

Administrative prospects for ECE curriculum implementation in Chongwe district of Zambia.

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1.1 Introduction

- **The advent of the free education in Zambia saw more children enrol into public schools than ever before.**
- **This showed that school going children where not able to access education in Zambia before this policy shift.**
- **Primary schools are currently over enrolled and so are the pre-schools or ECE centres.**
- **To support this shift, the government enhanced the provision of grants to schools.**

- **School grants are funds given to schools according to the enrolled learners per school.**
- **For ECE however, grants range between ZMW1000 – 2000 (USD50-100) per quarter.**
- **This is different from the grants the primary and secondary schools receive which are dependent on the the number of pupils enrolled and distance from the DEBS office**
- **Therefore, this raised the administrative factors for the curriculum implementation in the zambian education system**

1.2 Statement of the problem

- The school administrators receive funding from government for ECE curriculum implementation which is separate every quarter**
- These funds vary from school to school according to their needs as well as infrastructure and teacher training challenges therein.**
- What was not known was how the funds were used to facilitate curriculum implementation in the ECE centres in Chongwe district**

1.3 Objectives

- i. to establish the infrastructure suitability in government ECE centres,**
- ii. to determine areas of investment for quality education provision**
- iii. to establish the needed pedagogical support for curriculum implementation**

2. LITERATURE

Author	Title	Findings
Pungwa, B. (2017)	Assessment of the Implementation of Early Childhood Education in Selected Primary Schools of Lusaka District	Learning environment for ECE learners was not suitable, schools lacked facilities for children's play, adequate sanitation and classrooms were congested in Lusaka district
Mulenga, Tu, and Teng (2021)	Contemporary problems and solutions for ECE music education in Zambia	ECE learners performed poorly due to lack of music materials to help in building a solid foundation
Mpolomok a et al., (2022)	Tales of ECE teachers in Government schools in Chipata, Zambia	There is need for infrastructure development in order to provide quality ECE programs in Zambia
Lungu and Matafwali (2020)	Play based learning in ECE centres in Zambia: A teacher perspective	Teachers remain strategic in the implementation of any curriculum strategies as they understand the language of play

3. METHODOLOGY

Approach	Qualitative	Design	Descriptive
Population	ECE centres, teachers/administrators		
Sample	10 teachers and 8 administrators (18 participants)		
Research instruments	observation checklist (infrastructure)	Interviews (teachers and administrators)	
Data analysis	Thematic analysis		
Ethics	Confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and informed consent		

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 To establish the infrastructure suitability in government ECE centres

The funding was not sufficient to enable the schools meet the administrative costs for their ECE centres hence they lacked appropriate facilities for every learner. One administrator said:

We receive inadequate funding for ECE activities which cannot make the centre run as per curriculum planning model because we do not have better tables, chairs and storage facilities. In and out door play equipment is just a dream far fetched for us.

One teacher said:

We are usually improvising some of the materials and play equipment we are using in this school. Government funding is not enough even to buy a swing for our children.

- **Pungwa (2017) agrees that the learning environment for ECE learners was not suitable because schools lacked facilities for children's play, did not have adequate sanitation and classrooms were congested in Lusaka district.**
- **Mulenga, Tu, and Teng (2021) found that ECE learners performed poorly due to lack of music materials to help in building a solid foundation in early childhood learners.**
- **Mpolomoka et al., (2022) found that ECE in Chipata, District has poor learning environments due to inadequate investment in infrastructure by government**

4.2 Determine areas of investment for quality ECE education provision

Government should invest in improving teacher-learner disparities, provide teaching and learning materials, teacher competencies, indoor and outdoor learning environment and build quality ECE centres not the current classroom environment annexed from primary schools. Administrators said:

- 1. ECE is not like any primary school class, it needs safe and child-friendly classroom environment for quality education**
- 2. The classroom and desks we are using are not for ECE. They are meant for primary school learner which we have turned into ECE**
- 3. There is need for specific funding for ECE infrastructure not the way the funding is being done currently**

Teachers also said:

- A. The government should build ECE centres which are specific not these classrooms and infrastructure we are using.**
- B. Cooperating partners can be found to help support infrastructure development in ECE just like they do for secondary schools.**

Mpolomoka et al., (2022) echoed the need for infrastructure development in order to provide quality ECE programs in Zambian public schools

4.3 To establish the needed pedagogical support for curriculum implementation.

- Need for materials that support holistic implementation of the curriculum vis-à-vis teaching and learning.**
- Apply play-based teaching and learning.**
- Translanguaging practices in multilingual classes to support multiliteracy development through CPDs.**

One administrator said:

There is a language barrier in our classes as the familiar language is different from the language of instruction thereby affecting holistic implementation of the curriculum.

A teacher said:

- **If I use the regional language in class, I end talking to myself, so use some town Nyanja and Soli to some extent and also allow them to respond in their language of play.**
- **Lungu and Matafwali (2020) argue that teachers remain strategic in the implementation of any curriculum strategies as they understand the language of play and language of instruction.**
- **Nyimbili (2022) adds that translanguaging practices through authentic TLM enable learners in multilingual classes to participate in the lessons.**

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

- The study concludes that there has been ineffective administrative support for ECE curriculum implementation in Chongwe district of Zambia through lack of suitable infrastructure.**
- The government should invest in improving teacher-learner disparities, provide teaching and learning materials, learning environment and build quality ECE centres.**
- Schools need materials that support holistic implementation of the curriculum, use play-based teaching and learning, and translanguaging practices in multilingual classes to support multiliteracy development through CPDs.**

5.2 Recommendations

- It was recommended that the government should provide adequate budgetary allocation to enable effective ECE curriculum implementation in Zambian schools.**
- Government should build model ECE centres in the established primary schools or stand alone ECE centres with its own management.**
- School administrators should enhance teacher pedagogical competencies for effective ECE curriculum implementation.**

Thank you