

Programs: Education

Education is the key to the future and remains the best hope for lifting the standard of living in rural Kenya. Everything is connected, and the solution to one problem requires dealing with other problems. If all of a family's resources are spent on food, health care, and basic survival, it becomes very difficult to send the children to school. In 2003 a law was passed eliminating school fees for Primary school.

Recently, school fees were also eliminated for Secondary school. Despite the elimination of school fees, it still costs money to send a child to school.

There are various small fees called building funds, schools often lack doors, windows, blackboards and desks. Children require uniforms, the cost of which is often beyond the means of poor families.

As in 2003 when fees were eliminated for Primary school, the newly 'free' Secondary schools are expected to add an additional 200,000 students. It is estimated that this will require 4,000 new classrooms and 4,000 new teachers. This has not been done and in fact the government has placed a freeze on hiring new teachers other than to replace retiring ones. Furthermore, the Education Ministry's limit on class size states that a class must have a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 45 students in order to receive government funding. Many classes are over 45 students since the fees were eliminated.

When there are delays in government funding or even refusals, school principals have attempted to extract more money from parents.

With the above background on the state of education in Kenya, Born To Aid proposes the following steps to improve the ability of poor families to educate their children:

- * Identification of those families which are so poor that their children can not attend school. Initially, get the child in school by purchasing a uniform and paying any of the associated small costs.
- * Intervene early to decrease the dropout rate. Although cost is usually the reason a child drops out, there may be other reasons. Because Born To Aid will be closely connected to the community, it will be much easier to identify and intervene in problems which would otherwise lead to a child dropping out of school.
- * Sponsorship of students to attend either University or one of the Polytechnic trade schools.
- * Construction of additional classrooms and schools as well as funding for quality teachers.