



INFLUENCE OF CURRICULUM SUPPORT OFFICERS' STRATEGIES ON SUSTAINABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN MVITA SUB COUNTY, MOMBASA, KENYA

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Abstract:

Teachers support from the curriculum support officers (CSOs) on implementation of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) seemed to be inadequate. This may have had an influence on the inadequacy of quality and sustainable pre-school education. Effective curriculum support centres role is to provide and build quality sustainable ECDE education through classroom teacher support to be able to raise the quality of classroom teaching and learning. Even if changes seems to have been made in the supervision of ECDE division of the Ministry of Education, little has nevertheless been done to establish how or in which way the role and influence of CSOs contribute to effectiveness of curriculum delivery in public pre-schools. The introduction of ECDE management under County Government has impacted negatively to the role of CSOs in relations to sustainability of quality education in ECDE centres. The ECDE teachers need a lot of support from CSOs so as to be able to fulfill the dream of every child and parent. It is the dream of every parent for his or her child to receive quality education as a foundation for future life endeavours. Children are central to any discussion on sustainable development. The early years of a child's life are crucial to the anchoring of a sound foundation for a child's growth and development for the rest of the child's life. Events in the early years of a child's first few years of life are formative and play an important role in shaping of social, learning, emotional, health and in the building of human capital. These aspects promote economic productivity in a child's future in life. It is the wish of every parent to see his or her child attend a pre-school and acquire quality and sustainable education. CSOs supporting role of classroom observation, preparation of teaching materials, supervision and in-service training for teachers would improve ECDE curriculum implementations for quality and sustainable

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education. Children who are transiting from pre-schools to primary schools in Mombasa seemed to have not received holistic quality education that they ought to have received. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of curriculum support officers on sustainability of ECDE in Mvita Sub-County.

Keywords: early childhood development education; curriculum support officers; classroom observation; supervision visits; teaching materials; in-service trainings; pre-schoolers & sustainable education

1. Introduction

Curriculum support officers (CSOs) are education administrators who work in education sub-sector in supporting the smooth running of teaching and learning in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools. They are in charge of supervision and provision of general administrative and material support in schools. Kamunge, (1988) avers that CSOs who are centered in curriculum support centres in all sub-counties in Kenya were intended to provide Kenyan school teachers with professional guidance. The curriculum support centres were supposed to be central models of conducting teacher in-service courses, provision of teaching materials, classroom observation as well as syllabus orientation for the sole purpose of maintaining high quality sustainable education in schools.

Globally, provision of sustainable education and maintaining of its quality is paramount in enabling teachers and pupils achieve their highest potential. Hammond, (2013) points out that, teachers are pivotal in determining whether any school initiative tips towards success or failure. Success of an institution depends on highly and motivated skilled teachers. According to World Bank, (2010) sustainable education is a transformative learning process that is intended in equipping students, teachers and school systems with the new knowledge, ways of thinking we need in order to achieve economic prosperity and responsible citizenship while restoring the health of the living systems upon which our lives depend. As Stacy, (2011) puts it sustainable education is heavily dependent on teacher professional development. Many studies in recent years have however proved that investment in ECDE is not a liability but an investment for human resource development Duncan & Magnuson, (2013).

The World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 not only emphasized the need of achieving education for all, but also advocated for the improvement of quality of education. According to the world declaration on Education for All (EFA), (2000) a quality education for all should therefore be one that satisfies basic learning needs, especially in pre-school and enhance the learners' understanding of their lives as well as their overall experience of living. The Global Campaign for Education, (A worldwide alliance of NGO and Trade Unions) however, observes that quality EFA should be the one that fosters the ability of children from early age to acquire knowledge and critical learning skills UNESCO, (2000). Learning is therefore essential for human development and it should naturally begin informally at very early age in life. In developed countries

especially in Europe, the work of continuing professional development and education programme for teachers to offer quality education is bestowed on curriculum support centres. Vegas, (2010) observed that, international charters agreements provide high level leverage for increased and sustainable investment of quality early childhood programmes. The early childhood phase is however a critical foundational period in human development. According to World Bank report, (2010) participation and access levels in Early Childhood programmes in the developing countries are naturally very low. The overall participation rate across the developing countries is also as low as it is only about 33% of the equivalent age group in Latin America and the Caribbean who are considered to be generally at the higher end of the average. However, Sub-Sahara Africa and the Arabs states are dimmed to be in the lower end attracting about 1% of the eligible age group in pre-primary programmes for example in Yemen. In short, World Bank believes about 57% of young children in developing countries have nil access to pre-schools, while about 83% in sub-Sahara Africa and about 78% in the Arab regions. Many governments in developing countries plan very little for ECD. ECDE programmes provide fundamentally essential base needed for the achievement of all EFA goals and contribute significantly in reducing poverty the overall objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to eventually achieving social justice the very important component of sustainable education (Ibid).

In developing countries inclusive of Africa, there seems to be a definite dichotomy between what teachers' curriculum support centers are however expected to achieve and the reality on how they perform their work. The aims pinpointed at the Arusha Conference, (1996) suggest that curriculum support centers are essentially strategies to provide teachers with professional services in the effort of enabling them to perform effectively in their classrooms. UNICEF, (2012) points out that in South Africa, just like many other African countries, ECD service coverage of centre based pre-primary quality education has expanded but coverage and quality are uneven. The government of South Africa provides support to children in pre-schools. In Kenya, Curriculum Support Centers (Resource Centers) refers to units within the education ministry which were founded and duly established in 1970s for the purpose of serving a set cluster of model schools Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), (2010). Ideally, an ideal set of cluster comprises of five to fifteen schools. CSCs let teachers to drop in and use or borrow materials in the centre, curriculum guides, teacher guides, supplementary texts, science equipment, maps, display charts as well as other needful audio-visual equipment for classroom Ololube, (2013). As a matter of professional practice, teachers should make use of curriculum support centres for production of teaching and learning materials KNEC, (2010). It is through support of curriculum support officers that ECDE teachers are able to effectively deliver quality education for sustainable development to pre-schoolers. National Center for Early Childhood Education (NACECE), (1996) asserts that a curriculum support center should be regarded as an ideal thought, concept or an area which facilitates the professional and developmental practices of teachers. They also act as teachers converging points of sharing of knowledge, innovations and teaching skills. Effective curriculum support

officers visit schools, observe teachers teaching techniques, give demonstration lessons and advice teachers on methods and resources needed for teaching and learning Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST), 1995).

Utting & France, (2013) posit that good and quality early childhood education with an effectively structured implementation of pre-school learning programmes is a pre-requisite to quality and sustainable education. Research evidence by MOEST, (2003) reveals that traits of a child's fastest growth in social-emotional, mental and physical takes place during the age of between 0-5 years. This is the time they need holistic care and learning services most. Holistic development encompasses the nature of the whole personality attributes. In addition, safety, adequate nutrition, security and promotion of good health significantly contribute to the foundation of proper and holistic growth of children UNESCO, (2014). It is pointed out by Ololube, (2013) that the role of education managers is to change the peoples' attitudes to favour the implementation of any particular innovation. Changing of policy makers' attitude and eventually the learner's and provision of administrative means and materials to make teaching and learning possible is very essential. Effective CSOs monitor and supervise curriculum on pre-schools teaching and learning in their endeavour for quality education for learners Gumam & Cahn, (2010). Whereas, Mudalia, (2012) portends that, a curriculum support centre should collect and organize resources and make them available to the teachers. A Curriculum Support Centre (CSC) should therefore be a point frequented by educators who share their experiences and thoughts with the teachers. Curriculum Support Centres should therefore be able to provide in-service training and hold professional meetings to enhance Teachers performance Otunga, (2011).

In conclusion, Early Childhood Education for sustainability is a concept that appreciates that in modern times, there are many challenges facing humanity and especially the young children. These challenges may be related to economic meltdown, poverty, ethnic and religious conflicts, global warming and more so, food shortage especially in developing countries. The very young children in Early Childhood Education in pre-schools must already have developed some understanding as well as knowledge of these phenomena. For them to grasp the magnitude of these issues, they must be equipped with skills and knowledge that will support them to develop the capacity and resilience of encountering the various modern challenges. For them to be able to face these challenges, the teachers must prepare them in a way that they are not frightened by the issues but encounter the challenges courageously and with skills. Challenges in early childhood education for sustainability should be addressed through the implementation and teachings about the physical environment (both built and natural), curriculum content integration into the learning Programme and promoting early childhood services culture of sustainability. Children should participate fully in the community and as future citizens. It is against this background that the researchers sought to establish the influence of curriculum support officers' on sustainability of early childhood education in Mvita Sub-County.

2. Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

1. To investigate the influence of classroom observation on sustainability of Early Childhood Education in Mvita Sub-County.
2. To examine the influence of CSOs in preparation of teaching materials on sustainability of Early Childhood Education in Mvita Sub- County.
3. To determine the influence of supervision of ECDE curriculum on sustainability of Early Childhood education in Mvita Sub-County.
4. To establish the influence of in-service training on sustainability of Early childhood education in Mvita Sub-County.

3. Literature Review

According to MOEST, (1995) one role of CSOs among others was to visit schools, observe teaching techniques, give demonstration lessons and advice teachers on methods and resources needed for ECE and Development. Classroom observation should focus on enhancement of classroom instruction. Classroom observation forms apart of teacher professional development as stated by MOEST, (1995) while outlining CSOs roles. CSOs effectiveness is measured on how they are able to develop and apply classroom observation skills and enhance teachers' performance. Effectiveness of Curriculum Support Officer in teacher development is based on their duties and responsibility as spelt out by Ministry of Education (Onyango, 2007). According to Israel, (2010) classroom observation refers to *"all occasions when learning and/or teaching activities are observed for specific purpose by someone other than the class teacher and support staff normally attached to the class"*. Classroom observation is developmental and supportive in nature. As Goe & Webb, (2012) observe, there is recognition of the difference between lesson observations for appraisal and those that develop and share teaching and learning strategies. Ultimately, the former is concerned with judgment; the latter with no judgmental support between colleagues. Israel, (2010) states that classroom observation can be an important tool in raising standards through supporting practitioners in sharing and developing their skills and thus improving outcomes for learners. Classroom observations based on indicators of effective practice help determine the instructional strengths and areas of improvement for each teacher and when aggregated they show patterns of practice across grade levels subject areas and for the whole school Goe & Webb, (2012).

Hardman (2009) claims that professional support services for teachers have come to be seen as indispensable for an education that wishes to maintain or promote quality, improvement, relevance and increase efficiency in the use of Curriculum Support Centres. According to Sartain, (2011) classroom observations of teachers should only be undertaken by quality assurance and standards officers in this case curriculum support officers. They should be officers who have had adequate preparation and the appropriate professional skills to undertake observation and to provide constructive

oral and written feedback and support. Sartain, (2011) further states that, individual curriculum support officers may wish to visit classrooms to become familiar with the pre-school or to observe specific aspects of the curriculum. As Academic Development Institute (ADI), (2012) stated classroom observation should observe various principles and all those involved in each observation should have a shared understanding of its specific purpose. Israel (2010) noted that classroom observation should support and develop learning and teaching. Classroom observation must be objective, supportive and developmental, conducted with courtesy, integrity and professionalism. The nature, amount and purpose of observation and as the areas to be focused on should be determined at a planning meeting Sartain, (2011). The total time of observation should be limited to no more than that required to form sound and evidenced judgments as frequent observation sessions are destructive and counterproductive Goe & Webb, (2012). As Israel, (2010) observed that careful consideration is required at the planning meeting of the timing and number of observation session to be carried out during the academic year. The consideration may be inclusive to the requirements of the curriculum support officer who sufficiently prepares, carry out the observation and report back on each session.

Curriculum support officers introduce teachers to “teachers observing teachers” form of professional development after training them of the same. According to Britto, (2013) teacher observation is usually linked to classroom performance. It is a form of professional development that improves teaching practices and student performance. As Britto, (ibid) further observed, the intention of teacher-to-teacher observation as a tool for professional development is to in turn enrich students learning. According to Sartain, (2011) being observed in the classroom can rattle any teacher’s nerves. Nevertheless, teacher observations that serve as vehicles for professional growth and development rather than performance evaluation have multiple benefits to teachers, administrators and the school as a whole. It aids in delivering a sustainable and quality education in school. Teacher-to-teacher observation is a peer observation which is a form of collaborative professional development. Mudalia, (2012) further notes that the main functions of a curriculum support center are to provide in-service training. They also carry out workshops and seminars in which partial solutions to the existing difficulties are ironed out while materials that are required for implementation of these solutions are advised and provided to help teachers in their work. It is to this backdrop that this paper will seek to find out whether workshops and meetings are organized at the Curriculum Support Centre to help teachers in developing and using learning materials. Chavan, (2013) defined instructional materials as devices which present units of knowledge through auditory or visual stimuli or both with a view to help learning. According to the MOEST, (2009), the Curriculum support officer should intervene and advice in teacher preparation, provision and development of learning materials.

It should be noted that the primary purpose of the CSO is to advice and train MOEST, (2009) and organize in-service training for teachers in order to help them implement the curriculum effectively. Curriculum Support Centers play vital role in supporting the learning process for their fundamental goal is the improvement of the

quality of teaching and learning at the ECDE and classroom level. The use of teaching or learning materials is externally crucial to the learning of pre-scholars at this level of education (NACECE, 2014). As Burger, (2010) observed, the *"central role of teaching materials is to support teaching by making ideas and concepts clear, making learning interesting and vivid"*. They promote motivation and retention to learners. Engle, (2011) states that, *"for effective and quality teaching and learning, there must be adequate resources"*. Materials used by learners concretize the all-important knowledge that is presented to learners and helps them in making learning experiences appear as real and as living. They, *"supplement the spoken word, develop concepts and improve attitudes, extent appreciations and interests"* Chavan, (2013). Vegas, (2010) posit that teaching materials support learners learning by effectively communicating knowledge and skills. Therefore, effective use of teaching and learning materials greatly influence the achievement of learner as Vegas (ibid) observed.

According to Franke, (2010) instructional materials possess some inherent advantages that make them unique in teaching. For one thing, they provide the teacher with interesting and compelling platforms for conveying information, since they also motivate learners to want to learn even more. Ideally, a support center serving a group of schools should be provided with sufficient facilities to enable it function efficiently and provide teaching and learning support materials that teachers need. Regenstein, (2013) alludes that teacher development is a common and more generalizable model to provide teachers with an accessible and permanently available support or advisory service. CSCs are also established as resources centers where teachers can make references and be assisted to prepare teaching / learning aids MOEST, (2009). ECDE teachers need to benefit from services provided by the curriculum support officers. They also need to benefit from materials and resources provided by curriculum support centers.

As Regenstein, (2013) states, the quality of education and training on participation given to pre-school learners depends greatly on the availability and adequacy of instructional materials. Teachers need to adjust their educational content to the changing skill requirements of sustainability of Early Childhood Education. The accessibility of materials depends upon their availability, storage and the teachers habits of usage Chavan, (2013). CSCs were mandated to facilitate teachers to develop, select and use teaching learning materials. CSCs, MOEST, (1998) were established as resource centres where teachers can make references and be assisted to prepare teaching / learning materials. The ministry of education envisaged a situation where a curriculum support centre would allow pre-school teachers to visit the CSCs and borrow or use all the materials they needed including the teacher made materials, teacher's guides' supplementary texts, science equipment, curriculum guides, audio visual aids and other classroom materials like maps and charts (Otunga, 2001). Guman, (2010) avers that, CSCs should provide teachers with a platform of preparing and producing classroom materials and a storage room for every material.

Curriculum support officers' role in selection and preparation of instructional materials is very important. The CSOs and teachers should always remember that, each and every instructional material possesses a specific unique strength in teaching situation. These learning situations cannot be exactly replicated by the use of another (Guman, 2010). Effective classroom teaching, communication and fast learning would only be guaranteed or facilitated by skillful utilization and selection of appropriate instructional materials by the teachers. Engle, (2011) observed that, appropriateness of the materials to instructional objectives; freedom of the content from bias and degree of the quality should be considered. Gumam, (2010) goes further to suggest that, teachers can collect local materials free of charge to make them display or illustrate a lesson. For a CSC to be effective, it is extremely important for it to have a large variety of the necessary materials and tools to be used by the administrators and where teachers can use and for teachers to draw from NACECE, (2001).

Supervision as defined by American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2011) is a continuous monitoring of ECD activities to ensure effective implementation of ECD approved curriculum. Supervision motivates teachers and results to children's holistic development, promotes and enriches the individual professional growth of teachers as well as all those who are involved. As Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), (2010) states, supervision is an important aspect of ECDE curriculum implementation as it aims at regular and continuous monitoring of activities to ensure that the curriculum's goal / objectives are met. In pre-school set up, teaching or learning phenomenon is usually the most important part of learning where supervision should be frequent. Supervision should be aimed at ensuring the total development of children and how children interact with one another KICD, (2010). Quality education at both regional and international level has been thorny issue. In South Africa for example, the quality of education is comprised by high enrolment of learners in comparison to that of the teachers. Nevertheless, the country has seriously managed the quality of education through CSCs (QASO) Seashore, (2010). Seashore further reveals that there are several concerns on the problems the CS officers (QASO) face in supervision, such as short notice and time frame, very few assessment tools and lack of transport.

Curriculum support centres in Kenya are modeled to look like the British Teaching Training Centres (DFID), (1999). However, they tend to retain the traditional teacher training approach of decades past without making deliberate effort to change with time. Hardman, (2009) reported that classroom practice observed in many schools in Kenya encourages learners to memorize facts while the teachers use transmission approaches that affect the sustainability of quality education at the long run. Otunga, (2011) puts it effective teaching is at the heart of high quality early childhood provision. The Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) in the centres were to prepare teaching materials as per researched need. For them to be effective in supervision, they have to continuously update teachers' pedagogical skills, teaching materials production, and classroom observation of lessons among others (Otunga, 2011). Mudalia (2012) notes that, for Curriculum Support centres to be effectively in supervision, they must be well

organized and teachers better informed of the professional services they provide as well as the programmes they offer. NACECE, (1996) stated that, a Curriculum Support centre should have the ability of laying the foundation of acquiring information, knowledge and skills for teachers' enrichment as well as recreation of leisure through supervision. The recognition of extremely difficult work of CSOs in supporting teachers in their teaching tasks should be the aim of teachers' resource or curriculum support centers Pipers, (2013). NACECE, (1996) avers that a resource center or Curriculum Support center should be thought of as an ideal, concept or area / institution that facilitate teachers' development and sharing of skills, talents, innovations and knowledge. This can only be successful through proper supervision.

According to America Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), (2011) pre-school support services and supervision are crucial elements in the improvement of quality of ECDE. Pre-school supervision is essentially important because the simplest form of difficulties would best be dealt with correctly and by monitoring learning activities at preschool level. In other words, there is a growing conviction that teachers should be encouraged and empowered to gauge for themselves the quality of the services which they have to deliver Gumam, (2010). Education for All (EFA) and Global monitoring Report (GMR) (2005), allude that quality education determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. Adetula, (2010) recommended that, government (in this case through the CSCs) may improve its responsibility of supervision and ensuring of quality by understanding of what transpires in the learning institutions. CSOs effective supervision should be guided by the role they play in servicing teachers, giving guidance in the preparation of teaching learning materials so that teachers can improve in their pedagogical and instruction skills Otunga, (2011). As supervisors, the CSOs ensure that, procedures are adhered to and maintained for the achievement of ECDE education goals. Curriculum Support Officers also play the classroom teachers through demonstrations for purpose of attaining the required educational standards Kosgey, (2011). This therefore, means that teacher supervision can contribute to quality education and enhance academic performance in school.

Quality Assurance is an all-embracing term covering all policies, processes and actions through which the quality is maintained and developed Wafula, (2010). It concerns itself with improvement of the total teaching and learning situation. The relationship of CSO as the official QASO and the teachers in pre-schools is highly encouraged Mathew, (2012). Kosgey, (2011) asserted that, the government, parents, non-governmental organizations and donors recognize that although major strides have been made in the supervision of ECD education, there are serious shortcomings in that sector of education. Wafula, (2010) observed that at the core of the challenges facing Kenya's Early Childhood Education is its quality of supervision. This clearly focuses on the effectiveness of supervision by CSOs and all other QASOs. According to Mudalia, (2012), the main purpose of CSCs establishment was to offer professional encouragement to teachers, guide and counsel teachers and see to it that they are provided with whatever they need so that they are able to teach effectively. Mudalia

also emphasized on the advantageous position of teachers in ECDE when they make full possible use of CSOs. For the CSCs to play its intervention role effectively in supervision, as a support service as Bunyi, (2012) observed, it must be adequately staffed to make certain that regular supervision and opt follow-ups of teachers in the classroom is adequate.

In-service education and training (INSET) for teachers as observed by Otunga, (2011) is conceived as a career long process where teachers are expected to be regularly updated on new curriculum materials, pedagogy and new policies in education" and where supervision is routinely done. Apart from CSOs not being effectively trained as well as qualified to be able to meet teaching needs of teachers, CSCs as observed by Ololube, (2013) officers face many challenges which affect their effectiveness. Maranga, (1997) mentions lack of commitment and positive approach as a challenge. He argues that the training as well as quality of personnel may be a guarantee of improved support service functions if such practices are accompanied by dedications and commitment together with a change of attitude by teachers and curriculum support officers towards each other. Duncan and Magnuson, (2013) note that there is poor staff selections and that the caliber of staff appointed as SC officers are not always appropriate for the roles they have to undertake. Stacy, (2011) emphasized the need to retrain CSOs for this would increasingly make CSCs and CSOs themselves more effective in supervision of teachers in pre-schools. This challenge is well appreciated by Ololube, (2013) who recommends that, in order to ensure that the education offered at the school level continues to be of good quality; adequate budgetary allocations to facilitate quality assurance services and supervision must be provided to CSOs as support services providers. Supervision of ECDE curriculum as a form of quality assurance on ECE and Development greatly influence teacher effectiveness and performance (Otunga, 2011).

According to piper *et al*, (2014) teaching and learning globally is said to be the greatest contributor of improving learning outcomes. In-service training (INSET) is part of classroom teaching and learning and considerably one of the major factors of improving learning outcomes in schools. In-service training is a professional programme or staff development effort where professionals are trained and discuss their work with others in their peer groups. In-service programme also refers to training that is given to teachers during the course of their teaching Piper, (2010). In-service training for teachers has developed mainly in the latest decades; however, there is a long history of actions undertaken for teacher professional development within the developed and developing world's school systems Jones *et al*, (2014). According to Jones *et al*, (ibid) in Finland, in-service teacher training is used as the reflection of life-long learning concept for teachers. Teachers have the will to learn in order to meet the continuously developing demands of teaching today. According to Kemi, (2014), the term in-service teacher education refers to the development of individuals arising from the whole range of events and activities by which serving teachers can extend their personal academic or practical education, their professional competence and their understanding of educational principles and methods. Kemi, (2014) further goes to

explain that in-service programmes range from conferences, workshops, short courses and refresher courses amongst others. In-service education may be one day, a week, a month, three months and even a year depending on the objectives and significance of the course in question.

Even with the presence of teachers and curriculum as supply side inputs, teaching and learning process is regarded as the major factor of improving learning outcomes. Bunyi & Piper, (2012), points out that, the quality of teaching is strongly related to pupils' achievement in learning. Jones *et al*, (2014) observed that, teaching and learning is one of the important aspects of maintaining quality education in institution and needs continuous refreshment in the life time of a teacher. Therefore, more emphasis should be focused on policies that tip towards a continuous holistic quality education for practicing teachers. Professional competence in teaching and learning, results into desirable and improved learning outcomes. This therefore makes the quality of teachers central to the process of learning. Lucas, (2013) argues that the quality of teachers depend on academic background as well as in-service trainings given. Nevertheless, the quality of teachers may be affected by the form of training they may have received in their pre-training phase. As Bunyi, (2011) observed teacher training colleges; curriculum does not connect with the needs of learners in schools. Therefore, regular planning of INSETs should be a major aspect of improving quality education for teachers and better learning outcomes in all schools.

Continuous INSET is a prerequisite for successful implementation of the curriculum. However, the quality of INSET owes itself to the recognition of prior learning that is determined through proper needs analysis and the delivery mode that needs to cater for different learning styles especially for adult learning Kemi, (2014). As Ndambuki (2009) states, in-service teacher training programmes have been carried out in Kenya for a considerable period of time. Leu, (2004) commenting on teaching strategies and classroom practice stated that, teacher professional development would constitute improvement of education if the professional development was focused on specific changes in teachers' classroom practice. Adedoyin, (2011) concurred with Leu above by observing that, the basis for development of innovative teaching approaches and techniques is deep content knowledge and therefore, teachers must be proficient in general pedagogic knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge. These teachers' output variables are determined by the presence of an effective Curriculum Support officer who conducts classroom observation and also does lesson carries out regular INSETS to enhance teacher performance in instructions. Oloruntegbe, (2010) in his research findings indicated that poor curriculum implementation was affected by poor capacity among the teaching staff. The teachers used out-dated methodology and strategies of lesson delivery because they lacked necessary skills like computer literacy and internet competences that are associated with the modern teaching techniques.

Jones *et al*, (2014) citing Marinas (2011) observed that capacity building for teachers equips them with the necessary professional development that enables them to deal with changes effectively. They further observed that, INSET contributes to better learning outcomes, even though it is not the only factor affecting learning outcomes.

Therefore, there may be urgent need of looking for INSET interventions that may result to high impact but less costly Piper, (2013). The quality of pre-school teachers and the ways of teaching are largely recognized as some of the most critical factors that when combined they create most of quality education Hammond, (2013). In many ways, INSET is more likely to improve teachers' quality. Most of INSET programmes carried out in many schools have been that are ineffective and do not support teachers in improving learning outcomes in ECDE centres Bunyi and Piper, (2012). The way teachers teach should be of critical concern to curriculum support officers (CSOs) in designing support service programmes that would improve the quality of pre-scholars (UNESCO; 2010).

As Bunyi (2012) observed, teaching is arguably the strongest school-level determinant of student learning and achievement. Therefore it is important to pay attention to teacher quality, in other words, to teacher preparation as well as continuous development which is very important. Piper *et al*, (2014) concur with Bunyi (ibid) to that educational quality is a matter of the skills and knowledge that learners gain through school. piper *et al*, (2014) go further to explain that generally, quality improves if a teacher understands the subject matter and has the know-how of teaching effectively. The teacher quality also improves if she/he has the motivation of going to school each day and working to help the learners learn. Improvement of how a teacher gives instruction is a complex task that entails a wide range of interventions which include the availability of curriculum support officers, support services and improvement of pre-service and in-service teacher training (UNESCO, 2010). Curriculum support officer's, supportive services and efforts should be geared towards classroom teachers ability in adopting teaching methods that are learner centered in the teaching / learning process.

There are two types of in-service education and training (INSET) programmes, a long term up-grading or professional courses for school teachers offered by the Quality Assurance and Standard Officers and Short term INSET Government of Kenya (GoK), (2010). INSET programmes have been used to upgrade the teachers' capacity, sensitize and training teachers in implementing new interventions in Education system in Kenya for a long time Kemi, (2014). While support programmes to improve teaching and learning in pre-schools may be provided at national levels, INSET at school level is more important. According to GoK, (2010) such programmes are likely to include induction programme for newly qualified teachers or newly deployed staff. It may also include short workshops to address particular needs of pre-school teachers and use of media as a supportive service for school-based in-servicing or individual initiatives. INSET should also include curriculum based workshops led by curriculum support officer and the already conversant classroom teachers. As Jones (2014) observed, local curriculum support officers can give advice and set up INSET programmes in pre-schools to enhance academic performance in the ECDE centres. Pre-school based programmes initiated are related to the context of individual pre-schools. Learning covers a large number of staff and a wider scope to draw on teaching resources is provided Piper, (2013).

According to Wasanga, (2011), professional development plays a critical role in the academic performance of the learners and the life of any professional and particularly teachers. INSET as a form a teacher's professional development provides a chance for teachers to keep up with changing trends in teaching to remain relevant and effective in their work. During INSET, teachers share on emerging issues in the societal and how to address such issues. This goes along with teacher improving academic performance of their learners Gok, (2010). INSET remains one of the approaches most often employed to up-grade teachers' skills and competence the world over Kemi, (2014). The rationale for INSET includes, professional development, raising the standards of teaching, hence performance improvement of learners and learning, keeping abreast with rapid changes in knowledge and responding to policy and curriculum changes GoK, (2010). The role of curriculum support officers in the provision of INSET to pre-school teachers determines the level of sustainability of early childhood education in a pre-school centre. The ECDE Curriculum Support officer organizes training and facilitates development of ideas, skills, learning resources and helps them realize their ability to influence and change the lives of learners or other people around them through effective delivery of curriculum (Engle,2011). They should always evaluate objectively, report accurately and fairly and respect the confidentiality of the information gained Chavan, (2013). The more reason this study is set to investigate the influence of curriculum support officers' role on sustainability of Early Childhood Education.

3. Material and Methods

The study employed the mixed methods research. Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative and qualitative research (Orodho; 2009). By mixing both quantitative (close-ended information) and qualitative (open-ended information) research and data, researchers gained in depth of understanding and corroboration, while offsetting the weaknesses inherent to using each approach by itself. This method was particularly suited to this study because of its triangulation possibility formation. This is the use of several means (methods, data sources and researchers) to examine the same phenomenon.

The non-current triangulation design was used in this study. The design was useful in this paper because the investigation was descriptive in nature. The design involved collection of data for the purpose of answering curriculum support officers' influence on sustainability of early childhood education. The information was collected from the respondents through the use of pre-formulated questions in a questionnaire which targeted the selected pre-school teachers. The research was carried out in Public pre-schools in Mvita Sub-County, Mombasa, Kenya. Orodho (2009) describes a descriptive design as a "*method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals*". While Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003) give the reasons for preference of descriptive design as its ability to determine and report things

the way they are without manipulating the variables. The target population of the study consisted of all 84 public pre-schools in Mvita Sub-County. According to County Director of Education Mvita Sub-County, (2016) there were 84 managers of the respective centres and 200 public pre-school ECDE teachers in Mvita Sub-County. This is well shown in Table 1 below, which presents the target population grid.

Table 1: Target population

Target Population	Size
All public pre-schools in Mvita sub-County	84
ECDE teachers in public pre-schools	200
ECDE managers in public pre-schools	84
Total	368

Source: Mvita Sub-County Education Office, (2017)

The study adopted stratified proportionate sampling technique where the respondents were mainly ECDE teachers in KG1 up to KG3 and ECDE manager. For the reason that the target population was made up of pre-school teachers only in various ECDE centres, the number of selected teachers and managers in each of the selected centres was first identified and their sum was used as part or proportion of the whole universe to be sampled. A sample size of 30% (60) ECDE teachers and 36% (30) ECDE managers was reached through proportionate stratified sampling. This was through a 30% criteria selection as agreed by Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003). Within each stratum, a simple random sampling was further applied to ECDE teachers at different levels. This was to ensure that each member of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. Table 2 below represents the sample frame.

Table 2 : Sampling grid

Respondents	Target Population	Weight	Sample Size
ECDE teachers	200	0.3	60
ECDE managers	84	0.4	30
Total	284	0.7	90

Source: Researchers, (2017)

The study employed three types of tools for data collection; questionnaires, interview guide and observation checklist. The questionnaires were used to source information on the assessment of the influence of curriculum support officers on sustainability of ECDE. The questionnaires were administered to ECDE teachers. The questionnaires contained closed-ended questions only. The questionnaires were self-administered on "drop and pick-up basis, whereby respondents were given a grace period of 3 days for them to fill-in the questionnaires. The interview schedule was used to solicit information of the study from the ECDE managers. An observation checklist was also used in this study. According to Peril (1995), an observation schedule helps in gathering data concerning the status of the school or institution facilitates equipment and examining the general situation of the environment. The observation schedule was used

used in this study in collecting data on facilities, resource and equipment, form of transport and finance books available in Curriculum Support centres. This instrument was selected because it provided a range of reliable data as the researcher was able to see facilities available in the CSCs.

In order to obtain the validity of the research instrument, content validity was employed to measure the degree to which the test items represented the domain or universe of the quality (trait) measured. The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest method. The questionnaires were administered to 9 pre-school teachers in Kisauni, a neighboring Sub-County where ECDE teachers were involved in the main study. The cut off mean for the reliability coefficient was 0.60 (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). After the data were collected researchers cross-checked the instruments' completeness, uniformity and accuracy. An information code status was prepared using statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) computer package. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis, while tables were used to present the data.

4. Results and Discussion

All (60) 100% of the sampled ECDE teachers and all (30) 100% of the sampled ECDE managers responded to the questionnaires and the interviews respectively. The response rate was therefore 100% which was sufficient for analysis and reporting from the field survey. Thus, the study was set to achieve four objectives, namely;

A. To investigate the influence of classroom observation on sustainability of Early Childhood Education in Mvita Sub-County.

Table 3 : Responses on CSOs Classroom observation in ECDE Centres

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
CSOs visits at ECDE centres for the purpose of classroom observation.	9	15	36	60	3	5	6	10	6	10	100
CSOs visits to ECDE centres to advise teachers on teaching methods.	12	20	12	20	6	10	24	40	6	10	100
The number of times CSOs conduct classroom observation in ECDE centres.	9	15	12	20	3	5	30	50	6	10	100
CSOs planning with teachers on timing and number of observations to be carried out.	9	15	27	45	3	5	18	30	3	5	100

Source: Research Data, (2017)

The findings revealed that majority (60%) of the teachers disagreed that curriculum support officers (CSOs) visit their ECDE centre more than once in a term for the

purpose of classroom observation, while 40% of the respondents agreed that CSOs visit to ECDE centres and advising the teachers on teaching methods enhances teachers' classroom instructions, whereas 50% of the respondents agreed that the number of times CSOs conduct classroom observation in ECDE centres raises teachers' standards and develop their skills and so improving outcomes of learners, whilst 45% of the teachers disagreed that CSOs plan with teachers on timing and number of observations to be carried out during an academic year. The implications are that CSOs do not visit ECDE centres for purpose of classroom observation. Therefore, there was inadequate teacher support from CSOs in the implementation of ECDE curriculum. This has challenged the teachers' professional development resulting to poor learners' performance. This view agrees with Goe *et al*, (2012) & Israel (2010) who observed that teachers' classroom observation enhances a classroom instruction which in effect improves the learners' outcomes, developmental and supportive in nature. Hence, must exercise to be done in the learning process.

B. To examine the influence of CSOs in preparation of teaching materials on sustainability of Early Childhood Education in Mvita Sub-County.

Table 4 : Responses on CSOs preparation of teaching materials

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
CSOs assistance to teachers in preparation of ECDE teaching materials.	30	50	15	25	6	10	3	5	6	10	100
CSOs make curriculum materials available to ECDE teachers.	15	25	27	45	0	0	12	20	6	10	100
CSOs prepare quality teaching materials with relevant content for teachers in every subject.	27	45	12	20	9	15	9	15	3	5	100
CSOs preparation of ECDE teaching materials.	3	5	0	0	0	0	21	35	36	60	100

Source: Research Data, (2017)

Results showed that 50% of the respondents strongly disagreed that, curriculum support officers assist teachers in preparation of ECDE teaching materials more than once in a year, whilst 45% were not sure to whether CSOs make teaching materials available to ECDE teachers more than once in year; 45% strongly disagreed that CSOs prepare quality teaching materials with relevant content for teachers in every subject, while 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that, CSOs preparation for materials have an impact on improvement of ECDE teaching. This connotes that CSOs preparation of teaching materials have an impact on improvement of ECDE teaching. Ideally, CSOs should provide teaching and learning support materials that teachers need. The use of teaching or learning materials as observed by NACECE (2014) is extremely crucial to the learning of pre-scholars at this level of education. This view also is consented by

Regenstein, (2013) & Franke & Webb, (2010) who noted that, the quality of education and training on participation given to pre-school learners depends greatly on the availability and adequacy of instructional materials as they inherent advantages that make them unique in teaching.

C. To determine the influence of supervision of ECDE curriculum on sustainability of Early Childhood Education in Mvita Sub-County.

Table 5 : Responses on supervision of ECDE curriculum and sustainability

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
CSOs visits to ECDE centres for supervision purpose.	24	40	9	5	3	5	15	25	9	15	100
CSOs ability to supervise every teacher in ECDE centres.	21	35	15	25	6	10	9	15	9	15	100
CSOs do follow- ups to see to it that teachers implement what they (CSOs) recommend to them.	6	10	18	30	3	5	21	35	12	20	100
The number of supervision visits by CSOs in ECDE centres.	3	5	9	15	3	5	30	50	15	25	100

Source: Research Data, (2017)

The research findings showed that 40% of the respondents strongly disagreed that CSOs visit their ECDE Centres more than once a term for supervision purpose, whereas 35% disagreed that curriculum support officers are able to supervise every teacher in their ECDE centres for more than once in a term, while 35% agreed that, CSOs do follow ups to see to it that teachers implement what they (CSOs) recommends to them in supporting teaching, while 50% of the respondents strongly agreed that, the number of supervision by CSOs have an impact in improvement of ECDE learning. This implies that, the number of supervision visits by CSOs has an influence in improvement of ECDE learning. Frequency, consistence and continuous supervision of ECD activities ensure effective implementation of ECD approved curriculum. This view agrees with KICD, (2010) who noted that supervision is an important aspect of ECDE curriculum implementation as it aims at regular and continues monitoring of activities to ensure that the curriculum's goals/objectives are met.

D. To establish the influence of in-service training on sustainability of Early Childhood Education in Mvita Sub-County.

Table 6 : Responses on in-service training and professional development

Statements	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
CSOs organize and carry out in-service training for ECDE teachers.	30	50	15	25	3	5	6	10	6	10	100
CSOs organize conference, workshops, short courses and refresher courses to ECDE teachers.	33	55	12	20	0	0	9	15	6	10	100
Effectiveness of CSOs in organizing in-service training for ECDE teaches.	6	10	24	40	9	15	15	25	6	10	100
The number of in-service training organized by CSOs has an impact in improvement of ECDE teaching.	6	10	3	5	3	5	36	60	12	20	100

Source: Research Data, (2017)

From the findings 50% of the respondents strongly disagreed to that CSOs organize and carry out in service training for ECDE teachers in more than once a year in their institutions, while 55% strongly disagreed to that curriculum support officers organize conferences, workshops, short courses and short refresher courses to ECDE teachers as need arises, whereas 40% disagreed to that effectiveness of CSOs in organizing in-service training for ECDE teachers in their institution was above average, and 60% of the respondents agreed to that the number of in-service trainings organized by CSOs have an impact in improvement of ECDE teaching. This means that the number of in service training organized by CSOs have an impact in importance of ECDE teaching. Frequent and regular in-service training helps teachers in keeping with changing teaching trends and emerging issues. This view is supported by Wasanga, (2011) who noted that, INSET as a form of teachers' professional development provides a chance for teachers to keep up with changing trends in teaching to remain relevant and effective in their work. The frequent changes in teaching methods and technology may pose a challenge to teachers hence regular INSET enables teachers to experience some of these changes and learn how to cope. During INSET, teachers share on emerging issues and how to address such issues.

5. Recommendations

Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study as per the objectives:

A. On classroom observation

CSOs should support teachers by conducting classroom observation in pre-schools to improve classroom instructions. They should help practicing teaches to grasp on how to go about conducting school based "teacher-to-teacher" observation approach system. Curriculum support officers should make frequent visits to pre-schools for purpose of conducting classroom observation sessions for improvement so as to positively influence the ECED and sustainability.

B. On preparation of teaching and learning materials

The Ministry of Education should empower teachers on the management and use of teaching and learning resources. Teachers need capacity building to enable them to develop, select and use resources for use in classroom instruction. Teachers need to be equipped with skills of preparing quality teaching materials with relevant content to be used in every subject. Teachers need to be assisted and empowered in the preparation and production of their own low cost teaching materials. This will enable teachers to present lessons in the classrooms in an interesting and motivating manner while using teaching or learning materials.

C. On supervision of ECDE curriculum

The Ministry of Education through the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) should make frequent visits to ECDE centres for purpose of supervision and be able to supervise every ECDE teacher for more than once in a term. Frequent visits ensure that teachers are always prepared with teaching preparation documents on a daily basis. QASOs should always do follow-ups to see to it that teachers implement what has been recommended to in curriculum implementation to support teaching in pre-schools.

D. On in-service training and professional development

The Ministry of Education through the CSOs should provide teachers with continuous, sustainable quality in-service trainings as a form of Teacher Professional Development. In-service trainings address teachers' professional needs on the job. The Ministry should also endeavor to organize in-service programmes so as to improve ECDE learning outcomes. It should be done in form of conferences, workshops, short courses and refresher courses to ECDE teachers occasionally when need arises.

Finally, the study focused on Mvita Sub-County, Mombasa, Kenya. Similar study can be carried out in different geographical locations within and outside the Country. Further, the study was carried out in public pre-schools; thus, a similar study can be carried out in private pre-schools in the same or different geographical locations to see if similar results will be arrived at for generalizations of the findings.

6. Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that classroom observation influence the sustainability of Early Childhood Education to a great extent. However, it can also be concluded that insufficient CSOs role in classroom observation affect the sustainability of ECDE in Mvita Sub-County pre-schools to a very great extent.

In the second objective, it can be concluded that the availability of a variety of teaching materials, teachers' production of own low cost teaching materials which are relevant and adaptive to a particular group of children to be taught, classroom utilization of learning materials in teaching process and classroom display as well as storage of materials were insufficient. Lack of CSOs' preparation of materials can impact negatively on improvement of ECDE teaching.

The third objective it can be concluded that, supervision of ECDE curriculum influence sustainability of ECE to a great extent. Thus continuous monitoring of ECDE activities ensures effective implementation of ECDE approved curriculum which results to high academic achievement and greatly influences the sustainability of early childhood education. Teachers need the appropriate support and supervision because their limitless potential competence in professional development is being tested in the classroom on daily basis and greatly influences the sustainability of ECDE.

In final objective, it can be concluded that teachers' in-service training influences the sustainability of ECE to a great extent. That the effectiveness of CSOs in organizing frequent in-service trainings in pre-schools impact greatly to the improvement of ECDE teaching and have positive influence to the sustainability of early childhood education.

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