institutions accounted for 55% of the total. This means that a total of 10 (45%) of the institutions had teachers with no professional qualification.

The presence of a teacher with a professional training has evolved over time and seems to have been influenced by the:

- financial stability of the institution *“When we begun the school, we recruited untrained teachers because...We could not pay for trained teachers (PO 1:2002)”*
- educational and training objectives *“from 1994, that is when we decided...in future the teachers that we will have to recruit will have to be vocational teachers who can teach carpentry, mechanic, such things. Not just maths and English. Because now the main objective of our school is to provide the pupils with vocational education... (HM22:2000).*

Two institutions in Urban however reported that as a practice, they preferred not to employ professionally trained teachers. One centre explained that *“...they may not fit into our methods of teaching (PO 17:2002)”*. This centre traditionally caters for street children who have specialised needs which teachers, whether trained or not, are not equipped to deal with. Such centres have therefore opted to take From 4 leavers and equip them to handle the social and educational needs of the children<sup>44</sup>.

The second centre reported negative experience with trained teachers, that *“...trained teachers try to do it by the book which does not work. Trained teachers have a conventional way...(PO 21:2002)”*. The argument here is that trained teachers have been equipped to teach in formal schools and feel less inclined to vary their teaching methods to suit the prevailing conditions. Hence this proprietor stated that *“we do not have trained teachers now...we had a few and it was quite a catastrophe. In fact the ones who were not trained, in their classes everything was good, and the performance was so good compared to the trained ones. The trained ones have a lot of complaints all the time...and yet the others, kind of, you know improvise (PO21:2002)”*. This proprietor’s contention is however suspect due to several contradictions in the data gathered. First, there was a trained (P1) teacher in the centre who was interviewed and observed when teaching. The pupils in fact reported that she was their favourite teacher:

- C: We like her because she teaches us well  
 E: She teaches very well until you understand...  
 S: and if you do not understand she explains to you  
 M: She does not beat you even if you make a mistake (PP33:2002)

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training colleges but would qualify as P2 to P4. These grade levels have since been erased and all teachers now train to be P1 teachers.

<sup>44</sup> Researchers dealing with the Education of Street children are uncomfortable with this approach and argue that in terms of quality of education, it may be a better idea to further train a professional teacher on skills needed to handle such children rather than put a social worker in class and expect them to teach (Mugo 2004)

Secondly, the proprietor's wife, who heads the school and has been the only consistent teacher since the inception of the school (P52:2002) stressed the essence of having trained teachers and explained the present lack<sup>45</sup>, to be because the teachers had left for further training.

the teachers were not trained. So we requested them if they could give them some training. So they informed us abit late because we thought they would go for inservice training during the holiday but they told us that they will take them this term (T42:2002).

The above evidence from the pupils and head teacher puts doubt on the assertion of trained teachers being unsuitable/ bad teachers. The centre mainly caters for "economic" victims who attend the school because it is the cheapest alternative. The centre offers academic subjects. As the teachers have not been shown another way, one can understand their insistence of performing the duties of teaching maths or languages as they were trained in college or refusing to accept the authority of a non-professionally trained boss regarding classroom issues who will "...tell them (to) display their classes (PO21:2002)". The contradiction of statement and practice may confirm that the real motivation for preference of the non-trained teacher lies not so much in their suitability or lack of it as in the monetary factor<sup>46</sup>.

In Rural (Samburu), the situation is that "*most of these centres are being supported by the formal schools, in terms of sharing of resources. They share books, they share teachers. Actually the teachers who are teaching in these centres are just the normal primary school teachers (EO65:2002)*". Six of the 7 centres visited in Samburu indeed had P1 or P2 formal school teachers who taught in the centres. The other group were the nursery teachers with DICECE<sup>47</sup> certification present in 5 schools. The school in Marsabit was manned by an experienced, albeit untrained teacher. He was selected because "*we were convinced that he was the right person to start the school. Even though the two other teachers we had talked to were trained teachers, they were younger and not very experienced. When you start a school, the teaching of the children is one aspect but the whole relation to the village, the community, the parents is a whole other side of it that is extremely important (P29:2002)*". So, like some Urban institutions, being a professional trained teacher was not always the primary consideration.

In conclusion, one can say that a compact recruitment strategy is largely lacking especially in Urban. In the initial stages, all and sundry were accepted to teach and recruitment only stopped once a point of saturation was reached for as one head teacher confirmed "*when we were 10...we decided that any teacher who wants to come here must be interviewed (HT5:2002)*". Going by the frequency and position of mention in the discussions, volunteerism and related qualities ranked as

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<sup>45</sup> During the first leg of the research where the proprietor was interviewed, he claimed to have 7 teachers 2 of who were volunteers. At the time of the case study, there were only 3 teachers, one of whom taught nursery.

<sup>46</sup> This centre, as discussed in Section 5.10.5 has a variety of self sustaining projects which can probably partially support an NFS teacher.

<sup>47</sup> These teachers undergo a series of in-service courses run by the District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) under the MOEST.

the basic recruitment criteria. Such qualities in Urban included experience with children (6 centres), former Sunday school teachers or church members (3 centres), that the teacher be of good character (2 centres), area specialisation (2 centres), former NFS teachers (1 Centre) and in Rural, experience and maturity to enable better linking with the community were important criteria. Academic qualification and professional credentials were secondary criteria.

### 5.8.5 Teacher Motivation

The data revealed that the Rural based teacher was largely propelled by feelings of community responsibility to teach in NFS. They identified themselves with the community as this sample of quotes reveals “*I decided to teach so that **our children** can get an education the way I also got an education (T47:2002)*” or “*I decided that because these are **our children**, there is no one else who can teach them if I do not (T50:2002)*” or “*we stay with these Lchekuti at home. They would tell me they would like to go to school, if only there was someone to teach them (T46:2002)*” or “*we know that these are **our brother and sisters**, so we also sacrifice and help in the programme” (HT24:2002)*” and lastly “*we became volunteers of the community because we came from around. So we just decided to help **our people** (T23:202)*”. When these teachers talk of “our children”, it basically means that. Pastoral communities, due to need for large grazing space, and the fact that there is abundant land, tend to cluster together along family lines. The chances are therefore high that the teachers and children belong to similar clans or lineages and in the broad sense, are therefore brothers and sisters. For this reason, teachers are willing to extend their services to the children.

The Urban teacher on the other hand admitted that “*I came here to look for a job (T40:2002, T43:2002)*” as “*...staying at home idly could not help me (T64:2002)*”. Other than that, some hoped “*...to help **these children** (T41:2002, T44:2002)*” or *learn more about **these children** (T43:2002)*”. Just by analysing the use of “these children” one sees there is a distance in the Urban teachers perception and relationship to the clientele, and they are serving in the NFS because it is a job.

### 5.8.6 Teacher Origins

It has been expressed in NFE literature (Ahmed et al 1993, Evans 1981, Grunstaff 1976) that the teachers are often drawn from the community. While all the Rural based centres affirmed this as did 10 (45%) centres in Urban, some 12 (55%) indicated that the teachers did not necessarily come from the community where the centre was based or its environs.

The community teacher is more liable in Rural where the societies are still more homogenous and familial. The teachers are often supported in kind by their communities. Example is hereby given of the teacher in Marsabit, whose official residence is in Korr, 30 km away from the NFS. Every weekend he visits his family, travelling on foot and on working days “*I just stay there, in the*

*Manyatta. I have a relative. My uncle is there (T29:2001)*". In Urban however, it is the centres that did not have a strong financial base, that were started as self-help projects that said that they recruited teachers from within. As one Urban centre explained "*since we are community based, they just come from this community, people who know this school (HT5:2002)*". All the established centres however did not have a community tag. Indeed particular teacher specifications counted more. One centre in Kisumu, that mainly caters for street children "*take(s) people irrespective of who they are or what they are as long as they fit in our programme (PO17:2002)*". However, that some non-established centres also claimed to have teachers from outside their community is difficult to explain. Perhaps, it is the term "community" that is ambiguous.

## **5.9 Teacher Capacity Building**

The data so far presented reveals that 45% urban and 25% rural based centres employed teachers with no prior professional qualifications. The teachers with prior qualifications were P1 (and in Rural some P2) teachers, DICECE/DAE trained teachers and other graduate/diploma holders in education but also non education areas such as theology, sociology or food technology. Given this it becomes necessary to examine the teacher preparation modes in place, not only for the untrained teachers, but also for the trained teachers who ideally need to be prepared for the different cadre of clientele in NFS.

While the inappropriateness of a theologian or food technologist to teach is clear, issue can also be raised with professionally trained secondary, primary and nursery teachers. These teachers, due to their training and orientation have a different way of viewing learning. First, training for conventional schools carries along certain traditions; that learning ought to be in a particular time, at a specific place, learners ought to be dressed in a certain way etc. These factors are an important point of divergence in NFS that teachers need to respect and encourage. For teachers to do so, they need to be educated on their essence. Secondly, the teachers have been prepared to teach a particular homogenous age group but they often end up with another type or at worst mixed ages ranging from 6 years to over 30 years in one class. The learning methods they know may not be suitable for the learners at hand. A classroom observation of a nursery school trained teacher depicted that he simply used the same methods for children when teaching adults (more details in section 6.7.2.1). So while it is a bonus to have these trained teachers, it is necessary to prepare them to teach in NFS where the ages and levels differ. Indeed some centres had invested in further or re-training of their teachers.

The data revealed two types of teacher capacity building modes in place. Either, the centres organised for persons to come and train their staff or the teachers participated in seminars or courses offered by the government or the NGOs.

In Urban, four centres (18%) had taken the initiative to train their teachers. One centre preferred to “...take people who are not trained and then we train them on the job and we send them out for some further training (PO17:2002)”. Another centre depended on “...a group from Nairobi who had volunteered to come and assist for the in door training (PO19:2002). The other two centres had some trained teachers but had additionally organised for an in-house training where all the practicing teachers were in-serviced. As one of them explained

In 1994, the centre organised for a training, an in-service in-house training for these teachers. The centre hired some personnel, who were drawn from the MOE, inspectorate and directorate, teacher college tutors and even some people from Kenyatta University and they came here and trained the teachers for two years. So the teachers were being trained every time the school closes. They used to hold a 3 week sessions. They were taught on teaching methodology, curriculum development...they were undergoing the P1 course because even the examinations that they were doing were P1 exams although these now cannot be recognised nationally as a trained teacher because it was something organised inhouse. So I can rightly say that my teachers are trained (HT22:2000).

These four centres therefore either invited volunteers, paid for trainers to come or sent out their personnel for further relevant training. The majority of the centres (11 or 50%) however mainly benefited from existing trainings offered by other agencies. The most active government wing that benefited the NFS teacher, if the number of mentions is anything to go by, was DICECE who in-serviced nursery school teachers over a period of two years. The teachers attended 3 weeks training during the school holidays. Also mentioned was DAE who, unlike DICECE that offers a short course leading to certification, mainly hold seminars. This teacher explained the value of the training:

I joined this ECD teaching training, from August last year. That way I also got more information on how to handle the children. And there are also some seminars I always go to, these one's for adult education. Sometimes they teach us how to handle these children...so that they can keep on enjoying learning.(T64:2002)

The MOEST in conjunction with UNICEF was also mentioned by 3 centres as having provided a training once. Supporting the government endeavours in training are the NGOs (e.g. KAACR) and sometimes the institutions themselves. The Kisumu based organisation have for example organised themselves into what they call “the Kisumu Children Agencies Consortium” One member centre is very established and from time to time organised seminars and workshops to benefit the other members. Four centres in the study sample mentioned benefiting from the consortium. Seven (32%) centres in Urban had not introduced their staff to any kind of training. The teachers therefore had to grope their way about how to teach. These teachers had adopted different coping strategies which are discussed in more details in the “Pedagogy section 6.7.1”.

In Rural NGOs prominently featured as training providers. Mention here must be made of Action Aid who was cited by 6 (75%) of the centres. As the AAK representative explained “*We had a comprehensive package for them. We took them for training. They were being trained by the KIE teachers... They qualified but they were not given certificates but to us we think they are qualified for the levels they are teaching (S60:2002)*”. The training package benefited not only the NFS

teachers in the AAK program schools but also other NFS teachers in the district. Other agencies mentioned to have trained the teachers are CCF, GTZ and CIDA. All the nursery school teachers had benefited from DICECE, mentioned again in 75% of the centres. So AAK and DICECE can be said to be the most active training agencies in Rural.

The Policy Guidelines (8.2vii) are clear on whose mandate teacher training and in-servicing is, that; “The MOEST, in collaboration with providers, shall organise training and in-service programmes to equip them with the methodological approaches suitable for non-formal learners”. When one examines the groups of people listed in both Rural and Urban as taking charge of the training, one sees it fits within the Policy Guidelines. These are personnel from government departments viz. KIE, MOEST, DICECE, DAE, College tutors and University lecturers, and lastly private groups or persons. Two issues are however raised. First, the government representatives and college tutors/lecturers can largely be said to belong to the mainstream conventional thinking. That it was reported in one centre that the teachers “...were undergoing the P1 course because even the examinations that they were doing were P1 exams (HT22:2000)” shows that the skills imparted must have tended towards conventional formal school rather than NFE approaches. It is only in Samburu, where language related to alternative learning approaches, like multigrade teaching was utilised. The Samburu teachers, trained under the auspices of AAK, did not raise issue about the varied age groups as did the Nairobi teachers for instance. This may imply that NGO trainers were less tied up to the formal paradigm training approaches and indeed introduced the teachers to some NFE approaches. The second issue is that MOEST is not in control of the training programmes. MOEST largely waits to be invited by the individual centres and NGOs. This makes a national plan for training NFS teachers shaky as training is on an *ad hoc* basis. Depending on NGOs makes it difficult for MOEST to check the vested interests and agendas the NGOs may have. For instance, KAACR mainly offers courses on child rights and not necessarily on pedagogical skills. This is a good thing but one cannot entirely depend on them.

MOE have planned a trickling down training mode where NFE officers are supposed to be trained and they in turn train others as hereby corroborated; “we had a *Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop in Mbagathi and thereafter we are supposed to train people down here who are supposed to then start training teachers (EO62:2002)*”. The training has not fully been effected. Under a Framework of Understanding entered between UNICEF and the MOEST in 1994, UNICEF was suppose to fund the programme primarily in terms of materials and teacher preparation while MOEST was expected to provide the personnel. The training aspect had not really taken off and both sides attribute the blame to the other party;

The biggest problem we have had has been from UNICEF. As I have said, its like UNICEF is supposed to kind of show the way. Because they provide the funds. Sometimes it has not been easy to get things going because they have kept on delaying things...So we have to wait for

them. There is an agreement that UNICEF is supposed to provide funds, the government provides personnel...like us we are always there. If they call us, we go... I think they have their own reasons. They also blame the government for failing to do one or two things (EO60:2002).

Irrespective of who is to blame, the experience shows the demerit of wholly planning and relying on donor funds over which one has no control. If MOEST want to be more proactive in planning and executing the relevant training programmes, as envisioned in the Policy Guidelines, they need to set out funds for capacity building of NFS teachers.

### 5.10 Payment of Teachers

Other than stating that the onus of paying teachers shall be in the hands of “Communities, NGOs and other service providers” the Policy Guidelines are silent about specific details of who shall be paid what amount. This leaves the decision of payment solely on the hands of the NFS proprietors, be they the community, individuals or sponsors. The catchword witnessed in the research, that had implications on teacher payment, was use of the volunteer teacher mentioned in 27 (90%) centres. These volunteer teachers were paid anything ranging from null to Ksh.5000/-<sup>48</sup>. Perhaps because most centres are aware that they cannot pay competitive rates, they label their teachers as “volunteers” thereby legalising the token mode of payments. Teachers are already forewarned on being hired not to expect any pay, and are therefore less bound to make any demands. The fact that these teachers lack accredited certification weakens their bargaining power just as having no written terms of service makes them more liable to exploitation. Teachers were reported to “...earn depending on how they talk to the director (C58:2002)”. This means they were rewarded differently by the various institutions. Figure 19 presents the variety of persons/groups who were mentioned as providing teacher salaries in both Urban and Rural.

Fig. 19: Salary/Token Source

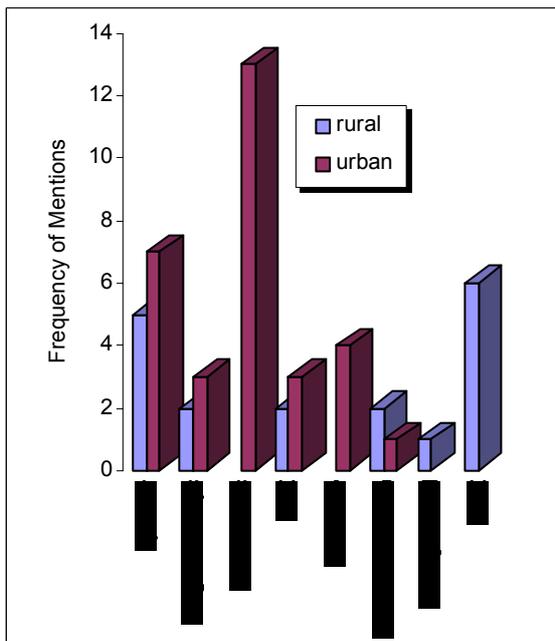
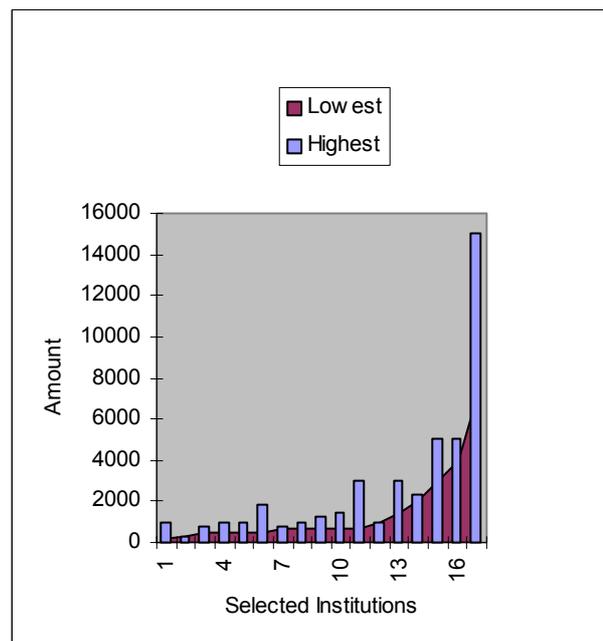


Fig. 20: Urban: Lowest and Highest Salaries



<sup>48</sup> The current exchange rate is Ksh 90/- to one Euro.

### 5.10.1 Sponsors

The data revealed that regular and often better teacher wages were paid in institutions that had an established sponsor. In Urban, these sponsors were identified as individuals (in 4 centres) and organisations based outside the country (in 3 centres). The individuals in two of these centres were missionaries, again based outside Kenya. The money sourced from the “external” sponsors meant that the centres were able to offer the most lucrative salaries recorded in the study sample ranging from Ksh.2000/- to over 15,000/-. For further illustration, Figure 20 shows a sample of the wages in selected urban institutions that availed their teacher salary scales. This group, with the best rewards in the study sample account 24% of the total. Indeed, the informants rightly talked of paying salaries to their employees and not just token payments.

Mention is hereby made of the less established individual sponsors. One, a Japanese social worker, provided the 4 teachers in the centre with a token payment of Ksh.500/-. This they received on a regular basis. Another, a proprietor, claimed to pay the Ksh.1000/- teacher wages. He was able to do this as he had received his retirement benefits. This money is long over, so he relies on what he earns from a commercial college he teaches to not only support his family but also the school. That managing this is difficult and not viable especially on a long term basis is clear as he says “*when I know that I am broke, I tell them (the guardians) (HT8:2002)*”.

In Rural, 4 centres cited sponsors, in this case NGOs (AAK and CCF) as providing payment. The AAK package of Ksh.1500/- per month only lasted 6 months while CCF gives teachers tokens of between Ksh.500/- to 1000/-. This amount is supposed to be augmented by the community. In Marsabit, the proprietors pay the teacher a salary and they “*...would like to continue supporting three teachers (P29:2002)*”. While they can regularly pay the teacher, the question of sustainability still crops up for as they laughingly remarked “*if we certainly lose our good jobs, we will not be able to continue supporting the school (ibid)*”.

Religious groups also sponsored teachers salaries. Three centres in Kisumu were provided for by a church (2 centres) and a Muslim association. In Rural, the Catholic mission supported teachers in 2 centres. While the Muslim association paid the teachers salary in whole, the churches only gave token payments to complement what parents were expected to contribute.

In summary, it is evident that “external sponsors” and proprietors with good income, offered teachers, not just a token, but a salary they could live on. The NGOs and the Churches provided token payments and expected the parents to top up the rest.

### 5.10.2 Parents Contribution

In Urban the vast majority of the centres 15 (68%) relied on contributions from parents to pay and/or as in 2 centres to augment the Ksh.500/- the sponsor/church offered. These contributions ranged from Ksh.10/- to 100/- per month often per child but sometimes per family too. This money

was used to buy teaching materials (mainly chalk) after which the remaining was divided among the teachers. The token scale of these centres, as illustrated in Figure 19, accounted for the lower salary scales which in nominal terms ranged from Ksh.200/- while the highest just over Ksh.1000/- (the higher scale of Ksh.2000 –15000/- belonged to centres with sponsors). However, not only was this amount so small such that it could not sustain anybody, but it was not always paid. As an exasperated chairman exclaimed “...*a parent with four children is supposed to give Ksh.50/- per month and they cannot!* (C59:2002)”. The irregular contribution meant that teachers could not expect a specific amount at the end of the month as the centres did not pay the token payments agreed upon. For example, this centre whose chairman is quoted above, had agreed to pay the teacher Ksh.300/-<sup>49</sup> but sometimes ended up giving Ksh.150/- . On other occasions, parents indeed made their contributions but the proprietor controlled the purse so tightly that the teacher were not paid, or inadequately so. An example is given of a proprietor, who assumed an active role when her Pastor husband who had initiated the centre died. This lady “...*is there to get money and control it because that land is theirs...Like the centre is hers in a way* (EO62:2002)”. The teachers however felt they rightly deserved some dues and several had resorted to unethical means of getting this money explained as thus

some teachers collect money from pupils directly and they do not remit... The way I look at it from the psychological point of view, I think they feel, money is there but they are not getting it. So they want to use their own unorthodox means to get it. In fact some teachers were laid off or sent away because of that. They would go to school very early in the morning and demand the money from the children (EO62:2002).

In Rural however, parents did not contribute any money. Both the heads of the centres and the NFS teacher reported that the parents had reneged on their promise to pay the teacher as these sample quotes show

During mobilisation, the community promised to pay us something but they have not. Even exercise books, they had promised that they will be buying ...for their children but since we started they have not (HT 30:2002)

They were asked “can you pay the teachers?” and the parents agreed they could. But later on, they have not shown any signs of paying. Actually they have not paid me (T47:2002)

The unwillingness/inability of parents to make financial contributions can be attributed to the fact that a different kind of economy, a non monetary one, exists in Rural. As the proprietor who wholly sponsors the Marsabit centre explained “*We thought of charging them a symbolic fee...but it is just that there is no money. So we decided that it would be very complicated to collect Ksh.10/- per child* (P29:2001)”. A discussion with parents revealed that some of them had planned to contribute in kind “*we had planned that a parent can contribute a goat. The teacher can decide whether to sell it or keep it. That was our plan to help the teacher* (C57:2002)”. This plan has however not been implemented due to the drought that had periodically affected them. In short, NFS teachers in Rural

<sup>49</sup> This amount was quoted both by the chairman of the committee and the teacher therefore validating its truthfulness.

cannot count on parents to supplement their earnings. Instead, NFS teachers had to rely on other sources.

### 5.10.3 Harambees<sup>50</sup>

To supplement the parents' contribution, 4 centres in Urban mentioned that they organised *harambees* from time to time, so “...for some months, we were earning well but there was nothing left again and we came back to square zero (HT3:2002)”. Earning well here meant receiving Ksh.1,800/-, the highest amount some centres had ever paid. So while *harambees* do aid, it is a short term solution.

### 5.10.4 The Government

The most prominent group that provided for the NFS teacher in Rural, by default, was the MOEST as these formal school teachers volunteered their time. This leaves the most active government department, in both Rural and Urban, as DAE. Two rural based centres in Kisumu were headed by former adult education teachers, who now devoted all their time to NFS but continued to receive an honorarium payment from DAE. In Samburu, DAE staffed a teacher in one centre as “*the adult department feels that those who are between 15-20 are now adults (T23:2002)* and there DAE clientele. On the whole, DAE was more responsive to the problem of teacher wages. An ingenious Head teacher, faced with the prospect of losing his teachers “...went to DAE, they accepted to give the teacher a token of Ksh.500/-. He was paid for about 6 months then he was told there is no money (HT27:2002)”. Lastly, the county council, due to the personal effort of the initiator, who also serves as a area councillor, contributed some amount for the teachers.

### 5.10.5 Income Generating Projects

One centre in Urban and the AAK program school in Rural paid teachers out of the proceeds of income generating activities. According to the proprietor in Urban, sustainability is an important attribute of his centre. As a result, many income generating projects were initiated such that “*while the community brings us work, we pay the teacher...three teachers are on salary (PO21:2002)*”. Indeed, this centre claimed to have a number of income generating projects, or organised their courses in such a way that they paid for themselves. In particular, the chicken farm brought in some income while the tailoring, hairdressing, computer sections were run like production units, in that training was given but services are also offered to the public at a fee. All these programmes were begun with donated equipment. These computers for instance, are used for training purposes and “*there are people in the community who come to send their emails here and they also pay something (ibid)*”. Over and above this, he claimed to have strong and beneficial ties with individuals

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<sup>50</sup> This word has carved itself a niche in the Kenyan scene to denote a fundraising drive.

in the community who could donate “...Ksh.10,000 to support the programme” The proprietor, who was very eloquent in describing the activities, concluded with “so basically, we are self-supporting. In a way, we run our services pole pole (slowly), although it is tough.. But somehow, we manage and we are able to take care of our small, small kind of expenses”. But in the same breath, he complains that “The problem with that is that it strains us so much...Then secondly we have to depend on a lot of volunteers to help in supporting other areas of our work because we cannot afford and that is our biggest problem”. On the one hand, the proprietor prides in the number of programmes<sup>51</sup>, their self sustenance and on the community support, both financial and otherwise that enables them pay the teachers yet in the same breath reports how they have to depend on volunteers. The proprietor’s wife, who heads the school claims that teachers are rewarded in kind. She says “our plan normally in that we get volunteer teachers to help then we exchange. We teach them something and they teach (in the NFS). So we have two ladies who have volunteered...(T42:2002)”. The teacher who was interviewed when asked how much she earns said “when I came, they told me that I will start on a voluntary basis. The teacher who was here had stayed for four months and she left because she had not been given anything (T43:2002)”. The contradictions from the informants from this centre suggests that something is amiss in the centre. At best, the centre is simply disorganised with no clear direction of how to handle the teachers or at worst, it is short changing the teachers. The evidence however points to the latter and one is compelled to agree with the NFE officer in Kisumu who surmises that “I think because of that voluntary part, some people take advantage of the teachers and it has also contributed to low levels of discipline even among those teachers. Some centres may charge some money from the learners...but you will find that that money just goes into the pocket of a few individuals...or the teachers are given something, but very little (EO62:2002)”. Some centres are deliberately short-changing the teachers all within the label of volunteerism.

The planning and execution of the income generating programme in Samburu, on the other hand, is quite different. The AAK Programme Officer explained that the 1,500/- token they offered teachers was found not to be sustainable as “AAK is going to go any time, in my mind I had it that if AAK goes, then of course teachers would cease. I decided that we needed to start an income generating project for the teachers. So we gave them 175,000/- to start an income generating project that would continue supporting them even as AAK goes (S60:2002)”. This money is currently benefiting 10 NFS teachers in the AAK programme schools, be they formal school teachers already on a regular salary from the government, nursery teachers supposedly paid by communities, P1 teachers waiting for posting and secondary school leavers not on any pay

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<sup>51</sup> The programmes offered were listed as: Tailoring and dressmaking, Computer classes, Typing, Hairdressing and Beautician, Secretarial, Housekeeping and Cookery, Skin disease clinic, Rescue centre, Community Clinic and the NFS.

programme. The teachers were first required to form themselves into an association, elect office bearers, and suggest what they would do with the money. These teachers proposed to “...*buy animals and sell, and do small business like shop and then the profit that we get would now be our salary* (T47:2002)”. The teachers are happy with this gesture from AAK. The income activity may however be counter productive towards teaching. The preferred activity, trading in cows, is time consuming. It was reported that sometimes the teachers were away for one week. Secondly, if the trading turned out to be more lucrative, the teacher would be tempted out of the classroom for as it was posed “*if it is generating money, and good money is coming out of it, what will make you want to support the pupils rather than put more emphasis on it?* (S60:2002)”. Luckily, other than the teachers experiencing some practical hindrances in the livestock trading, they also had a moral baggage that “*it would consume all the time for our main work which is teaching* (*ibid*). As was elaborated:

Initially, we had said every region will take 15,000/-. We took it, and tried to do that business of livestock, but we saw we were not profiting. So we returned the money to the officials of the cooperative...we then divided each of us, because we are ten, and each got 5,000/- Now every end month, you have to return 500/-...So in total, one will need to return 6,000/-, interest is 1,000/- We have realised this will help us because you take the money and do your work (T47:2002).

The AAK example of entrusting the teachers with the money has not only raised the morale of the teachers, but has also raised their responsibility levels and is the envy of other teachers in Samburu.

In conclusion, the data reveals that teacher salaries fluctuate depending on the availability of the money or the proprietors will to pay. Leaving teachers in the mercy of the individual proprietors heightens their liability to be exploited, all within the banner of volunteerism.

#### **5.10.6 Teacher Volunteerism Versus Turnover**

The vast majority of schools in the study sample (27 or 90%) are staffed partly or entirely by volunteer teachers. As the subsequent section will show, absolute reliance on volunteer teachers does not auger well for the regular teaching nor the sustainability of the school. It is illogical, as some centres have, to plan a whole school, solely relying on volunteers. As one proprietor aptly put it, “*you know a volunteer is here today, tomorrow he is gone and maybe he was just getting to learn and know how to do the right thing, then they have to leave. And of course because you are not paying them, you cannot hold on to them* (PO21:2002)”. Simply put, if one neither has an agreement binding the teacher to serve in the school for a period of time nor pays for services rendered, then one has to depend on the teachers good will and sacrifice. Dependence on volunteerism has had several effects ranging from lack of teacher motivation, absenteeism, teacher turnover and ultimately shorter survival rates of the schools.

The data revealed that want of reasonable teacher wages had led to general lack of motivation and commitment. As this head teacher affirmed “*teachers are not given anything. So*

*sometimes their morale goes down because no one cares about what they are facing (HT25:2002)*". The teachers in question here are those who mainly depend on parents' contribution for their payments. All the teachers in Samburu who were interviewed had the same complaint that whereas *"the parents had accepted that they would be paying me something small. Since the project begun, there is nothing they have been able to contribute to pay for me (Nursery female teacher Rural 50:2002)*. In Urban, teachers raised issue with the meagre salaries

the salary is so little. It cannot sustain somebody. So the teachers just come and the salary is not good and they move away out there...Teaching here is not that easy (Female Form 4 school leaver Urban 14:2002).

You see voluntary work does not succeed because there is no motivation. That is why the number of teachers who are here are so few. Many have come and they go away. To me, I can not explain being here and if things go well, I may not be here because like me, I have a wife and a child and I have to take care of them. So if they can pay the teachers well, they can improve the school (Male Form 4 school leaver Urban 14:2002)

The lack of or insufficient reward had contributed to a laissez-faire attitude towards teaching, as the NFS teacher did not seem to regularly present him/herself in school. In the 6 schools where classroom observations and teachers discussions were held thereby making it possible to counter check the stated teacher numbers provided by the administration and actual teachers available, it was noted that other than one Urban school, all the schools had at most only half of the teachers present in school. This was despite having made a prior appointment with the schools regarding the research. Table 12 presents the specific details.

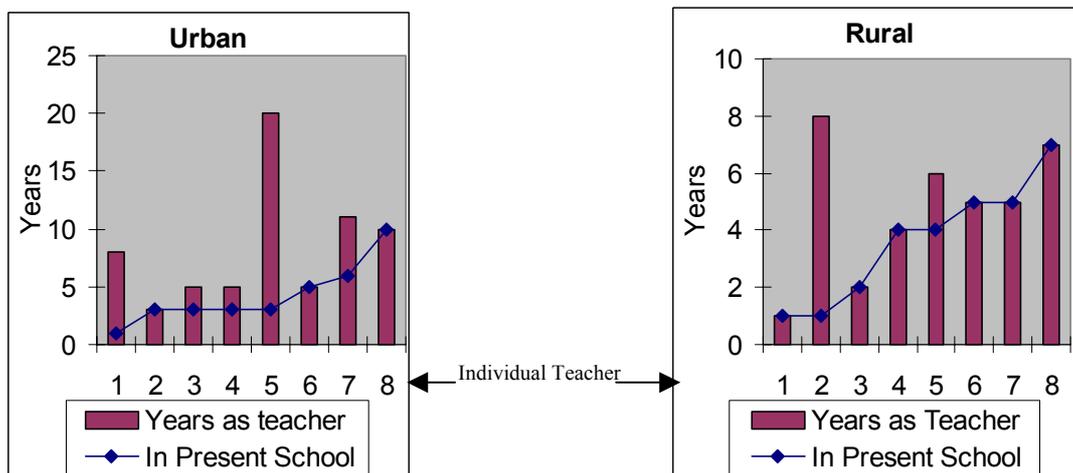
**Table 12: Teacher availability per centre**

| Teachers      | Urban Centres |         |           | Rural Centres |         |         |
|---------------|---------------|---------|-----------|---------------|---------|---------|
|               | a             | B       | c         | a             | B       | C       |
| Stated Total  | 7             | 4       | 10        | 2             | 2       | 2       |
| Total Present | 3 (43%)       | 2 (50%) | 10 (100%) | 1 (50%)       | 1 (50%) | 1 (50%) |

Teachers in Urban Centre C in the above table are paid well and they know that this pay is dependent on their performing their duties. So they avail themselves to teach. The other centres however depend on volunteer teachers. That teacher attendance may fluctuate to null is corroborated by parents in Urban (Centre a) who said that *"...like last year there were no teachers, only the nursery teacher. The children would come and say there is no teacher (P52:2002)"*. In Rural, the formal school head teacher (Centre b) in Samburu admitted that *"I am sorry to say but they are a problem because they do not avail themselves... sometimes he leaves without informing me and the pupils have been coming. Like last week they complained to me that they have been coming and they are not getting someone to assist them (HT26:2002)"*. Pupils sometimes went a whole week without being taught due to the disappearance acts from the teacher. But while the Rural child can seek redress with the formal school administration that houses the NFS, the Urban child has to hope that matters will improve. The fewer pupil numbers evident as one climbs the class ladder may be a consequence of children despairing with attending school but not being taught.

Issue must be raised with the role of the volunteer primary school teachers. Rural Centres (a and b), are supposedly staffed by volunteer primary school teachers. It is however not clear how active they are. The fact that non of them availed themselves for the classroom observation and subsequent interviews, or that they are not there to teach when the other volunteers are away, may prove their irregularity and/or total lack of participation.

**Fig. 21: Individual Teachers' years of service**



To further elucidate on teacher turnover, data of teachers who were interviewed, regarding general years of service specifically in the current institutions is presented. Figures 21 show that the Rural teacher is less transitory than their Urban counterparts. Seven (90%) of the teachers in Rural were still in the same school. The exception cases in the diagram are (a) Teacher 2 who had previously taught in a formal primary school, as a an untrained teacher and as an adult educator before joining NFS and (b) Teacher 5, a nursery school teacher who additionally teaches in the NFS and has constantly been there since the inception of the programme. The fact that the Rural teachers are more permanent should not be construed to mean that they are happy with the situation or that they regularly come to school. Indeed, it may be the strong communal ties that make them stay in the school. But for how long these ties can hold is another question. The primary school teachers had volunteered too because *“these are our children (HT24:2002)”* but this was not enough to sustain their free contributions. Indeed, Teacher 5 argues that *“you know you cannot volunteer for a life time It is a must for you to want to be employed. Isn't it? So I have volunteered for 4 years but I have not seen any changes (T50:2002)”*. She too, like the primary school volunteers may just despair. An example in the study was given of one teacher who had stopped teaching in order seek out a living. Said the head teacher *“But come January, the teacher came for about 3 weeks. He came to the office and said he wants to prepare his piece of land since he was not being paid fully. So the teacher went. Till then, he has not reported (HT27:2002)”*. This teacher has gone for an unspecified duration, therefore planning resumption of learning is indefinite.

The situation of the Urban teachers is less homogenous. Three teachers have been in the same

school all through. Two of them, (Teachers 2 and 8) are on a competitive salary scale while the other (Teacher 6) serves in the more Rural based school in Kisumu. She is a volunteer in the true sense of the word on Ksh.300/- per month when she is lucky. Teacher 5, though she has only served 3 years in the NFS, has been a teacher for over 20 years, consistently so as she is on DAE salary. Teacher 7, the head teacher and wife of the proprietor had taught in a private secondary school before quitting to join her husband to run the centre. Other than Teacher 6, this group of teachers will probably last in NFS as they earn a salary they can live on. That teacher 6 has survived this long in the centre is twofold. First, though in Kisumu, her centre is located in the outlying rural areas where one can earn a meagre salary but be able to survive from the land. Secondly, she only teaches half day and after that she engages in an income generating activity (saloon business). Her experiences are corroborated by another Rural based counterpart in Kisumu, who when asked how he survives on pure volunteerism said *“I can say it is quite natural because we are staying in our own communities, we are also working in our land sometimes...so those things help (T13:2002)”*.

The teachers with a higher prospect of moving on are the following: Teachers 3 and 4 had both taught in other NFS schools before joining the current one. Teacher 4 is a P1 teacher. His presence in NFS is really be default as the government had ceased employing new teachers but *“if I get posting, I say I may go to the formal school (T40:2002)”*. Teacher 1 too is a P1, and in her first year in NFS. She had previously taught in a formal school and was newly transferred to the town. That she is there temporarily is confirmed with her statement that *“You know that all of us are looking for money, so if I get a better paying job, I might go because of that. If they are ready to pay me here, I will not mind teaching (T43:2002)”*.

Teachers 3 and 4 depict a trend of “teacher nomadism” or “career volunteers” that has been developing in Urban (Kisumu) NFS. The primary cause is money. Not only do teachers move, but in two cases (as reported in the study sample), they had initiated their own NFS schools. In one example, it was reported that when the proprietor who had initiated the school died, his wife took over. However, she ceased paying the teachers and they just moved on. This teacher (teacher 4) who was initially at the school remarked *“we just took off...Teachers were not being paid. We just went away... even Mr Michael was at that school. His school broke away from...and they went and formed their own school in the interior. They took off with some teachers and pupils (HT3:2002)”*. It is evident that there are seasoned NFS teachers (like teacher 3, normally those with only academic school certificates) who will keep moving from one NFS to another, or will form their own NFS schools. The formation of splinter schools actually confirms that NFS can pay their teachers reasonable tokens payments. But since some proprietors view NFS as an income generating project first, the plight of the teachers and children come second.

That two schools in the study sample, Urban and Rural, had closed down due to lack of teachers shows how critical the issue of teacher remuneration is. As the Urban head teacher explained “*When we started this school, we had many children and they were using volunteer teachers. So now the teachers wanted their services to be paid for. Parents were not contributing well. So this is what made the school collapse (HT5:2002)*”. The school was started in 1994, collapsed only after one year and was re-established again in 1997. That it has been steady since then may show that there was lack of management of the parents’ contribution for it is clear that parents in Urban do contribute, even if not in whole or irregularly. His Rural based counterpart, who is trying to revive the NFS, stressed that teachers were the pivot grounding for the school as learners were already motivated to seek formal education. However, he agreed with the teachers that it was impractical to expect them to wholly volunteer with nothing in return. Concluded he “*You cannot work for 30 days for free...The children are very interested but the problem is the teacher (HT27:2002)*”.

### **5.11 Summing up**

The findings reveals that a compact recruitment strategy is largely lacking as the Policy Guidelines are silent on the issue. Most centres therefore seem to be easy on who can teach in an NFS, and a sieving mechanism is only put in place when a point of saturation is reached. Going by number of mentions, voluntarism (and other related qualities) rank as the first criterion with academic levels and professional qualifications following.

The study however concludes that a reasonable minimum requirement ought to be a secondary school certificate as the teachers have been hired to teach and should therefore have a good academic grounding. In terms of teacher preparation, the data revealed that the urgency and essence in teacher capacity building was accorded varying importance and seems to have been dictated by the (a) financial stability of the centre, (b) presence of a provider or sponsor and (c) professionalism envisioned by the institution. The institutions therefore adopted varying teacher preparation modes that ranged from recruiting prior trained personnel or preparing training packages for the teachers. Use of representatives from conventional mainstream institutions to train teachers, while credible, may not be most suitable for NFS especially when these trainers fail to train the teachers in NFS approaches. It is paramount that the training programmes delink from conventional maxims, otherwise the training will be a duplication of existing programmes and hence not justifiable. Teacher certification needs to be addressed. Nursery school teachers are at the end of their training period issued with a certificate that is recognised countrywide. NFS teachers, however put in the same effort but have nothing to show for it. They are not nationally recognised. The free for all atmosphere in the training programmes makes it difficult to address the issue of

certification. A national training plan would ease the issue of certification and augment the worth of NFS teachers as trained and qualified. Hence NFS teacher training needs to be streamlined and MOEST has to take a central role. For MOEST to be proactive in planning and executing the training programmes as envisioned in the “Policy Guidelines”, it presupposes setting out funds for the programmes rather than waiting to be invited.

Lastly, it is evident that volunteerism is not sustainable even in Rural areas where feelings of community responsibility are high. Additionally, some employers short changed the teachers all within the banner of volunteerism. The reliance on the volunteer teacher has had adverse effects on the learning process as not only do teachers absent themselves, but there is a big turn over. Absence or frequent teacher changes is not conducive for the continuity of learning. One can however not blame teachers for the laissez-faire attitude they have adopted nor is it fair to expect them to be eternal volunteer as one head teacher, on salary from the government did that *“I try to encourage them to sacrifice, these are their brothers, their sisters and once they give them this education, they may not be rewarded by anybody here, but God is there (HT26:2002)”*. Some sort of consistent remuneration, even if inadequate, may be enough to sustain the voluntary spirit of especially the rural/peri-urban based teacher and arrest the phenomenon of “teacher nomadism”. This contention is based on the fact that *“the retention of the teachers is quite high. Some of us are paid by the department of Adult Education a token of 500/- per month (T15:2002)”*. NFS teachers on token pay from DAE were more faithful as opposed to the formal school volunteer teachers. The explanation here is that the former are expected only to serve in NFS, but the latter have to satisfy their normal duties, over and above the NFS ones. It is therefore not a viable solution to have primary school volunteers, unless a reward system is worked out so that they are motivated to serve. Additionally, it is irrational to expect a volunteer teacher to be in school from 8.00a.m. to 5.00p.m. for free. If they are indeed to continue to serve as volunteers, then it should only be for a couple of hours so that they can engage in other money making activities.

## 5.12 The Place

The available NFE literature largely presumes the location or the premise of learning in NFE to be not only flexible but also optimal in usage in that borrowed or no facilities can be utilised. This is as opposed to conventional schools which are fixed (buildings) and mostly dominate urban areas. This section confirms these assertions by presenting data on the premise of NFS, in terms of its ownership, the quality of the location/buildings and its suitability and impact on learning.

## 5.13 The NFS Premise

The ownership and quality of NFS buildings (when available) is diverse, more so in urban. As Diagram 22 depicts the Rural NFS can be said to fit within the “effective locale utilisation” framework NFE is attributed with as they use borrowed or “open air”. Six (90%) of the NFS in Samburu are housed by the formal schools where NFS mainly borrows the lower primary classes. The arrangement works almost perfectly as the NFS learners report in the afternoon when the regular lower primary learners are through with the school day. However sometimes the NFS “...learners come early, they still find the primary children in class (T45:2002)”. The seventh centre in Samburu utilises a borrowed building too, a nursery school that has been put up by the catholic mission. The exception centre in Rural is the NFS based in Marsabit. This centre is located right in the *manyatta* and has been conceived as a mobile school. There is no construction, and none is intended. Learning takes place outside, under a tree. When the *manyatta* relocates, as is the norm with pastoral communities, so does the school. The teacher has his blackboard, two stools and a desk. The learners sit on the ground, and each has a slate that eases the writing function.

Fig. 22: Owners of the NFS Premise

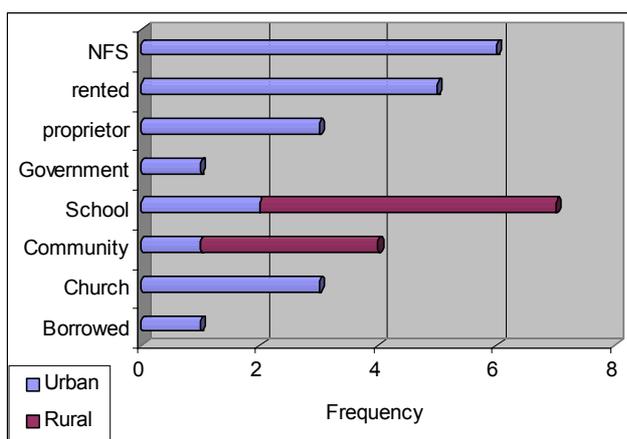
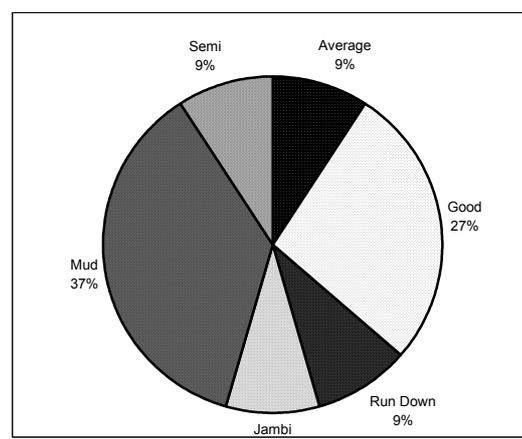


Fig. 23: Quality of the Buildings (Kisumu)



The Urban NFS are more varied. The largest single proportion of the sample (6 centres or 27%) own the buildings where the NFS operates from. All the 3 well established centres, and those with proactive leadership such that they were able to be allocated land by the Municipal Council (2 centres in Kisumu) and one sponsored by a church have put up their own buildings. The quality of

the buildings in the established centres is as good as or even better than most formal schools. The best of the three had the following facilities for example

We have an administration block which houses the offices, the administrators room, a store, the secretary's office and reception and the programme officers office and classes 1-8 ...we have 2 dormitories, a small library...and we are hoping that a friend like you can write a cheque to build a better block, and we have a kitchen. There is no staff room and that is why we say each teacher stays in her class, that is her staff room. The headmistress's office is very large...and can accommodate all the teachers when we need to have a staff meeting. We have 4 pit latrines and we are raising up 4 flush toilets which we hope will be completed very soon (PO1:2002).

Of the other three centres, one has semi-permanent buildings, another is made of mud, and the other *Jambi* (straw mats). The last two are more vulnerable to the elements of rain and/or wind. The next large proportion of NFS (22%) operated in rented buildings. These were primarily those centres situated in the slums, and operated as self-help or income generating projects, and one centre sponsored by external missionaries. The latter rented a part of a non functioning secondary school. The buildings are averagely maintained. The only problem is that the rest of the classes have been turned into residential quarters for outsiders. During the course of the interview, a child was wailing while two grown ups were speaking very loudly. This must cause some interference to learning. The slum NFS were made of mud and *jambi*. 14% (3) of the NFS operated from the proprietors premise; one in his house while the other two proprietors had constructed buildings on their land. The former initially rented an adjacent house and used it for teaching but *"because of lack of money, I could not pay...I had to let go. I stay in the other house so if it is raining we learn in the house. But when it is sunny like now we learn here, I am planning to have a shade here..."*(HT 8:2002)". At the time of the research, he was teaching the 2 learners (out of a stated 12) who had attended school on that day. The buildings the proprietors have erected for NFS are both made of mud. The rooms are so tiny such that *"we do not have space. The pupils are not comfortable in class. They squeeze"* (T10:2002)". Other than congestion, one of buildings is incomplete. Mud has been thrown here and there to make the resemblance of the initial construction of a wall. This is a splinter school. The original school was started by two cousins. Upon their disagreeing, they parted ways and one of them bought land, put up the hurried constructions and started an NFS (T14:2002).

It is only 7 (32%) of the Urban centres that use borrowed facilities and can be said to fit with the "effective locale utilisation" assessment. Of these, three centres use the church halls for class. The hall accommodates a maximum of 4 classes, who simply face different parts of the hall. In one case, the shade of a tree is used to supplement the church hall. Two of these halls have been constructed with mud, while one is a semi-permanent building. Another two centres are housed by the formal schools. In one case, the school is no longer functional so *"the community gave the centre the building"* (T15:2002). The building is pretty run down and *"the roof was blown off during the rainy season (ibid)"* As the classrooms are fewer than the classes, learning sometimes takes place under the shade of a tree. The other centre utilises the primary school classrooms on

weekends “*but during the week, we do not have access to these classrooms, so learning takes place under the trees* (T11:2002)”. So unlike Rural where the effort has been made to accommodate NFS, the Urban schools seem to be more rigid. One centre has been loaned the premises by the community. “*The building is for the community and it was started a long time ago* (HT5: 2002)”. Lastly, one school uses a building that belongs to a local corporation. The building “*was just lying idly* (HT4:2002)” so the proprietor borrowed it, as did members of a political party and they were allowed to use it. This building is very run down.

### 5.13.1 Impact of Premise Quality on Learning

The quality of the buildings was not an issue in Samburu. Most of the primary schools are constructed of wood, on spacious land. It is in Kisumu where the state of some of the buildings was so wanting that it was bound to hamper learning. Figure 23 presents a summary of the quality of the buildings Kisumu. The reasonable to good buildings account for 45% of the total. The rest of the buildings were made of mud or *jambi* or were previously good buildings that are now in dire need of renovation. Some of the “mud” buildings were in various stages of completion and rather derelict. Not only were the rooms small but the architectural style was deficient. The windows were so minuscule that ventilation was a problem. Given that Kisumu is generally a hot town with mean annual temperatures ranging from 20 to 30 degrees and that some schools (specifically those located in the slums) had large pupil numbers, one can imagine the uncomfortable atmosphere in the classroom. One could only learn with the utmost effort at concentration. The *jambi* shades were not better. These straws can at best shade the sunlight away but it is not strong enough to counter the other elements. According to one teachers experience, during the rainy season “*...you could just see them shivering. It was so cold* (T43:2002)”.

Despite the fact that the aura of the “shade of the tree” is much better than the “tiny mud classes” the study revealed that there was a favour towards having a construction, however dilapidated it was. This is because a building made the school visible and thereby led to increased enrolment. As one head teacher explained “*it took a lot of time before we saw growth. When we established some temporary classrooms here, is when we saw many children come here* (HT3:2002)”. The need, however for mechanisms to check and control the buildings is made evident by the nature NFS is developing. A seasoned NFS practitioner in Nairobi had this to say

One, you will find them in slum areas, almost all of them...You will find others in very tiny rooms, where they even have to have lamps in order for the children to see what is there. Very old and dilapidated buildings. Others are made of mud. Some even learn under trees where there are trees...Generally, they are in situations where you would not expect any learning (HT22:2000).

His description could as well be a summary of the NFS in Kisumu and confirms that Urban NFS, especially those located in slum areas, seem to be developing a pattern of derelict buildings.

The temporary nature of the buildings or non-existent buildings had certain consequences which the schools with good buildings did not face. First was the issue of time. Time had to be spent every morning assembling “the school”. Due to safety reasons, the needy centres in Urban store their furniture and stationary with kind neighbours “*so we have to bring them every morning and return them there. You see that affects learning because instead of having the children in class every morning, they are walking up and down bringing the desks* (HT41:2002)”. The pastoral nature of the Rural centre had its implications too. “*Sometimes the village is migrating to a new place so we cannot have classes for two or three days* (T29:2002)”. These activities were not only tedious but also time consuming and ate up some of the school time.

The second issue was the effect due to exposure to the elements of nature. When a school is under the tree “*when it rains, they cannot go to school and they will have to rely on the teachers to sacrifice their Saturday or Sunday or eat into the school leave to make up for those days* (P29:2002)”. At best, the school days can be made up, but where the teachers are not sympathetic to the situation, the days are just lost. A related issue that also emerges in Kisumu is that of safety. The parents warned that though “*they have tried with these classes of theirs, I have not seen them being swept away by the rains, but if the rains were to increase, coupled with this soil of ours of Kisumu, there would be a problem* (P51:2002)”. This centre is located on the Kano plains formation which “*due to the structure on the floor of these escarpments, renders itself vulnerable to flooding*” (MFP-KDDP 2002:6). A potential catastrophe that can bring learning to a halt is the seasonal and sometimes flush flooding associated with Kisumu.

Thirdly, having the open field as the boundaries of the class can be strenuous, not only on the teacher who has to speak loudly in order to be heard but also there are more interferences from the environment which can distract the learners’ attention. As was expounded

I do think when you do not have a classroom - the number of children you can cope with may be smaller because sound gets lost, your voice simply disappears and it is lower for the children in the corner. When you shout in a classroom, children at the back will hear you, even if they are many. Under a tree, that becomes a refrain around the children. And sometimes it gets windy and that again makes it more difficult to keep their attention (P29:2002)

Given this, all affected interviewees aspired for permanent buildings, preferably that which they owned. The exception is the Marsabit school. A mobile school is advantageous as

...having the school so near the home...is so important -that children stay at home as long as they are so small. But also the issue that the school suddenly is so near the parents, and the community and the people. And even when the parents can walk around their houses and do their work, they will see out there...out there...under the shade of the tree, the school activities are going on. So suddenly, the school becomes part of the community because it is visible (P29:2002)

The essence of mobile school, with no buildings, is accommodated for in the Policy Guidelines (4.1 & 7.2). However, its acceptance as a credible alternative still needs to be entrenched in the minds of the education officers. That the proprietors of the Marsabit centre faced attitudinal obstacles when

trying to register the school is a case in point. According to the proprietors, they sent out an application letter. Upon receiving no reply, they visited the education office in person and the officer “*was very negative, very critical (P29:2001)*”. The officer’s unenthusiastic reception is understandable as several issues needed clarification. For instance, registration was being sought for a “school” that had no buildings, one whose “classroom” was the shade of a tree. So while the education officer was “*very, very happy that there is a school at the same time he wants to see a building...but everybody is telling him there is no water in that place. How are you going to start a permanent settlement in that place when there is no water? (ibid)*”. The education officer needed to be educated on the concept of a mobile school. The fact that “*he changed after we talked to him (ibid)*” shows that it was the unusual concept rather than downright adamance that made him hesitant to register the school.

### 5.13.2 The Classes

The quality of the buildings, as the previous section has indicated covers the whole spectrum ranging from conventional buildings to “open air” schools in good to rather harsh conditions. This section however, examines the nature and arrangement within the classrooms. The data revealed that the tendency in Urban was to divide the pupils according to age and ability thereby creating homogenous groups that were placed in one classroom. As such, as diagram 24 shows, the bulk of learning took place in individual classrooms irrespective of the school type (i.e. constructed buildings, under a shade of either a tree, or temporary shade erected out of *jambi*).

Fig. 24: Classroom type

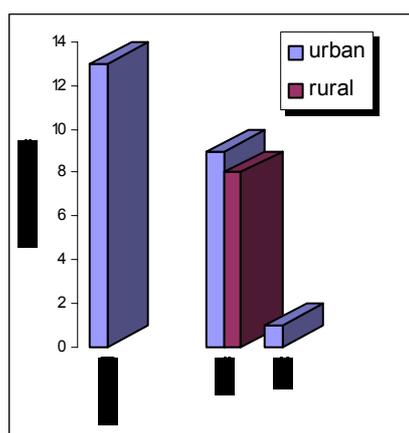
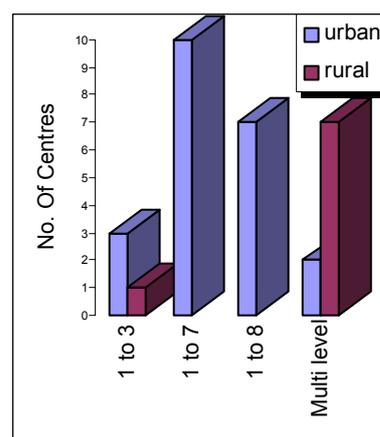


Fig. 25: Class levels by district



One centre in Urban, faced with limited classrooms had resorted to a double-shift system where some learners reported at 8.00a.m. and others at 2.00p.m. Nine or 30% of the centres in Urban and the vast majority in Rural (7 or 87.5%) had heterogeneous age groups and levels within the same classroom. The rationale however differed. Whereas in Urban “*classrooms are few, it forces us to put separate classes in the same room (HT5:2002)*” in Rural “*we divide them by the order of their ability (T23:2002)*”. The data therefore indicates that 70% of the centres in Urban placed their

learners in homogenous level classes, while another 30% would like to do so but are obstructed by limitations of space. This is opposed to Rural where varied ages and levels are put, as a matter of principle, in the same class.

That almost all Urban centres lean towards conventional school specifications is further illustrated in Figure 25 above. 32% of the centres in urban already went up to Std. 8 thereby making it difficult to discern their difference from conventional primary schools which also go to Std. 8 and prepare learners for the national primary school leaving certificate. 45% of the centres were in various levels of expansion and had classes ranging from class 1 to 7. That these schools hoped eventually to reach Std. 8 was confirmed by these sentiments, that *“in our school, we normally add the classes every year because we started from baby class and the youngest children are now in class four. So we are going on with them yearly (HT2:2002)”*. Indeed one centre was very clear about the overall aim and how to get there *“since the classrooms are not enough, we are planning to have a harambee in July, so that we build more classes. So next year, the class 5 will find a place to learn and it will continue like that. We intend to go up to std 8 (T41:2002)”*. Another 14% went up to class 3. Unlike the Rural school which has been planned to cater for pupils up to the lower primary stage only, the Urban counterparts have been forced by circumstance that *“we cannot continue with class 4 as we do not have the classrooms, also there aren't enough teachers (HT4:2002)”*.

The situation in Rural, as was for 3 centres in Urban was different. These centres neither planned nor aspired for Std 8. The Samburu based centres were satisfied with their role of offering education, and sometimes rerouting the learners to the formal schools to which it was attached. The Marsabit centre had a homogenous cohort and hoped to reroute the learners to a boarding school 30 km away. The Nairobi based centre branched off the learners to various vocational courses after Std. 7, much to the consternation of the parents and pupils who would rather have class 8. A Kisumu based centre also did the same, but after a basic education course of 3 years. This shorter course seems to have kept away any formal school equivalency expectations.

That Urban centres lean towards the conventional maxims is also confirmed when one analyses the language of use. For instance, when describing the class structure, the Urban teachers said *“now we have from class 1 to class 8. Now in this concept we call them stages as I have said and they compose of three stages (HT6:2002)”* or that *“The normal language is Std 1-7 but we are in levels so we were having level 1-2 at that particular time (T13:2002)”*. The Urban teachers' first inclination was to use the conventional terms when describing learning and use “level” as an afterthought. This is opposed to Rural who explained that *“we go by the order of ability...When we talk of these levels I have to divide them according to their ability (T23:2002)”*. The Urban teachers

are guided by traditional terminology of class/standards while their Rural counterparts lean towards the multigroup teaching methodology associated with alternative approaches.

The Policy Guidelines (8.2ix) state that “the entry and re-entry from NFE into the formal system will be encouraged”. This means that the practice of the Rural centres is catered for in the PG as opposed to most of the Urban centres, which, by virtue of following the formal school structure, also prepare their learners for the eventual national exams at the end of the structure. By so doing, the non-formal umbrella is put in suspect and makes one conclude that the Urban NFS are simply quasi-formal schools.

### **5.14 Summing up**

Several conclusions can be arrived at regarding the premise. First, whereas Rural formal primary schools have made an effort to accommodate NFS, their Urban counterparts are rather rigid and only let out their premise on weekends despite the fact that lower primary classes are free in all afternoons. Secondly although the aura of the “shade of a tree” is better than the “tiny mud rooms” there is more favour for a construction as (a) it makes the school visible and leads to enhanced pupil enrolment (b) the confinement into a classroom eases teaching and there are fewer environmental disturbances (c) time is not lost due to rain, wind or sun (d) one does not need to “construct “ the school every morning. A solution to the tiny rooms can be found in introducing a double-shift learning system.

Additionally, Urban NFS in terms of class levels and terminology used lean towards FE paradigm. That 32% of the studied institutions in Urban already comprised Std. 1- 8, the full cycle of formal primary education, while another 45% were in various stages of expansion with the ultimate aim of reaching Std. 8 confirms the formal school orientation of NFS. However, since these school do not fit within the specifications outlined in the “Education Act” in terms of acreage, quality of buildings and so on, they acquire the character of parallel institutions or quasi-formal primary schools. On the other hand, Rural NFS fit within the specifications detailed out in the Policy Guidelines. Therefore at lower levels, they assume an alternative status but in seeking to reroute their learners to NFS, they act as feeders to formal schools.

## 5.15 The Time

Time, in the NFE paradigm is perceived to be both part time and flexible as it ought to blend with the varied occupational roles the recipients often have. It is also presumed to be present oriented as the aim is to acquire functional skills for immediate usage. This is as opposed to FE where time is fixed and future oriented in that education prepares one for some role in the distant future. This section presents the scheduling of learning in NFS. The discussion will be presented along the urban and rural subheadings as the data revealed a dichotomy, along regional lines, in time tabling.

### 5.15.1 Urban: “conventional time schedules”

Learning in Urban generally followed the conventional time schedules associated with formal schools. Three centres run half-day programmes, from 8.00a.m. to 12.30p.m. Two of these centres had nursery to Class 3, the equivalent of lower primary in formal schools, while the other was the juvenile institution that tried to “*keep the inmates busy (T7:2002)*”. The vast majority of the centres (19 or 86%) however, planned their programmes from 7.30/8.30a.m. to 4.00/5.00p.m. In other words, they had a full day schedule.

These school hours were not constantly adhered to due to several reasons. First was the state of the weather. The consequence of the elements of rain or wind on poorly maintained or temporary buildings or “open air classrooms” was interruption of learning. The weather therefore had time implications as when it rained, learning could hardly take place and school time was lost. One centre for instance explained that “*School runs from 8.30a.m to 4.00p.m. These school hours are only workable during the dry season. When the teachers see the weather changing, they release their pupils after lunch so that the case of the roof blowing off again doesn’t happen when the pupils are in the centre (T15:2002)*”.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to the time table was the clientele type. The Urban NFS learners, as has been detailed are often economically disadvantaged. The reality of their situation is that they “*...have to do some domestic work before they come to school or they have to work, or some are maids (T13:2002)*”. Sometimes, the learners themselves “*ask the teachers for permission to go and work for some people to get some money to buy food for themselves (T15:2002)*” and the teachers comply because they know that these learners have to fend for themselves even as they strive for an education. The institutions indeed acknowledge that though “*8.00 o'clock is our standard time it is not effective because of the kind of pupils we are dealing with (ibid)*”. However, this realisation has not been enough to make them adapt the school timing to the prevailing conditions.

The inflexible time plan has had adverse effects on school participation of especially child workers or those who have to fend for themselves. This is the category for whom NFS is envisaged

to be a lifeline for, yet the blind time scheduling is pushing them out of the school. That is why the NFE officer has been trying to encourage the centres to adopt the multishift approach. Said he

The multishift approach can enable them to do both...such that if a girl works as a maid, she can work in the morning maybe upto lunch hour then she can come to school in the afternoon. If a boy works as a shamba boy, he can work in the morning hours...this idea of using the formal system timing is very serious because the truth is that eventually such children drop out because...they spend the whole day in school and when they go home, there is a problem, because there is no food to eat...But the multishift approach can help them (EO62:2002).

The inability of the Urban centres to change the school time could be due to influence from formal school tradition, as the teachers grew up and have perhaps also been trained in that school of thought or simply a case of “thinking within the box”. Two schools had instituted mandatory tuition time before learning begins, from 6.30 to 8.00 a.m. and after school up to 6.00 p.m., showing how much some centres ape formal schools. Tuition in Kenyan primary school found credence during the height of the 8-4-4 system. The curriculum overload, coupled with the exam mania made many schools resort to tuition. It is controversial and its presence in NFS may denote how they too try to excel in the 8-4-4 curriculum. However, the conventional time tabling could equally be insensitive to the pupils needs. One head teacher for instance had adopted a flexible plan for himself as he needed to work elsewhere to earn money. However this same flexibility was denied to pupils . So while one can attribute the main cause to be discipleship to formal school traditions, it is perhaps the fact that NFS aspire to be like formal schools that makes them so adamant to change.

### 5.15.2 Rural: “the flexible time plan”

In Rural, the Marsabit case followed the formal school time specification for lower primary and run for half a day, between 8.00a.m. to 1.00p.m. All the centres in Samburu however, practiced a flexible time plan which was dictated by the pastoral nature of their community. NFS in Samburu has been conceived primarily to “*enable the children who are looking after the animals... to be tapped in school (T23:2002)*”. As such, school time is determined by “*when the animals come back (ibid)*” from the grazing fields. In the pastoral framework, herding duties as already mentioned are defined by the age sets. Children who care for kids (nursery school age) are considered to be too young and generally do not participate in NFS. The critical groups are “*those who are of the age between 7-10, those who look after the calves do not go far. So those ones would attend classes between 2.00 to 4.00 p.m. And then the big ones, between the age of 10-13, now enter class from 4.00 unto 7.00 p.m. (HT30:2002)*”. The teacher in the same school who was interviewed however gave different time blocks for the two groups as 3.00p.m. to 6.30p.m. and 8.00p.m. to 10.00p.m.

The fact that no two informants, even from the same centre gave identical time further denotes how flexibly the clock is practiced and how varied the time for learning is. However, regardless of the specific hour, learning started in the afternoon, anytime from 2.00 p.m. It was dictated by how far the herders had gone in search of pasture. Two centres had the double time plan

in place while 4 centres only offered learning from 2.00/3.00p.m. to 5.00p.m. or thereabouts. The centre in Baragoi that is not affiliated to any formal school did not just target herders, but anybody interested in acquiring some basic skills. This centre run its class from 2.00p.m. to 4.00p.m. The afternoon time was agreed upon “...so that in the morning they would work and come to school at 2.00p.m after finishing their other chores (T48:2002)”.

The learning time comprised about two to three hours. This time, it was felt was too short to enable meaningful learning to take place especially considering that one teacher had to deal with varied levels and ages. As one teacher expounded

the timing is good, but honestly too brief. But we give them work depending on the time we have. I see it is difficult. When I try to go to one group...I cannot give them work hurriedly and leave because you know they need to be taught step by step because they want to really understand. So I take time explaining. By the time I change from one subject to another it is already dark and we cannot continue. So we have to stop (T47:2002).

Secondly, the irregular arrival of the learners made it difficult to maximise the time available. One teacher gave an example that “when a child comes...and he gets the maths lesson over, he will tell you ‘Mwalimu, I want Maths. Can you please go back? I also want that work’ What will you do? So you have to go back again and make sure that s/he has done maths (T23:2002)” While learners demanding to be taught their favourite subjects is a positive trend that ought to be encouraged, it results in repetition, negligence of non-favourite subjects, slower progress and complicates the time management issue further.

Like in Urban, these time frames are affected by several factors. One centre mentioned that “here we have a lot of wild animals. We cannot exceed 5.00 p.m. (ibid)” again depicting how the ecosystem impacts on the time planning. However, the greater problem was related to the climatic conditions. During the rainy season, grazing land was in abundance and therefore the herders could comfortably attend to their dual roles of herding and acquiring formal education. However, the entry of the dry season heralded in hard times. Longer distances had to be covered before reaching pasture “they go even 5 - 10 km away in search of grazing pasture or water (C57:2002)”. The far distance away from school had two implications. Either the learners did attempt to go to school on return from a pasture searching trip however late it was, or they were too tired, and understandably so, to make the effort and temporarily dropped out of school. The Samburu NFE officer confirmed that “These programmes are seasonal especially in the dry season you find most of them closing. That is the nature of these programmes, they die and revive (EO65:2002)”. Like his Urban based counterpart, he proposed a solution that “the option is that we have to have mobile schools where we can follow the learners as they move to other place so that learning continues. So maybe by creating mobile schools where they go with their teacher (ibid)”.

While the climatic conditions were a major detriment, it seems that sometimes flexibility had been misconstrued to denote lack of seriousness. One teacher observed that “there is too much

*freedom in this programme which cause problems because some children can come on time, which is 2.00, others can come when the others are leaving (T23:2002)*". The "too much freedom" is corroborated by the fact that the time of the research coincided with the long rains. Indeed the head teacher confirmed that "*currently the land is clean and everything so we expect the enrolment of the OSP to go high (HT36:2002)*". Despite the favourable climatic conditions and a prior appointment being made to conduct classroom observations, the learners were not in school. In the NFS mode, the line between flexibility and laxity is rather thin.

Despite, the irregularities, one has to commend the Samburu centres for managing to instil the flexible time frame within a national ethos of rigidity. Making the school time blend with the social life has not only given these children, who would otherwise not have a chance at formal education, an opportunity, but has also got parents to be allies and not obstacles to a child who may choose to proceed on to a formal school. As one parent said

when a child goes to herd, comes later at 2.00 to school, learns, you will find the child will really progress such that they want to go to another school. The child even refuses wealth (cows) and says let me go to school. That is why we like this school. It helps children and parents as children go to the wealth and go to school. I see this education is good (C56:2002).

### **5.16 Summing up**

Samburu centres must be commended for managing to instil a flexible time frame within a national ethos of rigidity. Hence the schools blend with the socio-economic life and gives a lifeline to learners who would otherwise be shut off from acquiring formal education. The Rural practice fits within the flexibility time plan associated with NFE. However, pastoralism and the dry season demand yet another novelty, if enrolment is to be sustained and boosted. This is mobile schools.

The Urban schools on the other hand persist with the formal school hours despite their unsuitability. The solution advocated for is that these centres should stop viewing themselves as a formal school of a different kind and embrace part time learning and/or double-shift learning. This flexibility would not only be advantageous to the learners who would be able to participate in their other occupational roles, but also to the "volunteer" teachers. The lesson however from the Samburu case is not to switch flexibility with laxity.

## 6 Curriculum and Pedagogy in NFS

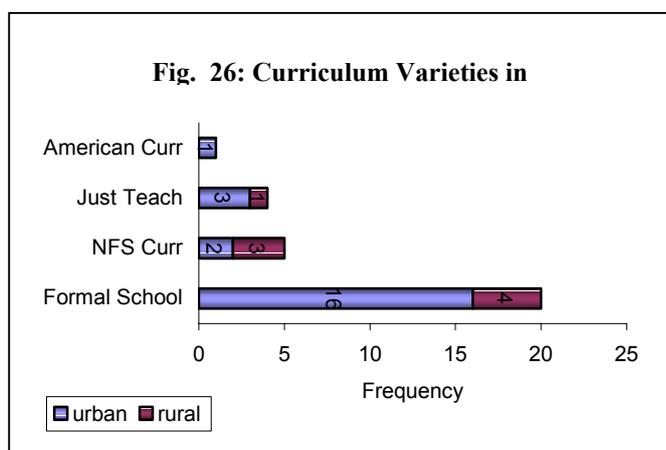
This chapter comprises two broad sections, the curriculum (content) and the pedagogy (processes of teaching and learning). The two can be said to be the most distinctive features that ought to define and distinguish NFS.

### 6.1 Curriculum: “what is taught”

Within the NFE literature, content ought to be task or skill centred and oriented to satisfying a functional need. The essence of a relevant curriculum with immediate use therefore ranks high in the NFE paradigm. This is as opposed to the academic curriculum that transmits a “status quo” content leading towards certification. This section presents the finding under four sub-themes as follows (a) Curricula varieties in NFS, (b) the subject range (c) the learning materials and lastly (d) the examination debate.

### 6.2 Curricula Varieties in NFS

The results of the study sample, as illustrated in figure 26, reveal that four types of curricula were in use in NFS. Most of the centres (70%) utilised existing curricula. One school initiated and



sponsored by an American missionary used an American curriculum. It was explained that because of the characteristics of the children (some were ex-street children), it was realised that they could not cope with the demands of the 8-4-4 curriculum. The alternative was to use “*the Life PAC syllabus which is much more accommodating and gives the child time to learn at his/her pace* (PO1:2002)”. This

curriculum was however developed for the American child, living in a different country that has dissimilar needs and specifications. Not all the subjects, or their prioritising concur with local needs just as some of the content is foreign. So, in order to make the curriculum more suitable to the Kenyan child “*we have introduced Kiswahili as a supplementary subject because we feel that as Africans, they should learn Kiswahili. This is a Life PAC adaptation. There is a lot of American history and American Geography and we are trying to introduce Kenyan history and Geography. So there is the supplementation (ibid)*”.

The vast majority of the centres (67%) however utilised the formal school curriculum. In Urban the explanation given for adopting the formal curriculum covered the whole spectrum. Some

centres admitted “*we use the normal curriculum (HT10:2002)*”. They attempted no alteration because they viewed themselves as a formal school perhaps of a different kind. Other centres were apologetic about using the formal curriculum that “*we have not been given an NFE curriculum and we have been using the formal primary school curriculum (HT20:2002)*”. Its usage was by default and in their view temporary as they were waiting to be issued with a more suitable curriculum. Yet others claimed to utilise a non-formal curriculum. When asked for more details, the reply was “*I do not think there is much that I can say. What we teach **should be** to help these pupils to know something that can help them in the future, ... maybe s/he can know how to do some tailoring or carpentry which we are not doing at the moment because we do not have the facilities (HT16:2002)*”. The use of “should” means that the NFS curriculum, whose distinctive feature, in the informants eye, seems to lie in provision of vocational skills, is not being implemented due to lack of facilities. Even if the facilities were available, other concerns like the age of the children (as this centre comprised Class 1 to 3 only) or the expertise of the teachers to train are not mentioned. It is only after a lengthy discussion and prodding that the head teacher agreed that “*we are just teaching the normal subjects found too in normal schools (ibid)*”. This vocational training angle can therefore be surmised to be projected hope rather than reality and basically justification for existence of NFS. The last group of centres explained that they had been issued with an NFS curriculum, that entailed both academic subjects and vocational subjects. This curriculum could not be implemented due to lack of facilities and equipment and the fact that “*those children who could have done that have left, they have gone to formal schools (C9:2002)*”. So, on the one hand are those centres that make no excuse about using the formal school curriculum, because they view themselves as formal and on the other are the centres that know that since they claim to be an NFS, they ought to be utilising an NFS curriculum whose distinctive feature lies in provision of skill training. This curriculum is however not being implemented as the centres are not equipped for this purpose and the learners are often too young. So, the formal school curriculum is reverted to by default.

In Rural, half of the schools use the formal school curriculum. The justification was based on the logic that “*we are going to use the kind of syllabus that will allow them to change (to formal primary). So we have been using the normal syllabus. It allows that harmony, they can transfer from OSP to normal primary (HT24:2002)*”. In other words, the aim is to reroute these children to formal schools, and to ease that process, the formal curriculum is utilised. Some of these schools could even be said to be satisfying the syllabus requirements more than their formal school counterparts. A case in point is the teaching of language. The official stance is that in the first three years of school, the local language, or the language of the catchment area in multi lingual situations, shall be used as the medium of instruction, with English and Kiswahili being offered as subjects.

Most formal schools flout this and start with English as the medium or mix three languages. The Marsabit centre however went out of their way to locate suitable mother tongue books at the “*institute of education (KIE) and there in the library we found Rendille Readers made by Bible Training Literacy (BTL). So we went to BTL to find out whether they had any more, they had a few (P29:2002)*” which could be used for learning.

Four (13%) of the centres in the study sample simply taught what they deemed suitable or as one teacher maintained “*I teach as I want. It has been left to the teacher to decide. There is no curriculum or syllabus (T8:2002)*”. The reason for this “flexibility” or lack of direction if one is to be critical is varied. In one centre, a remand home, it was the fluid period of stay of the clientele. These children were in the centre only for a specific duration, “*for a month or less*” as they awaited for their cases to be heard. Planning under these unpredictable circumstances was difficult hence the teacher remarked that “*I no longer scheme because you can scheme, then you get new pupils within the month (ibid)*”. While one can understand the conditions here influencing the teacher to “just teach”, the other centres seemed not to have given enough thought to the issue of the content of learning, and hence taught what they deemed right.

We don't really have a set curriculum. All we are doing is taking the KIE books, look at them and just teaching what we feel is appropriate for the level of the children. In this school, we try to take them as far as we can rather than stick to a particular syllabus and say this is what we must do. The reason is that until we start thinking, then the syllabus becomes a very serious issue... Since we have not started thinking in that line yet, we can be flexible (PO21:2002).

That this centre had “*not started thinking*” shows how lightly the business of offering formal education is taken by some centres. There is neither a specific path to be followed nor a goal to be reached. It is therefore unfortunate that this lack of vision is confused to be “flexibility”.

Five centres in the study sample (representing 10% in Urban and 38% in Rural) utilise an NFS curriculum. Four centres (two apiece in Urban and Rural) had taken the initiative to draw up their own curriculum while one utilised an already prepared NFS curriculum. The following section gives an in-depth view of the NFS curriculum and its perceived impact on the recipients.

### 6.2.1 Rationalising the NFS Curriculum

The NFS curriculum, in all the 5 centres, has been derived from the existing formal school curriculum. Three reasons may have influenced the centres to employ this path. First, a primary focus of NFS is to provide basic skills in the 3Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic. The existing syllabus, with due alteration, was found to be useful towards this end so “*we just modified what we have from the formal curriculum (PO17:2002)*”. Secondly, in Rural, the NFS curriculum had to ease re-entry back to the formal school. Effort had to be made to “*contribute change in that curriculum but still maintain a national outlook (P31:2002)*”. This is an old problem education systems have been grappling with. How does one make the curriculum locally relevant but still maintain a national perspective? A third reason can be argued as the effect of a policy vacuum. These centres,

in drawing up their curriculum, were answering a functional need that was not catered for in policy. But there was a danger of it being seen as an individuals thing, usurping the role of KIE. The view that *“I did not want to write my own curriculum (ibid)”* denotes that by deriving from the formal curriculum, the NFS curriculum could attain some acceptance and credibility.

The need to change or modify the existing curriculum strongly featured as *“we feel that what they are teaching in the formal schools is not necessarily what our target group needs (HT22:2000)”*. This inappropriateness implied not only content but also coverage. Formal curriculum, for instance covers the geography of the world sometimes to the exclusion of the local geography. Of what use is this to the target clientele of the centre *“because very many of them are not going out of Pumwani. Even their grandmothers were born here, they were born here so they will stay in such a surrounding (ibid)”*. For Rural, their preoccupation with curriculum relevance that *“we had to modify in our own way and relate what is there to our local situation (HT30:2002)”* is due to the alienating curriculum currently in place that has been accused of being “euro-centric and pro-urban”. So strongly did the people feel about the need for a relevant curriculum that the sponsor reported that *“...most of them said that if the curriculum does not entail anything to do with our lives, with our ng’ombe (cows), then we do not want it. So a lot was incorporated (S60:2002)”*.

#### **6.2.1.1 The Process**

The participants involved in the curriculum development were mentioned as the teachers, parents, experts (KIE), NGOs and MOEST personnel. The approach used to develop the curriculum was quite similar in that experts were invited either by the institutions or the sponsors to guide the process. However the impact was quite varied. The centres that used teams of experts rather than just depend on KIE, the body charged with curriculum development in the country, were more satisfied with the whole process. For example, one Urban centre utilised a whole array of experts ranging from

curriculum developers, from the directorate, inspectorate, teacher training colleges and we also had other people who came and gave their input. For example, we could take a subject like maths, now we asked ourselves, who can we contact? Who is an expert in this area who we can contact? Then we could come up with somebody... (HT22:2000).

Together with the teachers, this group produced both a curriculum and syllabus which the centre uses today to guide learning. The experience in the Rural centre was however the opposite. KIE personnel were invited to lead the curriculum development. The process was rather top-down in that KIE seems to have considered curriculum development a specialised business delimited only to professionals such as them. This elitism exhibited by KIE as well as the non inclusive participant range resulted in the development of a curriculum blind to the needs of the recipients. As such it has been dismissed as *“... not a grassroot syllabus. It has a lot of repetition. They went to Nairobi, they sat down and came out with their own syllabus and then gave it to us. This is not a syllabus that will*

*benefit the programme here...it is sad that you are living in Nairobi and you are telling me what to do here. The KIE should have come up with what we have discussed! (HT 24:2002)*". The dissatisfaction with the KIE curriculum is two fold. First, the process was not participatory. The primary actors were simply disregarded. Secondly, their views were not incorporated. They wanted certain subjects to be emphasised, unnecessary repetition done away with, and most of all, they wanted a curriculum, that while responding to local content, would also *"allow children from OSP to go to normal schools and those in normal education to join OSP (HT24:2002)"*. The consequence of this inflexible and non-participatory process is that *"at the end of the day, the curriculum which is designed by KIE is not relevant (P31:2002)"*. This curriculum has been shelved and the school has reverted back to formal school curriculum.

The above pitfalls have been avoided in the curriculum development process utilised by AAK for the project schools in Samburu. AAK sought to involve all the interested parties, and these ranged from parents, teachers who would handle the programme, head teachers in formal schools who would manage the programme, MOEST and specialists from KIE and NGOs participating in NFS who participated as observers. Through PRA, parents were encouraged to deliberate on the education their children should receive. As the parents elaborated *"we started first by saying that they should be taught like the others. But then we saw that the hours spent in school by the herders would be very few. So we decided to choose the most important subjects and those which the children will understand and enable them to catch up with the others (C57:2002)"*. After deliberation the core subjects were suggested as Kiswahili, Maths, General studies and English. Different FGDs with parents in different localities produced the same results that

We decided on these four subjects because in Kiswahili...we want that when a child goes somewhere, they should be able to communicate with other people who do not understand our language, and even English, it is for the same reason...this general studies, we want a child to take care of the animals and know cleanliness (C61:2002).

Parents said the first subject is maths so that they can know how to count cows, money, then the second is languages - Kiswahili and English- so that they can communicate with other people and the fourth was hygiene, things do to with science so that they would be able to know cleanliness (C57:2002).

Other subjects were found to be unnecessary, as the nature of the activities the children involved themselves in catered for these areas. For instance, parents explained that *"Things like physical fitness they do when herding the cows...You find they have javelin, high jump, they compete with each other. So they do fitness out there and concentrate on other things here. So they almost draw with the children in formal school (ibid).*

After this, the education specialists and the teachers took over and they needed to address the issue *"...how can these subjects be modelled so that the children can be at par with those from the formal primary school (T46:2002)"*. This they answered by fusing *"the Std. 1 to 4 information into two and a half years (HT30:2002)"*. Considering the limited time (2 hours per day during the

good season) that children had for school, one can see the necessity for the synthesis. The fusion implied getting rid of repetitions which they claimed to be in abundance in the formal curriculum. They also deleted inappropriate topics. The issue of curriculum relevance was arrived at by including the appropriate topics, that is by *“looking at specific things and trying to relate them to our environment (T47:2002)”*. So, for instance, agriculture topics, in the formal curriculum, such as crop farming: tea, coffee, rice, pyrethrum, that have no relevance to nomadic children have been replaced with animal husbandry and livestock education in general.

### **6.2.1.2 The Impact**

The research revealed that an inclusive and participatory process of curriculum development could result in several things:

- It is more responsive to the recipients needs and can therefore apprehend accusations of a bad curriculum, whether valid or not.
- The participatory preparation is an empowering process to the teachers *“after writing, we present in front of others and we correct whatever problem there could be. We were involved in the process until we completed writing the curriculum (T50:2002)”*
- It can avoid curriculum replication in a region as a wide based participation, from civil society to government ensures a widespread collective ownership. Persons interested in NFS know that there is an AAK curriculum, and hopefully would utilise it or improve on it instead of wasting resources developing a similar curriculum.
- It resulted in satisfaction with the curriculum *“we were happy with the process of writing because those who were involved were the teachers... the curriculum is good for the community because it is they themselves who said they want particular items (T50:2002)”* and therefore can instil a sense of ownership since *“it is us who contributed everything there (T47:2002)”*

## **6.3 Subject Range**

To ease the discussion, this section is presented under six sub-headings namely the core subjects, other academic subjects, the innovative subjects, the vocational subjects, the learner preferences and lastly the official (KIE) stance regarding the subject range is presented.

### **6.3.1 The Core Subjects**

All the centres in the study sample, whether using a borrowed, adapted or modified curriculum offered Maths, Kiswahili and English. These were considered to be the core and sometimes the only subjects (in two cases). As one teacher in Urban explained

On a typical teaching day, what I programme in mainly the languages. I try to help them in English so much and Kiswahili. Maths they are very sharp, I have realised because most of them have done businesses. Put it in sentences, they will not do. But put it directly, they are always 100%, 80% but come to English, 10%, 20%...they cannot read. So we put a lot of emphasis on the languages because if they know how to read, they can do science...(T42:2002).

There was a view in Rural that “*children who are herding goats have a lot of maths already* (P31:2002)” just as they had advanced knowledge of their environment. More emphasis however was needed in Kiswahili and English.

### 6.3.2 Other Academic subjects

The schools following the formal school curriculum invariably also offered the other subjects, namely science and agriculture, Geography/History/Civics (GHC), Christian Religious Education (CRE). The latter was stressed, more so by the institutions sponsored by the Christian groups one of whom simply said “...*Bible, we take very seriously* (PO1:2002)”. That the teaching of this subject needs streamlining is apparent due to this view, from a Pastor by profession, who said that “*I had all sorts of children and I was so happy when I had them because they could cram for me verses from the bible* (HT8:2002)”. Expecting a pupil to “cram verses for me” leans towards exploiting the captive audience that pupils are as well as taking advantage of their urge for education for a rather unrelated objective. Religious instruction is one thing, verse cramming to suit the whims of the Pastor head teacher is another. At best the option should have been made clear so that those enrolling in the centre would know that “cramming” is an integral part of the curriculum. This list of subjects, namely science, GHC and religious education in addition to the core subjects of Maths, Kiswahili and English form the official subject range of formal primary schools in Kenya today.

A few centres also offered mother tongue, art and craft, home science and one centre French! Other than mother tongue which is not tested, these subjects have since the last modification of the 8-4-4 curriculum been dropped as examinable subjects. Therefore, formal schools are not bound to offer them and are slowly phasing them out. The inclusion of French however shows how much these schools lean towards the formal school paradigm. French is a subject normally offered by private schools in the effort to make them more marketable. This NFS centre explained the reason for the inclusion of French as “*we have to plan ahead because the world is moving to various technologies and other languages. Now, if a child goes to Congo, he cannot be able to communicate...but it is not compulsory* (P19:2002)”. One can counter this argument by asking how many children, considering the economic group they belong to, would really travel. A practical concern that emerges is therefore that of relevance. In terms of prioritisation, other languages with immediate use would rather be emphasised. Another critical issue is also the teacher capacity to teach French. The school utilises an untrained secondary school leaver. The subject is optional but one has to pay extra. If the parents and learners are to be cumbered with additional costs, then it better be for a worthwhile learning experience as well as a for a relevant subject.

### 6.3.3 The Innovative Subjects

It is mainly centres following an NFS curriculum that have the more innovative and functional subjects in place. In Urban, one centre in Nairobi for instance offered Business Education and Entrepreneurship (BEE), Child rights and Creative Activities which encompassed Music, Physical Education (PE) and Drama. Instead of offering the traditional religious areas of Christian Religious Education (CRE) or Islamic Religious Education (IRE), Social Education and Ethics (SEE) was given in its place. Child Rights for instance was included as *“I thought that maybe if we can teach children their rights, they can be able to demand their rights (HT22:2000)”*. Both children and their parents are offered this subject, the latter so that they can learn to respect the rights of their children. In this respect, Child Rights can be said to be a subject targeting the community.

In Rural, the unique subject areas that were offered over and above the core academic subjects correlated with the lifestyle of the community. These were animal husbandry, business education and hygiene. In the AAK schools, they went by a collective term, General Studies. The inclusion of Business Education, for instance, was rationalised that *“Maybe they have small-scale businesses, selling goats. So they should be able to calculate the profits and their losses (T23:2002)”*. The inclusion of these home-based subjects is a laudable innovation and befitting especially for the short term learners. However, for learners who complete the primary school cycle and have to sit for national examinations that are blind to geographic differences or regional novelties, it may be a handicap. It is such a scenario that distorts this delicate balance of addressing local needs but at the same time fitting into the national plan. So the other alternative, as the Marsabit school has done, is simply to offer formal school subjects.

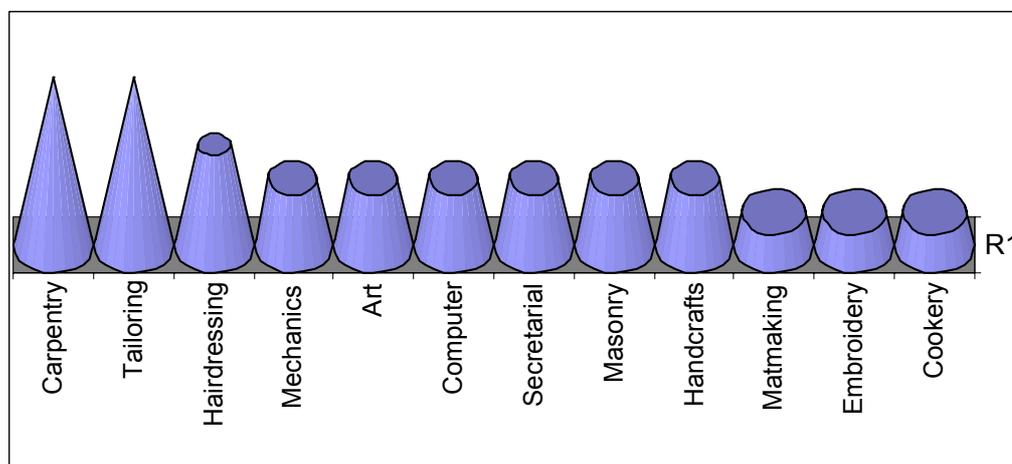
### 6.3.4 The Vocational Subjects

The provision of vocational subjects was a strictly Urban affair. Eight (36%) centres offered various trade areas, four centres as a subject to give the learners basic awareness, while 3 centres offered them as a training area, after completion of the basic education programme, with the ultimate aim that the trainees would earn a living from the trade. It is only one centre that offered both vocational subjects and vocational training. Diagram 27 gives an impression of the varieties of trades found in NFE.

In the less established centres, the provision of vocational subjects was not planned. Rather it was dictated by two circumstances; (a) the presence of the equipment and (b) the availability of a trainer. Three centres that offered tailoring/dressmaking and carpentry had benefited from a UNICEF donation of sewing machines and a set of carpentry tools respectively as had another 5 centres in the Kisumu study sample. That it is only these 3 centres that had been able to put the equipment into use was due to both better leadership and more flexible approach to the training as

well as coincidence. For instance, one centre “invited a ‘fundi’ expert from the community to help in training the pupils (T15:2002)” while another centre “have a madam who had already been trained in dressmaking...She came here when she was already trained. So she uses that skill plus the facility we have to impart, to share the skill with the children (HT20:2002)”.

**Fig. 27: Range of vocational subjects in NFS**



Due to insecure buildings, all these UNICEF beneficiaries mentioned that they stored the equipment “at a teachers house (T15:2002)” or “the chairman’s house (C9:2002)”. This had not always worked well especially where there were management squabbles. For instance, in one centre, the deputy chairman who was interviewed and the chairman are not in terms and therefore any plan for the usage of the machines which were stored in the Chairman’s house was not foreseeable. The deputy reported that “...I am not happy. We have not been using them. Even if we cannot use these machines within the centre, it could generate some funds. We could lend it to someone and get funds in order to buy whatever material we require for the school (ibid)”. Even the centres that can access the equipment whenever they want seem to find it cumbersome or inconvenient to do so, therefore showing that it may not be practical to store these equipment elsewhere if they are to be utilised for teaching purposes.

The four well funded centres in the study sample offered a wider variety of trades, and not just the two favourites; tailoring/dressmaking and carpentry. Each centre provided between 4 to 8 trade areas and other than one centre, were offered after the mandatory basic education programme. The rationale for vocational training was that “what is the point of keeping someone in one class for three years when you can give them a skill for two years and he goes on to be self-reliant? (PO1:2002)”. The centre that offers subjects before specialisation in the trades shall be presented in detail as it is a case worth duplicating.

The NFS is only one of the many programmes offered by this institution. As such, the NFS has been able to evolve a plan whereby learners are given an impression of the variety of vocational areas after which they can specialise in the other Schools of dress making or typing available within

the institution. The teaching of the vocational subjects, begins in earnest in Class 5. Prior to that, the pupils do simple art. The learners are introduced to a whole range of trade areas “*then one can decide, that this child is best suited for this skill (HT22:2000)*”. This decision is made together with the career officer who educates the children on their options and trends in the labour market. “*They are made aware of what they can do in this surrounding so as to earn a living (Ibid)*”. There is gender preference in the vocational courses “*generally, hairdressing is for girls. When you come to motor mechanics, to carpentry again you leave that for the boys. When you come to crocheting, embroidery, dressmaking and tailoring, mostly it is left for girls (ibid)*”. What is clear is that the aim of the NFS is not actual skill acquisition. This is done in the attached and better equipped schools. The NFS simply makes the learners aware of the options they have, something which is within their capability and in line with the age group of the learners.

A desire mentioned by 10 centres in Urban was that given the space and equipment, the aim was to offer vocational training “*for skill development for these children so that they become self-reliant. I think this is that something missed somewhere in formal school but it is very important here because some children will not go to secondary school (HT20:2002)*”. This is a valid argument given that many children drop out of the formal system or some do not continue with the academic line. The trade areas mentioned were invariably always the traditional areas of tailoring/dressmaking and carpentry and non other. Other than the obvious result that such an occurrence would flood the market with only these “graduates”, there is the other practical element that was ignored. Most of these learners, are within the school age and are really too young to be branched off into any area. Furthermore if any training is to be done, it would be more practical, quality wise, if the trainees were apprenticed to a practising craftsman. The NFS personnel, in their current state are simply not qualified to handle such kind of training. Lastly is the issue of costs. One centre quoted that a year’s course in carpentry and joinery costs Ksh.34,000/- per trainee. This amount is beyond the capability of the less established centres and in effect takes the provision of vocational training out of their realm.

### **6.3.5 Learners Subject Preference**

The research sought to establish the learners subject preference as they are the recipients of the curriculum. In all the FGDs in Rural, the learners mentioned the core subjects of Maths, Kiswahili and English. In fact, the other additional subjects mentioned were hygiene, animal husbandry and business education. This indicates that these together with the core subjects form the active subject range for Rural NFS. Given the short time for school available, at most two hours a day, one can understand why. The tendency in Rural was to be in favour of all subjects that “*we like all of them because there is no subject that we do not want to know. We want to know all of them*”

(PP37:2002)". There is therefore some sort of hunger for formal education in Rural. In fact it is only one boy who mentioned that "*I do not like maths so much because I already know how to count goats or cows or sheep (PP38:2002)*", corroborating with a similar view earlier mentioned (section 6.3.1) and depicting learners inclination for novel things. In order to get a general picture of reasons for subject preference, the results from the learners FGD in Rural are presented.

Subjects were preferred due to their perceived functionality. Subjects such as maths and business education were seen to be vital in easing future business endeavours "*I like maths because when I go to do my small business, I know how to return the right change, how to sell cows and sheep (PP37:2002)*" or because they were of direct relevance to the people's life; "*mainly we like business so that we can know how to stay with our livestock (PP37:2002)*". The subjects were viewed as useful in helping providing an education of direct relevance to their general conditions "*When we stay at home, we do not know hygiene. Hygiene we have come to know here...you get to know how to stay at home in a clean environment (ibid)*".

The languages were also viewed as a useful subjects. The strength of the languages was that they enabled one to communicate, whether orally or in written form as these two quotes respectively confirm: "*I like Kiswahili so that when I go somewhere, I can understand other people and we can talk Kiswahili (PP38:2002)*" and "*We would like to know English, and also Kiswahili so that if you want to write a letter, you can do so in Kiswahili (PP39:2002)*". Kiswahili would suffice for communication purposes, but English is a language often associated with modernity and progress, and so however difficult it is and however rare its possibility for usage, especially for the adult learners, they would still like to learn it. The learners, especially the adult ones seem to be aware that their prospects of learning English are quite limited, but they still hope as this quote shows

F: We see that English is not easy for adults like us to grasp. It is difficult to learn. It is better to learn Kiswahili because that is what we can understand...But English gives us problems. We would like to know it but it problematic because it is a new thing...

M: It is the tongue that is heavy...

F: Sometimes we do not get anything but we would like to know English. (*Why is it difficult?*)

M: We did not start learning English in our childhood. We started the other day when we are grown ups, and we were already used to speaking in our mother tongues. That is why we want to correct the situation and understand better. And there is no other time we get to talk in English (PP39:2002).

In Urban, it is difficult to establish a pattern as subjects across the spectrum were either liked or disliked. However, if one is to rank according to number of mentions (refer to Table 11) and priority in discussing the subjects, then the core subjects would rank as the most important subjects to the Urban based learners too. The following is a cross section of reasons given for or against the various subjects.

Like the Rural learners, certain subjects are liked due to their perceived usefulness; that “*I like maths because it can help one when they are grown up to know how to count, and English because you can communicate with more people who do not understand your language (P35:2000)*” or “*another subject that we like a lot is Business, because Business teaches us a lot of things. Even if we miss a school, miss work, you can start your own business because you learnt Business (PP35:2000)*”. However, the overriding reason that influences subject preference is how the subject is taught.

Me I like Home Science, because the teacher knows how to teach very well. She does not like beating people anyhowly because there are some other teachers, if you just speak a little, even if you are asking your neighbour a question, they do not want to hear that. They arrive on you and start beating you. But the home science teacher is not like that. We really like her.

Me I like GHC, English and Kiswahili. We like the GHC teacher because of the way she teachers. She teachers very nicely, until someone understands. She explains to us in both English and Kiswahili (PP35:2002).

If the teacher teaches well, the subject is understood, then the subject is liked. Equally important is the teachers attitude to the learners such that subjects taught by teachers who unnecessarily punished the learners, or were generally harsh were disliked;

F2:I do not like maths because I do not understand it very well. I only understand a little. But these other subjects I understand.

F1:Even me...

F2:...me too, except maths...

F1:...the teacher whom we have,

F2:...we do not understand him, when he teachers us, we do not catch...

F1:...you cannot ask him a question thrice or twice. He tells you “have I not just taught you now?” (PP34:2000)

The teacher can therefore be said to be the cornerstone of subject preference in Urban. Some learners mentioned that they did not like Kiswahili and Mother tongue as they already knew these subjects and would therefore spend more time on English; “*I do not like Kiswahili because I talk Kiswahili everyday and I understand it. I like subjects that I do not speak at home like English so that I can know them (PP32:2002)*”. That a high personal value is placed especially on English is seen through this quote “*I like English because when I read I feel good and I even understand (PP32:2002)*”. The learners language preference fits with the wider picture, that ones chances of progression are heightened when one understands English, which is not only the medium of instruction but also the language of business. That vocational subjects are hardly mentioned by the Urban learners, despite them being taught (among 2 pupil FGDs) indicates learners preference for academic subjects just as it may indicate that this is the school preference too.

The table below by presenting the actual frequency of mentions of the varied subjects provides an apt conclusion to this section. The core subjects, English, Kiswahili and Maths are the most important. As English received the most mentions, this ranks it above the other two, for other than its functional uses, English has a psychological leverage. It gives the learners a feel of being

“educated” as they can speak the language of school and “modernity”. The presence of Kiswahili is due to its functionality and it being the language the nation identifies itself with. Maths on the other hand is often acquired outside the classroom. There is a direct connectivity to economic activities in the community and hence its urgency within the formal set is less urgently felt.

**Table 13: Subject Frequency Count of Mentions by Informants**

|                                |                  | Head teachers  | Teachers      | Learners      | Parents      | MOE/Sponsors | Total | %    |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------|------|
| <b>Core Subjects</b>           | English          | 70             | 20            | 39            | 8            | 1            | 138   | 23.4 |
|                                | Kiswahili        | 66             | 13            | 29            | 14           | 2            | 124   | 21.0 |
|                                | Maths            | 36             | 18            | 31            | 6            | 2            | 93    | 15.8 |
| <b>Other Subjects</b>          | Science          | 25             | 7             | 10            | 2            | 1            | 45    | 7.6  |
|                                | GHC              | 11             | 2             | 16            | 1            | -            | 30    | 5.1  |
|                                | CRE              | 7              | 2             | 3             | 1            | -            | 13    | 2.2  |
|                                | Mother Tongue    | 1              | -             | 3             | -            | -            | 4     | 0.6  |
|                                | Agriculture      | 7              | 1             | 10            | -            | 1            | 19    | 3.2  |
| <b>Vocational Subjects</b>     | Carpentry        | 26             | 1             | 1             | -            | 2            | 30    | 5.1  |
|                                | Tailoring        | 18             | 2             | 9             | -            | -            | 29    | 4.9  |
|                                | Hairdressing     | 10             | -             | -             | -            | -            | 10    | 1.7  |
|                                | Masonry          | 6              | 2             | -             | -            | -            | 8     | 1.3  |
|                                | Art and Craft    | 5              | 4             | -             | -            | -            | 9     | 1.5  |
|                                | Secretarial      | 4              | -             | -             | -            | -            | 4     | 0.6  |
|                                | Mechanics        | 3              | -             | 1             | -            | 1            | 5     | 0.8  |
|                                | Cookery          | 1              | -             | -             | -            | -            | 1     | 0.1  |
| <b>The Innovative Subjects</b> | Child Rights     | 2              | 1             | 1             | -            | 1            | 5     | 0.8  |
|                                | Hygiene          | 4              | 1             | 3             | -            | -            | 8     | 1.3  |
|                                | Animal Husbandry | 2              | 1             | 2             | 3            | -            | 8     | 1.3  |
|                                | General Studies  | -              | 2             | 1             | 2            | -            | 5     | 0.8  |
| <b>Total</b>                   |                  | 304<br>(51.7%) | 77<br>(13.1%) | 159<br>(26.8) | 37<br>(6.2%) | 11<br>(1.8%) | 588   | 100  |

The other subjects deemed critical are science and GHC. The remaining of the subject areas quoted assume a regional face. In Rural, hygiene, general studies etc is preferred as opposed to Urban where the vocational subjects are quoted. Regarding the latter, it is important to note that the learners did not give it as much weight as the adult informants did. If left on their own, it seems that the Urban learners would first concentrate on the academic subjects. Adults are however more concerned with self-reliance hence their preoccupation with vocational subjects.

### 6.3.6 Officially Recommended Subjects

In an effort to harmonise the curriculum in 1994, KIE in an exercise jointly sponsored by UNICEF, GTZ and DAE came up with a National NFE Curriculum. This curriculum comprised the following subjects:

- the academic subjects - mother tongue/foreign language, English, Kiswahili, Maths, Social Studies, Science and RE
- trades - agriculture, art, garment making/woodwork, welding and fabrication and motor vehicles mechanics and
- support subjects - applied geometry and entrepreneurship.

There are several limitations with this curriculum. This subject range as it stands would not entirely satisfy the needs of either the Rural or Urban clientele because it is rather limited. Marketable vocational areas in Urban such as hairdressing are not mentioned. The Rural clientele on the other hand seem to have no need for the trades. Instead, a broader form of agriculture, specialising in animal husbandry would suffice. The NFE curriculum, with DAE as a core participant, was created for adults. NFS basically cater for school aged children. So this curriculum is seen to be unsuitable

because when you draw a curriculum, you must have established the needs of a particular group. The needs of children are not the needs of grown-ups who are pursuing some education. So when you make a curriculum that addresses the whole group, I mean you are not being fair. You are not being realistic... because each group has its own needs (HT22:2000).

Needless to say, to date, this curriculum has not been implemented. That the Samburu officer was not knowledgeable of its existence and asked *“is there one that has been developed?”* (EO65:2002) shows that a lot of awareness creation is needed if at all its implementation is to become a reality.

## 6.4 Learning Materials

This section comprises three areas; text books, learning materials and lastly the parents role. The types of books used, their sources and overall impact on the learning process is presented.

### 6.4.1 Text Books

In Urban, 18 of the 22 centres in the study sample reported that they utilised the KIE recommended text books. Some centres were anxious to satisfy these requirements to the letter – *“like when we teach primary mathematics and then they say pupils book refined edition, I use the refined edition (HT8:2002)”*. The centre that claimed to be following the American curriculum, reverted to the recommended KIE text books with the reason that *“we do not want to bring books that will take the children far away from what other children are doing in Kenya. We do not want to alienate them very much (PO1:2002)”*. Four centres either identified primary school text books relevant to their needs or simply utilised whatever was accessible. For instance, the situation in one institution was that *“the centre does not provide text books. I use my children’s primary school text books (T7:2002)”* while in another centre, whatever books the donor availed were used. The donors in this case were DAE and a religious organisation.

A recurrent complaint in the majority of the centres, especially the less established ones, was lack of text books. Due to the wanting economic conditions and/or laxity, buying books was out of the question. The centres therefore depended on the occasional donations which had been received from religious organisations (3 centres), UNICEF (6 centres) and DAE (1 centre). These donations, while helpful, were like a drop in the ocean. So *“the teachers manoeuvre and get some text books for teaching (T15:2002)”*. This basically entails *“just collecting books from the community...the teachers came with their books... As teachers we borrow from other school teachers, from those*

*who are having in the community*(T13:2002)” or as was reported in one case “*sometimes I also refer to notes from the children of the normal schools* (T64:2002)”. In most cases, the onus of getting teaching material is the teachers responsibility.

The inadequacy of the books impacts negatively both on the teacher, the teaching process and the learning outcomes. That the teachers have “*to walk up and down searching for the books for our reference* (T43:2002)” takes up time and energy that would have been spent elsewhere and makes the teacher weary. Since the trend is that the only text book available is the teachers, it makes giving homework a tedious affair. As was explained “*all the time we have to give homework children have to leave here very late, because we have to write it on the board, if it is maths we write on the board and they copy, English you write and they copy* (T40:2002)”... “*it is a lot of work to keep on writing on the board* (T11:2002)”. One of the direct effects of lack of books on the pupils, other than slowing up the learning process and negatively impacting on the outcomes was quoted as “*without homework also, we find that they have a lot of idle time at home* (*ibid*). The children are drawn to activities in the social environment such as video shows which can eventually pull them out of school.

In Rural, it is only the Marsabit centre that used the KIE recommended books. The textbook situation in the other centres in Samburu is illustrated by this teacher who said that “*we have books we were given for Lchekuti and that is what I use. We also have Adult education books, for Maths. I also use primary school books. So I just chose what I think is suitable* (T46:2002)”. In other words, three groups of books were utilised; (a) NFS books, (b) DAE books and (c) primary school KIE books. Further discussion with the informants however seems to point to primary school books being the favourite. Complaints, regarding the level and content of the books created for the NFS syllabus were raised, that

there are mistakes in the books...I think more people should have been consulted in making the books...some of them are very simplified, some of them are complex. These people just come straight from the Manyattas to the school. Some of these things are complex to them, especially maths and English because they have not passed through the process of pre-school (HT25:2002).

In addition to this, the teachers claimed that

we tried to use them but we saw that we could not follow these books as we ourselves are not trained. So we saw it better to use formal education as that is better for people who have just completed secondary education (T45:2002)

These teachers are not trained for the primary school curriculum too, but seem to prefer KIE to the NFS ones. It is therefore probable that NFS books are not easy to follow or that the teachers are more comfortable using the conventional books. The ability of the teachers to properly utilise the formal text books was however questioned by one head teacher who said that “*if they are using anything, maybe someone just plans I am going for maths then goes for any kind of arithmetic. It*

*becomes a problem. They need to start from step 1, then 2 like that (HT26:2002)*” pointing to the essence of professional preparation.

In addition to using primary school books, teachers in the AAK sponsored schools reported that *“we have to dub (copy) a little from the teachers guides (T50:2002)”*. These guides have been prepared for the NFS curriculum. So whereas a lot of effort has been put in writing a relevant curriculum, the issue of text books is still hanging.

#### **6.4.2 Writing Material**

In Urban, it is only 3 centres that provided learners with *“everything else that they need...exercise books, pencils, rulers (HT22:2000)”*. In the other centres, the parents were suppose to buy these items for their children or pupils simply fended for themselves, *“for example, they can go to the lake and fish and sell the fish and buy books or cut firewood and sell or go and weed for someone for a little money or sell sugar cane. They can have one exercise book for different subjects which seem similar (T15:2002)”*.

In Rural, the sponsored schools, (4 centres in Samburu and the Marsabit centre), were provided with writing materials that comprised exercise books as well as slates. The latter were used in 3 schools in the study sample. The slates had a dual purpose, that *“they use them to write letters and later on they use it as their desk. They just put their books on top of their slates and they write (T29:2002)”*.

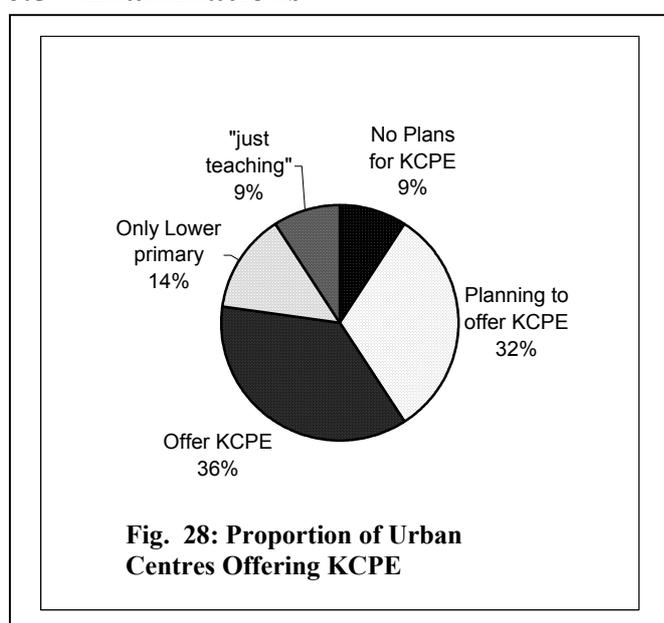
#### **6.4.3 Parents and Provision of Learning Materials**

An interesting point of diversion between Rural and Urban is the role the parents perceived for themselves in the provision of learning materials. In Urban, discussions with parents revealed that they were in agreement that it was their duty to *“buy exercise books for writing and for maths (P52:2002)”*. They however distanced themselves from the provision of the text books which they claimed *“they use the text books that belong to the school” (ibid)* or the books could supposedly be bought by the school from the Ksh.100/- monthly contribution parents made. They indeed felt guilty about the amount that *“we as parents see that it is not much as it is used to buy chalk, pencils and a few text books. This money is little (P51:2002)”* but still thought it sufficed. The main point is that parents agreed that however hard the economic times were *“we should make our contributions to buy books for our children (ibid)*.

In Rural however, parents seemed to absolve themselves from the provision of books. During one FGD, where the NFS teacher was acting as translator, she explained that *“AA have been helping these children up to now. I have not seen a book which a parent has bought for their child. Am I lying?”* she posed to the parents. The parents agreed that it was true but one of them, the chairman replied that *“I do not see the need of books because we have these slates. Each child has one and*

they are very good...If an individual wants their child to read at home, then buy a book. But a book is not necessary here inside the school because we have slates (C66:2002)". If this is the attitude to buying exercise books, which are relatively cheaper, then the possibility of parents buying text books for their children would be a uphill task, let alone requiring them to contribute money for learning aids, which they would probably deem unnecessary. One head teacher corroborated that "parents here have a problem. They do not want to part with anything. Tell them that they need to buy books, or materials to prepare learning aids, they do not see. They see as if you are wasting money (HT26:2002)". It is therefore fortunate that the formal schools or the donors provide these centres with learning materials, otherwise learning would be brought to a stand still due to this laissez-faire attitude from parents.

## 6.5 Examinations



Literature has it that the primary concern in NFS content is functionality. This is opposed to formal school content where the accreditation, the examination at the end rounds up the cycle. The results of the study point that the NFS clientele were in favour of examinations. In Urban (figure 28), 8 centres already presented some of their candidates to sit for the primary school leaving certificate, KCPE, while 7 centres were planning to do so. These centres were still growing and had not yet reached Std. 8, the exam class. In

other words, 15 or 68% of the study sample either offered or planned for KCPE as opposed to 7 centres who had no intention of registering their pupils for KCPE. Of these, 3 centres (14%), happened to be "small schools" and it may be this that had shaped their reality while the other two centres, another two belonged to the "just teaching" and had not yet thought out which direction to follow. It is only 2 centres (9%) who in line with their laid out objective which tilted towards skill preparation and training, had no interest in KCPE. Because the latter are the exception centres in Urban, their rationalisation and motivation will be discussed.

These two centres have been presented in some detail in sections 4.2.1, 5.3.1 and 6.3.4. Both are well established and utilise an NFS curriculum designed for their learners. The Kisumu centre has a two tier structure. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are offered (level 1 to 3). Thereafter, the learners are branched off to the vocational schools and these learners then sit for the Government

trade test. This actually shows their examination preference, that it be in vocational rather than academic subjects. However, if there are learners who prefer a formal education “*we will put them in a school (PO 17:2002)*”. The Nairobi based centre on the other hand has structured its school from Std. 1 to 7, but has a strong vocational angle in its curriculum. The centre is clear that it does not want to duplicate the formal school, and will therefore not prepare the candidates for KCPE. Instead, like the Kisumu counterpart, such learners are rerouted to formal schools. These transfers, which according to the head teacher were “*almost negligible...about 10 in a year (HT22:2000)*” occurred mainly between class 6 and 7. The parents seem to have a different opinion about the issue of examinations.

F1: We committee members are pleading that they add for us a Std. 8. Because you educate a child till Std 7 then you get problems getting the child another place because your economic situation is wanting. That is why we were asking that a child completes from here and gets a certificate from here.

F3: ...the children worry why they do not have a Std 8.

F1: When the child gets to Std 7, it is as though they are just abandoned. But until a child completes, there is no livelihood they are able to get. They need at least the Std 8 certificate so that one can get for them any type of course...(FGD55:2000).

In short, parents really do hope for a formal type of education. That it is only Std. 8 absent makes them see this as the only difference between their school and others. The fact that the centre uses the same terms for the class levels results in heightening the expectations for formal school equivalence. But they also raise an important issue. We live in a society dictated by certification. Entry to other institution is eased with the presence of a certificate. However, the NFS learners, after 7 years of school, have nothing to prove their claimed skills, especially if they want further training. So examination and the subsequent certification becomes an issue.

The same kind of argument regarding certification was voiced by respondent Rural (Samburu). For instance, one reason why the KIE syllabus was dismissed was because it did not address accreditation. As the head teacher pronounced “*the syllabus must have that kind of final end that when you finish these years, there is something to show that you are learned. So the KIE provided us with a syllabus that will not show us where you are. It is not examinable. So how can you prove that you are learned?(HT24:2002)*”. Another head teacher, added how lack of certification can be a barrier in job seeking “*one can even stay here for 10 years and there is no certificate. The parents might even tell the child now, if you were in the formal school from class 1-8, you could have even got a certificate and you can be employed as a security man. So why are you wasting time here? (HT25:2002)*”. Centres in Samburu cater for two types of clientele, the Lchekuti; that is the school aged pupil and the older learners (morans, married men and women). Some Lchekuti are rerouted to formal schools and sit for the national exams. However, for the older category, the NFS is their only avenue for formal education. They participate sporadically and for a shorter duration and they feel that at the end of the day, there ought to receive a nationally credible certificate.

The question that emerges is, should NFS offer KCPE? Several reasons can be advanced why NFS ought not to submit any learners for KCPE:

- The harsh and wanting situation in which learning is offered, with barely any learning materials, or suitably trained personnel means that these candidates are already disadvantaged. They start out as second rate and chances are high that their results will be reflective of this fact.
- Next is the issue of cost. Because NFS are not registered, they are not recognised as examination centres. They therefore have to present their learners as private candidates. While pupils in a normal primary school are charged Ksh.250/- exam fee, private candidates have to pay Ksh.600/-. This makes them doubly disadvantaged.
- Even if these learners pass, which from a perusal of the exams results they hardly do, they do not easily gain admission to secondary schools. Admissions for secondary are sorted out centrally for the normal registered primary school pupils. The others have to search for their own admissions.
- Quantitatively, the learners presented are negligible because fewer learners survive to the eighth class and for those who do, not all choose to participate in KCPE. These learners can therefore easily be accommodated in formal primary schools.

Given all these restrictions, it seems better to let primary schools prepare learners for KCPE. By NFS doing so too, it is duplication or at its worst, a legitimisation of quasi-primary schools. But until the sector is streamlined, examinations will remain an issue bedevilling those institutions that have decided, as a matter of policy, not to participate in national examinations.

## **6.6 Summing up**

From the data provided, it is evident that the majority of the schools in the study sample lean towards formal school curriculum. However, the hope for some Urban centres is really to have a strong vocational emphasis so that the learners who opt out of the academic line can be trained for self reliance. Instilling a strong vocational training bias may be the salvation for NFS. It is here that NFS acquire a distinction and quit serving as bad formal primary schools. Yet, it is clear that the decision of the trade areas to be offered cannot be left to the institutions, especially the solo owned ones. These centres do not have the financial base, vision nor capacity to handle vocational training. There would be a duplication of favourite trade areas and overflow of these trainees just like it is questionable if the teachers have the needed qualification to enable them train. Vocational training is generally an expensive endeavour. Only the well established centres are in a position to offer quality training that can yield self-reliance. So ones again, the Urban NFS hoping for vocational training are left hanging.

A critical issue that remains unsolved is that of curriculum development. From the data, it is evident that the initiative for drawing up the curriculum has been outside of government control. The impetus lay with the institutions themselves or their sponsors. This has had a double-barrelled effect on curriculum development and subsequent implementation. On the one hand, the institutions have been able to develop a curriculum tailor-made to suit their needs but on the other hand, the curricula's are as varied as the centres and organisations sponsoring them. Given such a scenario curriculum replication cannot be ruled out. A worrying trend is however that the less established centres, with no means of developing their curricula have simply reverted to formal school curriculum.

The answer to the curriculum problems has been to let KIE establish a core curriculum. NFE curriculum prides itself with flexibility and being attuned to the socio-economic realities. Establishing a core curriculum however puts these qualities at risk and it may therefore not be the right path to follow. Indeed, the data reveals that where KIE took the lead in curriculum development, it was found to be non-participatory and excluding. It is agreed that KIE needs to be more proactive. Rather than write a curriculum, they can play a different role, (a) redistribution of the curricula and (b) quality control. All the centres indicated that they had invited KIE to assist them in drawing up the curriculum. This means that KIE has an idea of the variety of curricula already in existence. As a central and national body, KIE can play a better role in availing this curricula to NFS with similar needs. Secondly, KIE can instil quality control mechanisms and improve the curricula as they are the specialist. If none is suitable for a certain clientele, then they should take up the challenge and develop a relevant curriculum. Centralised organisation would also ease the issue of national examinations and certification. However, decentralisation in curriculum development has to be maintained as that is a key way in which curriculum relevance is reached.

Lastly, the analysis of text book usage results in several unanswered questions. Can one claim to be following an NFS curriculum and yet utilise formal school books? To what extent does a text book influence the curriculum output? Do books shape the result, or can they be adapted to a given situation? What are the implications of using books that have been written for an entirely different target group? These questions are posed because the data reveals that books written for adults are used for children. Centres claim to be following one curriculum but use books developed for another curriculum. The teachers decide, on a whim, what topics can be taught. In short, text book sourcing is haphazard. There is need for more systematisation of the sector and evolution of a clear vision of the planned end result.

## 6.7 The Pedagogy: “how is it taught”

NFE literature lays claim to non-conventional methods of teaching that in the end ought to empower the learner. This is the Freirian influence in the field, that the methods need to conscientise the learners, enable them to take control of their destiny. As such the NFE methods are often listed as being community based, relying on discovery and peer learning and in this way are learner centred. Additionally the learning organisation is viewed to lean towards flexible approaches, such as multi shift and multi grade strategies, that are responsive to the learning situations. This section presents the results from the research that will enable one to compare the stated versus the practice. The discussion is presented in four sections. First is an analysis of the teaching and learning strategies then an examination of the language use. Classroom factors that impact on learning are also presented finally followed by the perspectives of the learners on the teaching process.

### 6.7.1 Teaching Styles in Urban

The study sought to establish from teachers how they taught and what methods their institutions espoused. In general terms, results from Urban can be grouped into three categories. The first group of teachers were rather vague about their teaching styles and simply replied that “*we teach the way other teachers do (HT2:2002)*” or that “*we use the normal styles of teaching found in schools (HT16:2002)*”. Asked to expound on what “normal” is, the reply was that “*it how a trained teacher can go to class and teach*”. This meant that “*we teach the way we were taught in our previous formal schools since we have not been given any training. We combine all the available methods (T15:2002)*” and “*we are trying to copy how we were taught when we were in school (HT16:2002)*”. One teacher had tried to educate herself “*my grandfather was once a teacher and my mother is a teacher. So I just took some of their guidelines, read them and got to know how to teach (T64:2002)*”. This group of teachers were those who had not benefited from any training and the only knowledge of teaching they had came from how they were taught or what they saw around them. The knowledge naturally leaned them towards conventional teaching methods. That these teachers imagine they can teach as trained teachers even without undergoing any form of professional preparation shows that they take the training process lightly and already conceive themselves to be capable teachers.

The second group of teachers comprised trained/in-serviced teachers who in line with their training used conventional methods. These teachers further attempted to share with their non-trained colleagues on “*the lesson plans and the schemes of work and how to handle these pupils (HT3:2002)*”. The P1 teachers and DICECE trained teachers were often clear and succinct about the teaching methods as these quotes show, that “*I mainly use methods such as talk and chalk method,*

*dramatisation, explanatory, story telling, discussion (ibid)*” or that “*in nursery we use thematic system...For example, for one morning, you take a ‘cow’ from 8.00-12.00. Even if you are outdoors, it is just that ‘cow’, in class, it is ‘cow’ Maths, English activities it is just that ‘cow’. That is the thematic system as that is what the child is supposed to learn that day (T4a:2002)*”. The “seminar or workshop” trained teachers on the other hand explained in a roundabout way what they did:

We read the text books, make short and simplified notes which children can understand. Then we move into the classrooms and now write these notes on the blackboard. You read for them, explain and then demonstrate using pictures. So you have to draw pictures so that the impression sticks in their minds (T4b:2002).

This second group of teachers therefore used methods normally associated with structured schooling. The description of the application of some methods, such as the thematic approach sounded appealing and effective.

It is the third category of teachers who leaned towards NFE methods. One centre, as a school policy tried to venture away from “*...classical teaching unless we are doing block subjects like business education, GHC, health science, home science and things like that, we might do classical teaching...that means you stand in front of the class (PO17:2002)*”. Otherwise the preferred teaching style was dictated by the ability of the learners who were grouped according to their levels. Group teaching was utilised to enable “*...the ones who are fast the chance to go ahead and the ones who are slow the chance to pick up slowly (ibid)*. Another centre reported that “*...we tend to be flexible to the child because of their varied ages. You can get a child is younger or older for the class he is (HT12:2002)*”. Lastly, one centre in Urban indicated that “*when I started, there are some boys whom I taught such that they can now assist me handle the young ones as I handle the older ones. At night, I then teach them but during the day, we divide the classes. They are 6, all boys (T11:2002)*”. In the last two examples methods associated with NFE, that is mixed aged and peer teaching are utilised. These teachers do not use the terminology associated with NFE as they have not been trained, and the methods are coincidental rather than a product of deliberate planning. The data revealed that peer teaching was resorted to first as a way of dealing with the large pupil numbers and secondly due to the understanding that peers can enhance the instructional process as this quote indicates “*sometimes the class might be very large. You cannot reach every pupil. So you can use pupil to pupil. Maybe this one has understood what you taught, so he can help the neighbour (T44:2000)*”. However, not all teachers encouraged this method. For instance, pupils reported that “*like maths...it is hard, and then if you ask ‘teacher what is this?’ he tells you go away and sit down. He tells you to ask a friend and if you ask a friend he calls you and starts beating you (PP35:2000)*” showing that their attempt to get assistance from their classmates did not auger well with the teacher who generally did not entertain peer referencing.

Two teachers in Urban further indicated that they adopted individualised strategies. One teacher who had only 2 pupils at the time of the research quoted this approach which is

understandable given the few pupils at hand. The other teacher is a carpentry trainer who handled a class of 13 (2 of them girls). He said:

I give individual teaching and individual coaching. I mean that I sit together with that particular individual to help him or her understand what is required, and when I say individual coaching, because they are working with their hands and a lot of measurements are involved, so I work with them step by step to ensure that they understand what the lesson is all about (T67:2003).

Vocational training entails demonstration and learning by doing. Together with the manageable trainee numbers it was possible to give individual attention. The limitation of this approach is however its inapplicability in large learning groups as was the case in the Nairobi centre that stated “*when you have a class of about 40, I do not think you can do much in that class (T44:2000)*”.

In total, the methods mentioned by the Urban teachers covered the whole array as follows:

- talk and chalk
- lecture
- question and answer, discussion
- explanation
- demonstration, illustration
- dramatisation, role play, story telling, songs
- thematic
- individual teaching
- peer teaching
- group work

While the majority of these expressions would easily be identified as belonging to FE, the NFE paradigm also lays claim to such terms like the thematic approach and peer learning. However, on the whole it would be correct to surmise that Urban NFS largely utilise conventional methods. A few teachers try to revert to methods that are espoused in NFE such as peer teaching, but these are the exceptions rather than the trend or school policy.

Due to few teacher numbers, or frequent absenteeism, the Urban teachers have to shift teach. During the research for instance, one case was observed where one teacher handled four classes: nursery, Std. 1, Std. 2 and Std. 3. Her job was somewhat eased by the fact that all the learners were housed in one room (the church hall). Each group faced one side of the wall and she taught one group after the other. As she explained

Today in the morning I started with Std 3, I gave them maths. After that I went to class 2, I also gave them Math and then I went to class 1 and gave them some English, is when I went to nursery class. That is how I normally do it because the nursery children do not always report early. I can take something to do with 15-20 minutes and then I leave them with an assignment (T64:2002).

Her experience is similar to a classroom observation conducted in another centre. In this case, the teacher taught two separate classes, in detached rooms, simultaneously. Class 1 had 13 pupils while class 2 had 12 pupils. The following is an account of how the teacher spent her time between the two classes.

Table 14: Classroom Observation – Shift Learning

| Std | Subject                 | Time                     | Activity  |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1   | English                 | 8.35<br>3 mins.          | The teacher has already written an exercise on the chalkboard. She asks one boy to lead the others in reading out aloud and then she proceeds to the next classroom.  |
| 2   | Maths                   | 8.38<br>6 mins.          | Teacher explains and pupils chorus the answers back then at 8.40 asks for a volunteer to do the sum on the chalkboard. She then writes sums on the board and asks them to work. She moves to the other class  |
| 1   |                         | 8.44<br>3 mins.          | Teacher asks if they have completed the exercise. Pupils reply in chorus that they haven't. <i>At this point it is beginning to get rather loud. The class are divided by a jambi.</i> 8.46. The teacher is still going through individual exercises. Proceeds to class 2.  |
| 2   |                         | 8.47<br>2 mins.          | Teacher goes through individual exercises correcting. <i>In Class 1, the concentration is beginning to wane. One girl is lying on the next while a boy and a girl argue about ownership of a ruler.</i> Teacher moves to 1.   |
| 1   |                         | 8.49<br>1 min.           | Teacher cautions the pupils, who have been working in pairs/groups, not to share the answers they have arrived at. The pupils now are involved in their task. They are measuring each others height. A Class 2 pupil then comes to report to the teacher that his pencil is not sharp enough. The teacher moves to class 2.   |
| 2   |                         | 8.50<br>5 mins.          | She sharpens the pencil for him. A late comer, a girl arrives. One boy in class 1 then comes to then report to the teacher that some pupils are sharing the answers. 8.55, the teacher is still sharpening pencils. The late comer girl has taken out her book and she is doing the exercise. Samson in class 1 is talking and the teacher calls him out by name from the adjacent class. Teacher moves.  |
| 1   |                         | 8.56<br>8 mins.          | Teacher asks if they have completed their task. They reply yes. Teacher then starts marking individual books. Class 2 are working but conversing in low tones. Pupils have got all the answers wrong. The teacher then demonstrates, using one boy, how to measure. She asks them to repeat the task. One girl is really listless. She is lying on the desk. She does not seem to have done her exercise and the teacher does not notice either. Teacher moves.                                   |
| 2   |                         | 9.05<br>6 mins.          | Teacher asks for "clean work". At 9.10. a boy from class 1 goes over to the teacher. The teacher sends him back to his class saying that she is coming over.  |
| 1   |                         | English<br>Opposit<br>es | 9.11<br>5 mins.   |
|     | 9.16<br>5 mins.         |                          | Two girls from Class 2 come over to ask for permission to go out to the toilet. The teacher allows them and then crosses over to class 2 to keep order as they were quite noisy and then returns to Class 1. A boy from Class 2 asks for permission to go out. The teacher tells him to wait for the others to return.  |
|     | 9.21<br>6 mins.         |                          | The Class 3 and 4 teacher walks over to class 2 and tells them to keep quiet. By this time no one in class 2 is working anymore.  |
|     | 9.27<br>3 mins.         |                          | A class 2 pupil comes over and announces that he has completed his work. The teacher replies that that is why they are making noise. She however continues to mark individual exercises then moves on.  |
| 2   | English<br>Use of<br>on | 9.30<br>17 mins          | She asks the pupils to keep their books in their bags and to turn over to English. She gives her instructions in Kiswahili and waits for them to settle down, explains, practices and at 9.44 writes an exercise on the board. Then she moves on.   |
| 1   |                         | 9.47<br>8 mins           | Teacher starts correcting the individual books. She then crosses over to Class 2 and asks them to work quietly and further gives individual instructions to a number of pupils. She corrects the books through to 9.55 when she proceeds to the other class.  |
| 2   |                         | 9.55<br>5 mins.          | She brings order and asks them to work quietly. It is at this point, since the lesson begun, <b>that the teacher finally sits down</b> , and observes what the pupils are doing. All the pupils are now busy doing the exercise. She then moves on.   |
| 1   |                         | 10.00                    | Marks books then returns to class 2.  |
| 2   |                         | 10.06<br>4 mins.         | The teacher sits down. She reiterates the instructions. At 10.07 the first pupil, a boy brings over his work for marking, which she marks then moves on.  |
| 1   |                         | 10.10<br>20 mins.        | The pupils were busy talking and the teacher asks them to complete their work. Meanwhile in Class 2, a friendly banter between a boy and a girl progressively gets physical. The boy beats the girl and the latter starts to cry. The other pupils, who had quietly been watching, call out to the teacher who goes to settle the learners. Immediately the teacher leaves to restore order in Class 1, pupils in class 2 start talking. The teacher however, goes back to Class 2 and sits down. |
| 2   |                         | 10.30                    | Finally, it is break time. The lessons come to an end.  |

From the above account of the classroom observation, several issues impacting on the teacher, the learners and the learning strategies emerge. First, it is very clear that the teacher has a hectic time, criss-crossing from one classroom to another. Initially, for the first half hour, she spends an average of 5 minutes per class where she quickly explains the topic of the day, briefly practices and leaves the learners with an assignment to do. Later, as the class progresses, perhaps due to the fact that she is getting tired, she takes a longer duration in each class. In fact, she first sits down one and a half hours after the lessons begun.

It was evident that the teacher had prepared well for the lessons, was confident of her content and presented it using a variety of methods such as talk and chalk, chorus answers, demonstration and individual approaches. She was soft spoken but authoritative such that when she addressed the class, all paid attention to her. However her having to divide her attention between the two classes compromised her output. Hence she was not able to properly manage the pupils or notice those who were just lazing around or those who needed special attention. More often than not, the pupils completed their assignment while the teacher was still busy. Due to idleness, the pupils whiled away the time talking, and sometimes resorted to fighting.

The amount of reasonable content that can be covered within such a hectic time schedule and coupled with the fact that the pupils do not have text books is questionable. Aggravating the situation is the noisy environment from the pupils but also due to the architectural style, as the classrooms have been constructed using *jambi* (straw mats) that are not sound proof. In the teachers words, she surmises the challenges as

The concentration. You cannot give out enough material. You cannot deliver enough information because the others are making noise. And then also, me I feel they are not getting enough. There has to be one teacher in one class. That would give them time to get enough information, even to learn, to correct them like the handwriting. I do not have time to tell them how to shape a letter. It is just like we are introducing and then just a bit of explanation. So actually it is so hard. I actually feel they are not getting the real thing I am supposed to be giving them (T43:2002).

The Urban mode of shift teaching puts a lot of pressure on the teacher. It is very strenuous and can result in the teacher burning out. Additionally the teacher cannot fully concentrate on the pupils or give specialised attention when needed. The findings also show that young learners cannot systematically work alone without the constant supervision of a teacher. There is also the implications of time on content to be covered and practice time. Pupils emerge as having too much time on their hands whereas the opposite applies for the teacher. The teaching is done well, but the teacher does not have adequate time to ascertain its reception. It therefore becomes evident that a trained and well prepared teacher, as the current one was, can achieve poor learning outcomes due to the conditions of learning. So while the efforts of such individual teachers must be applauded, it is clear that the shift system can result in quality being undermined and in the long run a sub-standard provision.

### **6.7.2 Teaching Styles in Rural**

On the one hand, the teaching methods in Rural were shaped by the formal trained school teachers, that is both nursery and primary teachers who were the main teachers in NFS. On the other hand, most teachers in Rural (including the trained teachers) had benefited from workshops and seminars that introduced them to varied ways of handling the learners. So, unlike a majority of the teachers in Urban who were inclined to conventional teaching methods, the opposite could be said of the Rural based teachers as is hereby presented.

#### **6.7.2.1 Conventional Methods**

One of the direct impact of utilising mainstream teachers was that they influenced the teaching methods in NFS. One formal school head teacher for instance said that *“they do not work as an independent body. It is us who provide them with the teaching resources. It is us who co-ordinate so they are teaching out of our direction...the trained teachers (HT24:2002)”* showing that the symbiotic relationship the NFS has with the formal schools housing them shapes the classroom practices as well. However, the overriding reason for adopting formal school methods was provided by this teacher who stated that *“we are not trained as Lchekuti teachers. We are trained as primary school teachers. In this case, we are just teaching the way we are teaching primary school pupils (T23:2002)”*. That it is dangerous to rely on the techniques these teachers have acquired is confirmed by one informant, who referring to how the NFS teacher (a trained nursery school teacher) taught replied *“I do not know how I can put it to you (he laughs) but I think they used to handle it like nursery school kids (HT27:2002)”*. This was indeed confirmed in a classroom observation of an English lesson. The teacher would say certain sentences in English such as *“open the door, stand up”* and the learners would sing-song them back. The teacher reported that *“many are happy with the education because they now know how to speak English. Even if they do not know, they can sing it like a song of their own (T28:2002)”* This *sing-songing* is a common feature in nursery schools in Kenya. It emphasises rote learning stressing acquisition of facts which cannot be transferred to dissimilar contexts. The fact that it is widespread depicts the urgency of improving learning strategies in NFS as well as FE.

#### **6.7.2.2 Multi-Grade/Multi-Age**

Besides, teachers indicated that their methods were dictated by two factors; the age and the ability of the learners. Learners were simply chronologically grouped; *“we arrange them according to their ages...that the younger ones be together and those bigger ages be together (T23:2002)”*. The reason for this separation stemmed from the traditional conceptualisation of age groups, which was still adhered to in the traditional societies and therefore needed to be respected within the classroom. However more instructional related reasons are available. The learners were separated due to

classroom management issues, “...*these small ones will make noise and the others want to concentrate (ibid)*”). However, a vital reason advanced was that the older and younger were separated as the objective, emphasis and ultimate goal of the education they were getting was varied. As such they needed to be treated as two entities:

We vary depending on age. The ones that can still join the primary system, we deploy the primary school methodology of teaching. The normal primary methods. For those we think that are aged, we come up purposely for skill kind of education. Therefore the methodology varies (HT24:2002).

Moreover, the teachers indicated that they were guided by the aptitude of the learners, that “*we just teach them according to their ability. We give them work, then we assess them from the work, then we group them together according to their ability. The teacher himself knows how to group (T25:2002)*”. Those who had benefited from relevant training used the appropriate language; “*we were taught a little methodology of multi-grade. So we identify those who are able, those who are advanced we put them in one side of the class, just according to their levels (T30:2002)*”. One teacher described multi-grade teaching as “*where you teach learners of different abilities, different ages in the same class. That is what I do in class. I give them different work depending on their ability. There are quick learners, slow learners and small children (T47:2002)*”. This definition, other than the last section is compatible with other definitions on multi-grade available. This last sentence however gives an added dimension. That the teacher talks of ability (quick and slow learners) and then age (small children) shows that even if younger children are of the same ability as the older learners they would not be grouped together (whereas small children of different ability were observed to be grouped together). In this case, age and ability are incongruent and adds another angle to multigrade teaching.

Whereas almost all the teachers in the (Rural) study sample asserted that learners ability and age dictated the grouping in the classroom and subsequent content each group was taught, the classroom observations depicted that seating arrangement, especially for the older learners, was additionally dictated by gender. Hence, although the *Lchekuti* sat together, the older boys and girls preferred to sit in isolated groups. Grouping younger children according to ability was therefore feasible, but not so for the rest where the socio-cultural socialisation was practised in the classroom. The teachers have therefore evolved a practice that fits within the traditional conceptualisation of age set and gender demarcations.

Teachers in schools solely supported by the community were untrained. In such schools, multi-grade is practised due to circumstances and not as a school philosophy. The only knowledge the teachers have of how to teach is their experience as former pupils, or what they observe around them. This naturally makes them favour conventional methods. Hence one untrained teacher complained that “*this style of teaching people together in one class is not good because when I am teaching one group, the other group cannot understand. They just look at me...It is better to have a*

*different class for those who know and for those who do not. It is not possible to teach another group, when the other one has been given work to do because...this group listens instead of proceeding with their work (T46: 2002)”. Irrespective of her training status, her views are valid and draw a parallel with a classroom observation in a mixed ability class, handled by a teacher trained in multi-grade methodology that is hereby presented.*

**Table 15: Classroom Observation – Multigrade teaching**

|                            |              |                       |                                       |              |             |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>            | Maths        | <b>Topic:</b>         | Addition                              | <b>Time:</b> | 4.45 – 5.30 |
| <b>Learners (present):</b> | 14 (5 girls) | <b>Registered:</b>    | 24                                    |              |             |
| <b>Teacher:</b>            | Male         | <b>Qualification:</b> | Form 4 Trained in Multigrade Teaching |              |             |

The learners are seated in three groups. The group on the right is the largest with nine pupils, and has the youngest learners and of mixed gender. The left group comprised three girls, relatively older and the last group at the back of the classroom also three older boys.

The teacher starts the lesson by explaining examples he has on the chalkboard. This lesson is for the older boys (**Group 1**) at the back and they are attentive. The younger learners (group 2) are simply murmuring amongst themselves. At 4.52, that is after 8 minutes of explanation, the teacher writes two sums on the board for Group 1 to work out. At 5.53 the teacher turns to the **Group 2** seated on two benches to whom he explains the sum and at 4.56 gives them an exercise to do. At 4.57 he returns to the **Group 1** who say they have completed their exercise. However, all got the answer wrong and the teacher instructs each individually and gives them an additional sum to do. In the mean time, the **Group 2** are working. The teacher comes round to correct their work, and it looks like they got the answers wrong as the teacher explains individually to each. In the meantime, Group 1 have completed their assignment and are chatting quietly as they wait for the teacher. At 5.10 the teacher writes individual sums on the slates for each of the boys in **Group 1** and they get busy. It is then that the teacher attends to the 3 older girls (**group 3**), gives them an assignment and proceeds to **Group 2**. By 5.15 the murmuring is getting louder. At 5.16, the teacher refers to a text book, then asks the three groups to erase their slates and gives each group an assignment. Two boys who had come late (at 5.18 and 5.25 respectively), and joined Group 1 and 2 respectively are taken through the task. Thereafter the teacher starts marking individual slates and by 5.30 when the observation stops, he is still doing that.

The language of teaching is a mixture of Kiswahili , Kisamburu and English. Teacher mainly explains in Kisamburu, but the pupils answer back in English. Examples from the environment are used, for instance the teacher says ”when you add 6 goats and 8 sheep, what do you get?”

As the class proceeds, the treasurer of the committee walks in and out of the classroom, proudly showing to the researcher the skills the learners have acquired (June 2002).

The observation depicted that some groups were attended to more than others. For instance, the group of three girls were idle for the first 25 minutes (56%) of the lesson time. In addition, the learners almost always completed their assignments ahead of time and had to wait for the teacher who was the busiest person in the classroom, rotating with no rest between the three groups. There was no evidence of the more able children aiding their classmates, a quality that multi-grade teaching esteems. An average of 6 minutes was spent on instruction per group. This, as has been raised with the Urban example seems to be rather short for meaningful learning to take place. The teacher in agreement states that *“I see it is difficult. When I try to go to one group...I cannot give them work hurriedly because you know they need to be taught step by step because they really want to understand. So I take time explaining. By the time I change from one subject to another, it is already dark and we cannot continue. So we have to stop (T47:2002)”. Given that NFS in Samburu*

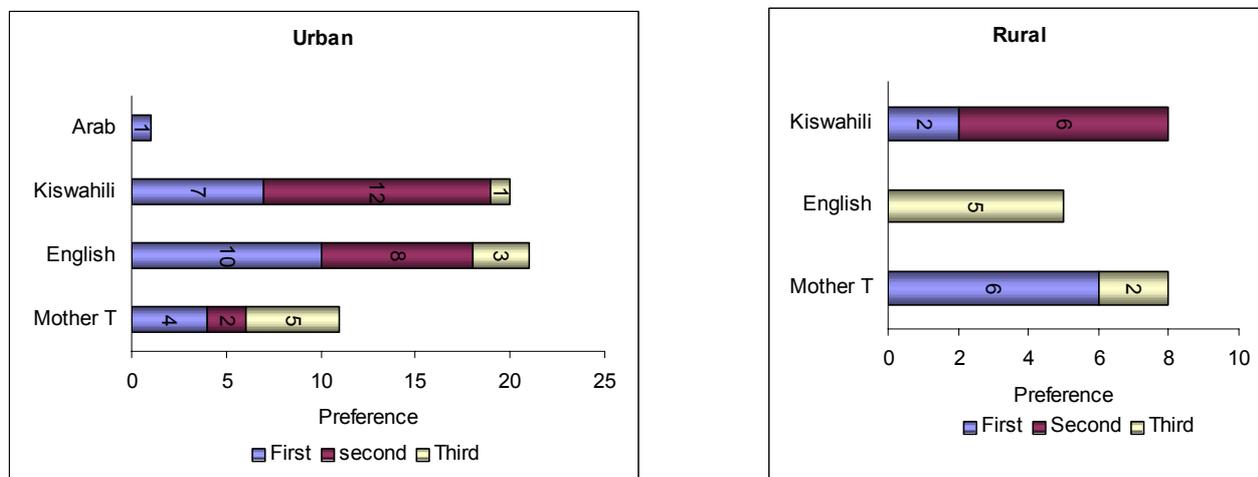
have at most two hours per day devoted to school, one can appreciate the challenge the limited time portends.

In terms of classroom traditions, there are some significant differences between NFS and conventional primary schools. For instance, the end of a task denotes the end of the subject. There is no bell ringing like in formal schools. Additionally, members of the school committee walked freely in the classroom. While this denotes a strong community presence, it was destructive as they did not really participate in the instruction process. Rather, they were an interference and were largely ignored by the teacher and learners. Ways need to be explored on how to utilise their presence more effectively like sharing their knowledge on the environment with the learners. Such a contribution would somewhat ease the pressure the teacher has in handling the varied groups, levels and ages.

## 6.8 Language of Teaching

The overall results indicated some salient differences between Rural and Urban regarding the language choice as medium of instruction. Whereas in Urban English and Kiswahili were almost at par as the preferred languages, in Rural, it was mother tongue and Kiswahili while English was the third alternative. Diagram 29 presents the results according to the order of preference as stated by the informants.

Fig. 29: Language Preference as Medium of Instruction



The tendency amongst almost all informants was to offer an explanation as to why mother tongue was utilised, whereas for Kiswahili and English, it was assumed that the reasons were self evident. Responses such as “we normally use Kiswahili and English but in lower classes we also use mother tongue because some of them are not used to Kiswahili. So for them to understand at least something, we go back to their native language or mother tongue (HT6:2002)” attest to this. One can therefore interpret an instinctive acceptance of Kiswahili and English as the medium of instruction.

Several reasons can be advanced to explain the preference of English and Kiswahili in Urban. First, English and Kiswahili are the two most crucial languages in the formal school system, the former serving as the medium of instruction and the latter as a compulsory and examinable subject. The NFS aiming for academic education therefore in line, emphasize these languages too as “*we are trying to prepare these children for the formal school (PO21:2002)*”. Secondly Kiswahili and English are LWC – languages of wider communication. NFS feel that their role is to prepare children for a wider world “*and empowering them means that they should have confidence in themselves so that they can communicate with the world. And you see the world over, people do not communicate in Dholuo, the language they use at home here or in this region. They should know how to communicate with people through other languages (HT20:2002)*”. The third reason counts especially for Kiswahili. Due to the multi ethnic language scene in Kenya whose manifestation is more evident in urban settings, Kiswahili has been rendered the most suitable and neutral language to resort to. It was explained that “*the children are from different tribes (HT12:2002)*” and “*...if you use Dholuo some will not understand (HT4:2002)*”.

If one was to rank the language choice in Urban, it would be English, Kiswahili and then Mother tongue. However, it is a fact that the pupils have poor grounding in English. This was repeatedly mentioned. Kiswahili and Mother tongue are the languages best understood by the learners. So while on the one hand English is the language stated as the medium, in reality it is mother tongue or Kiswahili that are used. For instance, quotes such as “*we use English. Maybe if you want to elaborate, we use vernacular (T14:2002)*” or “*...I also have to translate in Kiswahili and translate in Kijaluo so they can understand (T42:2002)*” reveal the confusion regarding statement versus practice. Mother tongue and Kiswahili are the ideal languages, but they unfortunately are resorted to as a second alternative, when English becomes unfathomable. The choice of English over Kiswahili, other than elitism, can be explained by habit. Teachers are used to thinking in and teaching certain subjects using the English medium as such a statement reveals; “*...you cannot teach Maths in Kiswahili, or English in Kiswahili, so we have to mix (HT22:2000)*”.

On the whole, the tendency in Urban and occasionally in Rural was to be rather apologetic about using mother tongue as this quote denotes “*...for the lower classes, at times we are **forced** to apply mother tongue (HT3:2002)*”. Others completely objected its usage. Two reasons were advanced. First mother tongue instruction would be incongruent with the demands on the formal school system hence “*no mother tongue because I am just looking at the competition within the municipal, even the exams (HT8:2002)*” or “*we do not use mother tongue. (Why?) We want to train them, just like the way we teach in primary level (T23:2002)*”. Secondly, it was argued that “*...there is no need teaching a child mother tongue. They already know it (HT30:2002)*” or that “*the environment is so Dholuo so that is why we try as much as possible that when they are here, they*

*speak Swahili, they speak English. They have all the time to speak Dholuo (PO21:2002)*". School is seen as the place to learn novel things. That these novel things can be learnt in a familiar language seems to be incomprehensible. It is only two centres in Rural that encouraged mother tongue usage with the reason that *"first we encouraged them to use the vernacular so that they could understand. As time went by they introduced Kiswahili. Since they come from near Maralal town, we thought it would be useful (HT27:2002)"*.

Results from the classroom observations, as depicted below in Table 16 show that teachers, in an effort to be understood, have resorted to mixing the languages.

**Table 16: Language Use in the Observed Lessons**

| Region | Subject                     | Classroom Observation   |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|
| Rural  | Maths<br>15 mins.           | Teaching was mainly conducted in Kisamburu interspersed with some Kiswahili. All the answers, given by the pupils, were given in English.   |
|        | English<br>45 mins.         | Kiswahili was used, translations given in English and then learners repeated the sentences. The medium was clearly Kiswahili.   |
|        | Maths<br>45 mins            | Teacher mainly explains in Kisamburu, but the pupils answer back in English. Pupils are reprimanded in Kiswahili  |
| Urban  | Maths<br>30 mins.           | The language throughout by both teacher and pupils was English  |
|        | English<br>Maths<br>2 hours | Both Kiswahili and English. The former to explain. Pupils answer back in English. Informal conversation between the teacher and pupils is also conducted in Kiswahili   |
|        | Maths<br>40 mins            | The teacher used only English. Kiswahili was used only to reprimand the learners. The pupils were the most active, in all the observations and posed questions using Kiswahili. The teacher replied in English. |

In Rural, the three languages were used simultaneously while in Urban the tendency was to stick to English especially for the older learners. For the younger learners, Kiswahili was the main language, interspersed with English. Other than one exception where there were pupil initiated questions, the learner mainly responded to questions from the teacher. Interesting though was that these learners gave the answer, normally one word, in English. In other words, the official answers related to the subject at hand were communicated in English. The learner initiated questions were sought using Kiswahili, but the teacher answered solely via the English medium. The Rural based teachers however explained via mother tongue. Informal conversation amongst the learners was conducted in Kiswahili or mother tongue. These findings therefore imply that formal knowledge is assumed best transmitted and stored via the English medium while mother tongue, which is still basically an oral language is considered unsuitable. Kiswahili lies somewhere in between. The practice of mixing languages is not recommended as it results in fragmented acquisition of a language. In the long run the entire development of the language may be affected (Skutnab-Kangas 2003, Brock-Utne 2000).

It is only in one classroom observation that English was used as an excluding tool. The teacher conducted the lesson solely in English despite the fact that he must have been aware that the learners did not entirely understand him. This school is located in an urban slum and the spoken

language is primarily Kiswahili. The pupils would be happy with Kiswahili as the medium of instruction. As the pupils said *“like us...we do not talk English. But when the teacher is angry, he tells us to talk in English. And we do not even know this language. Yes, the little we know we can try, but when you ask him, he starts getting harsh. So there is nothing that you can do (PP34:2000)”*. The teachers persistence with English makes one see its usage as a psychological weapon, to show the pupils that they are ignorant while the teacher is intelligent, because he can speak the language of the elites. The result was that the pupils detested the subject saying *“you know this subject (maths), you cannot like it because you do not understand (PP34:2000)”*. This teacher was generally hostile to his pupils and represents an extreme case. He was an exception case in the study sample.

The Policy Guidelines (9.0) declare that the language of the catchment area shall be used *“while developing other languages gradually”*. This is more or less in tandem with the language policy of formal schools which states that mother tongue or in multi lingual situations, Kiswahili, shall be the medium for the first three years of school, upon which English shall take over as the medium of instruction. Indeed, the language policy described by one centre fitted this national policy plan for formal schools that *“the upper classes, the medium of instruction is in English. But for classes 1-3 and even 4, we try to instruct them in Kiswahili (HT22:2000)”*. But for other NFS, in attempting to be like formal schools, they are actually infringing the very policy guidelines by discouraging mother tongue instruction. The NFS situation is however reflective of the confusion in formal schools. One NFS teacher who is a formal school teacher for instance explained that *“the rules say that you are not supposed to use mother tongue in lower primary unless it is an issue you want to explain (T23:2002)”* showing how they too have misinterpreted the language policy guidelines and have evolved a mixed language medium of instruction.

## 6.9 Classroom Contingencies

- Class size

Schools in the study sample that admitted street children tried, as a policy, to limit their overall admissions and pupil per class as *“most of the children we have need individualised kind of attention so we are trying to keep the numbers minimal (PO1:2002)”*. This centre quoted 14 as the desired class size and this generally correlated with the class size in a majority of the urban and rural schools. The stated number in the register was often higher than daily attendance as NFS are plagued with absenteeism.

It is only two centres, which also fully sponsor their pupils, that had big pupil numbers which progressively decreased in the upper levels. One centre in Kisumu that had nursery to Std 4 had 60, 49,77 46 and 35 pupils in the respective classes. The other was the Nairobi based centre whose

details are provided in section 5.4 (last paragraph). The age groups per class were more homogenous in Urban. Though this does not lessen the difficulties in terms of class control and being able to reach and meaningfully instruct each child, it somewhat eases the pressure on the teacher.

- **Varied Ages**

Non-formal schools are viewed as a place to offer a second chance to learner with no access to or who had been pushed out of the formal school system. Hence the schools admit whoever comes. The result is varied ages, the biggest gap witnessed being in rural where a 12 and 30+ year old were being taught in the same class. The data indicates that older learners were faced with a lack of fit. Teachers were generally at a loss on how to handle them as this Urban based teacher's remarks portray "*sometimes we are brought children who are so old and we wonder what to do with them. Some bring a child my age mate and they want such a child to go to Std. 3!* (HT4:2002)". In Urban, the ages per class were not so varied, so the presence of a more mature child in a lower class was easily noticeable. This learner could be an object of ridicule and if not handled in the right way, could easily drop out of school. Teachers therefore had to develop ways of attending to such a child which was to "*...teach separately. If you place him/her in class 1 they will feel ashamed. So you place the child in class 3 but you teach class 1 material so that he/she can like to come to school* (T4a:2002)". Naturally, this implied additional pressure on the teacher and less time for other learners and generally slower progress. In Rural however, two factors worked in their favour. First older learners were not an isolated case and secondly the centres claimed to utilise multi grade teaching where the primary concern was the level of learners' understanding. Hence multi ages were easily accommodated within this methodology of teaching.

The older versus younger learners have atypical problems related to their age group. With young children, the main problem is class control. The centre in Marsabit explained "*...for some of the children with 6 years, it was difficult to make them keep quiet and listen, to be attentive. They would start playing around...the very young ones are not very attentive while the others are attentive. There is a lot of interruption when the age varies, when that gap is big* (T29:2002)". This centre therefore solved the problem by trying to homogenise the ages somewhat as "*all the people who were below 6 years, I told them to stay, they will start school next year (ibid)*". Learners were simply sent away. Older learners on the other hand are very sensitive to what is assumed to be conventional classroom practice. For instance, it was reported that "*there are others during marking, they did not get the write answer, but you have shown them it is not the correct answer. That child because he or she is a grown up, will run away from school because they think that others will laugh at them* (T23:2002)". Teachers also had to develop other ways of marking the learners assignments, especially for the *morans* who took it personally if they got an answer wrong.

A *red X*, as normally used for wrong answers was enough to make a *moran* drop out of school. There was a gender element too as the *morans*, for instance were more sensitive in girls presence “*the morans...they do not want to be defeated by the girls. So that is why we do not mark them wrong when the others are seeing (ibid)*”.

- **Different Entry Levels**

Urban enrolled two types of learners: drop outs and non-enrolled. The dropouts often had a certain level of proficiency but were sometimes placed in the same class with non-literate learners because the latter “*...are grown up and you cannot place them in nursery. You do not even know where to place them! (HT4:2002)*”. Methodologically, the answer would be a shift in conceptualisation, to focus on the ability rather than the age of the learners and resort to mixed ability teaching. However, teachers need to be prepared to teach in this way. In as far as vocational training is concerned, the varied educational levels is a problem but not necessarily an obstacle as the skill being imparted is not dependant on literacy skills, though it could benefit from it. One instructor elaborated

The trainees I have are from different backgrounds. We have those who have gone up to Std. 8, we have those who have never gone to school, we have those who have undergone our non-formal education...so we have three categories of trainees. But what I believe is that people can do a lot with their hands. Education (level) should not prevent people from doing things with their hands (T67:2002)

In Rural, the learners are new to the school environment, “*...these people have never been in school. So there is no way we can handle them the way we handle the normal pupils in school ...there are even Morans, and as I told you Morans are very aggressive (HT25:2002)*”. The learners need to be accustomed to some school norms and practices simple because the nature of learning to read and write requires some sort of order. The problematic group again was older learners, who are not so flexible in adapting to conventional classroom conditions. Some examples were given that “*you can get in there (class) and you find the morans talking, they do not even take any seriousness...they just continue with their talking and since they are just mature people you cannot just tell them to keep quiet (T25:2002)*” or that

traditionally, morans greet girls using the hand. So a moran can enter when you are in the middle of a lesson and start greeting all the girls. You waste over 20 minutes. Then he tells them I want to chew snuff. Or one of the girls tells the moran ‘please can you give us snuff first before you sit down!’... In fact, in order for you not to chase them, we must allow that. We just give them time, after they finish, we continue....A person who is non-Samburu, I do not think he can teach very comfortably. Because such things in class can irritate. But we are Samburu’s, we understand them, so we have to accept them (HT25:2002).

While every effort must be made to make the learners comfortable in class and not to unnecessarily deviate from their ways, it should not be at the expense of class time or the instructional process. So for the sake of maximizing learning time, the learners may need to conform to conventional classroom habits.

- **Gender**

Gender concerns in the classroom were more prevalent in Rural than in Urban. The Samburu society for instance is patriarchal. The boys through the elaborate initiation ceremonies are further socialised to assume a sort of macho role. Coming second to girls is inconceivable. In one school, it was reported that “...*from the beginning, a problem cropped up between girls and boys. So whenever a girl could do better than a boy, it could mean a fight. They would fight on the way home* (HT27:2002)”. So the solution was to teach the learners in gender disaggregated rooms.

The female gender was also more vulnerable than the male. The older girls who participate in NFS are either married or about to be married. This means that their husbands/fiancés have the final authority on their continued participation in NFS. One case that was reported gives an inkling to the issues at hand, that “*at one time we had mothers, young mothers who were ready to come to class. We volunteered to talk to their husbands. For example, last year we had a mother and sometimes she comes. She is a mother of two now. She is about 25 years. She used to come to Lchekuti and she is good. So it depends on who is teaching them* (HT25:2002)”. In line with the patriarchal nature of the society, when male teachers plead the case for the young women, there is some chance of success. Secondly, husbands are more comfortable when their wives are taught by a female rather than a male teacher. However female teachers, as detailed in Section 5.7, are rare in Rural. Combined with the fact that these young women learners have families to manage, the multiple nature of obstacles becomes too overwhelming that they drop out of school. That is why the girls attendance is reported in the past tense form. They no longer participate in school.

- **Punishments**

Rural and Urban were at variance regarding punishments. In Rural, it was non existent. It was explained that “*we do not use any cane there. You cannot become harsh. They come in their free time. You only tell them you are supposed to be here by 2.00 p.m.* (T23:2002)”. In Rural, enrolment is very low so every effort is made to encourage the learners to come to school. Punishing a child would clearly be a deterrent. That the informant refers to the cane portrays it as the favourite form of punishment.

In Urban however, pupils were punished in several ways. Caning was the most cited method. In fact one teacher simply stated that “*I counsel them with caning* (T7:2002)”. It was mainly the pupils who were very illustrative about the varied punishing styles, which included slapping, or that “*girls are told to kneel down, bend and hold their ears through their legs* (PP34:2002)”, or

- M1: Then the teacher comes, in the evening and when s/he hears any slight noise, says “lie down! Heads on the desks!” Or you are poked with a biro
- F2: The teachers in this school are not serious...
- M1: ...or you are hit with a duster

*FI:* Now the hand is called a nail, so when they say hold the nail...we understand, so they say hold the nail so that it can be nailed down with a hammer. And you are hit with the duster "ngong!" And if you move your hand a little, and if it was 5, now you are hit 10 times (*ibid*).

Other than inflicting physical pain, psychological punishment was also resorted to. Instances such as "*when the teacher is angry, he tells us to talk in English. And we do not even know this language (PP35:2000)*" or that the teacher "*laughs at you when you make a mistake (PP33:2002)*" confirms this. The teachers tried to diminutise the pupils by consciously making them appear ignorant or unintelligent. The pupils felt that their rights were being violated with this kind of treatment and sometimes questioned the teachers, that "*we ask him a child's right is not to be caned, surely teacher a child should only be caned when they do wrong, not every time. He just gets annoyed (ibid)*". Since, they did not have anywhere to seek redress they simply stated "*even if one says that being caned in school is normal, it should not be like that (PP34:2000)*".

The data indicated that punishment was resorted to depending on the teachers trait rather than it being a school practice. For instance, the two pupils FGDs (33:200 and 34:2000) that belaboured the point were from the same school, and it was mainly one teacher, the maths teacher who frequently punished the pupils. The result was that the pupils disliked this teacher and maths, the subject he taught "*children cannot even respect you as a teacher because you do not show love. Every time you are making the pupils suffer (ibid)*". The Urban teachers on the other hand felt justified and impelled to resort to punishments as they explained that the children were indisciplined.

### **6.10 Learners Voices: "the way teachers teach"**

In order to have a complete picture, the research sought to capture the learners perceptions on the way they were taught. Some learners felt that the content they received was too little to make them comprehend the topic at hand, that "*she teachers so little even when you have not understood she stops teaching (PP32:2002)*". This corroborates with some teachers views and the classroom observations regarding inadequate content.

However the bigger problem seemed to relate to the non-participatory manner in which learning was conducted. Certain teachers did not encourage communication with their pupils. They did not even try to explain anything. One instance was described where "*when this teacher enter the class. He does not tell you anything. He just starts writing. You can write like 7 pages and then he just leaves. And there is nothing you know, there is nothing he has told you. He is a very bad teacher (PP35:2000)*". The teacher simply duplicated notes on the chalkboard. The next category were the teachers who taught, but inadequately, that "*when she teaches even English she only shows you one example (PP32:2002)*". However, when pupils attempted to seek clarification as they had not understood the content, they were met with an unfriendly reaction. In the pupils voice, they said

“...when you ask a question, they answer you badly. Like ‘when I was teaching where had you positioned your ears?’ Now, if this is a question, and yet teaching is his responsibility, what will you say? (PP34:2000)”. Another group had a similar view, that teachers responded “‘where were you listening from? Do the exercise!’ If you get it wrong she beats you (ibid)” showing that harsh language was sometimes accompanied with caning. Other teachers were accused of moving at a faster pace than their learners. The older learners in a Rural centre for instance remarked that “we are grown up people who do not grasp quickly...being hurried up is bad...maybe you do not yet understand sometime and someone is hurrying you up. You can even go mad! (PP39:2002)”. That such teachers have developed a “don’t care” attitude and would not listen to appeals from learners is confirmed by this quote that when “...we ask questions, they tell us ‘let us continue to learn...then you will be able to know (PP34:2000)”. A critical perspective, to sum up this section, was provided in one FGD that “you know a subject which you are not taught, you cannot like it because you do not understand. And you know that during a test you cannot complain that you were not taught agriculture. You just do it then perform badly. And if you fail, what do you do? (ibid)”. Indeed teaching has a direct correlation with learning outcomes. What the learners are pointing out is therefore critical as it shows their life chances are being undermined through poor instruction and communication processes. Worse still is that they seem powerless to change the course of events.

On the other hand, the teachers who were gentle with the learners, who sought to clarify and explain a concept and did not unnecessarily cane the learners were considered to be good teachers. Whereas bad teachers simply duplicated a text book on the blackboard, the good teachers accompanied the note writing with explanations and individualised assessment: “when she teaches us, she gives us notes and explains what the notes are all about. And also when she finishes, she gives us questions, we fill them and we take the books to her and she corrects (PP34:2000)”. These teachers, other than clarifying well, were compassionate “he teaches us well and makes us understand and to grasp and teaches gentle. He explains well...and not hurriedly...(PP39:2002)” and encouraged the pupils to ask questions if they had not understood “he used to ask you something in a nice way. And if you have not understood, he used to tell you, just come, do not be afraid. And then he would teach you until it enters into the brain...we really used to like that teacher. He was very good (PP35:2002)”. A good teacher was therefore one who explained well and was humane.

## 6.11 Summing up

This section reveals that teachers in Urban, by training and inclination lean towards conventional methods. Due to the conditions at hand (being untrained, or fewer teachers than classes) certain copying strategies had been adopted, such as shift teaching. In Rural teachers utilised multigrade or multiage methods that fit within the NFE paradigm. The explanation for this trend is twofold. Other

than the fact that some teachers have been introduced to NFE methods, these methods blend within the traditional conceptualisation of social groups. Hence the methods in as far as group methodology is concerned have been implemented, but teaching across the (age) groups has not.

The implementation of multi-grade learning in Rural and the shift teaching in Urban raised similar concerns. First, the learning strategies have not devolved from the role of the teacher. Given the fact that learners have no text books for personal reference, the teacher has to be physically present for learning to occur. The circumstances of learning were therefore characterised by teacher exhaustion, idle time by learners while teachers were pressurised regarding time, inadequate content coverage. Classroom management, for the groups/classes not being attended too was a problem just like the teacher had no time to give individual attention to those in need. In all, it seemed that the actual time spent on instruction was too short for any meaningful learning to take place. Regarding multigrade, strategies associated with the method such as using one group to aid another or exploiting the presence of the community to aid the learning process were not utilised. Therefore both the Urban and Rural based teachers could benefit from more education to update them on how best to exploit the local conditions or include wider participation during the learning process.

The section on classroom management issues also enhances methodological gaps teachers have. For instance in Urban, a problem that was bemoaned was that of varied ages which can be addressed within a multi-age methodology of learning. In terms of different entry levels, a group methodology where the more able assist the others would ease the pressure from the teacher. These practices however presuppose relevant training. In Rural, the group with difficulty in conforming with new environment that the school denotes are the *morans*. They cannot conceive coming second to a girl or getting a sum wrong. While every effort needs to be taken to make them comfortable in class, it should not be at the expense of learning time or the instructional process.

In terms of teaching, a section of the Urban teachers can be said to be “bad” teachers, both from interpersonal and teaching skills perspective. These teachers had developed “don’t care” attitude and used extreme modes of punishments. Their preferred methods of teaching, like dubbing notes on the blackboard or using a language which the learners are not conversant with does not amount to instruction.

Lastly a crucial issue that needs to be addressed is that of language. There is an ambiguity regarding the stated medium of instruction versus practice. English is preferred but because the learners are not proficient in it, Kiswahili or mother tongue is used. As such the practice of mixed language teaching has evolved. This practice ought to be discouraged as it is counter productive to the overall development of the distinct languages. There is no reason why Kiswahili and mother tongue ought not to be the medium of instruction in Urban and Rural respectively, the other languages being taught as subjects, at least in the lower levels.

## 7 The Support Structures

This chapter comprises three broad sections namely the community role, the administrative and management styles and lastly finances in NFS. These three areas are vital in shaping up the education provision and have therefore been termed as the support structures.

### 7.1 Community Participation

NFE literature acclaims a central role for the community in terms of initiating the centres, management, sponsorship in cash or kind, curriculum development and so on. Hence, community presence in NFS is perceived to be high. This section discusses community involvement in NFS first by analysing the process of initiating the centres, secondly by examining parents responsibility to the centres and lastly looking at the environment at large and how conducive it is to supporting children's educational endeavours.

### 7.2 Community or Private Schools? “analysing the process of initiation”

When asked who initiated the school, the response in 46% of the study sample (10 schools in Kisumu and 4 schools in Samburu) was “the community”. This leads to the question, who is the community? At what stage can a project that was originated by a person or a group be said to be a community initiative? What mechanisms can be used to gauge community participation? Where does one draw the line between a community school and a private school? These are important questions that need to be resolved because an elevation NFS award themselves is that they are community driven. It therefore becomes imperative to unearth what a community school is. Three related subsections will be addressed, these being the venue the schools are located, the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the establishment process and lastly a content analysis of individual verses collective terms used when describing the process. This data is useful in not only illuminating the type of initiators and but also gauging community participation.

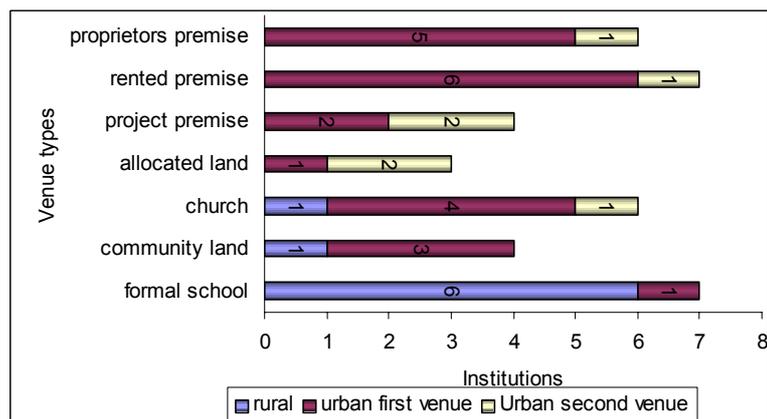
#### 7.2.1 Venue of Schools

Figure 30 gives a summary of the variety of venues schools are either currently located on or were established on. In Rural, NFS is housed either by the formal school, a church or community land. The latter is trust land<sup>52</sup> whose disposal rights are held by the elders and tribe. In the vast arid lands, where the land has not been title-deed, the presence of such community land is the norm rather than the exception.

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<sup>52</sup> 73% of the land in Kenya is trust land, while the rest is either government or freehold land.

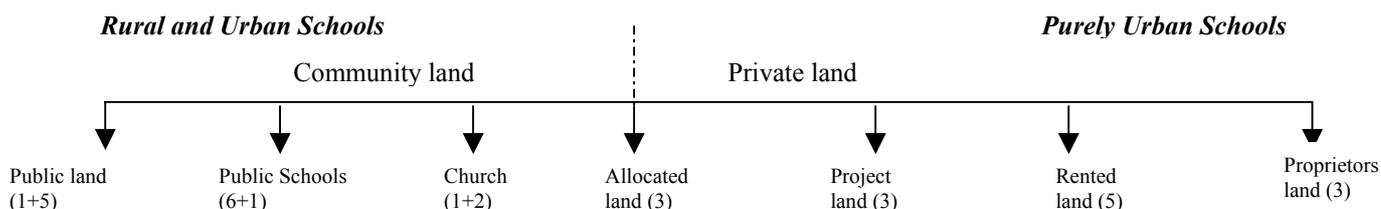
**Fig. 30: The Changing Venues of Schools**



In Urban, the venue types are more diverse and fluid. In fact, 7 schools had changed venue since inception. The largest proportion of schools were located either on the proprietors premise (land or house) or on rented premises. Next were the schools housed in churches. The three schools in Kisumu located in the outlying rural areas are on community land. One proactive initiator was able to get land allocated to him by the then municipal council in Kisumu, and initiated the school. The schools that have changed location since initiation moved from the proprietors premise (2 school), the church (3 schools) rented premise (1 school) to either land they had been allocated or to the church or had a stronger financial base and could afford to rent/buy their own sites. One exception is however a school that moved from one proprietors land to another, upon the two proprietors disagreeing.

Originally it was just Rehema<sup>53</sup>. This one now is Rehema “A”. There is a branch because there was a disagreement among the committee members. And even that land where it was originally belonged to my cousin, the chairman. Now he wanted his land back. That is why Rehema was brought this side....There were people who sided with the director and there were people who sided with the chairman. So that is why the chairman moved to the other side...that is Rehema “B” (T14:2002).

One can, to a certain degree, judge ownership of the school through ownership of land/premise. In Rural all the non-formal schools are located either on community land or in public schools. In Urban however, the scenario is more flexible and school ownership covers a whole spectrum as illustrated in the schema below.



<sup>53</sup> The name of the school has been changed to protect privacy.

NFS in located in formal public schools, church grounds or other public land, be it government or more community owned (100% rural and 36% urban) have been analysed as belonging to the community column. Individual person can hardly hold a personal claim to such schools, specifically public formal schools and to a lesser extent those on church venues. Schools (14%), placed on the borderline, are those situated on public land allocated by the municipal council in Kisumu. The structures are public utilities and indeed, the persons were bestowed the land due to the public social driven initiative they had. But is the target group sufficient to define one as a community school or does it lie more with how the school is run/managed? The next category of schools have been analysed as leaning towards private. These are NFS located on project premise (14%). They are more organisational in type, and indeed, the NFS is only one of the programmes offered. It needs to be noted that neither these schools situated on allocated land nor those on project premise, laid any claim at being community schools. Rather it is schools found either on rented or individual (36%) land that purported to be community schools.

The community status of these schools is questioned on the basis that just as the piper calls the tune, so does the owner of the land dictate issues. That the one school, quoted in the previous page split up due to land disagreement is a good example that points to the fact that schools on proprietors premise are more prone to be manipulated by the individual. The “Policy Guidelines” acknowledge the role of individuals in setting the schools. Therefore issue is raised only in as far as these individual initiators in Kisumu hide under the auspices of the community. As community schools hold more appeal than an individual schools, it seems that the “community” tag is used for authentication purposes vital for donor grooming for instance. In total, all the Rural schools are located on community land as opposed to 36% Urban schools. Another 14% lie somewhere in between while 50% of schools in Urban are on private premise.

### **7.2.2 Process of Establishing the Schools**

Different schools went about the process of establishing themselves in different ways that can be summarized as (a) entry via research, (b) targeting community leaders, (c) using established institutions or public forums or (d) individual solo runs.

- Entry via Research

Two schools in Rural (Samburu) and seven centres in Urban (Kisumu) claimed to have been started after research had been conducted. Discussions revealed two categories of research; the conventional research and a more unconventional type that entailed ad hoc visits to the research subjects.

Three different types of conventional research were noted in the study sample. First, in Samburu before AAK initiated the schools, they originally embarked on systematic research. The general

perception is that nomadic peoples are apathetic to formal schooling “*so we actually wanted to motivate and activate them through capacity building, through creating awareness...we started with PRA with the community members trying to analyse their problems, trying to look at how we can solve them...so we entered the community through the PRA (S60:2002)*”. The second other systematic research encountered was conducted by an upbeat vice-chairman in a peri-urban school in Kisumu. He designed a brief but effective checklist, and accompanied with another committee member, moved from house to house documenting the presence of orphaned children, when and how their parent/s died, cause of death and so on. He did this “*to enable me know how the community is and how many children we have not attending school (C59:2002)*”. This is the only school covered in the study that had hard statistics to confirm the growing number of orphans in its environs. But needless to say, trying to cover the whole population, rather than take a sample had its toll on the research process “*I only covered one sub-location but I did not complete the exercise because later on I became tired (ibid)*”. The third systematic research noted that had an impact on the creation of schools in Kisumu was the survey conducted in 1994 by GOK in conjunction with UNICEF. The study revealed the presence of OOS youth some of whom were attending adult education classes. As NFE was already in the portfolio of the DAE, they encouraged practicing adult education teachers to start schools, and two schools in the study sample, located in the outlying rural areas did this.

The more ad hoc research prevalent was reported in Kisumu. As one head teacher initiator described “*I made a step and did research. I went, I followed a child at lunchtime and...I found that a child is a parent taking care of his family. Then I asked what happened? I was told by a neighbour that the parent was sick and died, then I found that these were the victims (HT8:2002)*”. Four schools started by head teachers adopted this rather unsystematic research style of “*going round in the estate, trying to talk to these young girls to find out what their problems were, what they desired to do (PO21:2002)*”. This ad hoc research style is understandable given that the initiators probably did not have the means and expertise for anything more systematic.

- Targeting Community leadership/organs

The process followed to operationalise the school shall now be examined. The thesis held is that this is the critical stage that later helps a school unfold with a more community outlook or without one. The research findings point to three main approaches (a) targeting community leaders (b) via public forums (barazas) or institutions and (c) solo runs.

Some initiators, from the start, sought to have only a facilitating role in the evolution of the school. Hence, community leaders, ranging from those in the provincial administration (the chiefs),

elected leaders (councillors) to traditional leaders (headmen, elders) were consulted as respectively reflected in these two examples from Kisumu (a rural school) and Samburu

When we heard from the government that we can start the NFE, we came together, and discussed...I met the different people in our community -assistant chief, church leaders and opinion leaders like clan leaders and Miji Kumi (headmen) "liguruu". At that time I was working as an adult teacher. (HT13:2002)

We talked to the parents, they accepted. I also involved the councillor and the school committee and they accepted. I informed the DEOs office and he also supported me (HT27:2002)

In Marsabit, in addition to liaising directly with the chief's, involvement was sought through targeting the "elite" in the community. The proprietors approached persons versed in the attributes of formal education and in turn got them to seek the communities blessing and participation. An example is cited

We started by talking to my dads research assistant from 1975 who now is a teacher. He has always been interested in education...There happened to be at that time someone visiting...he is also a Rendille. He was in the Catholic University of Eastern Africa... He was also very supportive of the idea...we just said we needed a school committee. So Kawap, my fathers research assistant from before talked to the elders about the school idea to try and get a response. (P29:2001).

Alternatively, community involvement, as reported in Samburu was sought via public forums such as *barazas* and through the church. In Kisumu, the CDA, a government employee, was quoted twice as being instrumental in galvanising the community "*to register all those children who are partly orphans and orphans within the sub-location (C59:2002)*" and thereafter facilitated the selection of a committee to discuss the management of the centre.

The majority of initiators in Kisumu however preferred a solo run. Unlike the above cases where community leaders were involved to concretise the school idea or manage the school, the community was only sought when there was an agenda, either to register or enhance pupil enrolment or to satisfy the preconditions issued by the education office which required them to have a community representation in their schools. One head proudly asserted "*I never went to talk to the parents. No. I just collected children and I started here...Some parents later came then I told them I am really looking for the orphans, and then from there I started getting orphans (HT8:2002)*". Later, when enrolment started to fluctuate, the same head teacher complains that "*the biggest problem that we have here in this society. They think that the person originating the idea, owns the project. So we always pleading with them and telling them please this is our thing to help our society, to help these young ones to learn (ibid)*". Recurring phrases among these informants such as "*we managed to mobilize the children by going to the community*" (HT20:2002), "*through counselling in the community, we got more children (HT2:2002)*" "*after mobilisation, we encouraged the children and they came (HT 12:2002)*" show that the prime reason for thinking about the community was simple to enhance pupil enrolment. The idea of "mobilising" or "counselling" has a rather top-bottom connotation. It is a "saviour" attitude that stems from the standpoint that the

initiators view themselves as more knowledgeable. This unilateral flow of activities does not instil community ownership and is therefore not sustainable in the long run.

### 7.2.3 Analysing use of Personal Versus Collective Pronouns

A parameter that can be used to gauge community participation, as opposed to an individualistic approach, is a content analysis of pronoun usage. This simply means investigating use of “I” (or sometimes “he”) versus “We”. Pronoun usage can depict the level of devolution of responsibilities and authority and thereby confirm whether a school leans more towards individual or communal management. Five cases shall be used as illustration points and they have been ranked in what is perceived as ranging from “I” to “We”:

#### Case 1: (Interview 8: 2002 with Pastor cum Head teacher initiator)

My name is... I am a pastor. The reason why I decided to start this school is that God gave me this burden when I was seeing children in the streets, or just running anyhow collecting something, these plastics. Then I went to the DEO and...I asked if I can be allowed to have some children.

#### Case 2: (Interview 2:2002 with the head teacher)

The director had the vision of starting this school. He is called Pastor ... The school was under the management of the church ... and Pastor himself started this school in his house. He only started with about 5 children. After that he brought them to the church.

“When the Pastor wanted to name the school in 1985, he sat down and he thought, who can I name the school after? He talked to the donors and the donors told him, name the school after me and my wife”

“The Pastor normally handles everything and he is not around...He is also our director and he is the one who has all the records.”

How are teachers recruited? By applying to the boss (i.e. the pastor).

#### Case 3: (Interview 4:2002 with Spouse of Initiator, Head teacher and two teachers)

*Who exactly started the school?* The school is for the community.

*How did it come together?* In a community there are members of the group, they came together, they discussed and agreed to start the this school

*What's your role in the group?* In the committee? I am not a member. I am here to talk because Mzee started it and he is not here at the moment.

*Who is Mzee?* He is my husband... So we are in the committee in this area called Bandari. “This building, Mzee himself, the director, went to people in Kenya Railways and they gave him the building.”

“I was a neighbour of Mzee. He used to see me around and then he told me that I could help to teach”

#### Case 4 (Interview 20:2002 with Initiator).

Definitely a group means more than one person, but sometimes it is true that two people who are sitting in one place cannot think of the same idea at the same time. Maybe one person can sit and air his ideas and the other person sees the sense out of it and the possibility of exploring the idea. So one of us actually...I was myself a teacher before in a private school. I used to teach children from rich families. ...I thought, I can be useful to my community in several ways. So I had friends, my age mates ... So we actually discussed the idea together and we discovered that what we should do is to become more organised and focussed...

#### Case 5 (Interview 3: 2002 with Pastor initiator).

When we say we, as Christians, we do not really say I because when I have a vision, I have to share the vision with people in the church. So we do it as a team, that is what I mean we. It is we the church ... Our ministry in mainly targeting children. God gave us that burden because we saw that children were really neglected even by many churches. We train Sunday school teachers and we also preach to children

Case 1 represents the most extreme example of a solo endeavour where the initiator plainly claims ownership of the project and conceived it from the start to be his. In the above short text, 8 personal pronouns are used (in the whole text, there are 200 “I” as opposed to 44 “We”) and this in a sense denotes who owns the school. However, the majority of the cases were not easy to discern (as Case 1 typifies). One had to probe and drag out details regarding the initiator as the schools preferred to ride under the cover of the community. For instance, Case 2 claims to be managed under the church, but all conversation centres on the role of one person; the pastor. In this example, no collective pronoun is used as opposed to 14 personal pronouns. Further, note how, in Case 3, the conversation starts out as a community endeavour, and ends up as an individual or at best family venture, with a ambiguous definition of “we”.

The word “we” had varied connotation. It could mean husband and wife (case 3) , a group (Case 4), or the larger population like church members (case 2 and 5). By using “we” the institutions lay claim to being community endeavours rather than individual. This means that another set of parameters has to be used to flush out the “I” from the “we”. One criteria would be to assess the devolution of responsibilities. For instance, Cases 2 and 3 declare themselves to be community/church endeavours. However, the hiring of teachers, searching for the school premise or sponsor or naming the centre is done by one person. The director-pastor, in Case 2, “*handles everything*” yet he has employed a head teacher, and “*keeps all records in his house*” yet this centre was one of the few that had good buildings. The head teacher by all intents and purposes has been rendered a figurehead without authority and the role of the church, which the centre is purported to belong to, is invisible. When any delegation is done, it is the spouse (Case 3) who is entrusted. Centring the tasks and power on one person tilts the pendulum towards individual (“I”) rather than communal (“We”).

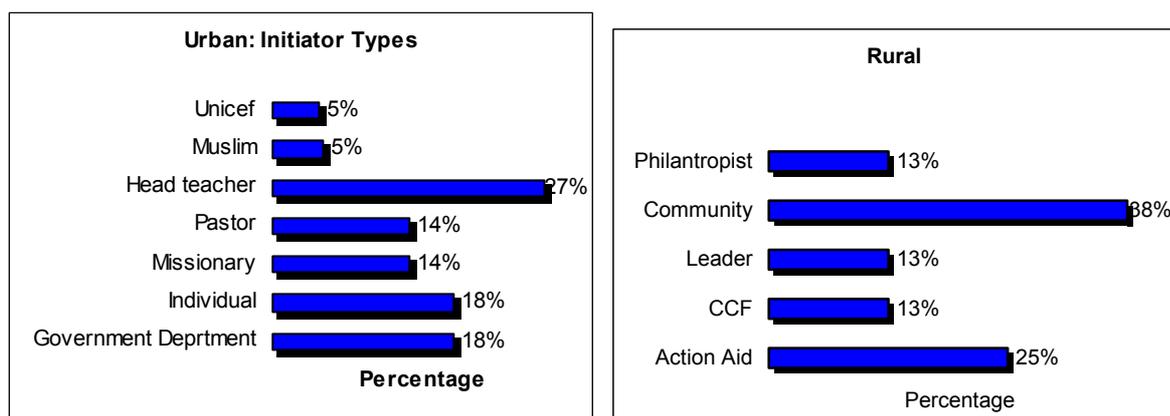
Examples in the group of Case 4 are somewhat more difficult to discern. As these groups are registered as CBOs or NGOs, they are legitimately “we”. The question then that needs to be answered is, at what stage does the group initiative become a community one as the institutions claimed themselves to be?. That one of the motives mentioned for organising into CBO was to get employment confirms such cases as a self help groups. Additionally, the phrasing of the sentences (e.g. *I have left it to the community whom we have to push so much*” Teacher/Spouse of Initiator 42:2002) show that there is a “we” and “they”. The school does not view itself as one unit, rather the community is only involved at the discretion of the initiators. Such centres also involve themselves in “mobilising” the community, again, a “we” and “they” mentality. For this reason, such centres, as self help groups operate more as “non-governmental individuals” rather than “non-governmental organisations”, if one is to draw the parallelism.

This therefore leaves centres like Case 5 to be bona fide “we” ventures. This centre for instance is located on the church land, has a head teacher who runs the school and to whom details of the school were referred to. The pastor initiator who was interviewed therefore comes out more as the custodian rather than owner of the project. The same applied to the peri-urban schools in Kisumu, perhaps also because economic considerations did not heavily feature as the initiators were on DAE payroll. The rural schools of Samburu and Marsabit also belonged to this category, where “we” translated as “the community”.

#### 7.2.4 Types of Initiators

Discerning the initiator types was easier done in Rural (Samburu) as one person started an NFS and subsequent initiators traced their NFS to this one person – Councillor Letipila. These secondary initiators are organisations (CCF and AAK) and teachers working in collaboration with the community. In Marsabit, the centre was started by two philanthropists. The details are contained in Figure 31.

Fig. 31: Initiator Types



Delineating the initiator types, especially for individuals carrying a “we” label in Urban, involved analysing the attributes in the preceding section. A total of seven different types of initiators were mentioned. Head teachers (6 centres) were the majority, that is persons who had started the schools and actually headed and taught in these institutions. This category was slightly different from the Individual initiators (4 centres) as the latter did not actually teach but functioned as proprietors and claimed to operate under the auspices of the community. Four schools in Kisumu, three of them located in the outlying rural areas were started directly by government wings – the DAE, the Municipal Council (CDA) and the Children’s department. The DAE in particular encouraged serving adult education teachers, under their payroll, to initiate the schools to reach out to school aged children. Humanitarian initiators driven by a religious zeal were present as well. One school was started by a Muslim organisation, primarily to offer Koranic education to Muslim children and secondly literacy education to needy children. However, six institutions were started by Christian

groups/individuals. A distinction is hereby made between missionaries and pastors initiators. Missionaries were all outsiders, and had worked in the said communities for a duration of time. Non of the missionaries were still based in the communities, although one still supported the institution. The missionaries were comparatively well financed. Pastors on the other hand belonged to the community and operated under the patronage of the church. The other initiator mentioned was UNICEF.

In total, the individual initiators, wearing the different labels (individuals, pastors, missionaries, head teachers) account for 73% of the initiators. It is worthwhile to mention though that the endeavours initiated by missionary have evolved to be organisations where an individual cannot claim a personal stake. The more communal (government/UNICEF) endeavours therefore account for 27% of the total in Urban.

### **7.3 Community Support to the Centres**

The study reveals that in Urban, the community, either individually as parents, or collectively contributed money to the centres. The former were required to pay some school fees while the latter gave money out of a philanthropic spirit.

#### **7.3.1 Cash Contributions from Parents**

Of the 22 centres in the Urban study sample, 18 centres received money, that was invariably labelled as school fees in some centres or school levy in others, from the parents. This amount ranged from four shillings to Ksh.100/- per month. Six centres charged less than Ksh.50/-, another six charged Ksh.50/- while the last 6 centres Ksh.100/- The four centres that did not require any contribution admitted a vulnerable category who either had no parents or whose parents had absolved their duty. For instance one centre mainly admitted orphans and other two centres street children, while the fourth centre admitted juvenile delinquents, who being “guests” of the state were provided for by the government.

An occasional informant voiced satisfaction with parents response to school fees payment that “*in terms of school fees, they do not disturb us so much. They pay even though some of them do not have* (HT4:2002)”. However complaints regarding non payment or irregular payment were more frequent with this head teacher summing up his experience that “*I must say even though we say they pay Ksh.50/- a month, this money hardly comes. A lot of them do not pay the money. Like in my experience since we opened the school, you find the children are here because they like school* (HT20:2002)”. The centres that were most affected were the schools, those that solely relied on contributions from parents such that these centres implored “*if they could bring that Ksh.100/-, then we could put it to do something* (HT8:2002)”. Parents on their part confirmed that some were not responsible as “*some parents say that they brought the children to this school to be assisted, not*

*us to give the money. When some parents are asked for money, they say they do not have and is why I went to this school. So the parent tells the child 'You just stay at home, they only want money, you just stay' (P51:2002)''.* This attitude confirms a characteristic pointed out by the Kisumu based education officer who argued that

if most of the parents are serious, they can still pay for them. Basically, the reason should not be economic as such, but some parents just want to have it easy...Like when you go to schools in the very rural part of the district, you find parents who their income is average, because they can even afford to take beer everyday, but they may not even want to pay Ksh.100/- But when they hear that there is a centre, they tell their children to go there! (EO62:2002)

In other words, though it is accepted that the parents, coming from the low economic cadre, are economically pressed, some amount of laxity is evident. Some parents bask in their poverty status and do nothing, even when they possibly can. The fact that some of the schools have assumed biblical names that subtly stress on the philanthropic nature of these schools consolidates the dependency mentality of such parents. It further portrays the difficulties that will cumber school depending entirely on community effort.

The Urban parents interviewed who acknowledged that the amounts required of them were fairly low said *"in the whole of Kenya, these are the lowest charges expected. Even the poorest of poor parents will be able to pay (P53:2000)''.* That another group of parents reported that *"...we discussed and we saw that Ksh.50/- was too little. So now we are paying Ksh.100/- (P51:2002)''* further confirms that Urban parents were aware and accepted that they needed to provide for their children. It needs to be noted though that the parents and committee members interviewed accounted for the proactive and progressive quota of parents. Such parents gave their time for school related activities, such as interviews and fulfilled their obligations. But not all parents were this supportive.

A comparison of the Urban and Rural parents however places the former way beyond, as "participation-willing" parents. Parents in Rural did not make any contributions to NFS and had no intention of doing so. Indeed, it was reported that asking for contributions *"...is chasing them away (HT24:2002), "when you think of cash, that is one way of telling them to go (T23:2002)''.* Even when head teachers made an effort to invite the parents to discuss the issue *"the parents cannot come when they know it is about money (HT27:2002)''.* As a result of this, in Samburu, the NFS *"rely on the primary part. Like now the chalk, the classrooms...we decided that the same, same committee, because it was started by the community, is supporting the programme (T23:2002)''.* In other words, the contributions which parents made for their children in the formal schools, is also spread over to the NFS.

### **7.3.2 Community Philanthropists**

Urban NFS reported to have been able to tap funding from the wider community. This was mainly in the form of *Harambees* and four centres reported to have used this method to get financial

support from the community. One centre appealed to individuals to sponsor their learners and as a result, “*we have a few people who say I will give Ksh.1,500/- for the school every month (PO21:2002)*”. This centre had posted appeal posters in several strategic places within the town, and this direct advertisement had been met with considerable success.

### **7.3.3 Contributions in Kind**

A very tangible support to NFS was in kind. Four examples can be cited. First, a cornerstone for the existence of a school is the presence of a teacher. In all instances in Rural and in some centres in Urban, the teachers originated from the local community and had communal ties that impelled them to volunteer, for little or no pay, to teach the children. This quote from one teacher stresses this, that “*we made them understand. We are members of your community, you know us. What we are doing is that we do not want our children to be idle around... we are young people from this community and...we are teachers (HT20:2002)*”. Some centres also used paraprofessionals from the community for skill training. So the community input in teacher and trainer provision is noteworthy.

A second example relates to the provision of community land. The Rural based and the peri-urban centres were all located on community land. This is therefore a significant support as the schools do not have to pay rent. Thirdly is the issue of security. The Urban NFS located in the slum areas were offered protection: “*we have stayed without a watchman and nothing has been stolen (P19:2002)*”. The community offered this service unpaid for, due to the cordial relationship the school had been able to strike with the surrounding environment. As the proprietor explained “*once the community has accepted you, they cannot attack you. I have gone to every house. So once they know you, you are safe (ibid)*”. Lastly, the community, by participating in the school endeavours, helped the centres to have a stronger financial base. An example was given regarding a centre that trains hairdressers “*we talked to members of the community and said we have a school for grooming hair. If you come, the little money we get will help us to train the girls (PO21:2002)*”. By utilising the services of the institutions, the community enabled the centres to have a stronger foundation and to grow.

### **7.3.4 Participation in Curriculum development**

NFE lays claim to utilising community based curricula. This would imply that the community is involved somewhat in either its planning or implementation. Within the study sample, it was noted that in Samburu, the parents views regarding the subject and topic emphasis was taken into consideration and as a result, one can say a “negotiated curriculum” emphasising community priorities was arrived at.

#### 7.4 Involvement in Children's School Endeavours

Parents and some community members at large played a critical role in encouraging children to go to school and facilitating this attendance. As was cited parents "*bring their children to school (HT13:2002)*" or "*... they take up the children's tasks and then they allow them to come to the classes (T23:2002)*". The concern with un-enrolled children was not limited to biological children but spread over to other children in the community such that "*if they find a child hanging around, they come with the idea, we sit down and talk about it. So we say that they are helping us because they have been our councillors who help us serve in the community (HT2:2002)*". But the parents support was not always constant. They were sometimes the obstacle and retained the children at home mainly to work. As one head teacher explained "*when there are problems, they push this child to go and look for food, maybe be employed as a maid, so this child loses out. But when there is plenty of food, they push the child to come to school (T28:2002)*". That parents know that they need to be more supportive is confirmed with this quote, "*the teacher has volunteered to teach for a small token, it would be good if we parents released our children. We should not give the children so much work. We should allow them to come to school (P51:2002)*". So it is perhaps their life circumstances that force them to interfere with their children's quest for formal education.

By design or accident, a line seems to have been drawn between sending children to school and involvement in classroom related issues. Parents seemed to distance themselves from what happened within the boundaries of the school. In all the discussions held with parents and committee members, the responsibilities they readily mentioned were non-classroom related. All were in full praise of their teachers whom they described as "*hardworking*" (P51:2002), "*teach well (ibid)*", "*they know their work, when a person is trained they know how to handle their work (C58:2002)*", "*they respect their work (ibid)*". Regarding the children "*the teacher is the one who knows the ability of the child (C55:2002)*". In short, in parents view "*our teachers are good (P54:2002)*". While these sentiments may hold for most of the teachers, there are exception cases whom the pupils term as "*bad teachers*". Active vigilance from the parents can help to check such teachers who, for instance, overly and unnecessarily punish pupils. However, the tendency for parents was to be uncritical of the teachers and the teaching process.

One reason advanced to explain the parents-classroom borderline was that it was assumed that formal education being a specialised endeavour needed equally conversant people. Hence parents who did not qualify as "*literate*" were bound to wholly entrust their children's education to the "*educated*" teachers. The tradition of following up a child's progress was simply lacking or as one head teacher stated "*that is something very new to them (HT22:2000)*". When parents were requested to come to school to discuss their children's progress "*they take it as a joke...like it is useless (T42:2002)*". It is only through repeated community education that some centres had been

able to record some difference *“before that they were not interested at all but now because of hammering into them that they should follow up their children, they should know the class teacher for my child is so and so, they should have that kind of relationship, you find most of them are very interested (HT22:2000)”*. Indeed, the discussion with the committee members from the same centre confirmed that their awareness on the essence of showing an active interest in the children’s progress had increased as they realised that this was bound to have a positive influence on the child. Lack of literacy need not be the stumbling block. As they remarked *“we appeal to parents...they should also check the children’s books. There are some parents who do not bother with the children’s work. But that is a thing of the past. Even if you are not literate, you can just take the book and ask the child “what did you learn today? Show me!” Just checking so that a child can have more restraint saying “you mean mama can read!”(C55:2000).”*

Another reason cited in Rural that made parents distance themselves from the school related to the perception of the non-formal centres. Parents were not prepared to fully support the centres. That they were not ready to make any contributions is a case in point. If the Rural pupils did not have that will to learn, it is unlikely that any enrolment would have been recorded. These facts therefore lend credence to the fact that parents take the provision lightly. As one teacher summed up

They are not so much serious like in the formal education. In formal education, if a child comes late today, you will ask the child “why were you late? can you call your parent” or the parent comes and says my child was late because of this or that. But in the OSP, you do not question anything and the parent does not come and say my child was not there because of this. So you find they do not have much involvement in the OSP (T23:2002).

In order to understand the parents response to their children’s educational endeavours, it needs to be addressed within the backdrop of the nomadic lifestyle in rural and the social environment in urban.

#### **7.4.1 Rural: “pastoralism and its impact on education”**

Educational participation of rural-remote districts, also known as ASAL, has historically been dismal. Three intertwining factors, of relevance to this study, that have contributed to this are the (a) geographic conditions, (b) socio-cultural structure of the people and (b) economic activities. The ASAL region, inhabited by 35% of the total population in Kenya, is well favoured for livestock rearing and indeed contains 50% of the total livestock in the country. The population density in Samburu is estimated at 2 persons per square kilometre.

As has already been mentioned, the main economic activity for the indigenous communities in ASAL is pastoralism. The popular opinion rife among the sedentary populations is that nomadic people ought to change their lifestyle. This is not exactly plausible. As was elucidated:

The non nomadic members of Kenyan society generally just think the nomads should settle. They should not continue moving around. They should join modern Kenya and settle. But I think people forget to ask where they should settle. They certainly cannot settle where they are now. People have done lots of research project out there to look for alternative livelihoods and nobody has found anything. The only people who have settled out there are people who are working for missions using outside resources. There is no generation of external resources from within the

area (P29:2000).

Given the fact that pastoralism cannot be entirely changed to fit the demands of formal schooling, it seems that it is the school that needs to change. But despite the flexibility NFS has evolved, in general it comes a poor second in value. Faith in pastoralism, especially among the older generation is strong. Their attitude is as such “*What is good in school? Tell me...I have grown up to be a person of my age...I see my lifestyle is better. You are not taking me to a life that is not mine*’ (P31:2002)”. While respondents indigenous to the area often understand this attitude, “outsiders” remained rather perplexed as this quote from a head teacher shows “*on the side of the parents there is that laxity. I do not know whether it is due to ignorance or due to the fact that most of them are illiterate. They do not value education. They value the livestock that they are keeping. That is the thing. They see as if when the children come this way, it is as if they are loosing something. So there is still that problem with the parents* (HT38:2002)”.

It needs to be noted that parents were aware of the advantages of formal education over pastoralism in terms of accessing formal sector jobs, “*being part of the Kenyan system*” (P31:2002) and so on. The fragility of the pastoral economy was recognised, that “*the important thing for a child with beads<sup>54</sup> is to learn...Herding is to wear beads, then care for the cows and when the drought comes, it kills all the cows and the child is left only with their beads. And the child cannot feed on beads!* (C56:2002)” but it does not surpass the value associated with it. So the overwhelming response from the cross-section of parents in Rural was that they ranked their livestock first and perhaps with good reason;

We have a lot of livestock so if we enrol all our children in school, we will not get anyone to take care of our animals. So we put one half in school and the others we leave as Lchekuti. They will come later and learn when they are finished with herding. Because we can not throw away our livestock!...That is what we depend on (P54:2002).

For the education provision to succeed, parents are required as advocates. It is they who can facilitate the process and the provision. It is they too who can encourage their children. But the odds are against the Samburu NFS school going child. Herding is a tiring endeavour, especially when great distances have to be covered in search of grazing land. Parents admitted that “*The ones who herd cows come back late at night ...very tired and just go and sleep. Even the parents do not have the courage to tell them to go to school because they know they are tired* (C56:2002)”. So until a solution that agrees with the peoples lifestyle is arrived, such as adopting mobile schools, as already practiced by the Marsabit case in the study sample, NFS will only be able to benefit the children whose will can surmount these challenges or those with a high aptitude for as parents repeatedly stated that “*if bright, they will continue on with primary. No one will stop a bright child from not pursuing studies* (C56:2002)”.

#### **7.4.2 Urban: “the socio-economic environment”**

The Urban child was faced with certain peculiar obstacles which can be said to largely derive from the slum environment where most of the schools were based. Slums are inhabited by people who when employed earn poorly or have temporary or no jobs at all. This qualifies them as belonging to the low economic cadre. They engage in whatever activities that enable them to survive. Children are not exempted and they too must participate in the income generation activities. The family set-ups in slum areas are also very fluid, one centre stating that 70% of its children were from single mothers.

Slum life is harsh life. It is a life where the border between proper and improper is thin, where survival, acquisition of money at any expense is the golden rule. That school going children may be negatively affected is of secondary importance. As a result, the slum life shatters children's innocence before their age. This has implications the children behaviour in the classrooms. The following discussion shows how the economic activities engaged in and community life in general negatively impacts on formal education acquisition.

##### **7.4.2.1 Economic Activities**

Two examples can be cited that show how the economic environment is detrimental to a child; (a) commercial sex activities and (b) video shows.

Commercial sex both within the family set up and by members of the wider community severely impacted on the child in some centres. One head teacher described the scenario and effect on the children as thus “*They do it very openly, quite openly as if they are selling sukuma wiki<sup>55</sup> out there. And you see what happens is that the children can see what is happening. They know exactly what is happening because these children have got a very wide knowledge, both positive and negative. Because the things that you might hear from this children, I am telling you...you would expect maybe a 15 year old child who is in rural areas, can be compared with a 9 year old here (HT22:2000)*”. These same members out there were the mothers (and fathers) of the children. So children were not spared from the adults only activities within the household, and in deed, in some cases, the older girls were seen as old enough to join in the income generation as the same head teacher affirms “*about 70% of the parents here are single mothers and most of them do not have a very decent way of earning a living, they will involve their children (ibid)*”. Once children are directly involved in such activities, the path to their eventually dropping out of school is established.

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<sup>54</sup> This is in reference to the type of dress. Formal school children wear uniform as opposed to NFS children who are clad in their traditional dress, of which beads is an important artefact.

<sup>55</sup> Kales is a vegetable available throughout the year, affordable and therefore eaten almost daily.

Enterprising people in slums have been able to fill up the entertainment void by providing video shows at affordable rates day and night to anyone who can pay. The video centres “*are not censored so they will show anything (HT22:2000)*”. Normally, the popular video shows are those with pornographic content. And it is here that the children frequent at late hours “*until 3.00 am in the morning. That is when the child creeps into the house (ibid)*”. The impact on the children has been so bad such that one centre sought audience with the provincial administration over the matter, but the latter claimed to be powerless in the matter as “*they cannot force those people who are showing the videos what they should show because it is a business and in a business you come if you want. If you think we are not showing the right thing, stay at home. So it has not been so good (ibid)*”. This captures the attitude of the video owners, that if the children can pay, then they can watch. It is not their job to mind over the children’s interests, rather business rules. Unfortunately, there is no explicit law protecting children against such excesses.

Other than the negative social environment that the above mentioned activities portend, it was normal to involve the children directly in the economic activities (refer to section 5.4.1) just as they were expected to do household chore sometimes at the expense of school time “*like some of them will stay at home because they have been told to stay at home and wash clothes... but it is not that they want to stay at home (T42:2002)*”. In this context, the Urban working child faces the same pressures as the Rural one.

When parents/guardians could not make ends meet, or were evicted from their premises, they had to move on. Hence “*the child comes today, tomorrow they have moved to Nyalenda, tomorrow they have moved home. They go stay at home 3 months again they are back is when you see a child appearing (T42:2002)*”. This forced migratory nature was detrimental to school attendance.

#### **7.4.2.2 The Social Life**

The Kisumu based centres reported that customs and traditions sometimes interfered with school. Certain communities in Kenya, such as the Luo and Luhya have elaborate funeral rites. Close members of the family are expected to attend. As these rites are observed in the rural homes, it means that the affected persons need to travel upcountry. Hence “*a child disappears then one term later, a child appears. “Where did you go?” The children replies “we went home, we went for a funeral” Two weeks, 3 weeks a child comes back and automatically, they lag behind. They cannot catch up fast (T42:2002)*”. Another issue relates to what happens during the period as when a person dies, a vigil is held which can last several weeks. During such moments, unless the family has religious restrictions, life is celebrated in the form of local brew and dancing. Certain children had developed the practice of “*...going to those funerals, dancing, walking, so you know they have*

*nothing much to do so they end up being bad girls (T42:2002)*". The children picked up bad habits and loose talk in these functions.

#### **7.4.2.3 Impact on the Children**

The manifestation of the environmental influence on the children is seen for instance in their language. The children "*call others 'dogs'(T44:2000)*". Children encountered verbal abuse within the family set up, that "*even their mothers, when they want to send them, they say "umbwa hiki, kuja hapa! (you dog come here) and now when they come here and you tell them it is bad, they cannot understand (ibid)*". Children were socialised to use aggressive language. School is the only place that tried to avert this but "*...for that child to know that "dog" is bad is another thing since they are being called that in the villages (ibid)*". In other words, the school environment cannot compete with the family and community environment in terms of inculcating correct language.

Another direct impact on the children related to drug abuse. In areas where partaking of drugs was the norm, teachers had a difficult time as "*some carry miraa. They even carry alcohol. They want to give others (ibid)*". Equally common was glue sniffing. Glue is more affordable but with an equally intense effect. That the children could access the drugs was not surprising as some of them sold these drugs on behalf of their parents and could divert the funds for their own uses. Being working children, they could earn their own money hence ensuring a money source for the drugs. The lack of discipline directly associated with drug taking was obvious. Their behaviour and outlook was shaped by the environment, that "*the kind of social life they talk about, things to do with brewing, drinking. Unlike the ones in formal schools (T42:2002)*". The school community felt handicapped to correct the children as "*You are told this is not good and you see out there in the village, that is what is being done. And you know a child learns from the environment ...if you are told to sniff glue is bad here and out there everyone seems to be doing it, then the child tends to be confused (T44:2000)*". Solving the problem of drug abuse needs the concerted effort of the family and the wider community.

The view of the school community (teachers) was generally that the parents had absolved themselves of their responsibility to their children, as these quotes attest, that "*most of them do not know wrong as their parents do not have time to talk to them, on what is wrong, what is right (T42:2002)*" or that there is "*no one to give discipline at home (T44:2000)*". But the parents felt helpless because it was the wider environment that was not conducive. How could they avert the bad influence from non-school going children and yet "*...chokora<sup>56</sup> is the child of your fellow woman. They know each other, they stay together. Your child leaves and goes to school. Come 10.00 a.m. the other one is waiting so that they go to the streets (C55:2000)*". Parents felt helpless

<sup>56</sup> This is a derogative term referring to street children and can be directly translated as "scavengers".

in the face of their children's unruliness who *"leave school but instead of going home pass through other corners...and cheat the parent that they left school at 7.15p.m. (ibid)"*. All in all, one must agree that there was a group of parents who tried to support their children, and felt deterred by the others whom they said *"they are the ones retarding our school (ibid)"*. The group interviewed claimed to try to mould their children in the right way. They acknowledged that not all of the parents were this responsible and pointed a finger to such parents.

## **7.5 Summing up**

From the findings on the process of initiating the centres, it emerges that land/venue ownership in Urban tilted towards private as opposed to Rural where it was more communally owned. Over 70 % of the initiators in Urban were individuals. These two issues are raised as they seemed to influence the management styles the centres later evolved. For instance, the individual initiators, such as head teachers, excluded the community and only sought their active participation when an issue was at stake. These initiators had donated land/venue to the school the NFE premise and this shows the collaboration between ownership of land and participatory management. Of critical importance too was the method the centres selected to solidify themselves. For those who used research two trends were discernable. On the one hand, there was a conscious effort to make the research process participatory with the resultant aim that the people would own the project (the AAK case). On the other hand, the research process was delimited to a data collection process (the rest of the examples). The former stressed on the community, the latter on information gathering. The former process was therefore more likely to lead to more community participation in the management of the centres. The findings revealed that proprietors who "owned" the NFS, were the same group that used the second type of research as well as preferred "solo runs" in that parents or community leaders were not involved in establishing the schools. However this same group wore a community tag. Such individual players tried to hide behind the mask of the community for two reason that (a) a community school has more appeal and (b) perhaps they were aware they were contravening the policy guidelines which require the management of the centres to be community centred. Government agencies, as represented by the DAE and the CDA attempted to involve community members in the school management.

In conclusion, this section reveals that active community participation is assured of if the community is co-opted right at the initial stages of setting up the school. It can result in a more broad based inclusion rather than simple be reduced to "mobilisation" or to easing the money collection process. The individual proprietors, especially those who own the NFS premise emerge as a group that needs to inculcate a more wide based participation. This group innately excluded

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higher level participation and which in effect rendered their centres to be private rather than community schools.

The other issue that emerges is that while there is a dichotomy between the social environment of the Urban parent as opposed to the Rural one, the impact on the child is similar in that it distracts the child from learning. The Urban social environment can on the whole be said to be rather harsh and not conducive to the continued participation of the child in school. Rural parents on the other hand seem to have developed a laissez-faire attitude towards schools especially where their money is needed or when the pastoral economy is somewhat threatened. In terms of value, pastoralism ranks first hence the odds are against the rural NFS child. The parents in Rural and Urban are further united in their aversion to participating in classroom related activities. As such, one can surmise that parental support to classroom teaching and learning is lacking while in other areas such as material contributions, curriculum development, support to children, it varied from region and according to parent type and the social environment they operated in.

## 7.6 Administration

Due to the fact that the NFS have been founded by several groups viz. individuals, communities or organisations, the internal management of the institutions is held by this variety of players who are united in the fact that they operate outside the central administration mechanisms. The role of MOEST in the administration of NFE services for school aged children, is a more recent phenomenon that is still taking shape. In this respect, management of NFS is considered to be more decentralised and localised, with a more visible role for the community. The school members as well as parents are expected to run the institutions. Hence, the centres hope to achieve a democratic style of leadership. The field data is presented under three broad themes. The first section examines the administrative structures in place at a national level. The second part details the management styles and the responsibilities accorded to the various actors while the last section specifically examines the role of the teachers and learners in managing the centres.

## 7.7 Structure and Organisation

### 7.7.1 National (Government) level

Non formal education is a multi-faceted provision with activities crisscrossing a number of government ministries<sup>57</sup>. In the past, NFE activities largely targeted adults and were conducted by DAE within the then Ministry of Culture and Social Services. The evolution of NFS with school aged children as their primary target naturally heralded in the entry of the MOEST. The structure that was put in place was first the establishment of an NFE desk in Jogoo B House<sup>58</sup> in 1994 manned by the inspectorate. This dictates the chief functions anticipated for the officers, that it be mainly supervisory. At the top of the structure, the national level is therefore the inspector of education. Districts<sup>59</sup> with active NFS programmes have also been allocated NFE Officers. While Samburu attained its first NFE officer in 1996, Kisumu received one in 1999.

In general, Kenya has a linear administrative style that flows from the national to provincial to district levels. The functions of the provincial office were not easy to discern; *“there is even an NFE desk at the ministry. So at the provincial level there should be something like that chaired by the Provincial Director of Education (PDE), but I do not know. I do not want to talk because I have never worked at the PDEs office, so I do not know what is going on there (EO62:2002)”*. That this officer is not aware of the functioning of the provincial office, despite the fact that they are housed in the same town, may imply it is not very active in NFS matters. From the data, it emerges that it is the national and district offices that are most active.

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<sup>57</sup> For instance coordination of volunteer service is found in present day Ministry of Gender, Sports, Ministry of labour and Culture and Social Services, DAE is in the Ministry of Labour and Human Development, NGO coordination and in Ministry of Home affairs while the registrar of societies is at the State Law Office.

<sup>58</sup> The MOEST head quarters

To operationalise and effectively administer the programmes, different districts have adopted different styles. In Kisumu, NFE has a multi-ministerial technical committee, chaired by the DEO while the District adult education officer serves as the secretary. Members of the committee are drawn from the Children's Department, the District Development Committees (DDCs), the local authorities and the NGOs. The mandate of MOEST is to chair and coordinate meetings. However "*...the attendance especially from the government departments has not been very encouraging. But the NGOs, the churches have been very positive (ibid)*". The education officer's opinion is that the committee would be more proactive if chaired by the District Commissioner, who wields an overall authority in the district. Whereas the active participation of members from government wings is lacking, the fact is that there is an organ in place for discussing NFE issues.

Comparatively, the Kisumu office was more visible in NFS activities. This is perhaps due to this conducive environment as NFS had support from the DEO, or due to the ingenuity of the NFE officer, who had, of his own accord, developed guidelines for registration and management of the schools. This was generally complied with by the schools though not to the letter. The opposite was witnessed in Samburu as evidenced by the response from the district education officer. When a request was put forward to him for an interview with the NFE officer, he replied "*I do not know what the NFE officer does. I even do not know where he is. I do not know whether he is on leave or he has gone to the hospital. We here concentrate on formal schools (EO68:2002)*". The DEO's casual attitude to NFE officer and preoccupation with formal schools implies that it is unlikely he supports the administration of NFS schools. Indeed the Samburu NFE officer's remarks that "*we would be handicapped without the partners (EO65:2002)*" shows that it is due to the partners that the NFS in the district functions.

In both Rural and Urban, NFE officers limited their functions to an advisory and problem solving position "*we tell them that if they have any problems they can come for advise (ibid)*". Actual and systematic monitoring of the programmes had not been achieved. A major handicap is the policy void in which these schools operate in aptly described as thus; "*we are operating under no legal framework. We are just operating. Something has to be done. If there is a policy somehow, such that it becomes legal... (EO65:2002)*". With the policy guidelines in draft form, it means that the activities of NFS schools have not been allocated funding quotas and therefore the activities have not been operationalised. This limits the effective functioning of the NFE officers who depend on other sectors for transportation.

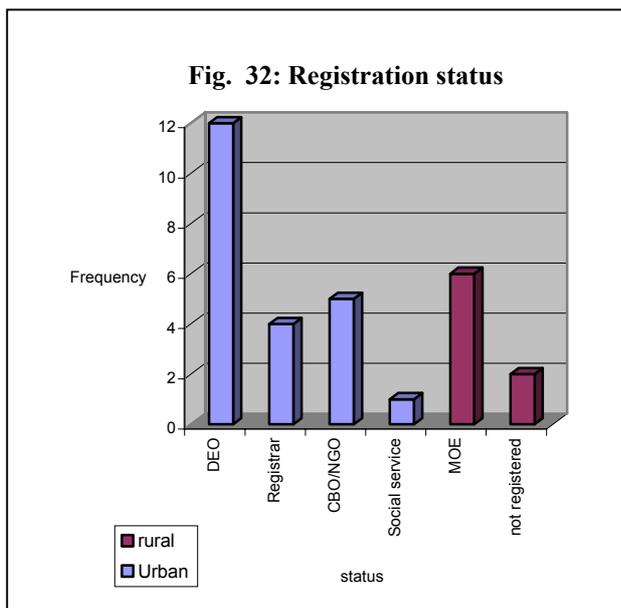
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<sup>59</sup> These are Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Migori, Samburu, Turkana,

### 7.7.2 Registration Status

While MOE recognises and appreciates the role played by NFS, the schools, as an educational provision, are yet to be legally defined. These schools are not catered for in the Education Act (last revised in 1980) that defines the operation of education in the country. Indeed, if the Act was laid down, most of the NFS, especially in Urban, would cease to exist. As was expounded “*we realised that if you use the existing procedure of laid down indicators of registering a school...most of these centres will be closed down because they do not have classrooms, the sanitary conditions are poor, the compound - the Education Act outlines the acreage of land a school should have which these centres do not have (EO62:2002)*”.

As the government is yet to come up with specific modalities for registering the NFE centres, the handling and supervision of these schools has partly been left to the ingenuity of the District MOEs’ or is partly influenced by the NFS type. So for instance, the approach in Kisumu is that “*...as long as we know that centre is there, we just give them the go ahead to proceed and give them whatever support we can (op cit)*”. In Samburu, the schools, by virtue of being run within the formal school set-up have a degree of legality, even if not formalised and therefore there is no urgency to register them.



The results from the study sample revealed four authorisation types (or lack of) in Urban as opposed to two in Rural as Figure 32. indicates. 55% centres in Urban comprising 12 centres in Kisumu, have been issued with a letter of authorisation from the DEO’s office. This letter outlines some requirements to be satisfied, for instance that each centre should institute a committee comprising parents and community members, and should submit returns to the DEO by the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month. Next are 5 (28%) centres, four of which are registered as CBO and

one as an NGO. These registrations are handled outside MOEST. A CBO registration is easier to attain and is issued by the DDC which is under the provincial administration in the Office of the President. The Kisumu DEO has however additionally issued these institutions with a letter of authority thus bestowing them formal recognition at the district ministerial level. Another 4 centres (18%) are registered with the registrar of societies within the State Law Office. These centres comprise only part of the activities of the parent institutions. This group exhibited some independence and did not have or require the authorisation letter. Lastly, one centre operates from a

formal state wing and therefore has a legal standing. In Urban therefore 10 (45%) centres have legal bases (of a non educational nature) while the 12(55%) centres are recognised by the DEO.

In Rural, 6 (75%) centres operate from the formal school setting. Two centres, one in Marsabit and another in Samburu are however not registered with any authority. The Marsabit centre had however applied for registration with the MOEST. According to the proprietors, they sent out an application letter. Upon receiving no reply, they visited the office in person and the officer *“was very negative, very critical but then he changed after we had talked to him (P29:2001)”*. The officers unenthusiastic reception is understandable as several issues needed clarification. For instance, registration was being sought for a “school” that had no buildings, one whose “classroom” was the shade of a tree. S/he therefore needed to be educated on the concept. The extent and nature of the sponsors commitment needed to be confirmed. As the school is envisaged as a feeder school, more information was needed on what would happen to the children after Class 3. These unresolved issues notwithstanding, an inspection team was sent to view learning in the centre. According to the teacher, the team was happy with what they witnessed. The centre was now waiting for the relevant committee within the district to sit and approve the school. And in the mean time, the teacher is putting off-stage pressure with *“one committee member who is from our location. She is a nominated councillor. So most of the times I ask her...(T29:2001)”* in the hope of hastening the approval and registration process. This experience denotes the attitudinal and bureaucratic hurdles that have to be crossed when registering an alternative type of a programme. Hope for registration at the moment lies within the hands of sympathetic education officers.

## **7.8 Management of the Centres.**

Having presented the structure and organisation of NFS schools this section is devoted to examining the management within the centres. The data revealed that a number of bodies were involved in managing the school. As Urban and Rural have salient difference, the discussion shall be under these categories.

### **7.8.1 Rural: “managing the small schools”**

Almost all Rural NFS qualify as “small schools” as they comprise two teachers at most. Hence the teacher stands out as a single most important person in managing the centres. In the Samburu schools, the teacher is supported by the formal school management which houses the centre on the one hand and by the school committee on the other. All the interviews with the FE head teachers, who are the overall managers suggested that they provided for the centres in kind by providing school materials, or including NFS children in the SFP which they are not eligible for. In addition, they advised the teachers on pedagogical issues or assisted in problem solving. The positive attitude

of the FE head teachers has been cultivated through their involvement in NFS workshops, curriculum development and other activities, hence they view NFS as appendages to the formal school rather than parallel institutions. A view from one head that *“I feel there is a great importance in giving these people the literacy they are demanding. So I would say I encourage to have them. I feel proud when I get them (HT26:2002)”* is evidence of the fact that NFS are welcome by the formal establishments and will probably enjoy this backing.

The school committees in especially the donor supported schools were strong due to the continued education that had targeted them. As one donor representative explained *“what we have been doing is to make the parents more involved particularly in governance issues so that they can talk about their school, they can see the school as their own property and not really an alien thing...we actually want to get them involved so that they accept and therefore they can be able to take their children to school (S60:2002)”*. Due to this constant education the Rural committees on the whole appeared more active. It was rather difficult to separate the formal and non formal school committees. As the parents themselves admitted *“we have two types of committees: There is one for Lchekuti and there is the school committee. However we often cooperate (C57:2002)”*. The boundary was thin because parents had children in both the FE and NFS section. So when they met as formal school committee, non-formal issues were hopefully discussed as well.

The Marsabit centre is the only centre in Rural which in addition to the school committee also had a school board. The board at the moment comprised only the sponsors but they are planning to widen the membership to include the head teacher of the local school which they hope will absorb the learners after Std 3. The essence of the board is that *“because of the jobs we have, we cannot keep a close eye. The last time we were there was 6 months ago. We have to rely on people that are there...there is one teacher there, very dedicated, but we still need large input into it (P29:2001)”*. In other words, the teacher requires guidance hence the need for an established mechanism.

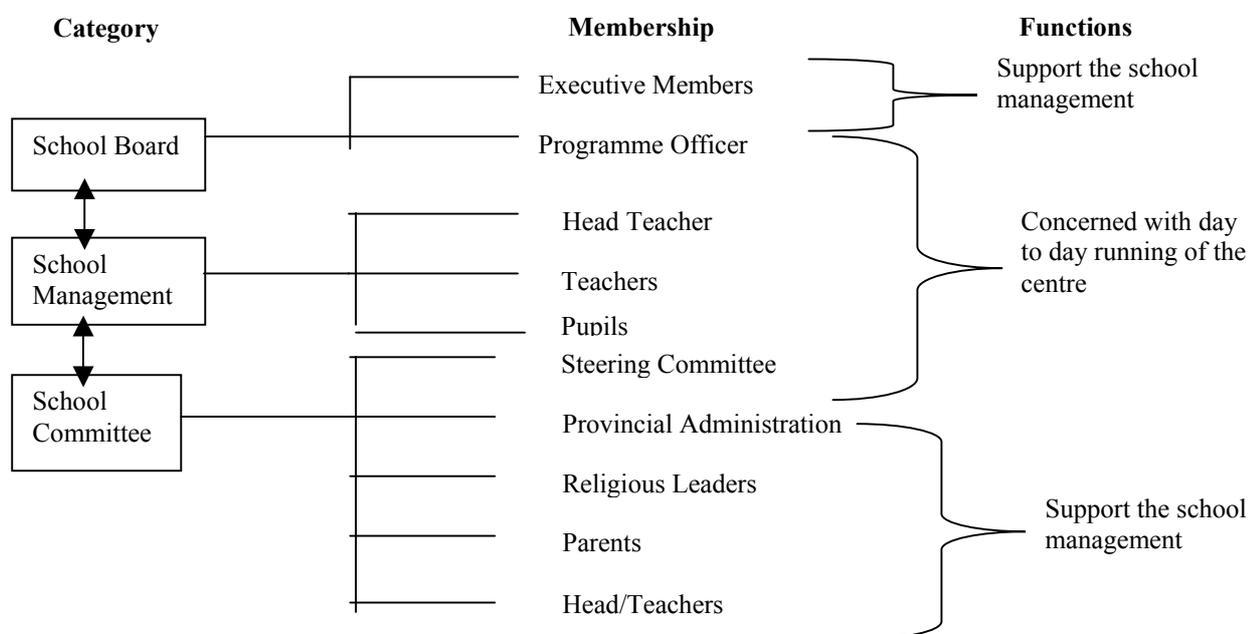
### **7.8.2 Urban**

Urban had a more heterogeneous management form that comprised (a) the school management – head teacher, teachers and in one case children (b) school committee and (c) school boards. In most centres, especially those with a sizeable teaching force, the day to day running of the institution was under the head teacher who assumed the overall authority, assisted by the deputy and teachers on duty. This structure is very similar to that found in formal schools. In the one-teacher or “small” schools, these teachers liaised with committee members in running the school. Lastly were the centres that were managed by selected board members. Committees and boards differed significantly in that the former comprised parents and members from the surrounding community

while the latter was composed of “outsiders” who were united in their special interest in the school. One board for instance consisted of three members “*the programme officer...and two other missionaries...but they are outside the country (PO1:2002)*”. Hence, the board was mostly the executive angle while the committee composition was locally based.

In Kisumu, the NFE officer, quoting the Draft Policy Guidelines that “*these schools should be community based (EO62:2002)*” explained that before he awarded the letter of recognition to any centre, “*I tell them they should have a committee which should be broad based, community based. It should comprise of the guardians, parents, the provincial administration...the chief or assistant chief, the church or if Islamic oriented people from there, opinion leaders something like that (ibid)*”. This generally sums up the composition of committee members as mentioned in Urban. A summary of the information as described by the informants is attempted below (Figure 33).

**Fig. 33: The Urban NFS Management Structure**



A total of 4 (18%) centres in Urban stated that they had school boards. However only two of these boards were actively involved in running the centres. The boards played mainly an advisory and financial role leaving the daily management to the school based people. In the absence of a school board, the school committee was the uppermost advisory team. Otherwise, the data revealed that the committee supported the schools to function and only occasionally did certain members of the steering committee, that is chair persons or deputies, take a more active role in daily activities.

## 7.9 School Committees

### 7.9.1 Rural

All the centres in the Rural study sample have committees. Compared with Urban, the data was not so contradictory regarding the presence and activities of the school committees. It is only one centre

where the head teachers reported that *“I have never met the non-formal committee. I only heard it was there yesterday when you (the researcher) left...they are not active. If I had know there was a committee for that, instead of using my school committee I should use them (HT26:2002)”*. Parents of this centre however explained that most of them formed the formal school committee and hence used one seating to discuss both formal and non-formal education issues. This explanation is valid and hence one can conclude that on the whole, the Rural committees seemed to be somewhat active and involved in school matters.

### 7.9.2 Urban

The majority of the centres 19 (86%) in the study sample claimed to manage their institutions through committees. Only 3 (14%) centres were negative, one of them categorically that *“we do not have a parents-teacher committee since the majority of our children are street children or orphans from the neighbourhood (PO1:2002)”*. Instead, the centre has a three person board who made all the decisions.

Even though most centres claimed to have committees, their functioning status was questionable. Two parameters can be used to gauge this. First is an examination of the consistency in the information provided and syntax utilised. Two examples are provided of interview transcript inconsistency. One informant stated *“they told me, go and form a committee...I told them I have done everything, the committee is there (HT8:2002)”* but later on in the interview contradicts himself stating that *“I have been trying to form a committee (ibid)”*. Another head teacher alleged that the school committee participated in admissions in that *“we direct the documents to the committee and the committee directs the documents to me (HT3:2002)”* but later says that *“we have not really been calling for committee meetings. They are just our committee and when we want to talk to them, we normally talk to them on closing day when we call the parents (ibid)”*. One then wonders how this committee can be actively involved in pupil admissions when their participation, if at all, is sought on closing day, this means after pupils have been admitted and been in school for at least three months. That the informant talks of inviting the committee *“when we want to talk to them”* further portrays the top bottom management style in place. Rather than treating the committee as equals to help run the school, they seem to be an appendage to help create a picture of a broad based management. Regarding syntax, parents for most of the part spoke in the future tense regarding their activities. Their speech was compounded with words such as *“we want to try (P53:2002)”* or *“we hope by next year we will have solved this problem (ibid)”* or *“we want to call for meetings (C58:2002)”* or *“we are thinking of organising an harambee (ibid)”*. Such words give the impression that these activities have not yet been implemented.

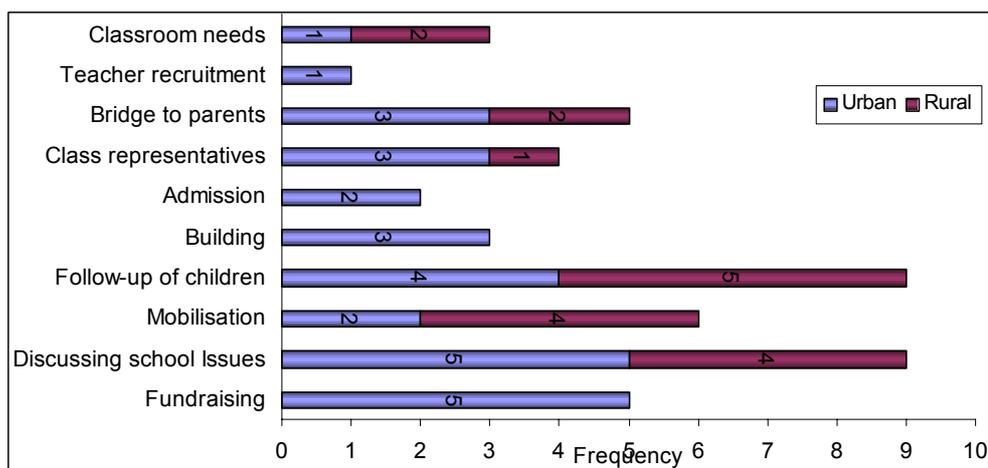
Secondly, informant triangulation also yielded some contradictions. For instance, the school (teachers and head teachers) claimed that there was a committee but the parents in two different centres denied, saying that “*there was but now I am not sure. A while ago, committee members were there (P51:2002)*” or “*we can say there is one but we have never seen it (P52:2002)*”. If parents are not knowledgeable about the existence of the committee, yet they comprise the primary representatives, then it is probable the parents and not the teachers are telling the truth. The reluctance by school administration of these centres to be open about the status of their committees probably stems from apprehension as one of the stipulated requirements from the education office was that a committee ought to manage the centres. A non-functioning committee therefore denotes a contravention of the laid out rules for managing NFS.

It is only one head teacher who admitted that “*we had a committee but it is not that perfect. What I mean by not perfect is that they are not so much concerned, they are not very active (HT10:2002)*”. Asked how they deal with issues needing wider community participation, this centre replied that “*we go about it individually, not through the committee (ibid)*”. This, together with the evidence presented above lends credence to the NFE officer’s opinion that “*the truth is most of these centres are run by individuals (EO62:2002)*”.

### 7.9.3 Responsibilities of Committee Members

A more critical gauge of the performance of the committees lies in the responsibilities accorded to them and the structure put in place to ensure that the committee are active. Figure 34 presents a summary of the duties that were mentioned by the variety of informants.

Fig. 34: School Committee Responsibilities



The two leading tasks accorded to committee members accounting for 19% of the mentions respectively were listed as discussing school related issues and follow-up of children. Issues discussed related to:

- a) solving problems facing the institution “*when we need their opinion over any issue, they usually come and we discuss with them, share with them, listen to us and we have the problem solved or calmed (HT6:2002)*” or “*when we see problems in the school, we as a committee sit together and see what the problem is (C61:2002)*”.
- b) discussing the school continuity, “*the committee must sit and deliberate why the head master has been transferred, they need to know the records the head master left behind so that when the new one comes, he finds the records (C56:2002)*” and general “*policy regarding the school (HT12:2002)*” or
- c) general school development. This held especially for the urban schools that had undeveloped land.
- d) Lastly, the committee also deliberated on money related issues, whether the fees should be increased, how parents can be made to provide the tokens and so on.

Problem solving and money matters were the most frequently mentioned items of discussion.

A more specific function the committees had was follow-up of children. This was in regard to general progress of the child. Hence spot-checks in school were made to ascertain if the children were attending school regularly: “*the role of the committee is to ensure that the children come to the centre at the right time. It is to ensure that they mobilise those children because there are some parents who say they will bring the children but they do not. So it is to ensure that these children are at least available from the manyattas (HT30:2002)*”. As has been established daily attendance in NFS is poor and hence this preoccupation with monitoring the children as “*if we do not make noise that please just go to school, some will not (C56:2002)*”. One committee claimed to have gone further in their community vigilance by establishing their own rules that support the child’s educational endeavours “*there is a law we have put. There is a day we sat and said there is no day a child will complete from Lchekuti and then go back and stay at home. We will push them forward, as parents, as committee as there is a law we have put with the chief. We will be together and push this child to proceed on up to primary (C57:2002)*”. However, the main method used to monitor the children’s attendance and progress was to talk with the parents and the children and if necessary “*take the child by hand and return the child to the school (C55:2002)*”.

Closely related to the above function was mobilisation (13% mentions). Parents and the potential learners were targeted. Mobilisation was conducted not only to popularise the school but also, especially in rural, to urge parents to avail their children for school. Mobilisation as a component was particularly stressed in the donor supported schools in Samburu. Communities were mobilised for sensitisation purposes due to the belief that “*if communities are sensitised, then we know they are able to sustain these programmes (S60:2002)*”

Another role for the committee was that they were a bridge between the school and the parents (11% mentions). As one member posed “*if it was not for committee members, when a problem arises, who would go to parents? Teachers do not have the permission to go to manyattas and ask wazee ‘where is the money’. Committee members have been selected so that teachers can bring them the problems they have and then the committee communicates with the parents and then a meeting is called (C57:2002)*”. In this role therefore, of communicating and seeing to the fact that school matters were attended to, committee members also counselled the non-attentive parents. This they claimed they could do better as coming from the same locality they were familiar with the parents. However, they admitted that they were faced with an uphill task as some parents were not co-operative.

Three functions viz. fundraising, school construction and pupil admissions were strictly an Urban domain. First, the committee was instrumental in organising and participating in the fundraising. While their effort was appreciated, there was a dissenting voice that was dissatisfied with their turnout during such occasions. Secondly, the committee was instrumental in assembling parents to aid in the school construction. Some parents provided free labour and hence contributed in kind. In one case, that was the only time the committee was active.

Pupil admission was perhaps the most critical responsibility accorded to the school committees. Two centres, one based in Nairobi and another in Kisumu had; “*left recruitment of pupils entirely to the PTA (parents teachers association) members and I told them this is your school. You do the recruitment, give me the list. And that is what they did (HT22:2000)*”. Both centres have an enabling administrative structure in place. The communities have been zoned and each region had a leader. It is these leaders who are responsible for admission. They must comply with the laid down regulations each centre has regarding age, gender and economic inability. The responsibility of recruiting and verifying the pupils is perhaps the most decisive and responsible function entrusted to the committee members. It is more proactive than just “discussing” and it denotes a sense of confidence the school has on its committee members. This function elevates the committee members to decision makers rather than just workers who participate in school construction or follow up children. Through participating in pupil admissions and teacher recruitment, the committee is brought at par in the management structure.

Only two functions mentioned related more closely to classroom activities. First, committee members tried to ensure that children had books and stationary and “*if no NGO helps, we as parents try to contribute some money. Committee members call for a parents meeting and they each contribute about Ksh.10/- . So we buy a box of books, pencils, chalk (C57:2002)*”. Secondly, some centres claimed to have class representatives who liaised between the teacher and parents regarding problems with children that “*the teacher can tell the parent responsible for the class that ‘I have a*

*problem with this class. Some children have bad manners. Some steal, others abuse the teacher or the classmates'. This report we get from the teacher. We then try to talk with the parent on how they can raise the child (C58:2002)".* Being a class representative leans one towards problem solving rather than participating in pedagogical issues. The latter is an area that committee members, just like parents, shy away from.

#### **7.9.4 Structure of Committees**

Two centres in the study, one based in Kisumu and another in Nairobi<sup>60</sup> were unique in that mechanisms had been put in place to enable better execution of responsibilities by committee members. The administrative areas, 9 in each case were known as “community” in one centre and “village” in another and was under jurisdiction of one community member. The responsibility of the leader of each region was to know not only each child, but also each parent so that when an issue arose, the leader liaised between the teacher and the parent. Each leader had a reasonable number of about 15 pupils in their jurisdiction. Other than that the leaders, as already mentioned in the preceding section, were directly involved in pupil recruitment.

#### **7.9.5 Composition of Committees.**

The informants in the Kisumu based centres, in line with the directives from the district education office, quoted a similar constitution of the committee which ideally comprised of representatives of selected institutions in society. These members were drawn from:

- a. Political domain - the councillor
- b. The provincial administration - the Chief or assistant Chief
- c. Village elders/ headmen - serve a smaller administrative areas that the chief.
- d. Religious domain – mainly representatives of Churches or Islamic associations sponsoring the centre
- e. Opinion leaders – active members, often retired professionals with some level of formal schooling
- f. Parents – often with children in the centre
- g. (Head)Teacher.

The committees had a steering organ comprising the traditional descriptions of chairman, secretary and treasurer. The data from the discussions with parents and committee members established that the chairmen – as there was no woman in this position – were invariably drawn from category E above, that is members in the community who have demonstrated leadership. The secretary was in all cases a teacher (or the head teacher). These two seemed to be the most crucial and active. So once again, it is evident that most committees organised themselves within the conventional norms.

The only exceptions are the two Urban centres already singled out that had evolved their own structures.

Women formed the bulk of membership in Urban. In one committee comprising 8 people, 7 of them were women. In another peri-urban centre with 9 members, 6 were women. The presence of more women was attributed to their larger voluntary spirit, that *“one must volunteer when you are needed. So women volunteer and they are found more. We could not get a man, so we decided to just forge ahead. If we find a man who is available, we will include him. But we have not found one (C55:2000)”*.

In Rural, the tendency was to have more men in the committees. Rural committees are still more traditionally bound meaning that the overt leadership roles are considered to be a male function, or as one informant phrased it *“our people believe that anything to be led or organised is for men (T29:2001)”*. Women’s presence in the committee therefore had to be insisted upon. In the Marsabit centre for instance, the school management reasoned out with the men that *“I was telling them that this is a school. Mothers are the ones who know how to handle the children. They are always with them. Most of you will go out for ‘foras’<sup>61</sup>, so the mothers must be among those in the committee so that they will be doing the work because they will always be at home (ibid)”*. Due to this intervention, of the 5 committee membership, two were women. However that *“they have already tried to replace one of the women (ibid)”* shows that inclusion is one thing, but achieving acceptance of the women presence and active participation is another. The AAK schools in Samburu that had benefited from community education however had a more active female presence.

#### **7.9.6 Frequency of Meetings**

On the average, the committees, both in Rural and Urban stated that they met at least once a month or more if there was an issue to be addressed. One Chairman in Urban however decried the irregular attendance of members whom he said *“the committee is not functioning correctly. You will call them to a meeting but they will not come. You go and tell them why you are calling them but they will not come. When they come, four sometimes only three come...this is the whole problem (C59:2002)”*. The explanation given for non attendance covered the whole spectrum. One chairperson explained that most of the members were self employed and engaged themselves in small business and hence found it difficult to sacrifice time for school matters at the expense of their income generating activities. The view of another head teacher was however that these members simply lacked commitment.

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<sup>60</sup> For more details on these two urban based centres, refer to sections 4.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.3.4 and 6.5

<sup>61</sup> Foras is an animal (camels/cows) camp that is often further yonder away from the village. It is only grown up men who travel this far away.

### **7.10 The NFS Teacher**

This section examines the role of the NFS teacher in what has been described as the “small schools” predominant in peri-urban and rural areas. From the data, it was established that the functions of the teacher spread from the classroom, to the institution, the parents and lastly to the community. In this respect the teachers primary responsibility was classroom related; to teach and monitor learner progress. Institution wise, the teacher administered the centres in terms of admitting the learners, managing the token payment to buy necessary learning materials. These teachers, as secretaries of the school committee were a crucial link between the school and the community. In this capacity, they called for meetings and in collaboration with the chairpersons, organised the agenda. What emerged from the findings was that the NFS teacher was active in community related activities that impacted on the school. Hence the NFS learners and their parents benefited from home visits aimed *“to talk to the children and also encourage the parents (T42:2002)”*. Members of the wider community were also targeted. Some teachers claimed to participate in campaigns aimed at popularising the school that *“I go to the manyatta and talk with the community. I tell the parents that there is a school going on which educates the girls and the boys (T28:2002)”*. In addition to this, the teachers were involved in community outreach and education efforts, that *“we help the NGOs and parents in mobilisation or making the parents to know the importance of school. Or even when they do the HIV education... we also assist. Out of the class, we assist in our role as youth. We do not only teach (T45:2002)”*. The teacher is therefore a key person in a small school for other than teaching which was the primary duty, they managed their centres as well as co-ordinated the links between the school and the community.

### **7.11 The NFS Learner**

One centre based in Kisumu involved the learners in active management of the centre. This was operationalised by having weekly meetings, chaired and run entirely by the learners, with a teacher as an observer. These meetings deliberated all issues cutting across the classroom to social issues. The idea for the meeting is that *“they go through the challenges and experiences they have had throughout the week and if they have problems, they look for solutions among themselves. If the problems are between them and the staff they discuss them as well. If there are problems they cannot find a solution in that meeting, then it is brought in our staff meeting (PO17:2002)”*. This was the only institution in the sample that had given the learners a voice and avenue to have their issues dealt with. The Nairobi based centre, in organising for Child Rights sessions, had succeeded in making the learners more aware of their rights, but had not instituted mechanisms for dealing with the violations, such as corporal punishment that was frequently noted by the learners.

## 7.12 Summing up

At government (MOEST) level, the NFE officers emerge as the most critical in overseeing NFS matters. However, in order to streamline registration of NFS, clarification from the government that elucidates what a non-formal school is or its varieties is needed. MOEST has delimited itself to a monitory and supervisory role. However, it was evident that actual and sustained monitoring has not been achieved. A vital drawback is the lack of policy framework which closes out NFS from funding. Without funding, planned activities cannot be effected resulting in the *ad hoc* services from MOEST and under utilisation of the officers.

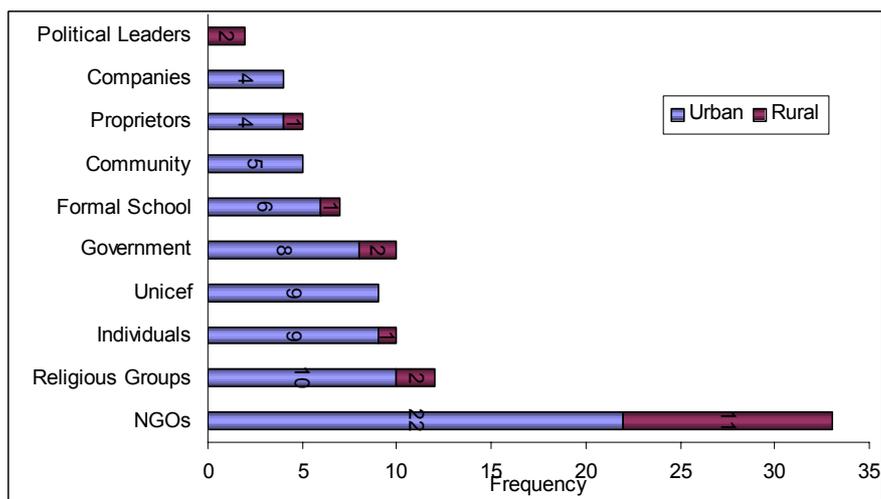
The institutional administrative structures were rather varied. Special mention needs to be made of 2 centres in Urban that have achieved a broad based management style between the varied departments in the institution hence managing to address the learners social needs as well as literacy and skill training needs with ease within the same institution. The other Urban centres however needed to devolve the responsibilities from the concentration of one figure. In Samburu, NFS is under the overall management of the formal school who emerged as being very supportive. The fact that their overall boss, the DEO, dismissed NFS provision, despite the role it was playing in enhancing formal school enrolment shows that there is need to target such high placed officers with education about the essence of non-conventional schools. The formal school head teachers had benefited from such awareness and were hence supportive. Mention is made of the AAK schools where a satellite system, administered from the formal school, has been put in place. This is essential in reducing the distance to school as well as introducing learning centres right in the *manyatta*. As these centres are used by all -children, youths and adults - in the village, they then acquire the feature of a “community school”.

There was an awareness from the informants that the centres needed to be managed by the committee. The 2 urban centres mentioned above had succeeded in actively bringing parents and learners on board. The demarcation of areas of jurisdiction with accompanying responsibilities such as admission or follow up of children ensured an active participation rather than the passive “discussion role” other parents committees had. That learners formed the management in one centre depicts a democratic practice in place. The majority of the schools however had a management structure very similar to formal schools. In such schools, the community presence was rather passive. In general, one can say that it is the 2 established Urban centres and the “small schools” in peri-urban and rural areas that had the strongest community presence. Within the small schools, the teacher emerged as the most central figure whose responsibilities cut across the classroom, institution, parents and community. The teacher, as the secretary to the committee was the link between the school and the committee.

### 7.13 Financing in NFS

Available literature is in agreement that financing of NFS is outside central government. Indeed, as the findings in figure 35 portray, the bulk of the financing, in both Urban and Rural (accounting for 34% of the total mentions) was from NGOs whether local or international, followed by religious organisations mainly the church (12%) and individuals acting in their private capacity (10%). The financing is discussed broadly encompassing contributions in kind as well as in money form.

Fig. 35: Sponsors in NFS



Of the total of 22 NGOs sponsors mentioned by 7 (32%) centres in Urban, 17 (77%) were international organisations, as were all the 11 Rural NGO supporters. The most frequently mentioned organisations were Save Our Children UK, Norwegian Church Agency, Danish Volunteer Service, SNV-Netherlands, World Vision in Urban and GTZ, CCF, AAK, CIDA in Rural. The local based organisations were an Urban feature and comprised Asian run foundations such as the Rotary, Lions and Simba Clubs. The support from these organisations, whether international or local, varied from one shot sponsorship of for example putting up a building, to a more long term financing of project activities. The latter, present in 3 centres in Urban and the AAK project schools in Rural entailed a more holistic financing plan that catered for several aspects that supported learning. AAK for instance supported the teachers financially, first through giving tokens and later through financing the income generating project. In addition they financed the community mobilisation and education, curriculum development process, in-service of teachers, erected buildings and provided learning materials such as slates, pressure lamps to aid the evening classes and bicycles for the teachers. The three centres in Urban had a long term relationship with a number of donor groups who supported their activities. This implied paid for employees with the most competitive wages in the study sample. On the whole, a majority of the NGOs sponsored specific functions mentioned as follows; erecting classrooms (4 centres), learning materials and desks (4),

Teacher salaries (5), training (3), Vocational training tools (2), clothing (2). Where a sponsor put up a building, the community was expected to contribute the labour. The sponsorship was therefore in both cash and kind and generally intended as a short term support to augment existing activities. The AAK funding plan for instance was designed to be a 5 year project starting in 1997 and as the Project officer said *“we are now overdue. We are supposed to have gone. In fact we are supposed to have left last year (S60:2002)”*. Continued NGO funding implies continual proposal writing targeting varied NGOs, which the three centres in Urban seem to have perfected. The most aggressive centre in the study sample had received help from a total of 4 NGOs, 3 Companies and UNICEF. The two most established centres in the study sample were funded by 4 different international NGOs each.

The next major support to NFS was recorded from religious organisations; primarily churches and one Muslim organisation. This support was mainly in kind, in terms of donating the church building to aid learning or provision of learning materials. Occasionally cash contribution to supplement teachers tokens was recorded. While the church space was appreciated, the architectural style was not conducive for learning as *“we cannot make partitions in the church for the classes because this will interrupt their service (C59:2002)”*. In Rural, the catholic church was instrumental in teaching literacy skills. One head teacher reported that *“they teach parents on Wednesday and Friday, once a month, through their catechist. They teach religion and writing (HT27:2002)”*. This therefore somewhat eases the pressure on the NFS teacher who normally attends to all the age groups in need of learning.

The individual sponsors category is defined as persons who are driven by their philanthropic zeal to support the school. They are not parents or guardians of NFS children. Their support to the school was largely in kind, through providing clothing, food and books. One exception centre in the study sample however mentioned that various persons provided shelter to the children, that *“we have families who have agreed to stay with the girls especially for the period they are under our care...we call them our biggest donors, small families, because the part they take is so big (PO21:2002)”*. This same centre further claimed to get financial donations from individuals to sponsor the training of the girls. A centre cannot plan on support from individuals, especially for recurring costs like salaries, as these contributions were not regular being of a voluntary nature. As one informant well explained *“...most people are willing to give something. But when the cost is a continuous cost, like salaries, very few people are interested in committing into something that continuous. So if it is a building, then you can collect money for that, books to buy...that is what people are interested in (P29:2001)”*. In other words, teacher salaries is an area prospective sponsors shy away due to its monthly demands.

Related to the above category is what has been termed as proprietors. Proprietors have been singled out as their support to the school is more long term and caters for teachers tokens/salaries as well as learning materials. The proprietors of the Marsabit school for instance stated that “*we would like to continue supporting three teachers (P29:2001)*”. This is a statement the individual sponsors in the preceding category do not make.

Various wings of government departments were mentioned as contributing cash or services to NFS. Going by the number of mentions and function attributed to it, the DAE stands out as the most important government wing. DAE provided crucial support to the teachers in terms of tokens payments and training. The Municipal council in Kisumu and the County Council in Samburu also supported NFS. The former had donated land to 3 schools in the study sample while the latter contributed the honorarium for the teachers. One centre in Kisumu reported receiving support from the ministry of agriculture. As was explained “*...they had a livestock programme. So we told them we are a CBO and we need some chickens to keep in our cage...surprisingly they said we will support you. That was a big surprise from the government but it happened. They did. They gave us some chicks and gave us some technical support and backing (PO21:2002)*”. The participation of the town councils or ministry of agriculture was due to personal pleas from the proprietors in Kisumu, and the councillor in Samburu respectively rather than laid down funding plans. The feeling among the informants was that the government could aid more, especially in as far as the payment of teachers was concerned. So while the governments administrative function was appreciated, the lament was “*the problem is the government is only helping us by telling us that we are here officially, but other than that they are not giving us anything at all! (HT8:2002)*”.

In Kisumu, UNICEF stands out as an important sponsor. Following the memorandum of understanding entered between UNICEF and MOE in 1994, UNICEF made material contributions (books, desks, carpentry tools and sewing machines), through the MOEST. Of the studied districts, it is only NFS in Kisumu that seems to have benefited, 9 of whom were in the study sample. This was a one time donation.

The other sponsors listed had a regional face. In Urban, the community and private companies were listed as supporters. The community refers to members living in close proximity to the school, with or without children in the school. These members supported the school by providing security, participating in *harambees*, providing labour during construction, donating land to the school and so on. None of the informants singled out parents as sponsors. Rather they viewed the fee contributions from parents as a basic responsibility. Support from private firms was only in kind. For instance during functions, Coca-Cola, the soda company donated drinks to one school, as did Castle, a beer company who donated chemicals for hairdressing to another centre.

In Rural the formal primary school and political leaders were mentioned as key supporters. The formal schools in Samburu provide the NFS with materials for learning. In this respect, learning in NFS without this support would be disabled considering that parents do not make any contributions. Pertaining to political leaders, councillors, was mentioned twice. Their support was in mobilising the people as well as facilitating payment of teachers, as teachers could not depend on parents.

### 7.14 Sustainability

The future of a school is assured of if the school programmes can be sustained especially from within. This therefore leads one to the question; How sustainable are the non formal schools? If one supporter withdrew, would the school survive? Some schools in the study sample claim to have invested thought on the question of sustainability. One proprietor in Kisumu explained that

Our thought right from the beginning was how do we make this thing sustainable? What do we do? We started thinking of how to start income generating activities to run our programmes. Initially, that was our aim and it was like, we took girls issues, put them on paper and left them there and started thinking how to make money to support us. It had to be something that we would sustain, we would manage ourselves (PO21:2002).

This centre has production units which produce items for sale. The proceeds received are used to fund the training programmes basically in terms of paying the teacher and purchasing material. The self paying sectors are tailoring, hairdressing, computer, handcrafts and skins clinic. In tailoring for example, the growth was described as thus “*we started by buying one machine after the other systematically, slowly. We have 12 and that is how we have managed to keep that sector running (ibid)*”. The NFS is one of the programmes of the institution. However the bid for self reliance has not been achieved. The school basically relies on contributions from parents and volunteer teachers. So on the one hand, while the vocational trade areas (and skins clinic) are self sustaining, the proceeds are not shared over to cater for the basic literacy in NFS, even in the bare minimal form.

In Samburu, sustainability mechanisms were in-built in the AAK programme as a way to ensure continuation after the project end;

In income generating project we are trying to support communities to generate income so that they could be able to support the schools around them. And for the School Feeding Programme (SFP), it is more to boost enrolment and retention rates of the pupils. What we do is that we encourage schools to come up with small shambas, small gardens, they plant maize, they plant beans and other crops. Now, the crops they plant there are mainly to feed the pupils. Most of them when they are hungry will not come to school. They go home, they go looking for food and that kind of thing and then their education is very much affected. So we want to create and cultivate that culture where the schools could be able to come up with their sustainable SFP rather than depending on donors, depending on the WFP and the like. Because donors are there now, tomorrow they are gone, so how are they going to sustain themselves (S60:2002).

It is therefore hoped that when the project comes to an end, the community will manage the income generating projects to support the children, while the teachers manage their own to supplement their salaries. It remains to be seen whether the communities will thrive and maintain their enthusiasm in the absence of AAK who have been the key financial and monitoring partner. The experience of

NGO funding in Kenya however indicates that projects often die as soon as the funding source dries up. It is in an effort to avert this end result that the Samburu initiator conceived the NFS as being primarily community driven. He states that

We did not also want it to be like an NGO where you get money, and when the money get finished, the programme will fail. So with us it was village based. We kept on it and we never brought in money. So people never realised that there was money to be gained except education to be gained. So that is why the programme has succeeded and that is why others are trying to copy us all around the district (P31:2002).

The above examples show the efforts being engaged in to achieve smooth running of NFS. However on the whole financing of NFS, especially the teacher is shaky. The thesis advanced is that where there is a teacher, learning can occur. Therefore in the absence of reasonable remuneration for the teacher, NFS will remain unstable. From the study, three groups were active in teacher payments viz. the proprietors, NGOs and parents. In some way, this arrangement is not sustainable as is hereby argued.

Individual proprietors who support the school and pay the teachers, depend on their salaries. But as one proprietor argued “*if we certainly lose our good jobs we will not be able to afford supporting the school(P29:2002)*”. That this threat is a real one is evidenced by the experience of a proprietor in Kisumu, who claims to have used his retirement benefits to start the school and pay the teachers. This money seems to have been used up. Today, he claims to sponsor the school from the proceeds from his part-time job, but in the same vein says “*my children are also in secondary school, so lets say, what I am getting from the commercial colleges, I am spending on the school...When I know I am broke, I tell them (HT8:2002)*”. That the odds are against him seem clear as he states “*So that is how I did it, except now, I may be tired (ibid)*”. The proprietor is “tired” and has no money to spare for the school. The school is faced with eminent closure as teachers are not being paid and with no teacher, pupils cease with time to come to school. Pupil enrolment had dwindled from over 40 to 12 pupils. On the day of the research only 2 pupils attended school.

NGO sponsorship to schools seems to be worthwhile where long term relationships have been established and where centres are creative enough to target multiple sponsors. But where NGOs come in for a specified duration it is not viable in the long run. It is unlikely that the AAK schools will survive the donors absence as the donor had provided everything “*AAK decided to buy exercise books, pencils, chalk, they even bought lanterns to enable learning to take place at night... (T47:2002)*” and additionally facilitated teacher payments such that the parents had relaxed. Additionally, NGOs are generally wary of supporting continuous costs like teachers salaries.

Parents are the key contributors of teacher tokens in Urban. But has as been shown in section 5.10.2, contributions from parents are both meagre and irregular rendering teacher payment difficult. In Rural, even in the one centre that was conceived from the start to be community based

and financed depends on the county council and CCF for teacher tokens as the community has failed to make their contributions. Parents cannot be relied upon as a source for teacher tokens.

It is therefore evident that proprietors, NGOs and parents cannot be entirely depended on to meet teachers tokens. Sustainability of NFS can be achieved through addressing the issue of teacher remuneration. The view of the informants was that this was the responsibility of the government. The informants, whether Rural or Urban based had the same views as follows “*We do not have private children. We have private schools. We insist these Lchekuti children are still Kenyan children who require a service of teachers paid by the tax payers money (P31:2002)*” or “*we have a lot of problems paying the teachers and these are citizens, they are Kenyan citizens. Why can't the government help us in paying the teachers? So it seems as if some people are neglected and some are being taken care of (P3:2002)*”. The crux of their argument centres on the fact that NFS serve Kenyan children and if teachers in public schools are supported out of public coffers, then why not NFS teachers? The data shows that the community can be galvanised to support other aspects of learning, but the issue of salaries is still problematic. If learning is to be improved, then this is one area that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

### **7.15 Summing up**

Excluding parental contributions, it emerges that NGOs are the biggest supporters of NFS, sponsoring both in cash and kind. This support is however within a particular time frame and is dependent on continuous and sometimes creative proposal writing. Unless centres are aggressive and quick thinking targeting multi-sources, NGO financing is not sustainable. Indeed, the experience of NGO funding in Kenya depicts that projects often die as soon as the funding source dries up.

The issue of teacher wages remains at the centre of question on sustainability. Where there is a teacher, learning can occur. However, of the 10 varied sources of finances mentioned, only 4 consistently paid for the teacher. Relying on parents, as has already been pointed out, does not work well. Because these schools are serving Kenyan children, the onus is pushed to the government. What is advocated, given the limitations in training and qualification that some of these teachers have, is a honorarium payment as practised by DAE. The honorarium, though meagre is appreciated, and may be able to achieve some continuous teaching as a long term solution to the issue of NFS is sought.

If NFS is truly expected to contribute to the country's basic education plan, then finance is a critical issue that needs attending to. Reliance on external agencies is ill advised yet with the “Policy Guidelines” in “refined draft form” awaiting enactment by parliament it is evident that NFS will continue to be excluded from budgetary allocation. It will continue to rely on community

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resources or good will implying that NFS will remain at small scale level, covering specific geographic areas. NFS will not develop into a national programmes. A contradiction therefore emerges as NFS is suggested to augment the countries basic education plan, and yet it is not properly empowered to do so.

## 8 The Concept of NFS in Kenya

This concluding section on findings from the empirical study contains two parts. First, the concept of NFS, from the informants point of view is presented. This will be contrasted with what NFE literature on the one hand and government policy on the other advocate. Secondly, a model of NFS school types in Kenya, as derived from the data is presented.

### 8.1 Expectations of NFS Clientele

The perception and expectation of pupils and parents especially in Urban was sometimes incongruent with what NFE literature and government advances as attributes for NFS. Three such contrasting examples are discussed below.

#### 8.1.1 School Uniform

When the school system was introduced in Kenya, one practice instituted by the colonial master was a uniform code of dress for pupils. Today, Kenyan formal schools have retained the practice and insist upon it as a prerequisite for admission and participation in the schools. However, school uniform increases the costs of education yet it is not a primary requirement for learning. Those who cannot afford uniform either do not bother to enrol or are forced out of school. It is due to this realisation that there is an implicit understanding, from a cross section of parties like the government, and some NFS players that uniform ought not to be a requirement in NFS.

The data revealed contrasting stands between Rural and Urban regarding uniform. The Rural informants were in agreement that uniform was unnecessary as it only led to increased expenses as this informant explained, *“we are happy when the children go to school in their beads because some of us cannot afford to buy school uniform...it is not the uniform that acquires the knowledge but they get an education, and that education will never escape from their brains. And it is not the uniform that ‘reads’ (C66:2002)”*. Additionally, not only were uniforms regarded to be lacking aesthetically, being bare without the adornment that the Samburu for instance uphold, but parents seemed to take pride in the fact that their traditional dress, therefore representing their way of life, had found entry to the school. There was satisfaction that formal schooling would not alienate the children. They could continue to do what their society expected of them yet at the same time acquire literacy skills. As was said *“the Lchekuti have their beads, you see how they are? They wear their beads throughout and when they go to their school here, they write their names and they are herders, they are the women’s helpers, they are our children, just from the Manyatta (ibid)”*. If at all there was any need to introduce school uniform, the suggestion that was advanced by one female committee member was that *“uniform should be the same colour as the primary school as a child may learn in Lchekuti and join the primary. Because we have seen many children starting Lchekuti*

*and joining primary. So if this happens, the child can just proceed with the same dress (C57:2002)*". Since the NFS functions as a feeder school, then it ought to adopt some of the formal school practices to aid future transition of the pupils. The main point to be stressed however is that the Rural informants, with one voice, viewed uniform as unnecessary.

In Urban however, only 4 centres were opposed to uniform and they advanced the same reasons as the Rural informants. However, 82% (18 centres) advocated for school uniforms. Of these only two centres had succeeded in ensuring that all the children wore uniform. One centre that caters primarily for street boys explained that *"someone has donated one pair of uniform and a sponsor is trying to raise funds for a second pair of uniform (PO1:2002)"* showing that it is due to external help that uniform wearing has been made possible in that institution. Otherwise the trend was that the uniform policy was not strictly enforced. It was explained that while uniform was recommended, *"it is not very compulsory (HT3:2002)"*, or *"there is no strictness that one should come with uniform. Those who can, buy, those who cannot just stay (HT5:2002)"* or *"we do not harass them, we just talk to them quietly so that they can tell their parents to buy them the kind of uniform we want (HT10:2002)"*. The cross section of informants in Urban, that is teachers, parents and pupils were pro uniform wearing and they advanced the following reasons, which have been presented verbatim:

- a) Identification: The overwhelming ground for uniform was that it gave the child a recognition label which became advantageous in case the child needed assistance. As was explained, *"It is good for a child to have uniform. When you see a child out there in uniform, will you not know that this child belongs here? And without uniform, would we know? Uniform is necessary for identifying that a child belongs to a certain school. It can even assist the child he s/he has a problem. The child can be knocked by a vehicle and the child's address will be that uniform (C58:2002)"*. Just to prove how lack of uniform increases a child's vulnerability, one head teacher added, *"for example there is a time one of our pupils here was knocked by a car and he was not readily identified. I think we should have uniform, for identification (HT3:2002)"*. The issue of children being accident victims was most frequently mentioned, occurring in all the pupils and parents FGDs and in 3 head teachers' interviews. The threat of accidents therefore poses a real danger for children.

Additionally, uniform distinguishes a school going children. In the slum environment where most of Urban NFS are to be found, there are many non-enrolled school age children. It therefore becomes important that the NFS pupils have uniform, so that *"they will be recognised as school children (HT5:2002)"*. This can save them when and if involved in skirmishes with the police as is sometimes the case *"When they are out there, you do not know whether they are street children or school children. There comes a time when there is*

*trouble with the police and very many are arrested and taken to police stations and all that. Now if there are not in uniform, they are not carrying any books, there is no way that this child will convince the police that he or she is a pupil. That is why we encourage them to have school uniform (HT22:2000)*". For the pupils, the label of being recognised as a pupil, that uniform wearing portends gives them pride. As one of them said, *"uniform is good as when you are passing somewhere, people can know that you belong to a certain school. But I cannot be bought uniform because my parents cannot afford (PP32:2002)"*

- b) The uniform label also instilled some discipline as the pupils were expected to behave like pupils *"If the child leaves home in uniform and starts roaming around, they feel ashamed, as others will point out to the child saying 'this child has not gone to school' (P53:2000)"* or *"the uniform helps because even the child is afraid to do bad things because they are afraid to be recognised (C59:2002)"*. In other words, the informants thought that dress can shape behaviour. In the same vein, committee members job of vigilance was eased as they could easily recognise a uniform clad pupil *"we committee members, when we see children passing by and they are in uniform, we stop them and ask where they are going (C55:2002)"*.
- c) Parity of esteem with formal schools: The informants felt that it was lack of uniform that was setting them apart from other schools and gave them a lower status. So teachers in NFS advocated for uniform *"for them to feel that there is not much difference between them and the children who are learning in formal schools. So now when they are going home, they enjoy. They feel that they at least look like other pupils in the country and maybe when we now teach them, they are happy because they feel there is barrier (HT6:2002)"*. One parents committee explained that in an effort to uplift the view of their school, *"we are forcing parents to make the children smart so that they do not see like their school is different from theirs. The way the others dress, and the way children dress here makes the children feel like their school is a school for chokora<sup>62</sup>. So we are trying so much that by next year, the children are smart so that they feel equal to the other children (C55:2000)"*. The pupils too felt inferior due to lack of uniform as these two quote show *"When you are walking in a group, people ask, which school is this that does not have similar uniform (PP32:2000)"* and *"When we go out people ask, "which school is that, which school is that" because they see that our game is good, it is just the clothing that lets us down (PP34:2000)"*.
- d) Aesthetic reasons: Uniforms have a neat quality to them. Hence, a valid reason for some was simply that *"I wanted them to look smart (HT8:2002)"* and presentable; *"In case we would like to go somewhere... we would like them to look neat. Not this one coming in shorts, this*

<sup>62</sup> A derogative term referring to street children which literally means scavengers.

*one in a funny trouser, this one in a funny jacket, sports whatever, you know how they dress (HT22:2000)*". Given that NFS learners come from the low economic cadre "*some pupils come wearing rags (T15:2002)*". A school uniform policy can arrest this situation as parents/guardians are forced to buy them clothes.

From the above account, one can see many valid points with regard to uniform. Uniform gives a child an identity as a school going child and this has many merits such as getting assistance or aiding the parents in their community vigilance. The identity tag uniform wearing denotes moderated behaviour as the children could not conduct themselves in any way. Of equal importance was that uniform resulted in achieving some neatness and made the NFS learners appear like any other Kenyan school going child. Uniform identified them with formal school. In this way, it uplifted their morale and image of their school. Hence uniform acquired a psychological leverage. While it was admitted that uniform is expensive and indeed a deterrent in formal schools, a proposal of affordable alternatives in the second hand market was made, that "*if one goes to Gikomba<sup>63</sup>, you can get soaks for Ksh.10-, cheap shoes, a jersey for even Ksh.30/- (C55:2000)*". One school located in a Kisumu slum has solved the problem of uniform in a creative way. The learners simply wore some sort of apron over their ordinary clothes "*provided by the school to indicate that they are at least going to school (HT12:2002)*". This is a cheaper and viable solution for Urban NFS. However, it is unlikely that the clientele will embrace the idea as uniform is not only for identification. There is psychological satisfaction that comes with exactly identifying with the mainstream school pupils. Urban NFS yearn for uniform as they view it as one way of achieving parity of esteem with formal schools.

### **8.1.2 School Timing**

As has been discussed in Chapter 5.15, almost all the Urban NFS planned their learning according to the conventional time plans that govern formal schools, this is from 8.00a.m. to 5.00p.m. When one views this time plan vis-à-vis the NFS clientele, one sees how defeatist the NFS time plan is with regard to reaching vulnerable children. Despite this however, the general feeling among parents and pupils was pro conventional school hours. One NFS in Urban had been forced into shift hours of 8.00 a.m. to 1.00p.m. for lower classes and 10.00 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. for upper classes. This was met with general disquiet among teachers who felt inconvenienced. However, it is mainly the pupils who were vocal about the unconventional timing. As the head teacher explained of the latter "*there was a time when they had this mentality that since they are not going to school in the normal hours like other schools, they used to call themselves 'shule ya gumbaru<sup>64</sup>' And it was so much imprinted in their minds that it was difficult to erase that from their minds (HT22:2000)*".

<sup>63</sup> The largest market selling second hand clothes in Kenya.

Confirming this, the committee members said that the children “*used to call it chokora because of the school timing (C55:2000)*”. The simile of *chokora* or street children used here is intended to be derogative, depicting the easy and unserious nature of NFS. One girl in the same school explained “*they call us ‘gumbaru’ because we have no uniform and we leave school at 6.15 p.m., they call us ‘chokora’ (PP35:2000)*”. This example shows the difficulty of finding acceptance for a different time plan for children who can not fit within the conventional time schedules. Such children as working children need a flexible time plan that can agree with their occupational roles. But pro “normal hours” attitude is so strong that Urban NFS have not bothered to try different timing.

The Rural clientele had however managed to instil a flexible time plan dictated by the availability of the target learners. If anyone was happy with this flexible timing, it was the parents, one of whom aptly explained “*this child in Lchekuti is the one who brings more gain to a manyatta in Samburu because dealing with issues to do with livestock for all that time, then issues to do with education, this child has done more work than the one who goes to school only (C57:2002)*”. While parents are content because the children can satisfy their economic roles, the pupils would be happier with full school hours that “*primary is good because it is full time. This one has few hours because we go and herd, in the evening we come when we are tired, so we are not enjoying (PP38:2002)*”. This view tallied with the teachers’ reasons.

The resistance to non-conventional hours in Urban seemed to be shaped first and foremost by psychological reasons. The Urban players, as in Rural, would benefit more from time flexibility. However, this would establish the Urban NFS as a different cadre of school, something which Urban NFS would like to avoid. This issue of “being different” does not arise in Rural due to the symbiotic relationship formal and non formal schools have. Rural schools share the same resources, be it buildings, teachers, or learning materials. Children from the same family can be found in both schools. It has been recorded that due to the NFS, enrolment in the formal schools has been boosted. In this sense the two types of schools depend on and complement each other. The Rural NFS is therefore accorded similar status (if not higher status especially by parents). This is opposed to Urban NFS that seems to enjoy lower societal status. Hence Urban NFS strive to adopt formal school practices that will prove similarity rather than difference between the two.

### **8.1.3 Certification/National Examination**

NFE literature proposes that certification ought not to be an issue as the main aim for learning is to satisfy functional skills. However, the general feeling, in both Urban and Rural settings was that certificates were a necessity not only because they were a prerequisite for future learning but also because they accorded some satisfaction to the learner.

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<sup>64</sup> This translates to a school for adult illiterate learners. Gumbaru is a colloquial and somewhat belittling term.

The draft policy guidelines (6.3) suggest “strengthening the capacity of the Kenya National Examination Council to enable it to develop and administer separate examinations for learners in non formal education centres and skill training centres”. Suggesting a different examination system for NFS however needs good justification. The NFS with a skill training emphasis do not need separate exams and are quite satisfied with preparing their learners to sit for the government trade tests. The contentious group therefore remains NFS offering academic curriculum. How different would their exams be? After which level would they be offered? What value would they have? Would the certification for instance enable transition to formal schools, if so wished? Unless such issues are addressed, then a different exam system would simply result in a parallel system that institutionalises an unequal social order, where the not so able go to their own kinds of schools and are certified differently. The NFE officer in Samburu suggests that “*some sort of certification should be given to the pupils after some level. And we should also take care that after class 4 we take those children to formal schools so that we do not create a parallel system. That is what we are trying to avoid (EO65:2002)*”. The learners in Samburu who complete the Lchekuti programme transit to the formal school in class 5. These learners then prepare for the national examinations. However, for those who do not proceed with the system, the idea is that they should still be able to do a recognised examination and be duly certified. The suggestion from Samburu is that NFS exams ought to be set at the completion of the NFS cycle to benefit the learners who do not wish to proceed to primary schools. But for those who proceed on with primary education they can sit for the available national examinations.

Whereas it is important to answer the aspirations of NFS clientele regarding examinations, care ought to be taken not to duplicate already existing certification. For instance, the learners in Rural who are unlikely to proceed on are the older learners who are ideally the right target group for DAE. It is therefore logical that DAE reclaim back its learners who can then sit for the proficiency tests already in place and be rightfully certified. Rural NFS will then be able to function as a feeder school and later prepare the learners for the primary school leaving certificate. In Urban, it is the quasi formal NFS that agitate for exams but yielding to their demands would be equal to legitimisation of a poor quality provision. Urban centres providing skill training programmes already prepare their learners for Government trade tests. In short there are already sufficient national examination processes in place and it seems that NFS only need to re-organise the programmes and objectives of learning.

In summary, just using these three examples of school uniform, school timing and certification, one sees that there is a discrepancy, more so in Urban, regarding what the clientele on the one hand aspire for, and what the establishment thinks they ought to receive.

## 8.2 Describing Non-Formal Schools

The research sought to establish from the informants what they perceived a non formal school to be. This question was met with a mixture of answers ranging from comparing FE and NFS, describing NFS characteristics or what it ought to have to actually attempting definitions. For some informants, the more they pondered on what NFS is, the more it led them to realise the similarities with formal schools leading one informant to concluded that “*actually we are non-formal by default. We just follow formal. It is just formal* (HT10:2002)”.

This section presents the findings under four sections. The first part contains findings from parents and teacher as this group preferred to draw comparisons between formal and non formal. The other sections present the descriptions and suggestions advanced by the school population and education officers.

### 8.2.1 Parents Vs Teachers: “comparing formal and non formal schools”

The differences that were cited by parents were structural variations rather than curricular or pedagogical. For instance, the difference in Urban NFS lay in financial requirements “*the money paid here compared to other schools is little. It is like it is free of charge and that is the advantage it has* (P3:2002)” or the fact that national examinations were not offered “*The only difference is that our school does not have a Std 8. There is no difference in the education offered* (C55:2000)”. However, in terms of what was taught, the parents were happy and prided in the fact that it resembled formal school content “*Even if you take the child’s book, and that of a child from another school, if you compare, they are the same* (ibid)”. And to prove that NFS did indeed offer a comparable education with formal school, one parent who had transferred her child from an NFS in Class 2 explained that the child had smoothly settled in Class 3 in a formal school “*and till now is proceeding well and is of the same standard with the other children* (P52:2002)”. That children were able to acquire basic literacy skills was good enough for the parents and convinced them the NFS offered a quality education as is hereby shown “*When children come here, they do not even know how to write their name. But after coming here, the child now knows how to read and write. If it was a bad place, the child would have come for one or two years and leave without gaining anything. But as they gain something, I think the education here is good* (C58:2002)”. On the whole, parents were pleased with the content offered in NFS.

The teachers in Urban however had another opinion regarding the comparability of the education levels in FE and NFS. One teacher stated “*I do not think we are giving them the full education that they need to get* (T64:2002)” while another further added that “*there is a difference. For one, the ones in formal at least have basic education but these of non-formal do not have basic education. Like the ones in class 4, some of them cannot even read. They cannot comprehend anything* (T43:2002)”. Both quotes are from teachers who handled two or more classes. Both

teachers were therefore aware of the limitations in the depth and breadth of the content that was conveyed and skills that were inculcated. In this regard, in the teachers' opinion, FE and NFS was not comparable.

In Rural (Samburu), the obvious differences in NFS that were cited regarded the school timing and the school dress. But largely, it was the amicable relationship between the FE, NFS and the traditional life that was raised by the parents as these quotes exemplify

It's a big advantage to a Samburu because this child has brought you profit by herding the animals and profit is that they start to know how to read and write...This is something you feel in your heart as very good and just makes you happy. I just feel very, very happy to see that all work proceeds without interference...You will not find any child thumbing their signature (C57:2002).

We are very happy with Lchekuti, and we are happy with primary because when a child has learnt in Lchekuti and is now ready to go to primary, like Kirimom primary here, they join in Std 3, or 4 or 5 even up to 6 and they started here in Lchekuti. So we are happy with both schools because this school support the other one. (C66:2002).

Unlike Urban where the parents strove to show the similarity between FE and NFS, the Rural parents were happy to show the difference, as the strength of NFS lay in this difference.

### 8.2.2 Lower Status for NFS

The general societal perception for NFS was low in Urban. A cross section of people be it the learners themselves, community members or those in established education institutions, did not see nor understand the essence of a non formal school;

There are some in the community who do not understand what non formal is, even teachers, even professors, some of them do not know NFE...Because there was one time I heard a Class 2 pupil complaining of our school. And I have also heard a Head Master of a secondary school complaining (T13:2002)

People talk about this school...that the children will be those who leave and then go to the streets. The big problem which I noticed was that some people did not know what a non formal school was all about (C59:2002).

Suspicious mainly came from the formal school teachers. Many came and asked why the school had started from class one up to five which is not normal in other schools. Now we also had different questions from the DEO-Division Education Officer for Maseno. They all came and asked so many questions why we are stating this institution, who are going to pay us and such like questions. Although at that time we did not have enough material to answer them because it was a new institution. And because of lack of employment we just came if at all they can employ us then we would be one of the happy lot, but we did not have good answers (T15:2002).

The suspicions to NFS are fuelled by the conceptual vagueness inflicting the sector. For instance what does a school that goes only up to Class 5 intend to do with the pupils thereafter? NFS is treated with suspicion due to the practical gaps it has. For instance who would pay the teachers? That these teachers "did not have good answers (T15:2002)" denotes that they too could not vouch for NFS other than the fact that it offers them some form of employment. It therefore seems that NFS has a stronger appeal to parents who find the monetary or uniform flexibility advantageous and to teachers who are really job seekers. However other secondary players concerned with practical

concerns like who would pay the teachers, or who see the curricular replication in NFS disregard these schools.

Rural based head teachers and the education officers tended to view NFS at best as centres to feed formal schools with pupils. In this regard, efforts have been made to ensure that the flow of pupils was from NFS to formal and not vice versa. One Urban officer however thought that “*the non formal education sector ought to be integrated into the formal sector since it is interfering with the formal sector in that some pupils in areas where the centres are well established are running a way to these centres (EO69:2001)*”. This idea of establishing barriers from formal school to NFS or completely advocating their riddance and integration to formal schools shows that while NFS is indeed popular with parents, it has not yet acquired that alternative status to enjoy equal flow of learners. Rather the establishment view it as existing primarily to support formal school, in other words, its essence is justified as lower in the hierarchy.

The ideal situation would be one where NFS acquires equal standing. The Kisumu NFE officer aptly explained

NFE should not be stigmatised. It should not be looked at as a form of education for maybe the disadvantaged, or the destitute. It should not be looked at as second class or third rate but it should be looked at as an alternative. In other words, personally I feel that children or parents should be given that leverage, if I feel that my child should go through an NFE system, I should be given that choice. You see now there is that restriction...remember I talked about that regulating, that if you are able your child should not go to NFE...that alone is divisive in that NFE is meant for this kind of people and not this kind (EO62:2002).

The ideal revolves around widening the admission policy to be broader that the disadvantaged children it now targets. It involves removing the restrictive barriers such that any parent or child can choose NFS because of the advantages NFS accords him/her. This ideal therefore presupposes that NFS is accorded the human and financial resources and services that would raise its standards as a prerequisite for equality of standing.

### **8.2.3 Urban Head Teachers: “advocating for vocationalisation”**

Perhaps due to subtle realisation that Urban academic type NFS, in their present form were a poor duplication of formal schools, the head teachers and proprietors suggested that NFS ought to have a strong skills training component. While they viewed their primary responsibility as to offer basic education skills, they suggested additionally, vocational skills ought to be offered. The level at which these skills would be offered was varied. One centre suggested at the end of the NFS cycle for those “*who do not perform well or due to one reason or another, for example their age, they may be involved in some of the practical skills which may enable them to be self-reliant when they complete at the centres (HT6:2002)*”. Another centre suggested directing learners towards trades at an earlier stage as soon as their aptitude was established “*we give a child literacy and we believe that he has understood a little bit of mathematics, understand English, science and believe that he*

*cannot go beyond that, then we start focussing that child, if it is on motor vehicle mechanics (PO21:2002)*". The main thread of the suggestions however is that NFS ought to have strong vocational units targeting the academically weak/overage learners. To make the NFS vocational units attractive, the suggestion was that centres *"should be able to build better workshops and have better machines than the formal system. They should have better farms and better grade cows for their agriculture lessons (T15:2002)"*.

A strong vocational element would provide NFS a distinctive character. However, the bone of contention is the level where the vocational emphasis would be. If at the end of Std 8, then it is not justifiable as there are vocational polytechnics in the country that have been conceived to offer vocational courses to those who do not proceed on with secondary education. However, if the aim is vocationalising at early stages, after a crash basic literacy course, as one centre in the study sample is already doing, then this is justifiable and has no danger of being a parallel institution. Urban NFS can find their distinctive mark in this aspect.

#### **8.2.4 Defining NFS**

Defining NFS was not an easy task especially for the schools that are very similar to formal schools. Indeed such schools had posed themselves the question *"when we present the formal school curriculum, are we non-formal or are we formal? (HT22:2000)"*. It is only few schools that admitted that *"actually we are non-formal by default"* as has been earlier quoted. This quote perhaps summarises how practitioners view NFS: *"some of them have got a very distorted understanding of non-formal because most people do not understand what non-formal means, what formal means and what informal means...there are some NFS which are following the KIE formal curriculum to the letter, no change. Only that they are not putting on uniform. Like someone said, they are non-formal because they do not insist on uniform, and that is the only reason he gave (ibid)"*. That the head teachers, most of whom are the proprietors, can delimit the difference in NFS to uniform wearing depicts the conceptual vagueness in NFS. So one can rightly agree with these informants that *"people do not know what a NFS is"*.

However, some head teachers, teachers and the NFE officers did advance broad descriptions of NFE. The broad based descriptions ideally stressed on NFS characteristics and therefore had a distinct rural-urban demarcation. In Rural, one head teacher reported that *"Some treat it as Adult, some others treat it as day care, others treat it as nursery...so it is not really defined (HT24:2002)"*. The reference to the adult learner on the one hand, and nursery on the other depicts the varied learners characteristics in Rural. Use of nursery teachers and occasionally teachers paid by DAE increased the tendency to typify this sector as *"adult"* or *"nursery"*. The one NFS in the study that had been conceived to be a mobile school pleaded for a wider understanding of NFS. The teacher

said “*Most of them believe that if they see an iron sheet, that is where the school is...that is what you can call a school. So people are encouraged that you can even learn in a manyatta (T29:2002)*”. This quote advances a non conventional definition of a school, that it is what goes on rather than the stationary building that ought to define what a school is.

In Urban, the NFS definition contained a self reliance emphasis “*this kind of system normally emphasise on vocational training and also on co-curricular activities... we normally try to get the talents of the pupils when it comes to co-curricular activities, such that when the child can play good football, he can go somewhere. When the child can make good things maybe from carpentry work, we can emphasise the child to be there. It is not necessary classroom work (T44:2000)*”. The NFS function of achieving self reliance, through vocational training for instance, is the one facet that sets the Urban NFS apart and has been earlier mentioned is the aspect aspired for by the largely academic oriented NFS.

The next group of definitions, while descriptive, emphasised not just structural difference, but also curricular difference and in this way tended to be more comprehensive. The NFE officer in Rural stated that “*It is any system of education that is given out of the formal classrooms. I would call it a flexible kind of programme. It is a programme given to the headers called Lchekuti (EO65:2002)*” while a teachers FGD in Urban provided this advanced definition; “*NFE is not structured like formal education and it is an education that is not formal. It is the opposite of formal. An education that you do not have to strictly follow the rules that are set by the MOE, maybe not strictly in class, not strictly follow the timetable or rather the formal curriculum, an education that one can come in at any given time and leave, and maybe it can also be controlled by an individuals financial problems. When he has problems he can drop, and come in when he is able to. An education system that one can assume any time because as you can see some of those children are workers (T44:2000)*”. This FGD summed up their definition that NFS is an “**operation restore lost hope**” (ibid), giving a second chance to those who had missed out on formal education. These elaborations leans towards the accepted definition advanced by scholars in the field, that NFE is outside of formal school, outside government and within community (individuals), flexible, has a unique curriculum and targets vulnerable OOS children. What seems to be striking in the definition provided by the Urban teachers however, is that they equate NFS with not being strict. The line between flexibility and laxity appears to be very thin.

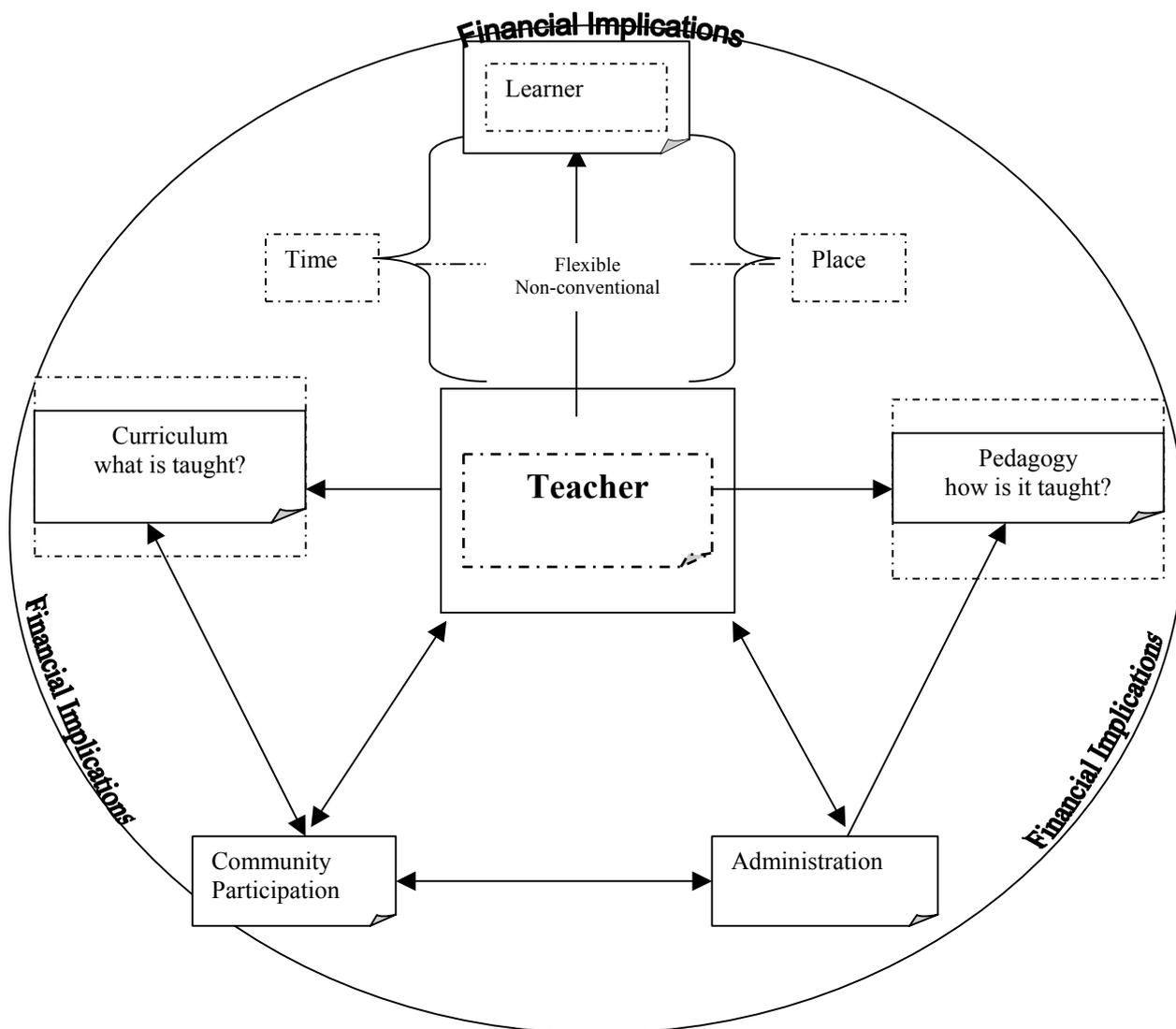
It was largely those who had been in the field for longer periods who attempted to define the concept. Two informants in the study, who belonged to the two most established centres in the study sample, aptly differentiated between formal, informal and non formal education. As one said while explaining the evolution of learning in his centre “*then we were giving what we called during that time “informal education”. But it was not informal education, it was non-formal education*

*because there was some sort of a system. It was sort of organised in one way or another even though tailored to the needs of the children (PO17:2002)*". That these two institution had succeeded in designing programmes that were not duplications of formal school depicts how conceptual clarity is important in shaping services the goal of the provisions.

### 8.3 Towards a Model of Non-Formal School Types in Kenya

The conceptual framework of the study discussed in Chapter 1 contained a schema and model, derived from available literature, that guided the study. Having analysed and presented the data, it is now possible to customise these representations to reflect the actual characteristics and trends of non formal schools in Kenya today. In this regard, two models will be presented. The first model depicts the interactions of the nine building blocks of education within an NFS context while the second model maps the non formal school types that the research revealed.

Fig. 36: The Nine Building Blocks in an NFS Context



Notation: Flow of communication and authority

The ideal size of the blocks

It was evident from the research that the teacher is the most crucial person in NFS. The teachers' presence alone encourages the learners to converge for learning. Their responsibilities cover the whole spectrum from the classroom, school matters and coordinate links with the parents and committees. Additionally, in some cases, they participated in curriculum preparation. However some of the pressure from the teacher can be eased by tapping the community presence to aid in the instructional process<sup>65</sup> hence the block of the teacher can be reduced in size. The teacher was in direct contact with the pupils. The flow of conversation was mainly teacher directed, hardly vice versa. Likewise, the ideal learner size is recommended to be smaller as some learners being accommodated in NFS can fit adult education provisions or in formal schools. Had NFS achieved an alternative status, with the same parity of esteem with FE, the latter would not be an issue.

In the same vein the place and time of learning can be improved further. In Urban this would entail more utilisation of available space and adopting double-shift system while in Rural the concept of mobile schools ought to be entrenched further. This would mean accepting the notion of a "moving" place. The time flexibility is commendable in Rural. However in Urban, children with occupational roles need to be taken care of with a part time system.

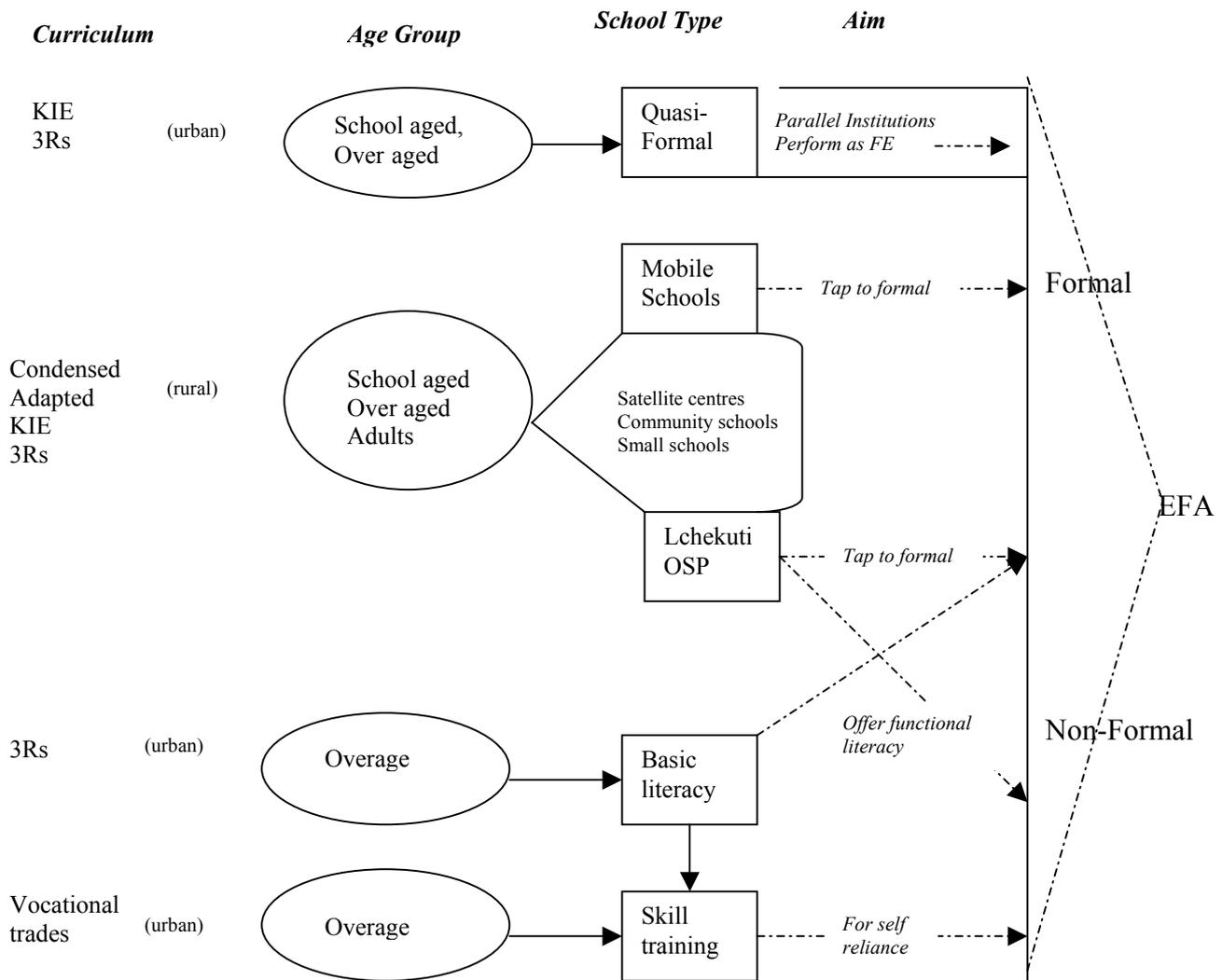
The blocks of the curriculum and the pedagogy, are considered to be the most distinctive elements that ought to define NFS, yet they are perhaps the most lacking especially in Urban. Lack of clarity for most NFS in Urban has resulted in duplication of content provided using methodologically questionable means. The only difference with formal schools is the bad circumstances in which education is provided using mainly untrained teachers. For this reason, the schools end up as parallel institutions or quasi formal schools. In Rural some attempt has been put in arriving at a negotiated curriculum with inputs from the community and in using non-conventional learning approaches.

With regard to the support structures, it was evident that the community was active in supporting the schools both in cash and kind, albeit irregularly. While community involvement in administering the school was recorded, this involvement could be made more proactive. Of more concern is the question of sustainability. NFS is largely funded by NGOs. The history of NGO funding in Kenya informs us that projects often die when the funding source dries up. Hence as issues of finance cut across the whole institution, this remains a crucial area to be addressed.

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<sup>65</sup> This includes planning, implementation, evaluation and feedback.

**Fig. 37: A situation analysis of the NFS types in Kenya**



As the above model shows, in Urban, there are two types of NFS, the quasi formal schools and basic education/vocational schools. The former are parallel insitutions that in a sense compete with formal institutions while the latter belong to NFE and fit within the supplementary provisions angle defined within NFE. In Rural, the two types of schools, in their distinct objective of rerouting the learners back to formal schools, fit within the formal paradigm. However, the schools have instituted certain elements such as flexible timing, non-conventional learning that the NFE paradigm identifies with. Older learners are briefly taught, in the Lchekuti, after which they fade away. In all instances, dotted lines are used because the provision and transition in most centres has been left to chance. For instance, mature learners in Lchekuti just fade away just as working children be it in urban or rural do. More institutional adaptations, societal support and proactive government role is required. More important is that there is need to clearly visualise the aims, objectives and goals of the various provisions and target groups. In short the provision can benefit from further streamlining.

## 9 Summary and Recommendations

This chapter contains two sections. First, a summary of the main findings of the study as well as suggested recommendations is presented. Secondly areas for further research are suggested.

### 9.1 Main Findings and Recommendations

The main objectives of the study were to

- Identify the non-formal school categories and the functions they serve
- Assess the teaching and learning processes and how they fulfil the objective of providing basic education to the recipients
- Posit the contribution NFS are making towards enhancing the provision of basic education in Kenya and suggest necessary reforms needed to streamline the sector.

These objectives were answered through both an empirical study and desk review of literature. The data collection and analysis was discussed within the framework of the “nine building blocks of education” that guided the conceptualisation of the study. In line with this, this section presents the main findings and recommendations on how NFS as a provision can be streamlined.

#### 9.1.1 Motivation for Initiating NFS

The motivating factors for initiating non-formal schools have a distinct regional face. In Rural the formal education system has not been responsive to the social-cultural ways of the people thus excluding many from attending school. As such two school types have been initiated: the Lchekuti OSP and the nomadic school. These schools have structural differences when compared with conventional schools. In Urban there are multiple motivating factors urged by the need to alleviate the perceived plight of the children. Therefore as Urban NFS have no conceptual disagreement with the structure or content of formal schools, its provision is similar to the existing forms, be it formal school or vocational training or functional literacy as practised in adult education.

Additional motivating factors were recounted in Urban NFS and these are summarised as they affect the school provision. First is the economic factor; NFS is seen as a source of employment and indeed the phenomenon of “career teacher volunteers” confirms this. Additionally, the presence of donors drew especially the individual proprietors to start the schools. However, this fact is subtly hidden and what is instead stressed as the key motivation for initiating the schools is “a vision from God”. The religious zeal is further evident in institutional naming. These terms are derived from the Bible and therefore stress on the “Christian spirit” which is a philanthropic one. Certain parents take advantage of this to expect free services while heads of institutions expect an equally philanthropic attitude from the teachers. Hence, the study concludes that the initiators seek legitimacy under the church wings and religious vocabulary and would prefer to be viewed as

humanitarians. Secondly, certain centres labelled themselves as orphanages or skill training centres when in reality they were not. So at best one has to conclude that there is unrealistic optimism that the centres can be what they hope to be or at worst, there is a conscious duplicity in institutional naming aimed at enhancing enrolment or soliciting for funds.

The findings further reveal that a clear objective is vital in shaping the educational provision. In Rural, NFS by seeking to reroute the learners back to formal schools, have curved out a distinct character as feeder schools which brings them back to the formal education (FE) rather than the NFE paradigm. On the other hand, the Urban centres with skill training emphasis fit within the supplementary provisions identified in NFE. The majority of the Urban schools, though filling an important educational void, lack a clear objective. This in essence leads to an ad hoc educational provision. Lack of a clear aim in a sense paves the way for Urban NFS to be parallel institutions to FE.

### **9.1.2 The Learner**

Other studies have documented that NFS are attended by a cross section of learners who are often socially and economically vulnerable. This study confirmed this but noted that there was a distinct difference between the learner characteristics in Urban and Rural. Learner's types in Urban are illustrative of the socio-economic impact. Hence Urban NFS is preferred as the cheaper alternative. While younger children attend NFS preschool provisions, the school aged utilise quasi-formal schools and the older benefit from skill training within NFS after a basic education course. The characteristics of Urban NFS, except those that have merged basic literacy provision with vocational training, emerge as a duplication of already existing educational services, the only difference being the affordability. Existing literature (Torres 1996, Ahmed 1993, Evans 1981) warns that advocating for a provision based on economic ability is the same as advancing the legality of a dual education system that stratifies society according to socio-economic canons. NFS in their present state can accentuate existing inequalities rather than redress them. Hence it is recommended that

- The school-aged children attend normal primary school types (FE).
- The overage learner can benefit from a shorter basic education course after which they proceed either to vocational training (NFE) or are rerouted to formal primary schools (FE).

Rural learner types depict the socio-cultural and economic discrepancies with formal education. Indeed descriptions of the learner's types in Rural are derived from age set definitions. The learner types are generally in tandem with other sources and policy documents. However more emphasis is given to Urban learner types as opposed to Rural learners who are simply lumped as "nomadic". Lumping Rural learners in one category makes it difficult to plan education programmes for the

different age groups and gender. In Rural, due to the predefined livestock-rearing duties, NFS is the better alternative (to parents) and sometimes the only alternative (older children/morans). A realistic education plan to address basic education needs for all would be

- School aged children attend the Lchekuti OSP which function as feeder schools (FE)
- Older married/or soon to be married girls and morans attend shorter more functional related provisions (NFE).

The findings on the admission processes depict that if one is to strictly stick to the official guidelines which stipulates that NFS should essentially admit only disadvantaged children, then a problem exists in Urban for those centres without stringent verification methods in place. Lack of verification has opened the door to all who wish to attend NFS. In Rural the only admission criterion in place is that learners are expected to flow from NFS to FE and not vice versa. This confirms NFS as operating as feeder schools rather than alternative provisions hence contradicting the Policy Guidelines (3.5) that states these schools as being “complementary alternative provisions”.

Regarding age, the Policy Guidelines (4.3) spell out the age group for NFS to be 6-17 years. This implies that the official age group for NFS is similar to the suggested compulsory formal school age of 5-16 (Education Bill 1999). Hence formal and NFS target the same age group. The guidelines (2.2vi) however recognise NFS as a “complementary rather than parallel” system. Complementary denotes it ought to round up or complete what has already been initiated. That NFS target 6 year olds propels NFS as a parallel provision competing against FE rather than complementing it. There is therefore need for conceptual clarity to enable the Policy Guidelines to offer direction.

Data on enrolment patterns reveal that statistical management is an area in dire need of attention both at institutional and district education office levels. Secondly, in terms of general enrolment trends, Urban centres have on the whole witnessed higher pupil admissions while the reverse has occurred in Rural. Learner retention, however, is a problem in both rural and urban settings. The policy guidelines envisage NFS to give hope to the excluded. However the high dropout rate shows that this is fond hope rather than proven fact. Both the Urban and Rural based child is affected. The worst hit is the rural based girl, who additionally has to fight against tradition.

### **9.1.3 The Teacher**

If there is one area in which the policy vacuum in NFS was felt, it is in delineation of teacher recruitment and remuneration criteria. Hence an array of teachers, ranging from those with only primary school certificate, secondary school graduates to professionally trained primary or graduate

teachers are found in NFS. They earn anything ranging from null to rather competitive salaries (for those in established centres with donor funding).

The findings depict that the ability to volunteer is the most desired attribute for an NFS teacher. The reality however is that Urban teachers have no other source of income and sustain themselves from the token payments received from teaching in NFS. Most teachers in Rural depend on their earnings as formal primary and nursery school teachers. However volunteerism is not sustainable even in Rural where feelings of community responsibility are high. The fact that primary school teachers in Samburu, who had volunteered to teach NFS do not seem to be very active attests to this. Findings from Urban further show that some employers short-change the teachers within the banner of volunteerism. Due to minimal and/or irregular token rewards, teachers have developed a *laissez-faire* attitude to teaching. Either they absent themselves from duty or quit altogether or move to another NFS hence developing a phenomenon of “teacher nomadism” or “career volunteerism”. This latter aspect shows that as badly paying as it is, NFS remains an option for especially school leavers who hold no training. It is urgent to address the question of the teachers. That two schools in the study sample had closed down due to lack of teachers shows how critical the issue of teacher remuneration is and confirms that the teacher is the most central person in NFS provision, for when there is a teacher, learners converge for learning.

To enhance the professional capacity of the teachers, the institutions have adopted varying teacher preparation modes that ranged from recruiting prior trained personnel or preparing training packages. Use of representatives from conventional mainstream institutions to train teachers, while credible, is not appropriate as the trainers fail to train the teachers in NFS approaches (as spelt out in the Policy Guidelines 6.5iv). It is paramount that the training programmes delink from conventional maxims, otherwise the training will be a duplication of existing programmes and hence not justifiable.

This study recommends that a reasonable minimum academic requirement ought to be a secondary school certificate as the teachers are being hired to teach and should therefore have a good academic grounding. These teachers ought to receive training in the appropriate pedagogy and would teach mainly the lower levels (feeder schools). The training ought to be planned by MOEST as a national programme. A national training plan is advantageous on many fronts; it would ease the issue of certification and augment the worth of NFS teachers as trained and qualified and it would enable the evolution of a national programme serviced with trained teachers. For other full time provisions like mobile schools it is recommended that NFS teachers ought to be already trained teachers who further benefit from alternative methodologies. In this way qualified teachers would teach in these schools and hence help in achieving parity with formal school teachers.

#### **9.1.4 The Place**

Rural formal primary schools accommodate NFS hence fitting within the “efficient locale utilisation” maxim espoused in NFE literature. On the contrary, Urban formal schools are rather rigid and only let out their premise on weekends despite the fact that lower primary classes are free in the afternoon. The study revealed that Urban NFS, especially those located in slum areas, are developing a pattern of derelict buildings evidenced by small rooms and minuscule windows. The poor ventilation and overcrowding creates an uncomfortable atmosphere for learning. Although the aura of the “shade of a tree” is better than the “tiny mud rooms” there is more favour for a construction as (a) it makes the school visible and leads to enhanced pupil enrolment (b) the confinement into a classroom eases teaching and there are fewer environmental disturbances (c) time is not lost due to rain, wind or sun (d) one does not need to “construct “ the school every morning. In Rural, the school conceived as a mobile school (with no buildings) to suit the nomadic nature of the people encountered similar problems with regards to time, weather and environmental distractions. A bigger problem was however that the concept does not fit into mainstream thinking of how a school should look like, hence difficulties have been registered in trying to register these schools.

In terms of class levels, Urban NFS in practise utilise conventional formal school terminology (e.g. Std 1,2) as opposed to Rural where learning is conceptualised in levels. That 32% of the studied institutions in Urban already comprise Std. 1- 8, the full cycle of formal primary education, while another 45% were in various stages of expansion with the ultimate aim of reaching Std. 8 confirms the formal school orientation of NFS. However Urban NFS do not fulfil the requirements detailed out in the Education Act in terms of acreage, quality of buildings, size of classrooms, number of pupils and hence remain unregistered and consolidate their character as parallel institutions. On the other hand, Rural NFS fit within the specifications detailed out in the Policy Guidelines. Therefore at lower levels, they assume an alternative status but in seeking to reroute their learners to NFS, they act as feeders to formal schools.

#### **9.1.5 The Time**

Samburu centres must be commended for managing to instil a flexible time frame within a national ethos of rigidity. The schools blend with the socio-economic life and give a lifeline to learners who would otherwise be shut off from acquiring formal education. Additionally, the Rural practice fits within the flexibility time plan associated with NFE. However, pastoralism and the dry season demand yet another novelty, if enrolment is to be sustained and boosted. This is the mobile school.

The Urban schools on the other hand persist with the formal school hours despite their unsuitability especially for working children and the “volunteer” teachers. The solution advocated for is that the affected centres should stop viewing themselves as a formal school of a different kind

and embrace part time learning and/or shift learning. This flexibility would not only be advantageous to the those learners who have other occupational roles, but also to the “volunteer” teachers who can then engage in other income generating activities.

### **9.1.6 Curriculum**

The study sample revealed three types of curriculum objectives: (a) to provide basic education followed by vocational training (b) to reroute learners back to formal schools and (c) to offer formal school equivalence. To reach these objectives (a and b), 5 (16%) schools in the study sample has designed an NFS curriculum which was largely derived from the formal school curriculum. The rest utilised the formal school curriculum or “just teach”. Hence one can conclude that majority of the school lean towards the formal school curriculum. In fact, in urban, of the 22 centres 15 of them (68%) offered, or were in the process of preparing their learners to sit for KCPE. This fact therefore confirms most Urban NFS as parallel institutions rather than complementing the formal school provision.

However, the hope for some Urban centres is really to have a strong vocational emphasis so that the learners who opt out of the academic line can be trained for self reliance. Instilling a strong vocational training bias may provide the needed distinction that can curve a distinct character for NFS. Yet, it is clear that the decision of the trade areas to be offered cannot be left to the institutions, especially the solo owned ones. These centres do not have the financial base, vision or capacity to handle vocational training. There would be a duplication of favourite trade areas and overflow of these trainees just like it is questionable if the teachers have the needed qualification to enable them train. Vocational training is generally an expensive endeavour. Only the well established centres are in a position to offer quality training that can yield self-reliance. So once again, the Urban NFS hoping for vocational training are left hanging.

A critical issue that remains unsolved is that of curriculum development. From the data, it is evident that the initiative for drawing up the curriculum has been outside of government control. The impetus lay with the institutions themselves or their sponsors. This has had a double barrelled effect on the curriculum development and subsequent implementation. On the one hand, the institutions have been able to develop a curriculum tailor-made to suit their needs but on the other hand, the curricula are as varied as the centres and organisations sponsoring them. Given such a scenario curriculum replication cannot be ruled out. A worrying trend is however that the less established centres, with no means of developing their curricula have simply reverted to formal school curriculum.

The answer to the curriculum problems has been to recommend KIE establish a core curriculum. NFE curriculum prides itself with flexibility and being attuned to the socio-economic

realities. Establishing a core curriculum however puts these qualities at risk and it may therefore not be the right path to follow. Indeed, the data reveals that where KIE took the lead in curriculum development, it was found to be non-participatory and excluding. It is agreed that KIE needs to be more proactive. Rather than write a curriculum, they can play a different role (a) redistribution of the curricula; all the centres indicated that they had invited KIE to assist them in drawing up the curriculum. This means that KIE has an idea of the variety of curricula already in existence. As a central and national body, KIE can play a better role in availing these curricula to NFS with similar needs. (b) tailor making the curriculum; where the curriculum is not relevant, KIE ought to guide in the development of a more suitable one. Decentralisation in curriculum development has to be maintained as that is a key way in which curriculum relevance is reached.

Lastly, the analysis of textbook usage reveals that textbook sourcing is haphazard. Books written for adults are used for children. Schools claim to be following NFS curriculum and yet utilise formal schoolbooks. Issue is raised as the content of the books or the level may not be appropriate for the envisioned curriculum type or the age group. There is need for more systematisation of the sector and evolution of a clear vision of the planned end result.

### **9.1.7 Pedagogy**

Teachers in Urban, by training and inclination lean towards conventional methods. Due to fewer teachers than classes, one teacher can teach two or more distinct classes simultaneously, shifting from one class to another at given intervals. In Rural teachers utilise multigrade or multiage methods that fit within the NFE paradigm. The explanation for this trend in Rural is twofold. Other than the fact that some teachers have been introduced to such alternative methods, they blend with the traditional conceptualisation of social groups. Hence the methods in as far as group methodology is concerned have been implemented, but teaching across the (age) groups has not.

The implementation of multi-grade learning in Rural and the “shift” teaching in Urban raised similar concerns. First, the learning strategies have not devolved from the role of the teacher. Given the fact that learners have no textbooks for personal reference, the teacher has to be physically present for learning to occur. The circumstances of learning are therefore characterised by teacher exhaustion, idle time by learners while teachers are pressurised regarding time and inadequate content coverage. Classroom management, for the groups/classes not being attended to was a problem just like the teacher had no time to give individual attention to those in need. In all, the actual time spent on instruction was too short for any meaningful learning to take place. Regarding multigrade, strategies associated with the method such as using one group to aid another or exploiting the presence of the community to aid the learning process were not utilised. Therefore in terms of learning methods, both the Urban and Rural based teachers could benefit from further

training to update themselves on suitable and effective learning approaches that are inclusive not only of the learners but also other para-professionals in the community who can assist the teacher.

Data on classroom management issues also exposes the methodological gaps teachers have. For instance in Urban, a problem that was bemoaned was that of varied ages which can be addressed within a multiage methodology of learning. In terms of different entry levels, a group methodology where the more able assist the others would ease the pressure from the teacher. These practices however presuppose relevant training, which Urban teachers have not received. Rural teachers have however benefited from some training and did not mention these constraints.

Lastly a crucial issue that needs to be addressed is that of language. There is an ambiguity regarding the stated medium of instruction versus practice. English is preferred but because the learners are not proficient in it, Kiswahili or mother tongue are used. As such the practice of mixed language teaching has evolved. This practice ought to be discouraged as it is counter productive to the overall development of the distinct languages. There is no reason why Kiswahili and mother tongue ought not to be the medium of instruction in Urban and Rural respectively, English being taught as subjects, at least in the lower levels.

#### **9.1.8 Community Participation**

The findings on the process of initiating the centres depict that land/venue ownership in Urban tilted towards private as opposed to Rural where it was more communally owned. Over 70% of the initiators in Urban were individuals. This issue is raised as it influenced the management styles the centres later evolved. For instance, the individual initiators, such as head teachers, excluded the community and only sought their active participation when an issue was at stake. These initiators had donated land/venue to the school and this shows the collaboration between ownership of land and participatory management. Of critical importance too is the method the centres selected to solidify the centres. For those who used research two trends were discernable. On the one hand, there was a conscious effort to make the research process participatory with the resultant aim that the people would own the project (the AAK case). On the other hand, the research process was delimited to a data collection process (the rest of the examples). The former stressed on the community, the latter on information gathering. The former process was therefore more likely to lead to more community participation in the management of the centres. The findings revealed a correlation between the proprietors who “owned” the NFS, as being the same group that used the second type of research as well as preferred “solo runs” in that parents or community leaders were not involved in establishing the schools. However, this same group wore a community tag. Such individual players tried to hide behind the mask of the community for two reasons that (a) a community school has more appeal and (b) perhaps they were aware they were contravening the

policy guidelines which require the management of the centres to be community centred. Government agencies, as represented by the DAE and the CDA attempted to involve community members in the school management.

In conclusion, this section concludes that active community participation is assured if the community is co-opted right at the initial stages of setting up the school. It can result in a more broad based inclusion rather than simply be reduced to “mobilisation” or to easing the money collection process. The individual proprietors, especially those who own the NFS premise emerge as a group that needs to inculcate a more wide based participation. This group innately excluded higher level participation and which in effect rendered their centres private rather than community schools. The findings suggest the need for MOEST to step up its monitory and supervisory mechanisms.

The other issue that emerges is that while there is a dichotomy between the social environments of the Urban parent as opposed to the Rural one, the impact on the child is similar in that it distracts the child from learning. The Urban social environment can on the whole be said to be rather harsh and not conducive to the continued participation of the child in school. Rural parents on the other hand seem to have developed a casual attitude towards NFS especially when their money is needed or when the pastoral economy is somewhat threatened. In terms of value, pastoralism ranks first hence the odds are against the rural NFS child. The parents in Rural and Urban are further united in their aversion to participating in classroom related activities. As such, one can surmise that parental support to classroom teaching and learning is lacking while in other areas such as material contributions, curriculum development and support to children, their support varied from region to region largely dictated by the social environment they operated in.

### **9.1.9 Administration**

At government (MOEST) level, the NFE officers emerge as the most critical in overseeing NFS matters. MOEST has delimited itself to a monitory and supervisory role. However, it was evident that actual and sustained monitoring has not been achieved. A vital drawback is the lack of policy framework which closes out NFS from funding. Without funding, planned activities cannot be effected resulting in the ad hoc services from MOEST and under utilisation of the officers.

In order to streamline registration of NFS, clarification from the government that elucidates what a non-formal school is or its varieties is needed. There is also need for harmony with other statutory documents such as the Education Bill (1999) that states that “every institution offering or intending to offer facilities or services for basic education in Kenya whether foreign or local, public or private formal or informal shall be registered”.

The institutional administrative structures were rather varied. Special mention needs to be made of 2 centres in Urban that have achieved a broad based management style between the varied departments in the institution hence managing to address the learners social needs as well as literacy and skill training needs with ease within the same institution. The other Urban centres however need to devolve the responsibilities from the concentration of one figure.

In Samburu, NFS is under the overall management of the formal school who emerged as being very supportive. The fact that the overall boss, the DEO, dismissed the NFS provision despite its role in enhancing formal school enrolment shows that there is need to target such high placed officers with education about the essence of non-conventional schools. The FE head teachers have benefited from such awareness and were hence supportive. Mention is also made of the AAK schools where a satellite system, administered from the formal school, has been put in place. This is essential in reducing the distance to school as well as introducing learning centres right in the manyatta. As all children, youths and adults in the village use these centres they then acquire the feature of a “community school”<sup>66</sup>.

There is awareness from the informants that the centres need to be managed by the committee. The 2 urban centres mentioned above had succeeded in actively bringing parents and learners on board. The demarcation of areas of jurisdiction with accompanying responsibilities such as admission or follow up of children ensured an active participation rather than the passive “discussion role” other parents committees had. That learners formed the management in one centre depicts a democratic practice in place. The majority of the schools however had a management structure very similar to formal schools. In such schools, the community presence was rather passive. In general, one can say that it is the 2 established Urban centres and the “small schools” in peri-urban and rural areas that had the strongest community presence. Within the small schools, the teacher emerged as the most central figure whose responsibilities cut across the classroom, institution, parents and community. The teacher, as the secretary to the committee was the link between the school and the committee.

#### **9.1.10 Finances**

Excluding parental contributions, it emerges that NGOs are the biggest supporters of NFS, sponsoring both in cash and kind. This support is however within a particular time frame and is dependent on continuous and sometimes creative proposal writing. Unless centres are aggressive and quick thinking targeting multi-sources, NGO financing is not sustainable. Indeed, the experience of NGO funding in Kenya depicts that projects often die as soon as the funding source stops.

The issue of teacher wages remains at the centre of the question of sustainability. Where there is a teacher, learning will occur. However, of the 10 varied sources of finances mentioned, only 4 consistently paid for the teacher. Relying on parents does not work well. Because these schools are serving Kenyan children, the onus is pushed to the government. What is advocated, given the limitations in training and qualification that some of these teachers have, is an honorarium as practised by DAE. The honorarium, though meagre is appreciated, and may be able to achieve some continuous teaching as a long term solution is sought.

## 9.2 Lessons from Selected systems

Selected systems of the world were studied to inform on the Kenya case. The following is a summary of the main findings which either show harmony with findings from Kenya or suggest further possibilities. For ease of discussion, they are presented as per the “nine blocks of education”

- **Learners:** In all cases, NFS is attended by vulnerable children mainly summarised as working children, children from ethnic minorities/lower castes and children from rural areas. Some of these categories therefore tally with the Kenyan case and confirm that achieving the goals of EFA can only be realised by reaching out to excluded populations..
- **Teachers:** Teachers are drawn from the local communities. However, they have to meet a stipulated academic level after which they participate in short term courses. Some of the cases in Africa however use Adult education teachers to teach children raising conceptual problems.
- **Place:** The schools are located close to the children’s homes or they attempt to reach the learners as in the case of the Mobile Tent schools in Philippines. In BRAC the schools are organised as “small schools” covering three levels and once the children graduate to formal schools, the school ceases to exist.
- **Curriculum:** Formal school curriculum has often been condensed from the formal school one due to the preoccupation that the curriculum ought to ease a re-entry back to the formal school system or that it should ensure national equivalence. Learning materials are provided for free in an effort to remove any possible obstacles that may prevent children from learning. However, a token payment by parents/children is sometimes expected.
- **Pedagogy:** Most of the cases have invested in teacher preparation in non conventional learning strategies as the corner stone of achieving effective learning. The instructional process stresses on learning rather than teaching. The essence of enhancement of teacher

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<sup>66</sup> In this context, a community school means education processes outside of an education institution that provides educational activities for all in the community and is managed by representatives of all major groups (Jarius 1990).

capacity is vital in Kenya as the subject has received lukewarm attention especially from the government.

- **Management:** To ensure local relevance, participation and ownership of the programmes, the varied cases studied encouraged community participation. To facilitate this, some cases in Asia had an “integrated community approach” which meant that the NFS was only one of the various programmes. This is similar to two NFS studied in Kenya. Latin America is however unique in its “integrated school approach” system.
- **Administration:** There is varied degrees of involvement by the MOEs, NGOs and local communities. For NFS to succeed in reaching all vulnerable groups within a country it must be expanded into a country programme. The role of the government is hence vital, even if there could be a danger of centralisation muting some of the distinctiveness of the programme.
- **Finances:** Almost all the cases studied are sponsored by NGOs naturally rendering its sustainability shaky.

The overriding lesson was that that schools ought to reach out to the learners through small scale endeavours that are nationally organised. To ease remuneration the schools use teachers from local communities. However, most of the cases in Africa and Asia operate as feeder schools which as in the Kenya case brings them within the FE paradigm. The management and financing of the school however has more of NFE characteristics.

A distinct difference between Latin America on the one hand and Africa/Asia on the other is that Latin America has alternatives **within** the formal school as opposed to Africa/Asia that have alternatives **to** formal school with later transitory points. So while the latter seeks to transit its learners to formal schools, the former reaches them within the formal school. The Latin America case is suggested as the better practice as it seeks to reform the deficiencies of formal school within the formal school paradigm, by introducing some non-formal approaches. The children attend a similar school system hence the possibility of an occurrence where there is a parallel system for socio-economic victims and another for the rest of the population does not arise. The problem of examination and certification equally does not arise as the children are all within one system. This therefore is the ideal solution.

### 9.3 Recommendation

In order to streamline the provision of NFS and meet the education goals of the country, the following model is suggested. This model borrows from the Latin American case that places NFS **within** the formal school paradigm. The justification for this is that NFS do not fundamentally differ from formal school provision. In terms of the curriculum and clientele targeted, it falls more within FE rather than NFE. Regarding the pedagogical skills such as multigrade or shifting the conceptualisation from teaching to learning, these arguments are found in FE too. It is therefore for this reason that it is recommended that the term NFS be abolished. The findings depict that especially in urban, low quality schools offering academic type of curriculum seek salvage under the NFS umbrella. The wording “non” is used to justify difference which unfortunately takes the shape of “just teaching” questionable content using equally questionable pedagogical skills. It has also been shown that there is confusion regarding the complementarity of the provisions of NFS and FE. That the Policy Guidelines lack clarity regarding the status of the provision confirms this. With “NFS” being subsumed within formal schools, it will guard against sub-standard provisions. It will target the basic education needs for school aged children. Older children and adults will benefit from skill training and other functional related courses which are traditionally housed in NFE. This model would also solve the issue of examination as the learners would be catered for through the existing examination systems.

The model, by suggesting that NFS be within FE, also shifts the financial burden to the government. This recommendation is made due to several reasons. First, NFS has been envisioned to augment the country’s basic education plan, yet it has not been properly empowered to do so. Absorbing the financial burden of non-conventional forms within FE solves this. Secondly, NFS is attended to by Kenyan citizens who also deserve to benefit from the tax payers money. Thirdly, all the evidence points to other financial sources being unsustainable. The basic education of excluded children is at stake, so guided by the current “Free Primary Education Policy”, it presupposes the government shouldering the financial burden of especially the teacher.

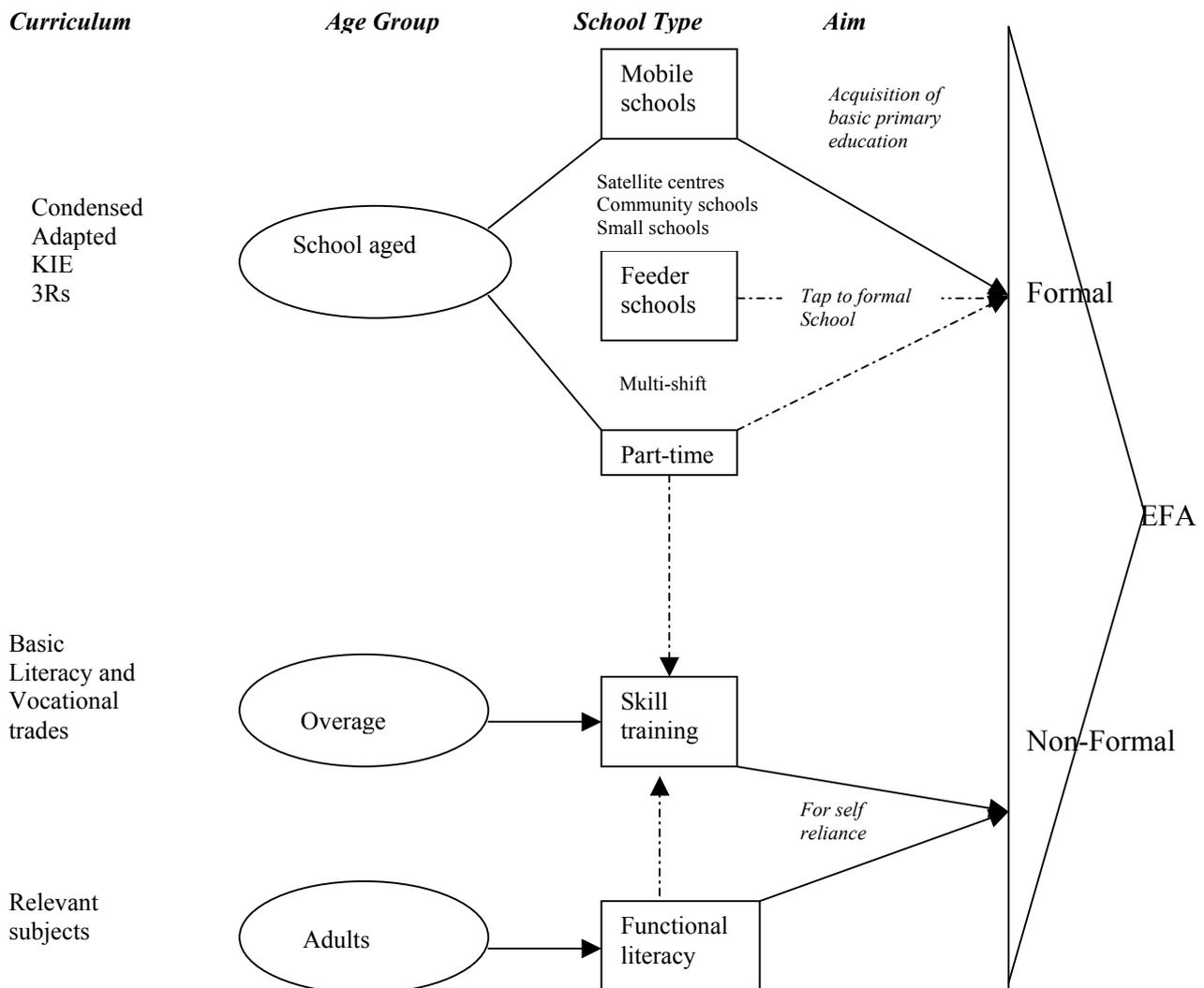
The proposed model (Figure 38) to meet the educational needs of excluded children, though within the formal school paradigm would have varied attributes to meet different age groups and aspirations. Hence, the schools would be characterised by curriculum adaptation that would be modeled to suit the school type. The feeder schools and part time schools, with limited school hours would for instance utilise a condensed curriculum and thereafter reroute the children to formal schools. Mobile schools would utilise the official curriculum and prepare learners for the national examinations. Overage children and adults would on the other hand be targeted with relevant functional subjects and skills training. This falls within NFE. Children who attend part-time

schools, and prefer not to proceed on with academic education can be tapped to skills training. In this sense, the complementarity envisioned in the Policy Guidelines can be achieved.

The schools would be organised in a non-conventional way as “small school” and “community schools” and administered as “satellite schools”. Such an administration would solve the problem of distance to school especially in ASAL areas. Additionally, there would be efficient locale usage as a community school would be used by all in the community. The recommendation of boarding schools (MOEST 2003) is not the best option as they are generally shunned by the nomadic populations due to the totally different concept they entail.

This model would solve the issue of the teacher as only qualified teachers, trained in relevant methodology that respects non-conventional methodology and remunerated like other teachers would be utilised. Additionally mechanisms of utilising community experts ought to be instituted. These would be the volunteer teachers.

**Fig. 38: Suggested model for education of vulnerable children in Kenya**



In conclusion, given the occupational roles some children have, the schools ought to insist on flexibility. The structure of the schools, the administration and the curriculum would be modeled to the needs of the recipients such that if it is among the nomadic groups, a mobile school is recommended while working children in urban would attend part time schools. In this sense, it is suggested that FE borrows from NFE relevant attributes in order to be inclusive to all children, rather than take the easy option of pushing school aged children to NFE.

#### **9.4 Recommended Areas for Further Research**

Curriculum relevance needs to be addressed. In particular research is needed on how community knowledge, the day to day living of the people can be integrated into the school curriculum. Such a research would unite the two different sorts of knowledge, “school knowledge” and “community knowledge”.

Regarding pedagogy, more research is required on how community experts, literate or not, can be integrated and actively utilised for the learning process. Such a research would provide guidelines to guide their inclusion.

The current research examined NFS in selected districts. A similar research looking at other districts would yield results of comparable value useful in suggestions with policy implications.

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## 11 Appendices

### 11.1 List of Institutions in Study Sample

|  | Institutions   | Location |
|--|--|----------|
| Institutional Mapping Survey   | Agape Children's Centre/New Covenant Academy/New Generation Children's Outreach<br>P.O Box 245 | Kisumu   |
|  | Cherry and Brierly Children's Home and School<br>P.O Box 2546                                  |          |
|  | Citizen Non-Formal Education<br>P.O box 5320   |          |
|  | Children of God<br>P.O Box 6454  |          |
|  | Dunga Orphans NFE<br>P.O Box 1643  |          |
|  | Judea NFE Centre<br>P.O Box 2737<br>jcnfke@yahoo.com   |          |
|  | Juvenile Remand Home<br>P.O Box 1486   |          |
|  | Kisumu Training Centre<br>P.O Box 242<br>Benomoro trainorph@yahoo.com                          |          |
|  | Kunya NFE Centre<br>P. O Box 8091, Dago  |          |
|  | Kwoyo Orphanage Non-formal Education,<br>P.O Box 873   |          |
|  | Manyatta Arabs Madrassah<br>P. O Box 1638  |          |
|  | New Good Samaritan<br>P O Box 1300<br>akelo@passage.africaonline.com                           |          |
|  | Ober Non-Formal Centre<br>P.O Box 35, Daraja Mbili   |          |
|  | Ogam A<br>P.O box 4416   |          |
|  | Olare Non-Formal Centre<br>P.O Box 222, Kombewa  |          |
|  | Otonglo Twins NFE School<br>P.O Box 25133, Otonglo   |          |
|  | Pandpieri Street Children's Rehabilitation Home<br>P.O Box 795                                 |          |
|  | Ringroad Orphanage and NFE Centre<br>P.O Box 2417<br>rrophan@kisumu.africaonline.com           |          |
|  | Salem<br>P.O Box 19236, Pembe Tatu<br>onyango@lycos.com  |          |
|  | St. Daniel Canaan NFE Centre<br>P.O Box 9398<br>canaan@passage.africaonline.com                |          |
| TEMAK (Teenage Mothers and Girls Association of Kenya)<br>P.O Box 4220<br>temak@mailkisumu.com |  |          |
| St Johns Community Centre<br>P.O Box 16254<br>Nairobi  | Nairobi  |          |
| Bawa Out of School Programme (OSP)<br>P.O Box 149, Maralal                                     | Samburu  |          |

|  |  |          |
|--|--|----------|
|  | Bendera OSP<br>Baragoi   |          |
|  | Kelele OSP<br>Maralal  |          |
|  | Lemisigiyo Community Education Outreach (CEO)<br>P.O Box 60, Maralal     |          |
|  | Mlimani OSP<br>P.O Box 49, Maralal                                       |          |
|  | Nalingangor Nkeyoko<br>C/O Lawrence Lorunnye, P.O Box 42, Baragoi        |          |
|  | Sirata Oirobi CEO  |          |
|  | Rendille   | Marsabit |
| Case Studies   | Pandpieri Street Children's Rehabilitation Home                          | Kisumu   |
|  | TEMAK (Teenage Mothers and Girls Association of Kenya)                   |          |
|  | Children of God  |          |
|  | St Johns Community Centre  | Nairobi  |
|  | Kelele Out of School Programme   | Samburu  |
|  | Bendera OSP  |          |
|  | Lemisigiyo Community Education Outreach (CEO)                            |          |
|  | Rendille   | Marsabit |
| Government<br>Ministry of Education, Science<br>and Technology (MOEST) | District Education Office  | Kisumu   |
|  | District Education Office  | Samburu  |
| Sponsors   | Action Aid<br>P.O Box 311, Maralal<br>Children Christian Fund<br>Baragoi | Samburu  |

## 11.2 Research Instruments

### 11.2.1 Interview Guide for Administrators

1. History of the Institution
  - Name of Institution
  - Year of establishment
  - By whom
  - Reasons for establishment
  - Sponsors – in what capacities
  - Other players/contributors
  - What type of school: Feeder, rerouting, alternative, temporary, mobile
  - Registration status
2. Growth of Institution
  - Physical facilities
  - Teachers, students: Numbers by gender over the years
3. Recruitment/Admission policy
 

Teachers

  - Recruitment criteria: qualifications, gender, religion, voluntary
  - Where do they come from

Learners

  - Recruitment criteria
  - Entry level
  - Age
  - Education level
4. School Policy and Practice
  - School hours
  - Uniform
  - Language of instruction
  - School fees
  - Books
5. Curriculum
  - Which one? Official, Private?
  - If private, Who designed it
  - Participation of teachers, learners, community
  - Subject range?
  - Do you seek equivalence with KCPE?
  - How does it cater for clientele: different levels e.g. literate or not, different interests e.g. KCPE
  - Relevance to local conditions
6. Instructional Process and Evaluation
  - Teachers preparation
  - Teaching/learning styles
  - Who evaluates
  - How
7. Community Involvement
 

Probe for community participation in

  - curriculum development
  - school development e.g. buildings
  - educational development of their children
  - evaluation
  - contributions in cash or kind
  - decision making e.g. committees
8. Financial Support
  - Government (central and Local government)
  - NGOs, organisations, others
9. Concluding Remarks
  - Main obstacles hampering provision
  - Suggestions to improve NFE
10. Bio data
 

Designation \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Qualifications \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Service as Administrator \_\_\_\_\_ In current position \_\_\_\_\_

### 11.2.2 Interview Guide for Teachers

- When and why did you join the institution
- Comment on your students characteristics
  - Home/education background
  - Age
  - Enthusiasm for learning
- Describe your methodology of teaching. Where were you acquainted with it?
  - Multi-shift
  - Multi-grade
  - Group work
- Comment on your curriculum in terms of
  - Curriculum development
  - Relevance
  - Community participation
  -
- What facilitates learning?
  - School hours
  - Facilities
  -
- What hampers effective learning from taking place?
- In what ways are you involved in the running of the centre?
  - Evaluation
  - Administration
  -

#### Teachers Bio Data

Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Subjects \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Years of Service and Where \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Highest Academic Qualification \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Professional Qualification \_\_\_\_\_

### 11.2.3 Focussed Group Discussion with Pupils

- Which subjects do you like and why
  - Subject content
  - Way it is taught
  - Language used
- Which subjects don't you like and why?
- Which Teachers do you like and why?
- Which teachers don't you like and why?
- What do you hope to do when you complete school?
- How do you view the education you are getting?
- 

#### Pupils Personal Data

School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Best Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Worst Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Schools \_\_\_\_\_

Which Class did you drop out \_\_\_\_\_

Household type (e.g single mother) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Number and School level of brothers and sisters by gender

| Brother/Sister | Age | School | Class |
|----------------|-----|--------|-------|
|                |     |        |       |
|                |     |        |       |
|                |     |        |       |
|                |     |        |       |
|                |     |        |       |



**11.2.5 Classroom Observation**

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Pupils: Girls \_\_\_\_\_ Boys \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Qualification \_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Class size<br>Furniture  |  |
| Seating Arrangement  |  |
| Distribution of questions by gender                                    |  |
| Student initiated comments/questions                                   |  |
| Style of teaching<br>Q&A<br>Explanation<br>Repetition<br>Demonstration |  |
| Teacher preparation, appeal, subject command                           |  |

## **11.3 Saying it with Pictures**