

Monitoring and Supervision of Adult Basic Education: District Education Officers' Dilemma in Machakos County of Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to explore challenges facing District Adult and Continuing Education Officers (DACEO's) in Monitoring and Supervision of Adult Basic Education in Machakos County in Kenya. The study used descriptive survey research design and was based on the conceptual framework embracing four main theories namely: - Adult learning theory, Mezirow's Theory of Perspective Transformation, Systems Theory and Reference Group Theory. The units of analysis were 424 Adult Education Learning Centers. The study population was 8 District Adult and Continuing Education (DACEO's). The targeted populations were 128 Adult education Centers and 8 Adult Education Officers. The researcher used both Stratified and saturated random sampling to pick out a corresponding sample. The instruments of data collection were questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The study found out that most of the adult teachers (67.5%) had inadequate understanding of the reform in the adult education sector by the adult education teachers (67.5%) thereby giving the district adult and continuing education officers a difficult time as they try to assist the teachers to comprehend and implement some of the policies and processes in the delivery of the curriculum. There is also lack of proper learning venues in most of the adult education centers (72.3%) thus posing a great challenge during monitoring and supervision. There is evidence of inadequate teaching and learning equipment and improper supervision of the programs that compromise the quality and delivery of the curriculum in addition to severe financial constraints as a result of little or no funding from both the County and Central governments. In light of the findings, it is recommended that the government (both County and Central) make every effort to secure proper learning venues and release funds to support the literacy programs and facilitate the district adult and continuing officers to monitor and supervise the programs.

Keywords: Adult Basic education, District Education Officers, Monitoring and Supervision.

INTRODUCTION

The critical role of adult education in the development of society has long been recognized. The understanding of the role of adult education has changed and developed through time. From being seen as promoting international understanding in 1949, adult education is now seen as a key in the economic, political and cultural transformation of individuals, communities and societies. While UNESCO has spelled out a definition of adult education, is still subject to a wide range of interpretations [1]. Notably, the challenges faced by Adult education officers in coordination, supervision, monitoring and evaluation are largely caused by inadequate funding of Adult Education programs by the Government.

According to Machakos County Adult Education Office Quarterly Reports of 2014, the majority of the learners are farmers; therefore they find it physically difficult to attend non-formal education(NFE) programme after work. This has led

some adult learners to miss classes and create variability in learning progress, and in return has made it difficult for facilitators to accommodate all the learners' needs. Because most of the NFE centres are located in remote areas and some are not accessible by road, it is difficult to monitor them and support their needs. This also hinders constant and effective monitoring, evaluation and support. Due to scarce IT-trained personnel and facilities in almost all the NFE centres, it is difficult to keep reliable data at the NFE centres which is creating problems in the planning and execution of the programmes.

The Government continues to reduce the cost of education to households through the provision of teachers, teaching and learning materials and grants to schools to cover operational and maintenance expenses under the Free Primary education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) policy; capitation grants be allocated to learners in adult education and other forms of basic education, so that the learners can benefit

from mainstream financing and enhanced skills development the provision of Adult and Continuing Education in Machakos County has suffered from inadequate funding, thereby defeating the aspirations of Vision 2030 [2]. Of particular concern is the raising of the levels of literacy.

The Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey [3] reveals that, in 2007, only 61.5% of the adult population has attained minimum literacy level, leaving 38.5% (7.8 million) adults illiterate. It also reveals that only 29.6% of the Kenyan adult population has attained desired literacy competency. About 29.9% of the youth aged 15 to 19 years and 49% of adults aged 45 to 49 years are illiterate. However, adult literacy education programs do face challenges. These include lack of adequate resources for things such as scholastic materials; lack of enough trained teachers; lack of classrooms; learners needing to walk long distances to class; paucity of employment prospects upon completion of the programs; no remuneration for instructors; missing of classes during rainy seasons; no opportunity for further training, absenteeism and the program not addressing the learners' problems. There is considerable shortage of classrooms, a shortage of well-qualified and expert teachers competent to lead their learners through the new competency based curriculum and learning styles, and the absence of an assessment and examination regime able to reinforce the new approaches and reward students for their ability to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

In Kenya, as elsewhere, politics control and manipulate the polity, either overtly or covertly. In the argument of Freire [4], education is normally a covert tool in the stratagem of the political class. Political influence in curriculum implementation in Kenya is best seen through the formation of various education commissions, committees, and working parties. Since independence, there have been seven major commissions on the school curriculum. The composition of these commissions is largely oblivious of expertise in curriculum; rather, it mostly exhibits political connectedness. Moreover, the findings and recommendations of most of these commissions are implemented at the discretion of the ruling elite. In most cases, these commissions end up being just grand academic exercises since their recommendations are never adopted [5].

Even though all the centers are fully operational [6], adult education faces a number of challenges to the District Adult and Continuing Education Officers (termed as district education officers) who are charged with the responsibility of ensuring the success of the Adult education programs within their Sub-counties. Adult education programs have little or no funding at all by both the National and

County governments. Notably, even the County adult education is not represented in the County Education Board unlike the case with Primary and Secondary education.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Monitoring and Supervision of Adult Basic Education

The central key to effective implementation of any adult education program needs qualified educators at all levels [7]. According to Richard [8], employment of full-time teachers could be the most important single factor toward curriculum implementation. The need to improve teacher training, working conditions and the professional status of literacy educators is important [9]. The effectiveness of any curriculum implementation depends on the quality of the personnel involved. The success of any literacy program is largely dependent on the type of teachers recruited [10]. The implementation of curriculum program largely depends on the facilitators and regular supervision and monitoring they are given. In Kenya, majority of teachers of Kenya curriculum programs have minimum qualifications required. The part-time and self-help (volunteer) teachers are recruited from primary and secondary dropouts. The need for training is very important for effective curriculum implementation program.

In Kenya, the department of Adult Education is responsible for the recruitment of teachers and Adult Education officers. The recruitment is done locally and training done by the department. The teachers are encouraged to enroll and manage the centers in the village. Wise [11] discourages untrained teachers being used to manage adult literacy classes. It is important to note that facilitators, apart from some attending induction and correspondence, low-cost material production and weekend seminars, get training from recognized institutions. This will aid them attain both academic and professional competence. Knowledge attained will aid them handle centers professionally, that is, know their students and type of learning activities that appeal to them.

Lack of confidence in teachers make learners look down upon them. The part-time teachers mainly drawn from primary schools training find it difficult to change from child-oriented approach when teaching adults. The young and inexperienced adult teachers are not effective facilitators to adult learners who are much older than them. Fordham and colleagues [12] advocate for training of adult literacy teachers before the start of literacy program to boost their confidence and motivate learners to learn. Failure to offer training leads to the failure of literacy programs. For instance, in Thailand, functional literacy and family planning project teachers were not well trained for the implementation of more non-formal curriculum. This led to poor and andragogical method used, hence, led to not achieving

the objectives. In Botswana, literacy teachers were recruited from primary seven school leavers in the 1990s. Due to low level of education, the program did not meet its demands. Even more importantly, teachers with good training and adequate experience have strong classroom management skills, make good instructors and produce better students. Murphy[13] has indicated that Kenya adult literacy teachers are poorly remunerated; hence, they cannot meet physiological needs of their families.

According to the 2015 Education for All 2015 National Review Report, in Kenya, the coordination, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of adult education programs is mainly hampered by inadequate personnel to implement. Recruitment of new personnel has been restricted through government embargo on recruitments. Due to lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation of the program, it compromises on quality

and standards in implementation. Adult education officers therefore routinely find themselves unable to ensure the implementation of the program.

According to the 2015 Education for All 2015 National Review Report, the adult education sector is the least funded of all the other basic education sectors in education like Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary education as evidenced by figures 1 and 2 below. As a matter of fact, the Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) program's recurrent and development expenditure budgets as a percentage of the Ministry of Education budget are shown in the Figure 1 below. The total budget for the ACE expenditure as a percentage of total budgets of the Ministry of Education between 2011 and 2013 ranged from 0.75 per cent and 2.19 per cent. This shows gross under funding for the adult education and literacy programs.

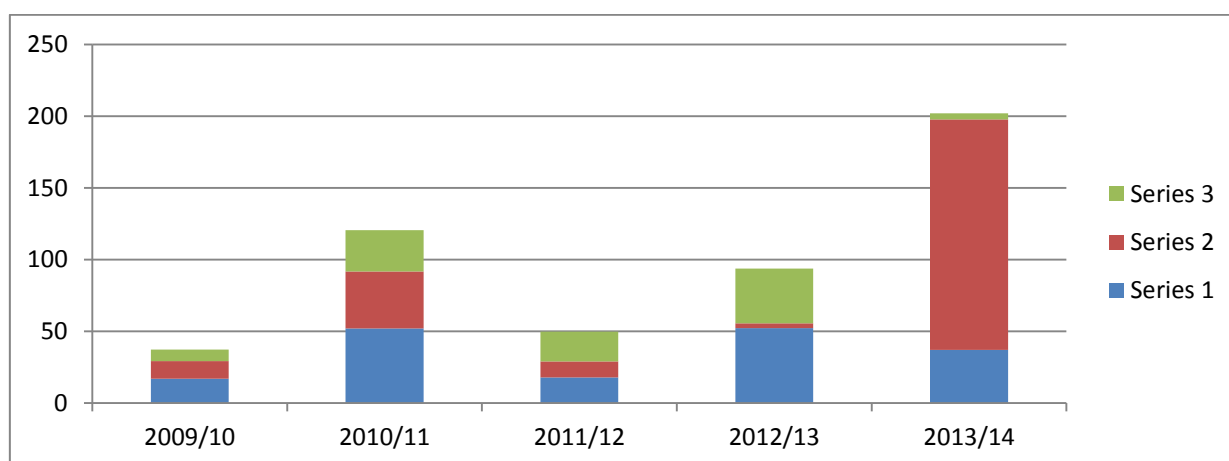


Fig-1: Expenditures in Basic Education Development, 2009-2013
Source: Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Kenya

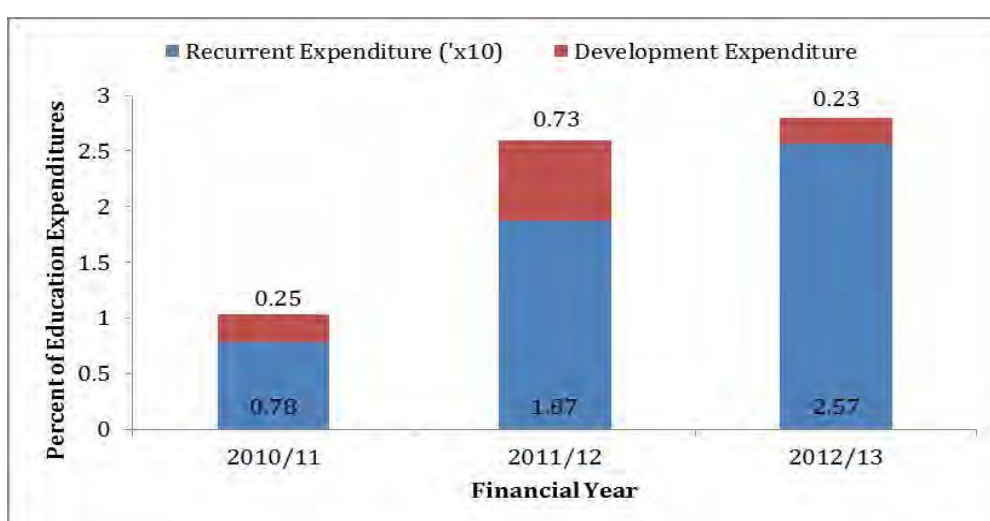


Figure 2: Analysis of approved estimates and actual expenditure by ACE (in Kshs) Million for the 2010/11 to 2012/13 financial year

Source: Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Kenya

In Kenya, the challenges that have affected Adult Education programs over the years include the absence of an all-inclusive Adult Education management programs and framework, poor strategic planning, lack of trained literacy and adult education teachers, a high turnover of staff and volunteer teachers, limited resource allocations and infrastructure. Although the Government established the Directorate of Adult and Continuing Education to coordinate the relevant programs, it has not been adequately resourced [14]. As a result, access to adult education programs is low whilst gender disparities are high. Adult education is affected by a negative image. The lack of efficient management framework, teaching and learning materials, the application of appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, and without coordinated service

delivery, leaves the sub-sector in need of major reform and resourcing. A further issue concerns the transition of adult learners from primary to secondary education and the appropriateness of the curriculum [15].

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The following are results of the study based on challenges facing adult basic education officers in monitoring and supervision of adult education programmes. The respondents to this research question were 18 District Adult and Continuing Education Officers. When requested to give challenges of curriculum implementation amongst adult learners in Machakos County, they supplied the data recorded in the table below.

Table 1: Perception of District Adult and Continuing Education Officers on obstacles facing Curriculum implementation of Adult Basic and Continuing Education Programs (n=18)

Statement		Freq.				Total F	Total score	Av. Score	% Score
	SA	A	U	D	SD				
There are no Minimum qualifications required for one to be a teacher	0	0	0	14	4	18	32	1.75	35
Unrealistic time constraints and inadequate resources, resulting in high drop-out rates and low skill acquisition	0	2	3	2	11	18	38	2.13	42.5
There is Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services	0	4	4	1	9	18	41	2.25	45
Most of our Teachers have inadequate understanding of the reform	5	4	5	2	2	18	61	3.38	67.5
There is Lack of proper learning venues	2	9	5	2	0	18	65	3.63	72.5
Almost all learning centres have Inadequate teaching and learning equipment and improper supervision of the programs	4	5	5	4	0	18	63	3.5	70
There is Little or no funding at all by both the National and County governments	6	6	5	0	1	18	74	4.13	82.5

Source: Responses from the field

Classification of individual scores

The district adult and continuing adult education officers were requested to score on the Likert scale their perception on obstacles facing the implementation of adult education. The score of 1.75(35%) on the item; there were no Minimum

qualifications required for one to be a teacher. Showed that that the respondents strongly disagreed with the item and that there were minimum qualification for the teachers handling the adult education scored 2.13(42.5%) on the item Unrealistic time constraints and inadequate resources, resulting in high drop-out

rates and low skill acquisition, an indication that they strongly disagreed with the item; scored 2.25(45%) on the item that there were Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services showing that provision services were adequate, scored 3.38 (67.5%) on the item Most of teachers had inadequate understanding of the reform indicating that they were uncertain of the item ; scored 3.63(72.3%) on the item there was lack of proper learning venues indicating they agreed on the item.

Scored 3.5(70%) on the item; almost all learning centers had inadequate teaching and learning equipment and improper supervision of the programs. This meant that they agreed with the item that teaching and learning equipment were both inadequate and there was poor supervision. The score of 4.13 (82.5%) on the item; there is little or no funding at all by both the National and County governments. This meant that neither the county nor the Central government had released any funds for the support of the adult education programs. Generally, the adult and continuing teachers scored 3.00(60%). This meant that their perception was that the obstacles were real impediments in the implementation of adult basic education.

Conclusion

The study found out that most of the adult teachers (67.5%) had inadequate understanding of the reform. This would mean that the adult education officers would sometimes find it a great challenge when trying to communicate adult education policies and processes to the adult education teachers. This would in effect slow down the teaching learning process and even strain the meager resources of both time and finances since they officers would be required to spend more time explaining and even sometimes to literally visit these teachers in order to educate them on the reforms. There was lack of proper learning venues in most of the adult education centers (72.3%). This would then mean that most of the venues would be temporary and hence supervision and monitoring would be jeopardized since there would be no guarantees on where to find the teachers and learners. Almost all learning centers (70%) had inadequate teaching and learning equipment and improper supervision of the programs. This would in effect mean that both teachers and learners fell short of what would normally be required to make the teaching and learning process a success. The adult education programs have little or no funding at all (82.5%) as neither the County nor the Central Governments have ever released funds for the running of the Centers. This would then mean that there is very little the officers could do in terms of the monitoring and supervision due to the serious mobility and logistical hitches that would otherwise require some expense to execute.

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