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Parents' Perceptions of Pre-Primary Education in Kenya: An Ethnographical Study of Pre-Primary Schools and Young Children's Lives in the Village of Narok

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Abstract

The importance of pre-primary education has been widely recognised in countries identified as 'developing' as its participation has a great impact on their daily lives mentally and physically, and later on for bringing about productive and healthy adult persons. A new competence-based curriculum (CBC) was launched in 2017 in Kenya, and one of the key pillars of the CBC is parental engagement. For public schools, pre-primary classrooms are generally attached to an elementary school. Governance of the education system in Kenya is shared between the national and local authorities. Parents, especially, play a significant role in children's education and development, hence the research aimed to listen to Maasai parents' voice and to share their insights into the situation of pre-primary education in rural Kenya. This manuscript is based on fieldwork conducted in Narok County, Kenya, in 2018 and 2019. First, it provides some information on Maasai people's culture, socio-economic and educational situation. Second, a background of pre-primary education in Kenya will be introduced. Next, we describe the research method, and introduce the organisation of village-based pre-primary education classes. Then it presents preliminary findings through thematical analysis of interview data. The findings show that, while unschooled parents understand the purpose and importance of pre-primary education, the Maasai culture and tradition influence their child rearing significantly. It concludes that the local pre-primary schools and other involved stakeholders could find a way to improve their financial strategy to correspond to the free-pre-primary education policy and their mother tongue education.

Keywords: Childhood in Africa, Pre-primary education in a rural Kenyan context, Maasai tradition and culture, Parents' views, Qualitative research

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Introduction

It is widely accepted that children's development is influenced by family, school and society (Brofenbrenner 1979; Bowes et al. 2012). Parents, especially, have an important role to play in children's education and development. Hence, this study attempts to listen to local parents' opinions about children's participation in preschools and mother tongue education in the rural area of Narok County in Kenya. Such perspectives determine the support that parents give and the extent to which they engage in their children's education. UNICEF (2018, p.74) recorded the growth enrolment rate of pre-primary education, and it was 76.5 per cent in 2015 which meant 3.2 million children attended a two year of pre-primary education in Kenya. However there is very little research conducted in the rural areas of Africa. Listening to parents' actual views on pre-primary education is rather limited (Cumming 2017). This article is based on research conducted in Narok County, Kenya, in 2018, 2019 and 2021. The research aimed to listen to Maasai teachers' and parents' voice and to share their insights into the situation of pre-primary education with a particular consideration on mother tongue education in rural Kenya. Focusing on the Maasai people, first, it provides some information on their culture, socio-economic and educational situation. Second, a background of pre-primary education in relation to mother tongue education in Kenya will be discussed. Next, we show the research methodology, and, then introduce an example of village-based pre-primary education classes, followed by the presentation of findings, via thematical analysis of interview data. The findings show that, unschooled parents understand the purpose and importance of pre-primary education, and they expect schools to teach Swahili and English, but not mother tongue. Additionally, although teachers know the new pre-primary education policy and the concept of CBC, because of multi-ethnic classroom situation and lack of training on mother tongue teaching, they are reluctant to implement mother tongue education. Lastly the paper concludes with recommendations to improve the current situation of pre-primary education to stakeholders.

Socio-cultural factors of the Maasai in Narok Country, Kenya

Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963, and is expected to have a population of 43 million (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2014, 2). The Human Development Index ranks Kenya 142nd out of 189 countries and territories in terms of its measure of poverty (UNDP 2019, 2), highlighting that about 26.8% of the labouring persons lived on less than US$3.10 a day (UNDP 2019,1). A new Constitution enacted in August 2010 states that Kenya has 47 counties, with implementing the decentralisation of administration.

Narok County is one of the counties in the Rift Valley Province, situated in southwest Kenya, with a dominant ethnic group of the Maasai, with an estimated population of 1157873 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2019IIc, p. 11). Its population is very scattered, and some people liv far from the main road. Their main activity for living is pastoralism (Saitoti & Bechwith1988). Currently many pastoral Maasai people have been forced to conduct agricultural work to meet their basic needs because of the enforced privatisation system of land. Some Maasai women make, sell and wear hand-made colourful beaded accessories.

Previously, the Maasai did not rely on a cash economy. The more cattle a Maasai person has, the more influence the person has in their community (Saitoti & Bechwith 1988), which was stated by Maasai women in Narok County. When I asked them about the concept of being poor in the community during previous fieldwork in 2011, all of them responded that one was considered to be poor if s/he had no livestock (Takayanagi 2017, 2020). Their perception of being poor conflicts with universally accepted cash based definition of `poverty`. Many Maasai women are engaged with all the housework by themselves. Also a Maasai woman works for raising crops and livestock with her husband. Almost all Maasai women have many house-oriented cores to take a day (Takayanagi 2008).

The Maasai speak Maa (the Maasai language), but there was no written script. However, they use the Roman Latin alphabet to develop their own Maa bible. Many Maasai people can communicate in Swahili and/or English. 94.8% of women in Nairobi (the capital city of Kenya) have been to school/learning institution, in contrast with only 70.5% of women in Narok County have been to school/learning institution (Kenya Bureau of Statistics 2019, p. 34, 43). For men, corresponding figures for Nairobi and Narok County are 95.8% and 75.3%, respectively (Kenya Bureau of Statistics 2019, p. 34, 43). its measurement relies on a self-reporting system by the age of 15 years old (Kenya Bureau of Statistics 2019). The government has implemented a few adult education programmes since the 1960s, incorporating the economic and functional needs of adult learners (Bunyi 2006).

Lower literacy rates in Rift Valley Province have resulted in shortages of local teachers. The lower literacy levels are in part the result of the Maasai's traditional perception of formal education as something that was not as important for economic survival. Herding cattle was the chief activity and did not quite require literacy. Thus, many of the Maasai children in the past and, to some extent, still now do not require schooling, as they must graze livestock, something that does not require education. Another factor associated with low literacy levels among the Maasai relates to traditional beliefs among the community. In the last few decades, parents in the Maasai community

were not eager to send children to school (Holland 1998). Schooling was perceived as a vehicle that led children to desert the ways of the community. Sending boys to school, for instance, was seen as a key factor in making them forsake what the Maasai considered as important qualities of manhood, such as strength, courage and self-discipline. It also prevented them from learning the important skill of herding cattle (Sena 1986). Though these perceptions have changed considerably over time, there still are some Maasai parents who still hold on to them, and are not very committal about taking children to school (Sena 1986).

Introduction of the Early Years Competency-based Curriculum and parents' involvement in young children's education

The Kenyan government articulates education in terms of sustainable development, and supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). Goal 4, for education, aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN 2015). The SDGs recognise more diverse approaches than the prior set of Millennium Development Goals, to ensure the promotion of the quality of education. Furthermore, SDG Target 4.2 states that by 2030 countries should "ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education" (UN 2015).

Formal early childhood education in Kenya began in the 1940s, established by the British colonial administration (Eshiwani, 1993; Mungai et al. 2017). It intended to accomodate the children of European settlers, and early childhood education was organised through the British system, which taught basic academic skills with religious education (Eshiwani, 1993; Mungai et al. 2017). Kenya declared in the 2010 constitution that pre-primary education would be compulsory and free for every child (World Bank 2018). The number of preschools has been rapidly growing in Kenya. The number of pre-primary, and early childhood development and education (ECDE) centres increased from 40,145 (public: 24,702, private: 15,443) in 2013 to 41,779 (public: 25381, private: 16,398) in 2017 (KNBS 2018, p. 227).

The management of ECDE was decentralized in 2017. The Ministry of Education is responsible for developing early childhood educational policies, curriculum, and training of ECD teachers and assistance. The County (regional) Government is responsible for constructing preschools, monitoring, and the employment of the Pre-Primary school teachers and assistants (Ministry of Education, 2017, 4,5).

The vision of ECDE in Kenya is to have "holistic pre-primary education for sustainable development" (Ministry of Education, 2017, 14). The Kenyan Government

mission, in addition, is “to provide, promote and coordinate the delivery of quality and relevant pre-primary education services for lifelong learning and sustainable development” (Ministry of Education, 2017, 14). In addition, the goal of ECDE is “to ensure every child has access to equitable, inclusive and quality pre-primary education services”. Therefore, this ECDE policy follows the guiding principles as outlined below (Ministry of Education, 2017, 14): a) Quality and equitable pre-primary education services, b) Respect to the rights and welfare of the child, c) Inclusiveness, d) Integrity, transparency and accountability, e) Public participation, f) Non-discrimination and protection, g) Developmental appropriateness, and h) Child friendliness.

The National Children's Policy 2010 (National Council for Children’s Services 2010) and the National Plan of Action for Children 2015-2022 (National Council for Children’s Services) state the roles of different stakeholders, such as parents and national and county governments, in the provision of ECDE in the country. For instance, to stimulate development and early learning, parents or primary caregivers in ECD settings are expected to “encourage the child to play with caregivers, toys and other children in order to enhance cognitive development” and to “provide safe play materials that stimulate all senses and a conducive environment for play” (Ministry of Education 2017, 17). Childcare centres are expected to “create a conducive environment that encourages child play” (Ministry of Education 2017, 17).

As part of the new education system enacted in 2018, the national education system has a 2-6-3-3 model, with two years of pre-primary education, six years of elementary education, three years of junior high school, and three years of high school. The eight years of pre-primary and primary education are called ‘basic education’.

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) designed the competency-based curriculum of early years education in 2017. Pre-primary one (PP1) is for children aged four years and Pre-primary two (PP2) is for children aged five years. The curriculum includes the following learning activity areas: language, mathematics, environmental, psychomotor and creative arts, and religious education (Christian, Islamic and Hindu) (KICD, 2017, v). Each lesson takes 30 minutes. Seven core competencies are integrated within this curriculum. These are; communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem thinking, imagination and creativity, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn and self-efficacy (KICD, 2017, v).

Communities in Kenya vary with reference to culture, traditions and in most cases the day-to-day occupation. The relevance of the curriculum may vary across different communities in the country.

Pre-primary education in Kenya aims at preparing children for primary school by teaching basic numeracy and literacy of three languages (Mother tongue, Kiswahili, and English). The teaching language is the language of the school catchment area. The aim of teaching language activities at pre-primary school education is to "enable learners to express themselves fluently and to assist them to improve the listening ability, concentration, understanding and memory" (Basic education curriculum framework republic of Kenya 2019, p.32).

According to a study by Mwegio and Mlekwa (2001, p. 69) on the relevance of formal education for nomadic people in neighbouring Tanzania, primary education curriculum and teaching approaches have very little relevance to pastoralist children and their families. These authors further suggest that, "the curriculum does not respond to needs and aspirations of nomadic children…it does not link with informal and indigenous education, which is more functional, and does not offer children the necessary life and survival skills that are of relevance in their immediate environment".

Under the decentralisation policy of ECDE in Kenya, Piper et al. (2017) found that counties (reginal governments) invested very little or no resources on teaching support and infrastructure for promoting quality ECDE. This led to individual schools focusing on material purchases including textbooks and syllabi. Although a school is advised to use a language of the local community as a medium of instruction, some schools used English materials as they could not obtain materials in their local languages. Piper et al. (2017) also found that while counties hired full-time paid ECDE staff for monitoring programmes, ECDE teachers with a minimum two-year qualification of ECDE certificate/diploma were employed at different status (many were on a temporary basis) with different salaries. Parents are expected to support pre-primary schools financially, albeit free and compulsory pre-primary education (Wangila 2017; World Bank 2018). This causes issues of sustainable funding for pre-primary education and programme consistency as it relies on parents' ability to pay teachers' salaries and fees to contribute to teaching aid (Wangila 2017). The negative impact of this school fees-related experience has been shown by a World Bank report, which states that, "Poverty-related deprivation contributes to low educational attainment" (Young, 2001, p.23, Tata 2004). Studies have been conducted that focus on parents' views on pre-primary education in different national contexts, but not in rural Africa (Einarsdottir 2010; Sahin et al. 2013). Therefore, these voices from Maasai parents' perspectives gathered in this study could help teachers and policy-makers modify the top-down teaching approaches, to be more culturally and linguistically responsive and sensitive.

Methodology

Data and research concerning education in rural East Africa (Dupas, et al 2007; Mwai 2003; Takayanagi 2020) is limited, and this study contributes to current discussions of pre-primary education from local teachers' and parents' perspectives. In order to investigate and analyse children's everyday lives and pre-school education from perspectives of parents in Narok County, the research questions raised were:

(1) What is the lifestyle of children in rural Kenya?

(2) What is a reason for the parents to send their children to pre-primary school?

(3) What do parents expect from pre-primary school?

The data collection took place over four weeks in February and July in 2019 after a pilot phase of data collection undertaken in August 2018. The interviews were undertaken in five pre-primary schools. Class observations were organised during the field work in July 2019, to find out teachers' instructional techniques in their classrooms (O'Leary 2020). 16 interviews were conducted with 14 mothers (1 with school certificate, 13 unschooled) and 2 fathers (1 with school certificate, 1 unschooled). In terms of ethical considerations, a research permit under the number of NACOSTI/P/18/60583/24037 from the Government of Kenya was obtained. Following the guidelines of Waseda University, Japan, the parents gave their informed consent to the study and were promised confidentiality and anonymity.

A case study methodology (Yazan 2015) employed qualitative and semi-structured interviews took place on the basis of an untied structure, using open-ended questions to explore topics identified from reviews of the grey and scholarly literature (Lindlof & Taylor 2002).

A local teacher acted as an interpreter among Maa, Swahili and English language. Teachers and government employees speak fluent English. Interviews were conducted at pre-primary schools and local cafes.

The interview data were written down in stages as field notes and transcribed (Lindlof & Taylor 2002). Thematic analysis was carried out looking at the research questions and review of literature (Hatch 2002). The interview data were categorized and grouped together thematically.

Findings and Discussion

The findings from the interviews and class observations can be categorised into three key themes. The first theme demonstrates the life style of children in Narok County,

such as daily routines and habits and household chores of PP1 and PP2 years children, who are four (4) and five (5) years in age respectively. The second theme embodied the image of a child, and parents' associated expectations. The third theme relates to parents' views towards pre-primary education, such as the selection of a pre-primary school and the reason to send their children to pre-primary schooling and their expectations on pre-primary education. As noted, pre-primary education in Kenya is regarded as the foundation of lifelong learning and sustainable development for children (Republic of Kenya 2017). Pre-primary classes have had academic focus, preparing for a smooth transition of a young child into primary education. The views of the parents reflect this point as well.

Lifestyles of Pre-Primary School Children in Narok

Table 2.1 summarises parents' accounts of the routine activities of pre-primary children in Narok. Schools are far from some of their homes; as young children have to walk to school, they tend to wake up early in the morning. Most children have breakfast with their parents at home. Many have dinner with their parents between 8 and 9 pm, and then go to bed.

Daily routine tasks	Time	Number (total 16)
Wake-up time	4am	1
	5am	4
	6am	9
	7am	2
Breakfast intake	Everyday	12
	Sometimes	4
Breakfast companion	With parents	15
	Without parents	1
Dinner time	7-8pm	4
	8-9pm	11
	9-10pm	1
Dinner companion	With parents	14
	Without father	2
Bed time	8-9pm	8
	9-10pm	4
	10-11pm	2
	After dinner	1
	7:30 (skipping dinner)	1

Table 2.1 Routine activities of Pre-primary school children in Narok

Pre-primary schooling in Narok, Kenya

For instance, one of the five schools visited during the fieldwork, School A had classes of PP1 and PP2 up to Grade 8. PP1 and PP2 had class lessons between 8:50am and 12:00pm (see Table 2.2 below). During break times, pupils went out from their classrooms to play in the school ground. The parents of PP1 and PP2 had to pay a school fee of KES 150 (USD 1.3) per month. A few students were withdrawn from pre-primary school (as higher levels of school) until their parents were able to pay school fees. The students had a school lunch of red-beans and rice, prepared by a school cook. There were 49 students in both PP1 and PP2.

Time / Day		8:50-9:20	9:20-9:50	9:50-10:20	10:20-11:00	11:00-11:30	11:30-12:00	12:00-
Monday	In Door choice activity	Language	Maths	Outdoor play	Break	Environment	Creativity	Lunch
Tuesday		Maths	Language	Activities		Religious Education	Environment	
Wednesday		Language	Maths			Environment	Creativity	
Thursday		Maths	Language			Music/ Movement	Environment	
Friday		Language	PPI			Maths	Environment	

Table 2.2 Timetable of PP1 as of July 15, 2019

The teacher-pupil ratio in pre-primary schools, according to the government guidelines, is 1:25 (GOK 2006, p.10). Hence the class size of this local pre-primary class was much bigger than the ideal/recommended size. Each teacher of PP1 and PP2 did not own a complete set of textbooks, but had some based on the new curriculum. As the full set of the textbooks were not available at the time of the researcher's fieldwork (as of July 2019), both teachers developed lesson plans based on the old syllabus.

Teachers reported that were aware of the vision of competency-based curriculum, and were eager to implement it in their classrooms. During the researcher's visit, the teachers were called by a local ECD coordinator to collect more textbooks. The ECD coordinator (a former ECD teacher) appointed by the local government did not have her own office, so she used her house to store ECD related documents, and her own cell phone for communication at work. Both teachers applied a conventional method of school teaching to the young pupils by which they wrote down Swahili and English

alphabet, and numbers on the blackboards so that the pupils were able to copy it into their notebooks. While Freirean approaches (1970, 1978) have long emphasised the importance of critical awareness raising in learning, the teachers and the students adopted a teacher-centred approach, more reminiscent of Freire's "banking concept of education", in which teachers transfer knowledge to their students (Freire 1970).

A PP1 female teacher with three years of teaching experience and an Early Childhood Development certificate was employed locally by the school parents, and received a monthly allowance of KES 7000 (USD 64.6), which was produced from the school fees. A PP2 female teacher with 12 years of teaching experience was employed by the county (regional) government, and received a monthly government allowance of KES 10000 (USD 92.3). That teacher also had a diploma in Early Childhood Development. This reveals a lack of standard salary for teachers at this level. The second teacher expressed her concern to the researcher, "My work is not permanent, salaries are delayed, not enough salary." (Field note, August 10, 2018). This evidence also supports Piper et al. (2017)'s report that a regional government's investment and capacity can have influence on preschool teachers' employment status and welfare. As the school still relied on the parents' financial support to manage PP1 and PP2, it could possibly affect young children's attendance, depending on their socio-economic status (Swadener, Kabiru, & Njenga, 2000; Young 2001; Tata 2004).

During the fieldwork, four lessons (each of 30 minutes) were observed. While the active learning method of group or pair-work or co-operative learning were not presented during classes, the teachers used real objects to explain the written words and for counting numbers. The pupils brought a notebook, pencils, an eraser, and a water bottle in their backpacks. The teachers made some charts and hung them on the walls. They also had a lesson plan notebook and showed it to the researcher, saying that they prepared a lesson plan beforehand. The traditional teaching method of 'chalk and talk' was frequently observed, in which the learners repeat and copy the words into their notebooks. The teachers told the researcher that they also taught traditional songs, rhymes, poems and stories, yet during the class observation, the researcher could not observe them.

The PP1 teacher avoided Maa in her classroom because she was afraid that, using a local language of Maa would cultivate tribalism among young students who came from more than one ethnic group. Although the CBC recommends schools to use a mother tong of a school catchment area for young students, this study finds that having mother tong based classes is a challenge (Tara 2004; Rossiter 2016). Using a local language such as Maa was a controversial and sensitive issue, apart from elaborating English words into Maa to students (Thiongo 1986). Therefore, it would be effective to involve other

stakeholders, such as parents and community people, to raise people's awareness on the impact of mother tong education on children's development (Mulumba & Masaazim 2012; Hungi et al. 2017).

While the teachers were aware of the rubric-based assessment (grading elements for assignments) that had been introduced in the new curriculum designs, the teachers still applied written exams to evaluate students' academic achievement. Teachers have attended workshops to improve teaching approaches or techniques, available on an ad hoc basis.

The young pupils enjoyed playing during break times in the school ground. Mutero (2001) and Tara (2004) have critiqued the academic curriculum in the context of Kenya, and pointed out how teachers could balance between the its syllabus and a play-based teaching.

Parents' views about pre-primary education

When the parents mentioned their reasons for to sending their children to pre-primary schools, many of them told the general aims of pre-primary education, which is building a good foundation for preparing young children for Class One of primary schooling, which was at the top of their minds:

> To have good foundation of education where basic things are learnt." (Mother Nashpae)
>
> Education life starts from nursery" (pre-primary education) (Mother Nashiegu)
>
> A child is able to join Class One." (Mother Yunis)
>
> Know how to read… (Mother Margaret)

Parents considered pre-primary education as preparatory learning space and were interested in the acquisition of basic academic skills. However, competencies such as creativity and critical thinking to be gained during pre-primary education were not stated in their interviews (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017, v).

Next, 12 parents responded that they selected a pre-primary school because of a short distance to home as children have to commute on foot everyday. Some parents told the reputation of the pre-primary school.

Regarding their expectations to pre-primary education, 11 out of 16 parents commented that they would like their children to proceed to upper grades so that children could be *knowledgeable* and could obtain a primary education certificate. One of the mothers replied:

> My children have got knowledge of what they have learnt and they are able to promote to other classes (upper grades). (Mother Naserian)

Another mother, Mother Makena said,

> (Pre-primary education) opens doors to education.

The aim and purpose of pre-primary education in Kenya has been discussed and debated since the government introduced the new curriculum with PP1 and PP2 classes in 2017 (Republic of Kenya 2017). The new government policy on pre-primary education asserts that pre-primary education is meant for young children, for their smooth transition to primary schooling, acquiring basic literacy and numerary skills. Most of the interviewed parents' expectations were that pre-primary school children learnt how to read and write so that they could move onto primary school education. Many interviewed parents seemed happy with the teachers of pre-primary classes, and what the children were learning in the classrooms. However, this study could not capture how much the parents understood their roles as stakeholders in contributing to quality education and the focus of holistic approach of the CBC (Segoe & Bisschoff 2019; Republic of Kenya 2017). Overall, the findings revealed that the parents emphasised the academic-oriented aspects of pre-primary education. This is in spite of the idea that, as Mwegio and Mlekwa (2003) explained earlier, the classes based on the curriculum controlled by the national government, had little relation to their cultural values.

Conclusion

What this overview of children's everyday live style and parents' views on pre-primary education in the Maasai land teaches us that pre-primary education in rural Kenya is regarded as the development of learning foundations for young children, while government has set up the aim of the pre-primary education to be children's holistic development, along with global aim of sustainable development (Ministry of Education 2017).

It prioritized listening to the experiences and opinions of parents' on early childhood development and pre-primary schooling in rural Kenya. These insights may contribute to the education policy makers at the county level to put relevant strategies in place in implementing needs-based pre-primary education in the context of traditional Maasai community. Investments in pre-primary teachers by local counties could improve

pre-primary education while considering quality of teaching and learning (Piper et al. 2017).

While the government of Kenya (2017) and UNESCO (2015) suggest the importance of holistic and integrated teaching approaches for young children, the interviewed parents emphasized academic skills of writing and reading of pre-primary education, and it helped young children's smooth transition to primary schooling. These differences may indicate disjunctures in the perceived aims and utility of formal schooling between local contexts and wide national and global goals. Although Mandillah (2019) and Mulumba and Masaazim (2012) suggest the implementation of teacher professional development in 'mother-tongue' teaching and in promoting parents' behavioural change towards indigenous languages, this issue should be carefully managed in cooperation with local parents and a school committee, with clear guidelines and teaching strategies. Although the impact of mother tongue on children's understanding of subjects and academic performance have been in debate for many years, this study still shows that the role of mother tongue in young children's education is not a primary concern to pre-schools. Therefore the enhancement of quality mother-tongue education should be asserted and discussed in the Kenya's government policy. This issue of mother tongue education is not new to the discussions of education development in Africa, this study reconfirmed that the mother tongue issue still exists in actual classrooms.

In subsequent fieldwork, parents' opinions on mother tongue education will be also re-examined, which will reinforce a discussion of this study of the relationships between Maasai culture and pre-primary education conceived of and driven by the central government, and wider global goals, including the SDGs. In addition, parents' and government's officers' understandings of roles as stakeholders in implementation of quality education will be further examined (Segoe and Bisschoff 2019). Future research should be conducted at a larger scale in rural Kenya, with more pre-primary teachers and government officers. It may also be helpful to undertake classroom observations to understand teaching approaches by pre-primary school teachers.

Recommendations

1. After the needs assessment of languages in the community, the government and stakeholders could facilitate the integration of mother tongue education into implementation in the ground.
2. To raise people's awareness on the importance of mother tongue education in the second and third langue learning, pre-service teacher training colleges could allocate its theory and practice modules to trainees.

3. Pre-primary schools could organize a seminar or workshop for parents and local communities to recognise the effectiveness of mother tongue education.
4. It is important to listen to teachers' and parents' voices and views on children's pre-primary education to bring about quality of early childhood education.
5. Aspects of the daily lives of children, and their roles as children located within their communities, must be reflected in framework of children's rights and multi-level ECD policies.

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