Early grade learning in Kenya amidst COVID-19 crisis

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Context of Early Childhood Education in Kenya

• For many years, the community played a critical role in supporting 70% of the early childhood centres, while Municipal council and private sector supported 30%

• Through NACECE, DICECE structure ECD personnel were inducted/trained (DICECE officers and preschool teachers)

• In the same structure, curriculum was developed and implemented

• In 2010, the constitution devolved preprimary education and child care facilities to the county government
Devolution of Preprimary Education

National Government
- Policy
- Standards
- Curriculum development
- Assessment

County Government
- Hiring teachers
- Infrastructure
- Feeding program
- Teaching learning materials
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>2.8 Million</td>
<td>3.4 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NER</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preprimary Education Centres</td>
<td>40143</td>
<td>41779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained teachers</td>
<td>83814</td>
<td>106938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained teachers</td>
<td>17248</td>
<td>11338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Republic of Kenya, 2018, 2019*
Teacher Education and Professional Development

• Preservice teacher development programmes are handled at different levels including universities and diploma colleges for teachers training for preprimary, primary and secondary levels.

• Curriculum reforms and the introduction of CBC, the minimum training level for teachers in Kenya is designed to be diploma

• Implication - preservice teacher training programmes at all levels must be redesigned to adequately prepare persons entering the teaching profession on pedagogical aspects.
Challenges

- **Regional disparities** in access to preprimary education opportunities (ASAL NER 18%)
- Lack of policy establishing a minimum level of funding for preprimary
- Inadequate regulation and enforcement of quality standards
- Weak inter-sectoral coordination which should bring together interventions from key sectors such as health, nutrition, education and social protection
- High turnover of trained teachers and low teacher morale due to lack of scheme of service
- Shortage of instructional materials and teacher professional development
COVID 19 and Early Learning

• 1\textsuperscript{st} case of COVID 19 reported on 13\textsuperscript{th} March 2020. Learning institutions were closed between 15\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} March.

• As of June 20\textsuperscript{th} overall Covid 19 disease burden was 4478 (National Emergency Response Committee on coronavirus, 2020).

• 129 children aged 0-9 years COVID 19 Positive (Ministry of Health, 2020).

• Impact on education sector: disrupted learning to over 18 million children with approximately 3.4 million preprimary age.

Challenges Paused by COVID 19 to Early Learning

• Interrupted learning - increased anxiety and uncertainty among learners.

• Lack of access to digital platforms due to lack of access devices and internet connectivity at home.

• School feeding programmes for Learners from low income households, (ASAL, urban slums), interrupted

• Different levels of parental knowledge and attitude as parents are expected to support children in learning.

• Loss of jobs and income for some non-teaching staff, BOM teachers and those from private institutions.

*Republic of Kenya, 2020*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skipped a meal or ate less in past two weeks</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received some form of assistance (cash, voucher, food, soap)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food as single most unmet need</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased food prices</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete or partial loss of job</td>
<td>4 out 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures to mitigate COVID 19 Effects

• The Ministry of Education through the KICD is offering lessons through EDU TV channel, Radio, Kenya Education Cloud

• Evidence from a perception survey by KICD between 28th April and 6th May, from 2664 participants indicated that several interventions are being implemented.
  • 45% of the solutions targets learners in primary and secondary schools
  • 2.8% target parents
  • 3.1% target teachers
  • 4 in every 5 learning solutions are loaded on mobile phone (android enabled cellphone).

KICD, 2020
Play Based Learning

• Play is educational when it is joyful, meaningful, actively engaging, iterative and socially interactive (Zosh, et al., 2017; Parker & Thomsen, 2019).

• Learning comprises acquisition of skills including cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical.

• Many education systems have reduced opportunities for playful learning and increased emphasis on structured approaches to learning for school readiness and achievement (Jay & Knaus, 2018).
Play Based Learning

• **Integrated approaches** to teaching and learning combine different levels of *teacher* and *child directedness* and value the development of a breadth of skills and knowledge such as learning through play (Parker & Thomsen, 2019).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play Based Learning: Integrated Pedagogy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative and cooperative learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experiential learning</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guided discovery learning</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Project based learning</strong></td>
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Way Forward

• Blended learning (online and face face) from early learning should be embraced. But will require ICT infrastructure in place, electricity, ICT gadgets,

• Teachers to be enabled through capacity building, to acquire necessary skills, gadgets, data to allow connectivity and supervision

• Provision of radio and television programmes will be viable for the unreached children when the marginalized communities are supported to acquire the needed equipment (radio, TV, etc) and electricity
Way Forward

• Supporting access to teaching and learning materials in remote areas and improving water and sanitation infrastructure and knowledge of health, hygiene in preparation for school reopening is critical.

• Support schools to observe public health guidelines (social distancing, handwashing/sanitizing etc)

• Need for schools to use integrated pedagogy to enhance learning through play.
Asante sana
Thank you