

# **The Role of Non-Governmental Finances on Pre-School Children's Cognitive Achievements in Nakuru North Sub County, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** *The non-governmental organizations play a critical role in the education sector in the country. This is especially so in the marginalized communities and amongst the vulnerable groups. The non-governmental organizations efforts are often with a view of sealing any lapses that are available within the governmental funded public education system. Within the early childhood education sector, the non-governmental organizations play a critical in the provision of the learning materials and as infrastructural support. The purpose of this study was to establish the role of non-government finances on pre-school children's cognitive achievements in Nakuru North Sub County, Kenya. The results obtained on the influence of Non-Governmental finances on Pre-school children's cognitive achievements showed that the role of Non-Governmental finances on Pre-school children's cognitive achievements include, but not restricted to employing teachers and support staff. The study also noted that Non-Governmental Organizations have also played critical roles in policy development, strategic planning, high-level advocacy and capacity strengthening of ECDE centres. The researcher recommended that there is need for the government to encourage the participation of the non-governmental organizations in early childhood education.*

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Education*

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## **I. Introduction**

The non-governmental organizations play a critical role in the education sector in the country. This is especially so in the marginalized communities and amongst the vulnerable groups. The non-governmental organizations efforts are often with a view of sealing any lapses that are available within the governmental funded public education system. Within the early childhood education sector, the non-governmental organizations play a critical in the provision of the learning materials and as infrastructural support.

## **II. Literature Review**

According to the World Bank development report (Jaycox, 1992), education and economic development are positively correlated, making education intrinsic to development. (Gonzalez-Mena, 2000) argue that the potential long term benefit for children's cognitive and social development has inspired increased interest in Early Childhood Education. It is against this backdrop that (UNICEF 2002) has expanded beyond the goal of child survival to include development and education. Much of what has been achieved in the ECD programme is attributed to strategic financial and technical support of development partners that has targeted ECE system building. The establishment of National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) in 1984 as a national resource centre within the then Kenya Institute of Education was with the support of Bernard Leer Foundation and later expanded with the support of the World Bank (1997-2003). It is responsible for co-ordination of the national training programme and is involved in advocacy, establishing linkages and Quality Assurance (Republic of Kenya, 2006). The World Bank ECD project (1997-2003) has also strengthened the ECD system through the construction of conference facilities at NACECE; staffing, equipping and capacity building of DICECE, the expansion of training opportunities for Pre-school teachers, strengthened community engagement through training management teams, the establishment of ECD Centres in marginalized communities, inclusion of health and nutrition into ECDE (World Bank 1997). Since 1954, UNICEF has supported early childhood development and education in Kenya. It has played a critical role in policy development strategic planning, high-level advocacy and the capacity strengthened of ECE at various levels. UNICEF, (The Rapid School Readiness Initiatives and the Islamic Integrated Education Programme) has also partnered with USAID (Education for Marginalized Children In Kenya Programme), Aga Khan Foundation (Madrasa Resource Centre) and others in supporting the expansion of services to marginalized children through innovative programmes. Although access to services is still low in and semi-arid lands (ASALS), Non-Governmental Organization has greatly enhanced access to services by children and families in the coast and North Eastern regions of Kenya.

Independence in Kenya increased educational opportunities, Aga Khan Schools opened in 1960s, in Mombasa and Nairobi, to cater for children who could not yet get into government schools. In 1986, the Aga Khan Education services started Madrasa Pre-school programmes for helping parents and communities to provide a positive and early start for their children. The services address holistic approach to early childhood development guided by a curriculum that integrates key religious value teachings and help to establish, manage and support sustainable quality Pre-school learning opportunities. The education services have also helped in training of teachers, school management committee members, delivering continuous onsite support and builds community awareness on the importance of early childhood development. It also partners with the government and other relevant partners in the creation of policies and sharing of good practices regarding young children's education and development.

**Objective of the Study**

To establish the role of Non-Governmental finances on Pre-school children's cognitive achievements in Nakuru North Sub County, Kenya

**Research Question**

What was the influence of Non-Government finances on Pre-school children's cognitive achievements in Nakuru North Sub County, Kenya?

**III. Methodology**

This study utilized the descriptive survey design. As noted by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a survey, is an attempt to, collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of the population with respect to one or more variables. It is a self-report study which requires the collection of quantifiable information from the sample. The survey design allowed the study to gather on actual state at the time of collection. It was also appropriate since it allowed the researcher to gather information from a large number of cases. The target population was thirty nine (39) head teachers, seventy eight teachers (78), one (1) Sub-County Centre for Early Childhood Education Programme Officer in Nakuru North Sub-County. Using purposive sampling, the study used a sample size of 8 head teachers, 16 ECD teachers, and 1 Sub-County Centre for Early Childhood Education Program officer. There was 100% response rate on the distributed questionnaires.

**IV. Findings And Discussions**

This study sought to find out the influence of the non-government finances on the preschool children's cognitive skills. In order to answer this question, the researcher viewed the learners' progress records of the selected ECDE centres based on various cognitive competencies in number work which included number ordering, shape recognition, matching, number reading, counting, addition and subtraction. The scores were analyzed in percentages of good, trial and slow cognitive achievements and the results presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Faith Based Pre School Children's Cognitive Competencies in Number Work

Name of ECDE centre	All Nations (Roll 10 )						St. Augustine (Roll 30)					
	Good	%	Trial	%	Slow	%	Good	%	Trial	%	Slow	%
Number ordering	10	100	--	--	--	--	16	53	14	47	--	--
Shape recognition	10	100	--	--	--	--	25	83	5	17	--	--
Matching	--	--	10	100	--	--	26	87	3	10	1	3
Numbering reading	10	100	--	--	--	--	25	83	5	17	--	--
Counting	10	100	--	--	--	--	21	70	9	30	--	--
Addition	10	100	--	--	--	--	26	87	4	13	--	--
Subtraction	3	30	3	30	4	40	28	93	2	7	--	--

*Source: Learners Progress record*

Table 1 shows shows cognitive competencies in number ordering, shape recognition, matching, number reading, counting, addition and subtraction in the two Faith Based ECDE centres which were All Nations and St. Augustine ECDE centres. All the Pre-school children selected at All Nations had 100% cognitive achievements in all the cognitive competencies in number work except in matching and subtraction where some

Pre-school children registered 30%. 100% of the Pre-school children at All Nations registered trial in matching, 30% trial and 40% slow in subtraction. Similarly, Pre-school children at St. Augustine Catholic ECDE centre registered above average cognitive competencies in all the cognitive competencies in number work. The highest score was 93% good in subtraction and 47% trial in number ordering while the lowest scores were 53% in number ordering, 7% trial in subtraction and 3% slow in matching.

The literature also supports the involvement of Non-governmental organizations in ECE in Kenya. For instance, the establishment of National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) in 1984 as a national resource center within the then Kenya Institute of Education was with the support of Bernard Leer Foundation and later expanded with the support of the World Bank (1997-2003). The center is responsible for co-ordination of the national training programme and is involved in advocacy, establishing linkages and Quality Assurance (Republic of Kenya, 2006).

Faith Based Pre-schools had feeding programmes in place. Teachers in these centres were well remunerated and were highly motivated to perform their teaching duty. Adequate instructional materials, furniture, latrines, classrooms, play materials and playgrounds were available in the Faith Based ECDE centres. The centres also sponsored children who were disadvantaged through payment of fees, buying uniforms and provision of meals. This promoted psychological and emotional well-being of the children; factors which are known to highly improve cognitive development and achievements among Pre-school children.

Non-Governmental Organizations have also played critical roles in policy development, strategic planning, high-level advocacy and capacity strengthening of ECDE centres. A cognitive achievement of Pre-school children in Faith Based ECDE centres is comparatively high compared to Public ECDE centres. This could be attributed to the additional facilities and feeding programmes available in the Faith Based ECDE centres. They have extended strategic financial and technical support targeting ECE systems building. These organizations have helped bridge the gap by helping parents and communities to provide a positive and early start for their children where there is inadequacy of government sponsored ECDE services.

In support of this findings, the World Bank ECD project (1997-2003) strengthened the ECD system through the construction of conference facilities at NACECE; staffing, equipping and capacity building of DICECE, the expansion of training opportunities for Pre-school teachers, strengthened community engagement through training management teams, the establishment of ECD Centres in marginalized communities, inclusion of health and nutrition into ECDE (World Bank 1997). Further, in 1986, The Aga Khan Education services started Madrasa Pre-school programmes for helping parents and communities to provide a positive and early start for their children.

From the results obtained, it can be noted that the role of Non-Governmental finances on Pre-school children's cognitive achievements include, but not restricted to employing teachers and support staff. The overall supervision of administration composed of a committee which manages the centres account, providing physical facilities including buildings furniture and repairs and sponsoring learners who are disadvantages through payment of fees, buying uniforms and provision of meals. It could be concluded that the above financial provisions has contributed to high cognitive competencies achievements by learners in Faith Based ECDE centres.

## **V. Conclusion**

The study found out that the role of Non-Governmental Organization in Early Childhood Education included, but not restricted to employing teachers and support staff. The overall supervision of administration composed of a committee which managed the school finances, provided physical facilities including buildings, furniture, repairs, sponsored children who were disadvantaged through payment of fees, buying uniforms and provisions of meals. Faith Based ECDE centres recorded 100% availability of feeding programmes. This to a great extent contributed to Pre-scholars posting high cognitive achievements as compared to other categories of ECDE centres

## **VI. Recommendations**

The government should create conducive environment for the non-governmental organizations to participate in early childhood education as they play a critical role in the child's cognitive development.

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