

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

*Understanding Key Stakeholders' Perceptions of Informal
Schools in Kawangware, Nairobi*

BY
DANIEL MUKITI MATHUVA

*A Thesis Submitted To The Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Christian Education*

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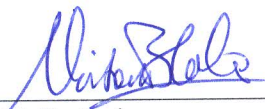
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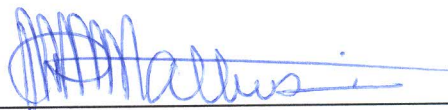
STUDENT'S DECLARATION

**UNDERSTANDING KEY STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
INFORMAL SCHOOLS IN KAWANGWARE, NAIROBI**

**I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to
any other College or University for academic credit**

**The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners**

(Signed) _____



Daniel M. Mathuva

July, 2008

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand perceptions on informal schools in Kawangware in Nairobi. Data was collected through open-ended interviews in three different schools in Kawangware. Forty seven respondents were interviewed on different dates. Thereafter, data was analyzed and transcribed.

The findings revealed that poverty in the slum is the governing factor explaining the reason behind the emerging of informal schools. Due to poverty many children fail to go to school. The research revealed that pastors are the key people in starting informal schools. They do so to help the poor children to get affordable education. The factor of poverty taken singly may not always lead to the start of any school but combined with others such as mercy and help for the poor, which gifts are given to Christians, lead to the start of informal schools.

The research concludes that due to poverty informal schools are on the increase in the poor areas, especially slums of Kenya. The conclusion paves the way for a recommendation that appeals for further research into this phenomenon. The findings further reveal that all the stakeholders, namely pastors, administrators, teachers, parents, guardians and pupils have a common perception that informal schools are targeting the poor child and seek to provide affordable education in the poor community. The study also found out that the role played by informal schools was very vital on fighting illiteracy in the slums.

Finally, in view of the various issues and explanations examined in the study, the thesis includes some recommendations to all stakeholders and calls for further study in those areas found to be weak in regard to informal schools.

To

My beloved wife Priscilla Nduku, member of Covenant Presbyterian Church –
Kawangware and all pastors working in the slums of Kenya, who have a heart to help
the poor children to acquire education

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To the only God, be the glory and majesty and power.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Learning is as old as the human race itself. Abreu adds, “Education, since the very earliest times in the history of man, has been of tremendous value to society. It has ensured conformity, stability and continuity of society” (Abreu, E.1982.1). Different methods have been used to acquire and pass on knowledge, but one most important thing and common to all is that the learning must take place in a humble and acceptable learning environment so that the learner can be comfortable as he/she learns. By humble learning environment here we refer to a suitable place for both students and teachers to use. A proper and humble learning environment facilitates good learning. Unfortunately such an environment does not exist in most places in Kenya.

Let us think about learning in traditional African cultures. How did the learning take place? Different cultures had different methods of educating their children of different ages. Traditional education was not the same as formal education, today, which takes place in a classroom. For example, the Akamba people of eastern Kenya taught their children in three main ways.

1. Old men taught boys aged 4-10 years at night at the fireplace, while the old women in the kitchen taught the girls of the same age. Knowledge and understanding were transmitted in the form of story telling, proverbs and sayings.

2. Circumcision time also was an important occasion for teaching and learning. Here both boys and girls met at night to dance and be informed about approaching adulthood.
3. The third instructional platform was marriage preparation, a time when community members were expected to join the ranks of full adulthood and to know how to behave as adults. Traditional education was meant to instil moral values in the life of the learners; it was education for life.

With the coming of formal education, brought by colonial governments, the traditional type of education was abandoned in some several areas. Colonial education was commercial. For children to attend school the parents were to pay fees, which was not the case with the African traditional schools. Many African cultures did not welcome this change because they had no money to pay. After the independence of many African states, only a few people could afford to pay for their children's education.

In Kenya many families were too poor to provide this commercialised type of education for their children. Government efforts to provide free primary education could not be properly achieved because the government itself lacked funds. The result was that many children could not attend school. This worsened during Nyayo era (President Daniel arap Moi's rule in Kenya) when the government introduced cost sharing in its institutions, including educational institutions. Many parents found themselves unable to afford the required money for fees and other development funds, and therefore their children dropped out of school and stayed at home or found jobs.

Parents were willing for their children to be educated but lacked the necessary financial resources. The Government did not provide an educational alternative for the poor. Hence poverty gave birth to most informal schools throughout the slum areas.

