

Full Length Research

Financing mechanisms in early childhood education in Kenya: A case of Kakamega county

Emmily M. Sitati^{1*}, Bota Kennedy² and Mwangi ndirangu³

¹Department of Education planning and Management, MasindeMuliro University of Science and TechnologyBox 190 - 50100, Kakamega – Kenya.

²Department of Educational Psychology, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

³Department of External studies and Media, Egerton University

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The study investigated the financing mechanisms in ECE centres in Kakamega County using descriptive survey design. Purposive sampling was used to select 3 sub- counties giving 30 % of the population. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 30% of the ECE centres. Head teachers and one ECE teacher from each ECE participated in the study. However where more than one teacher was found in an ECE centre, simple random sampling through balloting was used to select the one to participate. The DEOs and DICECE Officers of the selected districts were selected purposively to participate in the study. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the ECE head teachers and teachers, interview schedules from the DEOs and DICECE officers and observation schedules used to collect data on availability of physical facilities. The instruments were validated through expert judgement and pilot-testing. The findings revealed that parents were the main financiers of ECE programs. The study recommended that; ECE should be streamlined within the policy of free primary education.

Key words: Stakeholders, Finances, Early Childhood Education Centres

INTRODUCTION

Children's success in life begins in the early years of childhood and investment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has a direct and positive impact on primary school enrolment, retention and completion. The environment in which a child learns plays an important role in holistic development of children and is determined by the amount of financial resources available to the centres. The Education For All Report (2007) confirms that children's success in life begins in the early years of childhood and therefore investment in ECE has a direct and positive impact on primary school enrolment, retention and completion rate. Early childhood education program in Kenya operates on the basis of partnership, collaboration and networking. The main stakeholders in ECE are the parents, the community and the private sector who provide funds and other resources. Other partners are:

the Government of Kenya and its constituent ministries coordinated by Ministry of Education (MOE). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Faith-based organizations have been providing support to ECE as well as bilateral and multilateral partners including UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Bernard Van Leer Foundation (BVLF), World Bank, and UNESCO. The policy on partnerships aims at enhancing the involvement of various partners in the provision of ECE services (UNESCO, 2005). The roles of these stakeholders and the coordination mechanism were defined in the National ECDE Policy Framework developed in 2005 by UNESCO in collaboration with the MoE and standard guidelines launched in 2007.

Parents are expected to provide financial resources which are used to procure teaching/learning resources, pay teachers' salaries, provide physical facilities and feed the children (MoE, 2005). The community provides physical facilities like land and buildings, mobilise resources, initiate and manage community based services for young

*Corresponding author. Email: emmilymugasia@yahoo.com,
Tel: 0722234890

children such as provision of clean and safe drinking water and meals. Community members also provide building materials and providing free labour during construction. The Ministry of Education on the other hand provides policy guidelines on capacity building of ECDE personnel, develops curriculum, supervises ECDE programs and registers ECE centres. Ministry of Education also trains and certifies ECE teachers and trainers and maintains standards and quality assurance. The NGOs and FBO have complemented the government's efforts by mobilizing resources, supporting capacity building for ECE programs and advocacy through community sensitization (UNESCO, 2005).

Bilateral and multilateral development partners have supported ECE programs through resource mobilization, capacity building, advocacy, technical support and funding ECE and ECDE programs through the ministry of Education. For instance the Community Support Grant from the World Bank has assisted improve infrastructure in ECE centres especially in marginalized and pockets of poverty areas impacting positively on participation and quality of services offered (RoK, 2007). However, there could be no clear policy on financing and lack of coordinating mechanism to facilitate participation of stakeholders. This has resulted in diversity of practices by various stakeholders compromising the quality of service offered. The impact of involvement by all these stakeholders in ECE is unknown and how it has affected the growth and effectiveness of the program.

Problem statement

Early childhood education has faced a myriad of challenges since independent escalated from the lack/ inadequate funding of the ECE programmes by both the private and public sectors. In 2003, the government declared primary education free and this led to an influx of children in public primary schools. This policy although received well by most education stakeholders, impacted negatively on ECE. Many children were able to enrol in primary schools without necessarily going through early childhood education because poor parents felt a relief of the burden of paying for early childhood education. The government funding at this level was minimal forcing other stakeholders to shoulder the burden of financing the programmes. The purpose of the study was therefore to establish the nature of financial support by stakeholders to the public and private centres in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study were:

i. To establish the amount of levy paid by the parents to the ECE centre in kakamega County.

ii. To determine the funding mechanisms for teachers' salaries in Kakamega County.

iii. To establish funding of the centres' feeding program in Kakamega County.

iv. Investigate the Government support to the ECE centres in Kakamega County.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows the interaction between the dependent variables (early childhood education resources) and the independent variable (finances). A good mechanism of financing the program ensures that resources are availed for the smooth running of the centres.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Association for Development of Education in Africa Working Group on Early Childhood Development Education noted that ECD has had a low priority in government policies with limited initiatives. There are also wide differences in quality of the initiatives. Most ECD programs are developed and maintained by the private sector, (NGOs) and international organizations. However the programmes suffer from inadequate funding and lack coherence, coordination and sustainability. Africa is the most hit as there are scarce resources for education (ADEA, 2009). This observation is supported by Penn (2008) who cites that ECE has had a low priority in South African government policies. At the same time ECE initiatives are unevenly distributed, and there are wide differences in the quality of the initiatives across the countries. This sub-sector suffers more in African countries where resources are scarce, especially for education. OECD countries invest up to 1.8 % of their GDP in ECD education (Bonnett, 2007). A world conference held in Geneva in 1989 and the 1990 World Conference on Education For All held in Jomtien Thailand broadened ECE curriculum and included other aspects of education. The conference recognised the family and community as important stakeholders in enhancing ECDE. Ghana launched an ECD policy and established multi-sectorial committees at various levels of implementation to serve as the entry points of educational issues concerning ECD in the country. The committees' activities have resulted in improved budgeting for ECE and better understanding of policy makers and implementers' of ECDE issues (ADEA, 2000). In most European countries, public child care programs predominate with the government contributing between 66% to 90% of the child care costs (OECD, 2006). Netherlands provides universal and free ECE for children aged 4 years while Denmark, Finland and Sweden provide ECE to children of one year and above

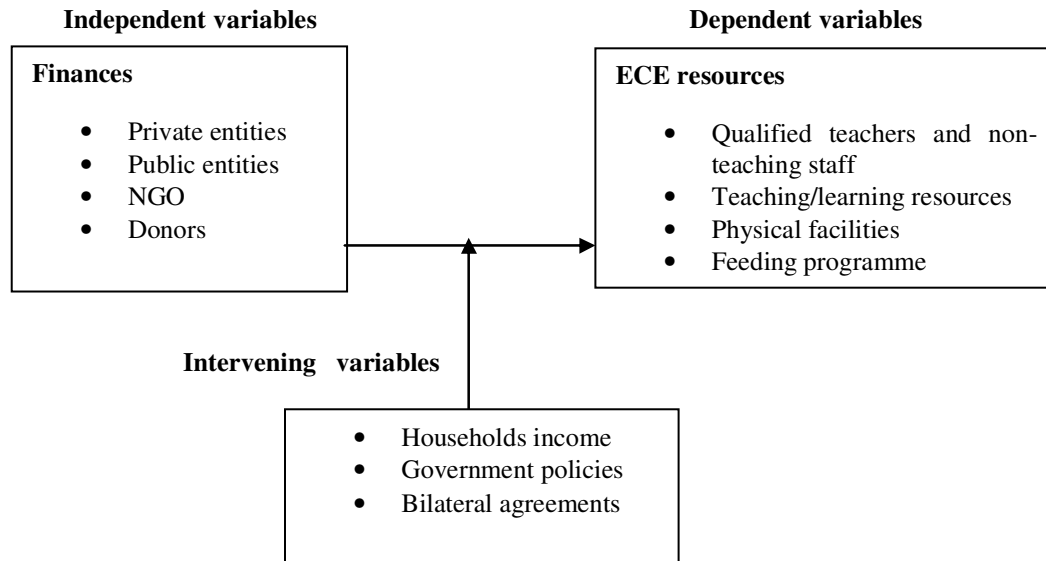


Figure 1. A conceptual framework showing the interrelationship between the dependent, the independent and the intervening variables.
Source: Researcher.

(Sandy, 2010).

Initiatives by stakeholders in provision of early childhood education in Kenya

More than 70% of the ECE facilities are funded by parents, communities, churches and the private investor. The communities are the most important partners in the development of the ECE centers. They take responsibility for the provision of physical facilities, furniture, payment of salaries, organization of feeding programmes, provision of labour and teaching/learning materials. Some communities receive financial and supervisory assistance from NGOs and local government (Kipkorir and Njenga, 1993). Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (2006) reports that the Kenya preschool education programme encourages partnership at all levels. The government, parents, communities and the private sector (e.g. religious organizations, private companies, NGOs and individuals) are the main sources of ECDE finance and support. While the government allocates less than 1% of the education ministry's budget for preschool education, parents and the communities currently manage 75% of the preschools in the country.

The Education Act Cap. 211 of the Laws of Kenya (1968) recommended that ECDE (4-5 years) be integrated into the Basic Education and the linkage of ECDE institutions with primary school level of education. This puts the burden of ensuring that ECE is streamlined into Free Primary Education on the government as the major stakeholder in education. This is supported by the Task Force on the Re-alignment of the Education Sector to the

Constitution of Kenya Report 2010 (ROK, 2012). At the same time the Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 tasks the government was to integrate ECDE into the basic education by 2010 but this policy has not been implemented. According to the fourth schedule on the constitution, the county government is responsible for managing ECDE in the county while the National government retains the responsibility for policy, standards and curriculum development.

Kombo and Gogo (2004) undertook a study on the role of the church in the provision of early childhood education in Nairobi Province. They found that churches employed teachers and support staff. The study further revealed that the churches had created management committees to manage the funds of the centres and provide physical facilities like furniture. The committee promoted the spiritual well-being of the teachers and pupils as well as managing the fees, buying uniform and provision of meals for the disadvantaged children. These were some of the major contributions by the churches as important stakeholders in ECE sub-sector.

Financing ECE in Kenya

The Government, parents, communities and the private sector (e.g. religious organizations, private companies, NGOs, CBOs and individuals) are the main sources of ECE finances and support for the ECE sub-sector. The largest source of external assistance in recent years has been the World Bank's ECD project loan of 1996/7-2003/4, targeting disadvantaged children aged 0+-8 and their parents (UNESCO, 2005). The project focused on

teacher training and community capacity building for service delivery, stressing on the importance of meeting the children's nutritional, health as well as their learning needs. The project underscored the importance of holistic development of a child, linking ECD to formal schooling thus extending the ECDE to 8+ years. In community-owned ECE Centres and those attached to public primary schools, the ECE Committee decides on a monthly basis how much each parent should pay, taking into account the parents' income levels. Money is paid directly to the centres/schools which is then used for paying teachers'/care-takers' salaries, buying instructional materials, improvement of the existing physical facilities and provision of meals.

Early Childhood Education teachers' salaries average around KSh. 2,000 per month, with large variations between rural and urban pre-schools (UNESCO, 2005). However, in Nairobi County for example teachers' salaries for church sponsored ECE centres ranges between Kshs. 1,500 for majority of the centres within the slums, to Kshs. 20,000 for centres within the affluent areas of the county. However, about half the schools paid between Kshs. 1,500 and Kshs. 9,000. This gives a big disparity in the remuneration among teachers of the same class and category (Kombo and Gogo, 2004). Whether or not teachers get paid depends largely on availability of parental contributions. Thus teachers' salaries are not stable and fluctuate each month depending on the level of contribution from parents. In some cases, teachers stay on after official working hours and are paid to look after some children whose parents delay to pick them up at the required time. Other teachers are paid to go to the homes of children to provide residential care (UNESCO, 2005).

With the introduction of Free Primary Education, government funding for ECE which had grown to 0.8% of the total MOEST expenditure by 2001/02, was more than halved in 2002/3 although it recovered in 2003/4. From the 2012/13 Education Budget, ECE sub-sector was allocated 1.6 Billion representing 0.686 % of the total MoE expenditure (RoK, 2012). Worse still, parents do not understand why primary education should be free and not ECE; they have therefore begun resisting paying ECE fees, choking off a vital source of funding.

The Community Support Grants was implemented by the Ministry of Education in 2006 to support marginalized/vulnerable communities as a subsidy fund. The main objective of implementing Community Support Grant was to enhance the capacity of parents and communities to improve and sustain the quality of and access to ECDE services by these communities. However the grant benefited only a small percentage of public ECE centres attached to public primary schools. Manani (2007) in a paper entitled "accelerated learning" noted that the multilateral partners had supported poor communities by providing financial assistance in form of community support grant. This had helped improve ECDE services at pre-school level in terms of improving

the physical facilities e.g. refurbishment of classrooms, construction of toilets and initiation of income generating activities to sustain the ECDE programs. A circular from the MoE dated 21st June 2012 and addressed to all County Directors of Education and DEOs redirected the utilization of Community Support Grant to just teachers' salary top-up and purchase of instructional materials. Only 10 ECE teachers from every constituency were to benefit from the program leaving many trained teachers out. This is below the ECE stakeholders' expectations of employment of ECE teachers by the government.

A study carried out by Owiye (2010) on management of resources in ECDE centres and its implications on quality of ECDE in Bungoma East District revealed that there were variations in financial management, provision of infrastructure and teaching/learning resources depending on sponsorship, locality and type of the centre. It was also clear that teacher remuneration was poor and there lacked opportunities for professional development of teachers. The study recommended that the ECDE teachers should be provided with the right environment essential for effective teaching and use of resources for holistic development.

Linda, Cathy and Margaret (2008) reviewed literature on the outcome of ECE in New Zealand and focused on ECE outcomes for participating children and their parents and the government. They used cost-benefit analysis tools to determine the economic returns from ECE in the reviewed studies. The study concluded that investing in good quality ECE may bring cost saving benefits to governments and economies as well as children and their families. Public spending for ECE programs results in good returns in terms of maternal employment, higher levels of participants' lifelong earnings, reduction in special education services and redundant use of social services that are expected to have a flow on effect to the economy (RoK, 2005).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND STUDY LOCATION

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the funding mechanisms of ECE in Kakamega County. The design enabled rapid collection of data from a representative sample population and generalization of the results beyond the given sample (Cohen and Manion, 1980). This is because the sample was selected in a way that represented the population. The location of the study was Kakamega County, one of the forty seven counties in Kenya with 11 administrative Sub-Counties.

Target population

The study targeted all the 1,820 (950 public and 870 private) ECE centres in the County. These ECE centres had a total of 1,820 head teachers and 3571 teachers. All the 11 DEOs and 11 DICECE Officers in the County

participated in the study.

Sampling procedures and sample size

Purposive sampling was used to select 3 Sub-Counties in the County to participate in the study which was approximately 30% of the population (O'Connor, 2011). The sub-counties had both rural and urban settings therefore giving a variety of cases for comparison purposes. Three sub-counties with this dichotomy were Kakamega Central, Mumias and Likuyani. Kakamega Central sub-county represented the Kakamega region which had four districts in total. From the Lugari region which covered three sub-counties, Likuyani sub-county was selected. Mumias sub-county on the other hand represented the Mumias region which has four sub-counties. Proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to select the participating ECE centres from the selected sub-counties. Thirty percent (30%) of the public and private ECEs were selected to give Kakamega central with 61 public and 64 private ECEs a total of 18 and 19 ECEs respectively. Likuyani which had 60 public and 190 private ECEs provided a total of 18 and 57 public and private ECEs respectively. Mumias with 85 public and 152 private ECEs provided 26 and 46 ECEs respectively. This resulted into 62 public and 122 private ECEs participating in the study. Head teachers from each ECE participated in the study making a total of 62 and 122 head teachers from private and public ECE respectively. One teacher from the sampled ECE participated in the study. However where more than one teacher was found in an ECE centre, simple random sampling through balloting was used to select the one to participate. The DEOs and DICECE Officers of the selected sub-counties were selected purposively to participate in the study.

Data collection instruments

Data was collected using structured questionnaires and an interview. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the head teachers, (H/T Q) and ECE teachers, (TQ). Open, closed and Likert questions were used to collect information from the respondents. Interview Schedule was used to collect data from the DEOs and the District DICECE officers (DDEO IS) to give in-depth information. The interview method enabled the researcher to obtain more detailed information (Kothari, 2003). Interviews also made it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study hence increasing precision (Kerlinger, 1973). Questionnaires and interview schedules were developed with guidance of experts in research methodology and the research supervisors.

Validity and reliability of the instruments

Content validity was ensured by developing the

instruments in such a way that all the concepts in the objectives were included in the instruments (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The researcher sought experts' judgement from the experts in research methodology and the supervisors. They verified the adequacy in coverage of the topic and ensure the questions were logically arranged and all the aspects were well covered. This ensured that the instruments yielded both face and content valid data (Enon, 1998). The instruments were piloted and the results used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaires. The test items were divided into two half ensuring each half was matched based on odd and even numbers and each half scored independently with the test items matched both on content and difficulty. Each half was marked separately and the marks obtained in each half correlated. Cronbach's coefficient Alpha was then computed to determine how items correlated among themselves. The method reduced the time required to compute a reliability coefficient in other methods as well as result in a more conservative estimate of reliability. A correlation coefficient of 0.75 was arrived at and accepted for use in this study as supports Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

Data collection procedures

Before the start of data collection, the researcher got an introductory letter from MMUST, School of Graduate Studies authorizing implementation of the study. A permit from the National Council of Science and Technology and permission from the Office of the President, Provincial Administration to carry out the study were sought. The researcher got the names of the ECE centres from the DEOs offices from which the required sample was selected using stratified random sampling. The researcher then proceeded to the centres where she sought audience with the head teachers. The teachers and the head teachers were then issued with the questionnaires separately after which the researcher collected data from the observation using the observation schedules. The researcher then checked the questionnaires if they were fully filled. If not fully filled the corresponding respondent was requested to fill the gaps as the researcher waited. This procedure took a maximum of two hours in a centre and proceeded until all the sampled centres were covered. This ensured 100% return rate as the researcher left with all the required data.

Data analysis

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules while secondary data was collected by use of observation schedules. Data was edited, organized in line with demographic aspects, groups and research questions and coded accordingly. The core

Table 1. Amounts paid by parents to the ECE centres.

Amount in Kshs	Head teachers		Teachers	
	f	%	f	%
Below 350	55	29.90	26	14.10
351-600	69	37.50	49	26.60
601-950	22	12.00	53	28.90
951-1250	27	14.50	36	19.60
1251-1550	5	02.30	9	04.90
Above 1551	6	03.80	11	05.90
Totals	184	100	184	100

Source: Field data

function of coding was to create codes and scale from the responses which could be summarised and analysed in various ways (Tromp, 2006). Qualitative data was “cleaned”, categorised depending on the categories, organised in themes and categories and coded manually and reported using textual presentation. Quantitative data was coded and analysed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. Findings were presented in frequency tables, charts and graphs. Gay (2003) observes that frequencies and percentages easily communicate the research findings to majority of readers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Parental financial support to ECE's

The first objective of this study was to determine the nature of financial support provided by parents to the public and private ECE centres in Kakamega County. To address this issue the ECE head teachers and teachers were asked to indicate the amount paid by parents as fees to the centres. The results were as presented in Table 1:

Table 1 shows that majority of parents paid less than Kshs.600 per term as reported by 67.4 % of the head teachers and 40.7 % of the teachers. Though affordable to many poor households and the unemployed, the fees charged were too low. A small percentage of the respondents (3.8 % and 5.9 % of the head teachers and teachers respectively) reported higher payments of over kshs 1,551 being made to the centres. With such low fees charged and with limited support from other stakeholders, ECE centres were likely to procure low quantities and quality teaching/ learning resources for the number of children in the ECE centre impacting negatively on the quality on services delivered (Owiye, 2010; Murundu et al., 2010). This could be the genesis of unconducive teaching/learning environments witnessed in a majority of

cases which are rarely child friendly. This lack of funds results into low teacher remuneration leading to high attrition rates and poor infrastructure (Kombo and Gogo 2004; Ngome, 2002).

Data on type of ECE centre and amount paid by parents was cross tabulated and the results presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows low variations in the amount of money paid by parents in both private and public ECE centres as one would not have expected. The charges in public ECE centres were lower than those in private centres comparatively. The analysis indicated that while majority of the public ECE centres were charging between Kshs.350 and 600, per term as reported by 42.7% of the respondents, majority of their private counterparts were charging between Kshs. 601 and 950 as indicated by 34% of the participants. Despite this some ECE centres were still faced with challenges of non-payment of this levy. This could be attributed to the fact that primary school education is free and parents did not understand why they should pay for ECE (UNESCO/OECD, 2005). The above findings are contrary to that of Kombo and Gogo (2004) who carried out a similar study in Nairobi and established that fees paid ranged between Kshs. 500 to Kshs. 45,000 per year with 80.1 % of the ECE centres charging below Kshs.15, 000 per year. The findings further reveal that there is no uniformity in fees payment among the ECE types. Young (2002) recommended a better fee structure as a measure of improving the financing of pre- schools.

Funding of teachers' salaries

The respondents were asked to indicate the stakeholders who funded their salaries. The results were as indicated in Table 3:

Findings in Table 3 indicate that parents carried the largest burden of paying teachers' salaries as reported by 83.7% of the teachers. Only 6% of the teachers were paid by the government through the Community Support

Table 2. Fees levied on parents by type of ECE centre.

Amount in Kshs	Public	ECEs	Private	ECEs
	f	%	f	%
Below 350	12	13	14	14.8
351-600	38	42.7	11	11.7
601-950	21	23.6	32	34
951-1250	16	17.9	20	21.3
1251-1550	2	2	14	14.8
Above 1551	00	00	3	3
Totals	89	100	94	100

Source: Field data

Table 3: Sources of funding for Salary payment.

Stakeholders	Head teachers		Teachers	
	f	%	f	%
By parents	68	37	154	83.7
Government (MoE)	4	2.1	11	6
Community	1	0.5	15	8.1
NGO/ CBO	2	1.2	4	2.2
TSC	109	59.2	0	0
Totals	184	100	184	100

Source: Field data

Grant, a subsidy fund for marginalized/vulnerable communities. The results also revealed that some centres had support from NGOs who paid teachers' salaries as reported by 2.2 % of the teachers. The implication was that parents were the major source of revenue for ECE centres. The findings further indicated that the government had honoured its pledge of remunerating at least two teachers in every public ECE centres as reported by 2.1% and 6 % of the teachers and head teachers respectively. This findings contradicts the Swedish International Cooperation Agency (2006) and Kombo and Gogo (2004) who reported that the Kenyan pre-school education program encourages partnership at all levels. It is therefore assumed that the entire partners should equally contribute to the sub-sector by cost-sharing on a fifty- fifty basis. With a budgetary allocation of less than 1 % from the MoE budget, parents bore the bigger burden of financing ECE by providing 49 % of the ECE finances in church sponsored school in Nairobi province (Kombo and Gogo (2004). Republic of Kenya (2005) reported that education financing in Kenya is skewed in favour of other levels of education with ECE coming last.

Data from the head teachers indicated that 59.2 % of the head teachers drew their salaries from the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) which is the main employer of teachers in Kenya's public schools. Thirty-seven per cent (37%) of the head teachers were either heading private

ECE centres, church sponsored or community based ECE centres and were paid by parents. Other stakeholders' like the community and NGO/CBO played a minimum role in paying teachers as reported by 3.7 % of the head teachers. Comparable studies in other countries show that the teaching staff, for example in of French nursery schools, are qualified professionals with the same status, salary, duties and training as those working in primary schools (UNESCO, 1996). Kenya Education Sector Support program report (2005) indicated that there was a high attrition rate of ECE teachers of up to 40 % due to poor remuneration and lack of support from the government. Kavuva (1996) observed that the terms and conditions of service for ECE teachers affect their competence. In most European countries, governments contribute funding to this sub-sector to the tune of 66% to 90% of the child care cost as indicated by OECD (2006) contrary to the findings of this study, in Kenya.

The respondents were further asked to indicate the levels of their salaries and their responses indicated in Table 4.

The findings in Table 4 show that there was a wide variation in teachers' salaries. Noticeably a large percentage of teachers, 60.9% earned a salary of Kshs. 2,000 and below per month, while 27.7% earned between Kshs 2001 and 4000. A small percentage of teachers (11.4%) earned over Kshs. 4,000. The Table further reveals that 8.7 % of the head teachers earned Kshs.4001

Table 4. Salary levels of the respondents.

Salary levels	Head teachers		Teachers	
	f	%	f	%
Below 2000	35	19	112	60.9
2001-4000	30	16.3	51	27.7
4001-6000	04	2.2	16	8.7
Above 6001	12	6.5	05	2.7
TSC Scale	103	56.0	-	-

Source: Field data

Table 5. Teachers' salaries.

Responses	DEOs		DICECE Offices	
	f	%	f	%
Teachers are poorly paid	3	100	3	100
Parents bear the cost of teachers' salaries	2	100	3	66.7
Teachers are exploited by head teachers	3	66.7	2	100
Teachers lack other benefits and allowances	3	100	3	100
H/Teachers from public schools draw salaries and allowances from ECE accounts	2	66.7	3	100

Source: Field data

and above safe for those paid by the government through TSC. This implies that the stakeholder support was inadequate to pay teachers a reasonable salary to the level of at least the lowest paid civil servant in Kenya of Ksh. 7,701 (Siringi and Maina, 2014).

Data from the head teachers further indicated that majority of the head teachers (56%) were on TSC salary scales. Some of those not paid by TSC were earning a very low salary of less than Kshs. 2000 as indicated by 19% of the respondents as compared to those who earned over 4001 who accounted for 8.7 % of the head teachers. The results further show that a small number of head teachers and teachers earned more than Ksh. 6001 monthly as reported by 6.5% and 2.7 % of the head teachers and teachers respectively. These findings therefore show a big disparity between the ECE teachers' salaries and those teachers in the primary school sub-sector. Primary school teachers have a scheme of service and a defined employer. The fresh P1 teachers' basic salary ranges between Kshs.15, 093 and Kshs.16, 828 (TSC, 2012). Very few ECE centres in urban areas pay their teachers well to the level of those in primary schools in Kenya. A study by Kombo and Gogo, (2004) on the role of churches in provision of ECE in Nairobi Province confirmed these findings by articulating that there existed a big disparity in teacher's remuneration with majority of teachers in Nairobi earning between Kshs. 1,500 and Kshs. 9,000.

The findings show minimal disparity between the teachers and the head teachers' earnings except among

the TSC employees. Given the extra responsibilities of managing the centres, the pay package for the head teachers deserve a better pay. The study findings are in agreement with a report by UNESCO (2005) which observed that ECE teachers' salaries averaged Kshs. 2,000 per month with large variations between rural and urban pre-schools. Kombo and Gogo (2004) agree with by this arguing that there exist huge disparities in remuneration among teachers of the same category. The salary they were paid was barely enough to cater for the teachers basic needs. As a result teachers ventured in other activities to make ends meet compromising the quality of their service delivery. This included selling snacks to the learners, organizing afternoon tuition and baby care for children of working parents who required custodian care for them (UNESCO, 2005). The results therefore imply that the amount salaries received by these teachers depend very much on the level of financial support by the stakeholders. The level of teacher's salaries is a reflection of poor stakeholders support.

The DEOs and DICECE officers were interviewed on teachers' salaries. Their responses were as indicated in Table 5.

The results of interview with the DEOs and the DICECE officers' indicated that ECE teachers were poorly paid as reported by all the respondents. Majority of the DEOs and DICECE officers reported that parents bore the cost of paying these salaries as reported all the DEOs and 66.7% the DICECE officers. On the issue of ECE teachers being exploited by their head teachers, 66.7% of

Table 6. Cross-tabulation of the type of centre and level of teachers' salary.

Amount paid	Public ECE		Private ECE	
	f	%	f	%
2000 and below	58	64.4	54	57.4
2050-3000	24	26.6	20	21.0
3050-4000	2	2.2	5	5.3
4050-5000	1	1.1	12	12.8
5050-6000	1	10.1	2	2.1
6050 and above	4	4.4	1	1.1
Total	90	49	94	51

Source: Field data

the DEOs and all the DICECE officers agreed to this. When asked further to expand on the same, they cited the cases of schools that benefited from CSG where the ECE teachers in possession of a diploma were to be paid ksh.12,000 while those with certificate course be paid Ksh. 10,000 which was not the case in majority of the schools. All the education officers reported that ECE teachers lacked other benefits like medical allowances, house allowances or commuter allowances which were enjoyed by their counterparts in other sub-sectors of education. Issues on management of the funds by the head teachers revealed that they drew extra salaries and other allowances from the ECE funds denying the centres financial resources to pay teachers well. This was confirmed by 66.6% of the DEO and all the DICECE officers. The results therefore confirms the earlier findings that stakeholders contributed little amounts resulting into poor salaries for teachers.

The findings further showed that there was a small disparity in teacher remuneration between private and public ECE centres as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 reveals a little difference between the pay for teachers from the public and private ECE centres. This was contrary to what many could expect. The possible reason could be that majority of the ECE centres participating in this study were drawn from the rural settings where there were little differences in teachers' salaries among the teachers from these institutions. Another possible reason could be due similar levels of financial support by the stakeholders. It was evident therefore that salaries of ECE teachers across the centres were low. World Bank (1997) agrees with the above findings by reporting that communities do not have the capacity to provide adequate support to teachers, therefore they compensate them poorly due to economic hardships and attitude towards pre-school education. Early childhood education teachers therefore engage in other activities to supplement their meagre income UNESCO, (2006). This include going to children's homes to provide custodial care to children while their parents are at work (UNESCO, 2005).

Utilization of funds from parents

Head teachers who are the executive and accounting officers of ECE centres were asked to indicate how the funds raised from parent were utilized and their responses were as recorded in Table 7.

From Table 7, it is clear that majority of the ECE centres used their funds for recurrent expenditure as reported by 68.5 % of the head teachers. Very little was used to procure instructional materials as reported by 1.6 % of the head teachers. The next biggest expenditure was on school furniture as indicated by 29.4% of the respondents. This therefore reveals that more funds were used on remuneration of the staff which is a very important resource in ECE centres. This is confirmed by MOE circular dated 21st June 2012 addressed to all public primary schools through the County Directors of Education directing the utilization of Community Support Grants to teachers' salary top up and purchase of instructional resources. However other resources are equally important in developing the holistic aspect of an ECE child. World Bank (2001) cited a wide variation in the type and quality of services provided by the ECE centres. Swendner, Kabiru and Njenga (1995) identified challenges facing the ECE programmes as lack of funds for necessary programs components. Resources should be evenly distributed so as to cater for all the needs of the ECE centres. Therefore there is need to strike a balance between the financing of personal emoluments and expenditure on other resources.

Financing the ECE feeding program

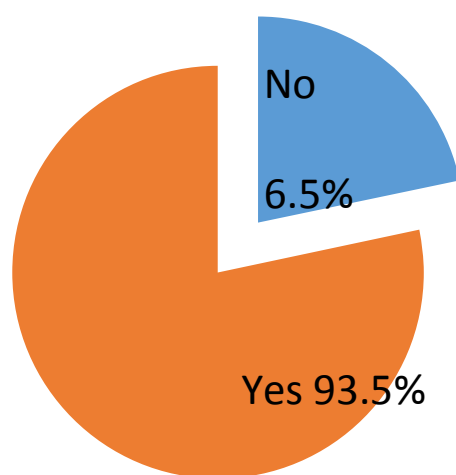
In order to determine how the schools financed their feeding programme, head teachers were further asked to indicate whether their centres had implemented a feeding program for their children as stipulated by the ECD service Standard Guidelines for Kenya. The results were as presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 indicates that almost all the schools had

Table 7. Utilisation of Funds from Parents.

Use of funds	Head teachers	
	f	%
Buying of desks, chairs and tables	54	29.4
Paying teachers' salaries	126	68.5
Buying instructional materials	3	1.6
Feeding the children	1	0.5
Totals	184	100

Source: Field data

**Figure 2.** Responses of Head teachers on school feeding program.

implemented the feeding program as reported by 93.5 % of the ECE centres. The results reflect a great effort made by the ECE stakeholders to ensure the nutritional needs of the children are met at the institutions. Early Childhood Education age child's development is affected by the nutritional care given to it. Learning by a poorly fed child is hindered both at school and at home, thus this is an indicator of the centres' sensitivity to the nutritional needs of the children. These findings agree with the findings by Waithera, (2004) and UNESCO (2004) who reported that ECE centres had implemented feeding programs although there were disparities in the implementation of feeding program in private and public centres.

Head teachers were further asked to indicate the stakeholders financing the feeding program. Their responses were as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 shows that parents in the majority of the cases financed the feeding programs as reported by 92.9 % of the head teachers. This is a good indication that parents were sensitive to the nutritional needs of their children. Organized feeding program in the ECE centres is very important as this may be the only meal the child may have on that day. Many of these children come from

Table 7. Financial Support for school feeding Program.

Stakeholders	Head teachers	
	f	%
Parents	172	93.4
Government	2	1.1
Church	4	2.2
Community	4	2.2
Others	2	1.1
Totals	184	100

Source: Field data

poverty stricken homes where mid-day meal may be history. The school feeding program also attracts these children to the centres and contributes to the health and wellbeing of the child UNESCO (2004).

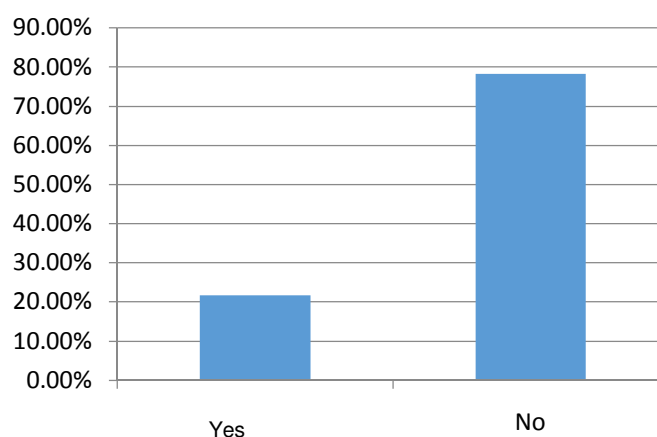
Responses on the type of meal served to the children at the centres were presented in Table 9.

Table 9 indicates that majority of the ECE centres provided mainly porridge or tea to the children as reported by 81.5% of the head teachers. This was in line

Table 9. Type of meal served.

Type of Meal Provided	Head teachers	
	f	%
Porridge /Tea	150	81.5
Tea/porridge/Snack	8	4.3
Porridge/Tea/Lunch	10	5.4
Porridge/Tea/Snack/Lunch	4	2.2
Children carry snacks from home	12	6.6
Totals	184	100

Source: Field data

**Figure 3.** ECE centres benefiting from community support grant.

with the ECD Service Standard Guidelines which recommend that ECE centres that run on a half day program (8.00-12.00 noon) provides children with a snack, preferably enriched porridge at break time (RoK, 2006). The study also indicated that a few ECE centres offered the children lunch in addition to the porridge or tea as reported by 5.4% of the head teachers, an indication that the centres operated full day. Further still the study indicated that some ECE centres required children to carry food/snacks from home. This may not be the best practice because some children may not have the snack/food to carry to school, while others may have elaborate and expensive snacks enhancing inequality in the ECE centres. A school-based feeding program is an equalizer since the children feed from the same pot, reducing social disparities. It also inculcates good etiquette on the little children which enhances their behavior, health and personality as they are taught hygiene practices like how to wash their hands, pray before eating, and eat with mouth closed and other general table manners. Republic of Kenya (2005) reports that school feeding program has substantially improved enrolment in both primary schools and ECE centres. Given that very little funds are allocated to this program, it

is probably possible for the parents to pay for it indirectly in kind (bringing maize for porridge to the centre).

Community support grant

Head teachers were asked to indicate whether their ECE centres benefited from Community Support Grant which is a grant from multilateral partners through the Ministry of Education aimed at supporting poor communities in Kenya improve provision of ECE. Their responses were summarised in Figure 3.

The results on figure 3 indicate that only 21.7 % of the sampled centres had benefited from the grant as opposed to 78.3% who did not. A majority of the ECE centres especially in the rural areas and urban slums are in dire need of financial support. Provision of the grant is to ensure that more vulnerable children and those with special needs from disadvantaged communities enroll in the ECE centres (RoK, 2009). Every child enrolled in these targeted ECE centres was allocated Kshs. 1481.51 per year (RoK, 2007). This amount is not adequate given the diverse needs of the ECE centres and more so from disadvantaged areas where other stakeholders may not

Table 10. Impact of CSG in the ECE centres.

Responses	DEOs		DICECE officers	
	f	%	f	%
CSG had minimal impact in the centres	2	66.7	2	66.7
CSG had been mismanaged by the centre management	3	100	3	100
Poor coordination at the district due to inadequate funding	2	66.7	3	100

be in a position to give more support.

Community Support Grant was implemented with an objective of enhancing quality, equity, retention and access to ECE services in poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities (RoK, 2009). The grant was to be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning materials and the learning environment in the ECE centres (Manani, 2007). However the grant had benefited a small percentage of public ECE centres attached to public primary schools in disadvantaged areas of Kenya. Republic of Kenya (2007) and Manani (2007) argue that only a few public ECEs benefit from the Community Support Grant as the grant earmarks disadvantaged areas to improve access to quality ECE for children. Given that only a few centres are granted this fund, it is therefore clear that the quality of teaching and learning materials and the learning environment are compromised in those centres that do not receive this fund.

An interview was further conducted with the DEOs and the DICECE officers on the impact of CSG and the responses recorded in Table 10.

An interview with the DEOs and the DICECE officers to establish the impact of the CSG in the ECE centres indicated that the grant had made minimal impact in majority of the centres as reported by 67% of the DEOs and the DICECE officers. All the DEOs and the DICECE officers (100%) lamented that the grant was mismanaged as the centres did not spend it according to the MoE guidelines. The main challenge as cited by 66.7% of the DEOs and all the DICECE officers was poor coordination at the district level due to little or no funding at that level which made it difficult to supervise and coordinate the grant.

The findings therefore indicate that parents were the major stakeholders who provided finances to the ECE centres bearing the largest burden of paying teachers' salaries, funding the feeding program and procuring teaching/learning resources. This is supported by RoK, (1998) who observed that parents finance and manage 70% of the pre-school programs. However there existed variations in stakeholders' support among the private and public ECE centres with parents in the private ECE centres giving more financial support as opposed to those in the public ECE centres. As much as there is a policy on partnership aimed at enhancing the involvement of various partners in provision of ECE in Kenya

UNESCO (2005) and RoK (2005) parents carry the bigger burden of providing finances to the ECEs. Balachander (2002) and World Bank (1999) encourage partnership among all the ECE stakeholders in financing of ECE programs.

Summary and conclusions of major findings

The study was conducted in selected public and private ECE centres in Kakamega County. As a result of the statistical analysis of collected data and subsequent interpretation of the results, the study came out with the following findings based on each of the objectives of the study.

With regard to the nature of financial support by stakeholders, the findings of the study established that the support to the ECE centres was in form of paying teachers' salaries, buying furniture and meeting the cost of the ECEs feeding program. Parents in both private and public ECE centres were the major stakeholders in this case who financed ECE programs. However the amount of support paid by parents was little ranging between kshs. 351-950 per term.

The study concluded that parents were the main financiers of ECE programs in Kakamega County. They provided funds through the fees paid for teachers' salaries, the feeding program and purchase of instructional materials. However this source of financing was not adequate to meet all the needs of the ECE centres. As a result teachers were poorly remunerated, centres lacked vital teaching/learning resources and physical facilities compromising on the quality of ECE services.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

- The government through the Ministry of Education should mainstream ECE within the Free Primary Education policy. This is likely to ensure that the ECE centres acquire funding from the government to enable them provide adequate physical, instructional materials and qualified human resource.

- ii. Early childhood education teachers should be employed by the government in order to improve their terms and conditions of service which are deplorable as shown by the findings of the study. The government should expand the scholarship programs to cover ECE pupils and teacher trainees.
- iii. Stakeholders should strike a balance between paying teachers' salaries and providing all the necessary teaching/ learning resources to the ECE centres. Further locally available teaching /learning resources should be availed by stakeholders and adopted for use in the centres.
- iv. The government infrastructure fund should be extended to ECE centres to assist the centres improve their physical facilities. The government should also set up a special fund for ECE equipment.

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