

School feeding program and academic performance of learners in rural universal primary education schools in Bwanswa Sub-county in Kakumiro District

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Introduction

A functional education system should ensure that everyone in school acquires quality education. The Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in Uganda is one of the means of assessment assessing the quality of learning in primary schools. However, public primary (UPE) schools in Bwanswa Sub County in Kakumiro district continued to perform below average. Ahmed (2004) observed that School Feeding Programmes have a significant positive impact on pupils' participation in schools among which include in-class concentration, learning and overall cognition. Therefore, this study intended to investigate whether there was a relationship between School Feeding Programs and the academic performance of learners in UPE Schools in Bwanswa Sub County in Kakumiro District.

Objectives

The study investigated the awareness and availability of indicators that help to reinforce the provision school meals, the relationship between the nature of implementation of feeding at school and academic performance of learners, the effects of prompt school meals on the academic performance of learners,

and examined the ways in which parental contributions to school meals influenced the academic performance of learners in Bwanswa Sub County in Kakumiro district.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design under which random sampling was used in the selection of the sampled schools while purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used to select respondents. The respondents were headteachers, teachers, pupils of primary seven classes and their parents. Data were collected by the use of questionnaires, interview guides and by the use of observation checklists. Data were presented using tables, bar charts and pie charts and were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Key findings

Findings of this study highlight key prominent issues; rural UPE schools did not have a copy of the guidelines for school feeding and nutrition intervention program in Uganda. There was no evidence for the existence of School Feeding Committees in schools.

There was a close relationship between the nature of implementation of feeding at school and the academic performance of learners. In fact findings of the study showed that the schools or pupils who had school meals had their academic performance quite good in the PLE. Prompt school meals had several positive effects on the improvement of the academic performance of learners. However, meals in these schools were not so prompt and not of the required standard eventually leading to the poor academic performance of

learners. In conclusion, the direct involvement of all parents in contributing towards the provision of school meals to their children greatly helped to improve the academic performance of learners.

Key recommendations

This study recommended the conduct of periodical reviews and sensitisation at various levels on School Feeding Programs; providing a copy of the school feeding program to each school; the establishment of functional School Feeding Committees at school, sub-county, district and the national, levels. Additionally, there is a need to utilise school resources such as land to set up projects like gardening, piggery and poultry to support School Feeding Programs.

Key references

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