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Non-formal education initiatives in Kianda village, Kibera:
An overview

Table of contents
1. The project .......................................................................................................................... 2
2. Background.......................................................................................................................... 2
3. Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 3
4. Data and analysis ............................................................................................................... 3
5. Conclusion and recommendations .................................................................................... 13
6. Postscript / Thank you note .............................................................................................. 17
References and websites .......................................................................................................... 17
Annex 1 - Visited schools in Kianda ..................................................................................... 18
Annex 2 - Photos .................................................................................................................... 19
Annex 3 - Collected data ........................................................................................................ 21

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1. The project

The following pages report the results of preliminary investigation on education initiatives currently run in Kianda village, which is one of the thirteen villages of the Kibera slum area, Nairobi. Research was meant to provide some insight into non-formal education endeavors in this context, to be enclosed as an Annex in the reporting of the Map Kibera Project.

The Map Kibera Project is a project developed by Dr. Stefano Marras from the University of Milan “La Bicocca”, in partnership with the Provincia di Milano and with financing from the Regione Lombardia. It aims to provide a truthful map of Kibera infrastructures (housing and commercial constructions, electricity lines, water points, drainages) and a reliable census of the population of Kibera.

From May to September 2008, the Map Kibera Project had its startup phase and focused on a pilot village, namely Kianda. At the time of writing, both the infrastructure mapping and the census of the population have been completed in Kianda, and data is to be analyzed and published on the Internet soon (http://www.mapkiberaproject.org/).

2. Background

Kianda village is one of the thirteen villages included in the Kibera slum. Apparently, the Kianda context is considered somehow representative of the context of the whole slum, as for housing solutions, ethnic background, social and commercial services, and economic activities. In addition, the population of Kianda is estimated to be average among Kibera’s villages. According to the Map Kibera Project’s census carried out between July and September 2008, Kianda’s population was between 15,000 and 16,000.

Research on Kianda schools was conducted from July 28th to August 7th, 2008. In Kenya, this was the conclusion of the school year, which would end on August 8th for the majority of the schools. Consequently, the researcher had the opportunity to easily contact teachers and visit schools, even though classroom activities were mainly devoted to end-of-the-year tests, and therefore were not representative of the ordinary school routine.
3. Methodology

School visits were conducted by an Italian independent researcher with the help of a Kenyan social worker. The research tools included mainly interviews with the teachers and the school principals, short time slots of classroom observation, and photographic documentation. In some cases, additional information was provided by the school staff, such as cooks and cleaning workers.

English was the main language of communication between the researcher and the teachers. In some cases, Kiswahili was also used by the Kenyan assistant in order to introduce the interviewees to the research quickly, and to create an open climate for sharing.

Interviews with the teachers were designed in order to collect the following data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>No of students</th>
<th>No of teachers</th>
<th>School fee</th>
<th>Family expenditure</th>
<th>Teacher salary</th>
<th>Student tribes</th>
<th>Financing/ donors / administrative expenditure</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Textbooks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

It has not always been possible to acquire even this essential information, mainly because of lack of school registers, misinformed school personnel, and confused statements. Nevertheless, all answers gave interesting indications that would have deserved much more follow-up than it was possible to pursue (see Annex 3).

In fact, due to severe time constraints and to very limited financial resources, the researcher was not in a condition to collect substantial quantitative data, nor it was feasible for her to conduct classroom observation for periods of time adequate to drawing a good picture of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the following notes have to be considered as a general overview, which is mainly intended to encourage further research on non-formal education initiatives currently run in Kianda and in the whole Kibera slum.

4. Data and analysis

Field research resulted in the registration of 17 non-formal schools in Kianda village (see Annex 2). The majority of these were pre-schools consisting of so-called Baby classes (the
entry grade at school addressing small children aged about 3), Nursery classes (the second grade at school for children aged about 4) and Pre-Unit classes, which are preparatory to Primary school.

Precisely, 14 schools were providing some sort of non-formal early childhood care and education (ECCE), of which 9 schools were exclusively pre-schools and 5 included at least some grades of primary school.

The 3 remaining schools included one primary school (grade 1 to 6), one school teaching both primary and secondary education (grade 1 to 8 and Form 1 to 4), and one high school (Form 1 to 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-schools only</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-schools with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools (some grades) ....</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school and Secondary school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total schools</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 School administrative situation and finances

Overall, Kianda’s schools have a variety of administrative situations and can count on different financing sources. In fact, since no school in Kianda is financed by the Kenyan government, the cost of infrastructure, lunch, and teachers’ salary has to be entirely covered by different sources of funding, which include school fees and donation either from individual donors or from international organizations. Slightly different is the case of textbooks, which are provided by the Ministry of Education in two schools.

a. Charity-financed schools

In Kianda, the better-off schools are those that benefit from financial support provided by faith-based organizations, some of which are important international churches. The most significant example is the St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School, which is mainly funded
by the Chicago Jesuits and offers free pre-college education to AIDS orphans including free uniforms, textbooks, breakfast and lunch.\(^1\)

In addition, some schools receive financial assistance from different donors at the same time. This is the case of the Salvation Army Nursery and Pre-Unit School, whose building is owned by the Salvation Army organization and is located in a well-equipped compound shared with CARE International and World Vision NGOs. The Salvation Army teachers are paid a salary of 5000 Ksh a month (which is more than 2000 Ksh higher than the average in Kianda schools) by the UK based Hope HIV NGO. Finally, drinking water jerrycans are provided for the school by CARE.

Other charity-based schools are the Tusaidie Watoto School, which is funded by the British NGO Karibuni Trust,\(^2\) and the New Life Missionaries of Charity School, which is run by brothers belonging to the Mother Teresa religious order. This last school has an interesting policy that intends to influence the social attitude towards schooling. In fact, the school does not provide grade 6-education, because after completion of grade 5 the children are encouraged to join the government schools out of Kianda. Towards this aim, student families are advised to save a little money every year, so that they can afford to enroll their children in the government school in the 6th grade. The New Life School’s policy is meant to make the families aware of the value of schooling and therefore more responsible for their children’s education, which is worth some sacrifice.

Despite the quite substantial charity support for many schools in Kianda, some schools financed by small parishes and charities based in Nairobi seem to barely afford all costs of their education initiatives. For example, teachers from the St. Andrew School (which is partially supported by the local Anglican Church) say that they struggle to prepare lunch for all students over the whole week. Comparable difficulties are faced by the school staff from the St. George Orthodox School. Finally, a volunteer assistant teacher from the Joyspring Educational Centre says that they cannot avoid charging school fees, because the Pentecostal church that is supporting the school does not have enough resources to provide its students with entirely free education.

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\(^1\) See the school website [http://www.sagnairobi.org](http://www.sagnairobi.org)
\(^2\) See [http://www.karibuni.org.uk/tusaidie_ss.htm](http://www.karibuni.org.uk/tusaidie_ss.htm)
b. Schools financed by individual donors

Apart from faith-based organizations, another source of school financing is individual donors. In fact, some schools appeared to be almost completely financed by individual benefactors. This was the case of Jami Outreach School, which is run by three volunteer teachers and charges no school fees thanks to the generosity of a patron named Ms Monika Shiro. According to what the school staff affirms, Ms Monika Shiro decided to take over a bar that was always crowded by drunk regulars, and to turn it into a school. This enterprise was undertaken as a vow to thank God for having healed Ms Monika’s mother from cancer.

A similar situation is that of the Nescodev Centre primary school, which is sponsored by Ms Nyatanga. The principal maintains that the donor disburses all money for the rent of the building and pays for the teacher salary, which is ranging from 3,000 to 4,000 Khs/month. All this is done without putting an excessive burden on the students’ families, since the school fees are low: 150 Ksh/month. Indubitably, more research should be done to have a better understanding of the phenomenon of individual funding to schools, which appeared to be of some weight in the Kianda context.

c. Schools financed through school-fees and resources from self-help groups

A third model of education financing is that of principals-entrepreneurs managing private schools. For example, the principal of the Joowi Academy (which includes Pre-school and Primary school with grade 1-8) is also the owner of the building, and considers his school to be a business. In order to make his enterprise work well, the principal does fund-raising all over the year, and affirms that he frequents social environments that are willing to support educational initiatives. In addition to donations from individuals, the schools can count on the school fees, which range from 3,200 to 4,000 Ksh for every three-month term (around 1066 to 1333 Ksh/month). These school fees are among the highest in Kianda, and this amount of money is generally speaking a considerable sum for the average family budget in Kianda.

In a comparable way, the principal of the St. Cecilia School (pre-school and primary school including grades 1 to 8) combines her entrepreneurial talents with her commitment to make this non-formal school in the slum equivalent to government schools. In fact, on the one hand the school relies on school fees to build a budget for teacher salaries. School fees range from 2,000 Ksh/term for grade 1 to 3 students (equivalent to 666
Ksh/month), and go up to 4,000 Ksh/term for grade 8 students. In fact, fees increase according to the grades, because access to education is particularly encouraged in the lower grades. As for the upper grades, the school policy draws on the assumption that the higher the grades the students are attending, the more willing their families are to pay higher fees to give their children the chance of a better future. According to the principal’s words, the school fees cover the costs of teacher salaries, reference books, maintenance (electricity, rent, cleaning, drainage), and of 12 boarding students, 10 of whom are girls.

On the other hand, the principal of St. Cecilia obtained a feeding programme for the school (including breakfast porridge and lunch) and managed to have as many free textbooks from the Ministry of Education as the government schools have.

Finally, three schools are operated by community based organizations and self-help groups. For example, the St. Francis Mary pre-school is administered and run by an Action Widows Group, whose 18 mothers provide for the two volunteer teachers and contribute to school financing by selling beaded necklaces and by tailoring with an old sewing machine in the back of the school. Lunch has to be brought by the children from home, but since not all of the children actually carry their lunch everyday, the self-help group has also applied for a feeding programme with an international organization. So far, they have had no positive response.

Across all these diverse administrative situations, teacher salaries appears to be the most critical issue. Even in the richest schools, teacher payment does not reach the minimum wage of Kenyan civil servants. Among Kianda schools, the best paid teachers are those of the Salvation Army school, declaring to receive 5,000 Ksh/month. This is barely half of the salary of a civil servant in Nairobi. Consequently, it is understandable that the usual teacher’s salary, amounting to about 2,000-3,000 Ksh/month, is considered to be just a contribution to volunteer work.

4.2 Barriers to access to school

Field research in Kianda village revealed three major barriers to education: school fees, lack of feeding programmes, and the so-called hidden costs, such as uniforms and shoes. Two

3 See http://allafrica.com/stories/200808260128.html
more obstacles are added in secondary education schools (both lower and higher secondary), which are the opportunity cost for male students, and marriage and early pregnancy for girls. Finally, HIV-AIDS stigma is deeply suspected to keep many children out of school in Kianda, and ethnic violence is a barrier to education in the slum context.

School fees usually range from 150 to 300 Ksh/month, which poses a burden to most families in extreme poverty, and is an unaffordable cost for orphans. Actually, some of the interviewees affirmed that many students are not paying for their school fees every month. Two atypical and somehow borderline cases in this situation are those of the St. Cecilia School and the Joowi Academy, which were presented above as business enterprises. In these schools, school fees are very high and increase by grade level, ranging from 666 ksh/month to 1,333 ksh/month in St. Cecilia School, and from 1066 Ksh/month to 1,333 Ksh/month in Joowi Academy. So, these two schools unambiguously target better-off students.

Having the opportunity to enjoy free lunches and free morning breaks are the most effective attractions to school for poor children. In Kianda village, the majority of the schools do offer a porridge break in the morning and provide a free rice-and-cereals lunch for their students at midday. However, some schools do not have enough funding to buy food and require their students to carry their lunch from home (for example, St. Collins School and Carolina Academy Woto School). As a consequence, many students either stop coming to school or attend school intermittently, despite the efforts by the teachers to share the available food with all of the children. In this regard, it is worth noting that the WFP is currently running a feeding programme that aims at proving all children at school with free lunch, and Kenya is officially enjoying a WFP/UNICEF Essential Package pilot project. In point of fact, a teacher from St. Collins School stated that she applied for a feeding programme but never went through. More research on this issues is needed in order to understand how and to whom these applications are made.

In Kianda, a school uniform for girls costs around 650 Ksh, and one for boys costs around 750 Ksh. If socks and shoes are added, the overall cost comes to about 1,500 Ksh. With the same amount of money, an individual can buy food for two weeks. With any evidence, this cost can pose an impassable barrier for many poor families to enrol children at school. Only

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few schools are providing their students with free uniforms. On the contrary, the majority of schools are not.

The so-called opportunity cost of schooling is the loss of income that families have to bear when their children go to school instead of working. Obviously, secondary school families with male children are the most negatively affected by this loss, which is likely to impact school enrolment and attendance especially at the secondary education level. Then again, many adolescent girls enrolled drop out from high school because of early pregnancy. Unquestionably, sexual abuse and early marriage are two major obstacles to girls’ education in this poor and socially disrupted context.

As for HIV-AIDS stigma, it is important to note that this issue was did not overtly arise during the school visits. However, some hints were made by the interviewees suggesting that many children living with HIV-AIDS are discriminated against because of their disease, and therefore they do not come to school. Inquiry into this matter is critical in order to have a truthful picture of the threats to education in the slum.

Last but not least, ethnic violence can keep many children out of school in Kibera. Reportedly, many children belonging to the Kikuyu tribe had to leave school following the violence that broke out after the December 2007 elections. Interviewed teachers from five schools clearly affirmed that many Kikuyu students left at that time and never came back. The bloody clashes that flared up between Kikuyus and Luos after the elections ravaged Kibera with a high death toll. Currently, Kianda village is majority Luo, since most of the Kikuyus were chased away during the violence. Sadly, the harmful consequence of the ethnic violence is affecting all children, regardless of their tribe. For example, the students of Jami Outreach School lost three classrooms, because some Luos occupied them during the violence and never gave them back to the school. So far, a padlock is keeping those doors locked and inaccessible to the children (see photo No 1).

4.3 Quality indicators: class size, infrastructures, teaching material

Given the serious lack of data sources about school attendance (including enrolment, completion rate, repetition and dropout rate), the research focused on quality aspects of education provision in the visited schools. The most significant set of indicators about the
quality of education is currently defined by the Education for All (EFA) movement\textsuperscript{5}, which recommends enquiry into six areas: 1. teachers’ academic background and certification; 2. completion of primary education and transition to secondary education; 3. government expenditure on education; 4. class size and pupil-teacher ratio; 5. availability of teaching and learning material; 6. condition of school infrastructures. In the following paragraphs some notes are given resulting from observation of areas No 4, 5 and 6.

a. Class size, pupil-teacher ratio and school infrastructures

Many of the observed classrooms looked overcrowded. Especially in the pre-schools, the pupil-teacher ratio is very high, so that it is expected to slow down the teaching and learning process considerably. For example, one teacher had 57 students the Tusaidie Watoto Project school and one teacher was teaching a classroom of 42 in the St. Andrew School.

In addition to this unfavourable pupil-teacher ratio, many classrooms are very small and infrastructures are insufficient to provide the students with space facilitating their school activities. So, even those schools assigning their children to a proper number of teachers have congested classrooms anyway. One meaningful example of lack of room is the Nescodev Centre Primary School, which accommodates students of four classrooms (from Standard 2 to Standard 4) in a warehouse split into different areas by wooden panels and fabric sheets (see Photo No. 2).

Another coping strategy to deal with both lack of teachers and lack of room at school is multigrade classrooms. In fact, in some schools, students of different ages and grade levels are accommodated in the same room and one teacher teaches all children simultaneously. Multigrade teaching has been observed both in ECCE and in Primary schools in Kianda. The likely disadvantages of this type of schooling have been inquired into by many studies for long time. However, some recent research has focused on the opportunities presented by this practice, which can generate some interesting adjustment to traditional teaching and bring about a flexible pedagogy not necessarily slowing down the students’ learning process.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{5} The EFA movement is coordinated by five UN institutions: UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank (http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=46881&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

\textsuperscript{6} Interesting remarks about multi-graded classrooms in the developing world are included in the recent IIEP publication \textit{Planning for successful alternative schooling: a possible route to Education for All}, by Joseph P. Farrell and Ash Hartwell, 2008.
Given the widespread occurrence of this teaching solution in the developing world, further research is desirable.

Finally, the teaching and learning process is inevitably hampered by very poor school infrastructures. Many of the observed school buildings in Kianda are basically shacks. In the rainy days of this field research, some of these schools were muddy rooms, where humidity and cold temperatures posed threats to children’s health. Toilets are always outside of the building, and are in even worse condition. These circumstances, again, are expected to negatively affect the quality of education (see Photos No 3 and No 4).

However, two significant exceptions to these unfavourable teaching and learning conditions are St. Cecilia Primary School and the Joowi Academy, which take advantage of more favourable administrative and financial situations. These schools are housed in good quality buildings that appear clean and well-furnished, and have small classrooms of 10-15 students per teacher.

Nevertheless, financial resources are not the only factor impacting the pupil-teacher ratio. Some cases are worth noting, since they are meaningfully related to the recent history in Nairobi area. Interviewees from two schools declared a very good pupil-teacher ratio: namely, the Carolina Academy Woto School has one teacher for every 15 children and the Kami Outreach School has one teacher for every 8 children. However, this is not the result of either wise school management, or of good financial resources. On the contrary, this situation directly follows the violence that broke out after the last December elections. In fact, as said above, many students were forced to flee away from Kianda and left school in the middle of the school year. As they were not replaced by anyone, the student-teacher ratio decreased.

b. The teaching and learning material
Textbooks availability appeared to be very insufficient in the observed pre-schools, whereas it seemed almost adequate in the primary and secondary schools, with some exceptions.

In the visited pre-schools, only the teachers had some textbooks, which are kept locked after lessons. Textbooks are mainly given by donors and benefactors (e.g. in Jami Outreach School) and sometimes are bought by the teachers themselves (e.g. in Saint Francis Mary School). Overall, the books look old and in bad condition. In addition, there is not great
variety of titles, the same books recurring across all schools, probably because of bulk donations.

Observation revealed pre-school English textbooks to be culturally adapted to a generic African context. However, the subjects are presented in a traditional way, which makes the student learn through rather passive activities. Reading aloud, matching words with pictures, filling in the blanks are the most frequent tasks required of the student. The book content is principally related to the family life. Represented gender roles show little modernization, mainly due to change in economic and social life (see Photos No 5 and No 6). Overall, very few incentives to critical thinking can be found in these textbooks, and few hints to active learning (or learning-by-doing) are disseminated throughout the pages. Finally, there are fewer Kiswahili textbooks than English books. This can also be due to lack of local donors in comparison to international donors.

The situation about textbooks is different in the primary and secondary schools. Although they are non-government schools, both primary schools and high schools in Kianda follow the national curriculum closely and use MoE textbooks. Field study provided evidence about this matter in St. Cecilia Primary School, St. Aloysius Gonzaga High School, and St. Michael’s Holy Unity Primary and Secondary School.

The two primary schools prepare their students for the Kenyan Certification of Primary Education (KCPE) exam, and the two high schools prepare their students for the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Apparently, the students’ grades are good. For example, the principal of St. Cecilia Primary School produced the last year achievement and attainment tables, which showed that 51 out of 52 candidates passed the exam.

According to the interviewed teachers, students from these schools are provided with all of the needed textbooks by the school itself. However, no double-check was possible on this matter during the field research period, primarily because the students were having the end-of-the-year tests and the weekly routine was over. Actually, some books on the desks of St. Michael School looked neither new, nor in good condition (see Photo No 7).

Besides textbooks, very little other teaching and learning material was seen in the visited schools. Students attending the pre-schools have insufficient exercise books and pens, which
have to be bought by their families. In primary and secondary schools the situation is slightly better, but not much. In all classrooms, the backboards are generally damaged and little chalk is available. Finally, in pre-schools, some hand-painted posters are hanging at the walls, along with some embroidered ones. They show the alphabet, the colours, the shapes and other basic concepts, and are made by the teachers themselves with the help of their students (see Photo No 8).

No electronic teaching material was seen in Kianda primary and secondary schools, except for seven laptops in Saint Aloysius headteacher’s office. They were said to be given by a donor, but it was not clear how they were used.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

This field study has been very limited, due to time constraints and scarce resources. However, it highlights some aspects of education initiatives in Kianda which may deserve consideration.

First of all, it clearly emerges that early childhood care and education (ECCE) projects can play an important role in this social context. In fact, pre-schools actually offers small children a safe place to stay, decent food, and a friendly environment, together with some elements of basic education. These benefits are particularly relevant here, if we consider that most of the pre-school students either are orphans or come from disrupted families, where they frequently do not have enough caring attention and food.

The extremely positive impact that ECCE can have on small children’s lives has been underlined by the 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, which emphasized the benefits brought about by this approach encompassing a caring environment, health treatments, nutrition plans and education programmes. Moreover, it is proven that ECCE programmes are particularly beneficial in social and economic contexts affected by extreme poverty, and in general among the most disadvantaged children.

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7 The Early Childhood Care and Education is the focus of the 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, which is titled Strong Foundations: see http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49640&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
Field research in Kianda shows that commendable ECCE initiatives are undertaken by volunteer teachers and self-help groups of mothers, who draw on their own creativity and goodwill to meet the need of their community. Actually, some of these teachers showed themselves to be very enterprising, for example the ones of the Shammah Children Centre, who made the decision to rent three more rooms in a shack close to the school, in order to provide their children with more comfortable school facilities.

With regard to ECCE initiatives in Kianda, the most urgent need appears to be the provision of free lunches to all schools, including those that are not entitled to apply for the official feeding programmes. As mentioned above, the WFP is currently running an Essential Package pilot projects in Kenya, since this organization is well aware that “poverty and vulnerability to food insecurity are highest in urban slums.” Thus, it is recommendable that some link will be established between Kibera (educational) grassroots initiatives and the UN agencies such as the WFP, in order to make the flow of humanitarian aid reach the needy.

Secondly, non-government schools providing primary and secondary education can be identified as “non-formal” initiatives only because they are not state schools. For the rest, these school do aim to be equivalent to government school in every aspect, including the curriculum, the school calendar, and the teacher certification. Administratively, they are private schools. However, they do not show an intent to pursue educational strategies different from those of the public schools. On the contrary, both the principals and the teachers look proud to be totally aligned with the government guidelines.

With respect to this matter, it would be advisable that the Kenyan MoE open a dialogue with these schools and start a process towards mutual cooperation. In fact, on the one hand these schools can take advantage of their better understanding of the social context, and consequently can provide invaluable knowledge to the central MoE and suggestions to adjust its educational supply according to the local needs. On the other hand, Kianda private schools need to be financially assisted, so that they can abolish their school fees and provide free education to every child in the slum. Currently, the best schools are those with the highest school fees, which leads to wealth selection among applicant students. At the opposite end of

8 http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/indexcountry.asp?country=404
the spectrum, some schools with very low school fees are run by international churches, which can use selection criteria different from the ones driving a democratic government.

Thirdly, despite the efforts made by some admirable teachers and principals in Kianda, no data is available about the school-aged children who are out of school. Indeed, the lack of census data about the slum population inevitably precludes any investigation about the access to school. Especially the most disadvantaged children, such as those living with HIV-AIDS and the orphans, are penalized by this absence of information.

Only when this type of data is available, thanks to scientific undertakings such as the Map Kibera Project, will it be possible to set out sound research on access to education in the slum. Hopefully, both cross-sectional studies at the national level and longitudinal studies on the Kibera context will follow, which will provide the basis for designing good education programmes actually reaching the unreached in this underprivileged social context.

Fourthly, without any doubt the quality of education is a concern for teachers and principals. Nonetheless, major obstacles to the quality of schooling come from the very poor infrastructures, the lack of teaching and learning material, and the teacher shortage.

As mentioned above, Kianda schools are for the most part shacks made of either plastered mud or metal sheets, with corrugated iron roofs and no windows. Desks are overcrowded and the benches are sometimes insufficient to accommodate all students, who in part have to stand or sit on the floor. In some schools, classrooms are obtained by splitting a big warehouse into different areas through fabric or wooden panels. This results in excessive noise and confusion, which makes it almost impossible to listen to the teacher.

Urgent intervention is necessary in order to improve the infrastructures for education in the slum. Hope comes from the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme 2005-2010, which pledges to take care of the “construction / renovation of physical facilities / equipment in public learning institutions in disadvantaged areas, particularly in Arid and Semi/Arid Lands (ASALs) and urban slums by 2008.”[^9] Now, these words have to become reality.

[^9]: [www.un-kenya.org/ThemeGroups/KESSPPartII.doc](http://www.un-kenya.org/ThemeGroups/KESSPPartII.doc)
As for the lack of textbooks, this poses serious a threat to the quality of education in any educational context. However, in Kianda this obstacle to good schooling is even worse than usual, because children cannot always rely on teachers with high certification and good training. In such challenging teaching and learning conditions, modern and culturally appropriate textbooks together with effective teachers’ guides can actually make a difference. The teachers themselves would appreciate having more interesting books, which could suggest a variety of ways to engage the classroom in active learning.

Therefore, as a first step towards the solution of this problem, it would be desirable that some of the biggest textbook publishing houses in the English speaking countries donate their surplus books to schools located in Kenya slums pending a more specific strategy from the Kenyan Ministry of Education aimed at publishing and distributing textbooks appropriate to the slum context, which means, addressing burning issues widespread locally and speaking a language comprehensible to children living in this social environment.

Finally, teacher shortage is the most evident challenge to education, especially in ECCE projects. As shown above, these schools can only afford very low teachers’ salaries, which cannot even be considered as such. This results in very few professional teachers willing to work in these educational enterprises. In fact, the interviewed teachers affirm that they are basically volunteer teachers, not fully salaried workers. Moreover, some teachers are mothers from self-help groups who have been selected to teach the children of everybody.

This problem needs urgent coping measures. For sure, Kianda schools have the most challenging conditions for every teacher. However, the Kenyan Ministry of Education could tackle the problem through many wise educational policies. For example, dedicated training could be supplied to newly graduated teachers who are willing to work in the slum during a qualifying period. These teachers could also be financed to develop research on the pedagogy and the teaching strategies most appropriate to this context, while practicing in the field. To this aim, the Kenyan teachers colleges should work together with the Ministry of Education to design effective study and productive educational plans. This approach could produce both short- and long-term results. First, it would immediately supply teachers to Kibera schools, which would presumably raise the enrolment rates and improve the quality of schooling. Second, it could produce interesting and innovative studies, which are likely to bring about great benefits for all students, not only the ones living in the slums.
6. Postcript / Thank you note

This field study has been possible primarily thanks to Dr Stefano Marras, who kindly agreed to contribute with time and energy to this endeavour, and assisted the researcher by sharing his professional views on fundamental subjects.

Special thanks also go to Mr Benson Sarago, whose social worker expertise and great humanity has played a crucial role in addressing interviewees in all schools and creating an open climate for communication.

Finally, the researcher expresses her gratitude to members of Koinonia Community in Nairobi, of Africa Peace Point NGO, and of Amani onlus. Their knowledge of the political, social, and human context of Kibera slum has enormously helped to design the research and to adjust it following to unexpected events.

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URL_ID=49640&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

EFA website: http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-
URL_ID=46881&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html


Karibuni Trust Project website: http://www.karibuni.org.uk/tusaidie_ss.htm


St. Aloysius Gonzaga School website: http://www.sagnairobi.org

World Food Programme, Feeding Children at School, website:


World Food Programme Kenya website:

http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/indexcountry.asp?country=404
Annex 1 - Visited schools in Kianda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carolina Academy Woto School</td>
<td>- Pre-school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jami Outreach</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby + Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joowi Academy</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Nursery + Pre-unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Primary school (grade 1 to 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyspring Educational Centre</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby + Nursery + Pre-unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Primary school (only grade 1-5 because the school was founded only 5 years ago. It will include grade 1 to 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nescodev Centre School</td>
<td>- Primary school (grade 1 to 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Life Missionaries of Charity school</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Primary school: grade 1 to 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NiV church / Ninevah Church</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby school + Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Primary school (grade 1 to 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army Church</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shammah Children Centre</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby + Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Aloysius Gonzaga High School</td>
<td>- High School (Form 1 to 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrew School - Anglican Church</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby + Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Cecilia School</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby + Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Primary school (grade 1 to 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Collins School</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Nursery + Pre Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis Mary School</td>
<td>- Pre-school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George Orthodox School</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby + Nursery + Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Michael's Holy Unity Academy</td>
<td>- Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- High School (Form 1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tusaidia Watoto Project</td>
<td>- Pre-school: Baby - Nursery - Pre-Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2 - Photos

Photo No 1
Three classrooms are locked in Jami Outreach School, as they have been occupied during the violence after last December elections.

Photo No 2
Standard 2 to Standard 4 classes are held in the same big room in Nescodev Centre Primary School. Wooden panels and fabric sheets split the room into four areas.

Photo No 3
Ninevah Church school building is a large room that becomes muddy and cold with bad weather.

Photo No 4
The toilets of Ninevah Church school building are unhealthy shacks outside the school.
This chapter of the textbook is introducing the family roles. “Some mothers also work outside their home. They do many kinds of work. Can you say what each mother does?”

“Fathers sometimes cook when mothers are sick” is written in the same textbook.

A damaged Kiswahili textbook in St. Michael’s Holy Unity Academy.

Hand-made alphabet posters and other didactic material hang on the walls in many pre-schools.