

Analysis of unit cost of ordinary secondary education and its implication to the quality of education in the fee free education era: A Case Study of Makambako Town Council

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This study analysed the unit costs of secondary education in Makambako town council in Njombe region in Tanzania and delineated the implications of such unit costs to the quality of education. The researcher employed mixed methods research approach to collect, analyse and present the study findings. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. A total of 326 questionnaires and 30 interviews were collected from teachers, heads of schools, students and households. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic methods while quantitative data were analysed using descriptive methods by the help of SPSS software version 20 and MS Excel window 2007. The results showed that both the government and households finance education during this fee free era. The unit cost of secondary education was about Tzs 1.5 million per year, the government expenditure being about Tzs.0.8 mil (53.1%) and Tzs. 0.7 mil. (46.9%) for by the households. The government disbursed a total of Tzs.32, 880.43 (131.52% of promised amount) per student per year as capitation grant and Tzs.21, 619.42 (108.1%) per student per year as fee compensation. Despite these commitments made by the government, the question of quality of education remained unsolved as the results indicated that there were insufficient funds for fee free education. This led to insufficient teaching/learning materials especially laboratory chemicals and apparatus. It has also caused shortage of sport facilities, inadequate equipment for cleanliness and drop down of teachers' incentives like tea, overtime and extra duty allowances causing low teachers' motivation. The study also found that, some of the households decided to arrange for their children's remedial classes out of school system. This situation could create academic gap between students from rich families and those from poor families. Therefore, the government need to plan to wide up its envelop to facilitate quality education if its prime objective of improving quality and equity on education is to be actualised.