

SCHOOLS PREPAREDNESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY BASED CURRICULUM

ABSTRACT

Education is fundamental to development of human resource capacities for sustainable economic growth and development. By imparting new skills and knowledge in people, education expands human capabilities, increases labour productivity and enhances essential participation and partnerships in nation building. Education is a vital tool in achieving greater autonomy, empowerment of the people and addressing gender gaps in the distribution of opportunities and resources (Muganda, 2002; Muthaka & Mwangi, 2002). More equitable distribution of opportunities and resources between men and women leads directly to higher economic growth and productivity (World Development Report, 2000/2001).

The right to education revolves around two universally accepted declarations or goals, one of them being the Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015, later refocused as Education for All (EFA), as articulated in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and reaffirmed at the Dakar (Senegal) World Education Forum in April 2000. In September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration to achieve universal completion of primary schooling and achieve equity in access to primary and secondary schooling by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.

In relation to compliance with education declarations, Kenya has made considerable achievements in education since independence. Provision of education and training of all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the government's overall developmental strategy. Development of quality human resource is equated to the education curriculum offered in the learning institutions which is central to the attainment of the national goals and achievement of the millennium development goals in the country. (EFA Global Monitoring, 2004). This can only be achieved through a thoroughly researched and developed curriculum. Curriculum that provides solutions to problems and develop the self in them. Curriculum that is coupled with the necessary teaching and learning resources, adequate teaching personnel, considering the teacher-child ratio and the teaching environment. In relation to Education for All, Gross enrolment rate (GER) in primary has risen from 50% in 1963 to 104% in 2002 after the implementation of Free Primary Education. The country's GER in pre-school education marked a remarkable 40% in

2001 higher than the median of sub-Saharan Africa (5.8%) and compared with developing countries at 35%.

Keywords: Curriculum reform, labour productivity, competency based curriculum, community interactions

COMPETENCY BASED CURRICULUM

Introduction of Curriculum reform in education is a worldwide-practiced phenomenon that is involved in striving for the best educational practices, primarily with the demands of the twenty-first-century, need for knowledge and economic demands. The African countries inherited the colonial education system after their independence, education that was discriminative and which demanded realignment to societal and cultural demands of the African nations [1,2].

Coincidentally, inherited curriculum by the African nations adopted the content or knowledge-based approach. This Knowledge-based curriculums were too academic and dissatisfying to most of the needs of the African countries, Kenya inclusive.

A Competency based curriculum emphasizes on complex outcomes of a learning process (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes to be applied by learners) rather than mainly focusing on what learners are expected to learn about in terms of traditionally-defined subject content [3,4]. Competence, within the European Union area is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Competence indicates the ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development). Competence is not limited to cognitive elements involving the use of theory, concepts or tacit knowledge. It also encompasses

functional aspects involving technical skills as well as interpersonal attributes e.g. social or organizational skills and ethical values. (CEDEFOP 2011). This is included in the fourth category of activity groupings (The affective domain) of learning.

Significance of Competency-Based Curriculum

Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) helps to align the education provided to the dynamic social and economic demands of the community. This curriculum enhances mastery of skills, knowledge, and developing self-confidence in problem-solving, which is a significant fit in the job market. CBC prepares scholars for life and career skills, which addresses leadership, interpersonal, flexibility, adaptability, self-drive initiative, responsibility, productivity, accountability, social, and cross-cultural skills. These attributes are essential in the transition to the job market and community interactions.

However, many African countries are struggling to be at par with the international standards in curriculum development and implementation. Kenya and Tanzania for example adopted curriculum with the philosophy of education for self-reliance, but due to the inadequately trained teachers and insufficient resources, it ended up being too examinable and losing its goals due to lack of skills and knowledge in the applicability of knowledge as required by the economic sector [5-7]. This could lead to unemployment, increased vices, and rampant dropouts, among other factors.

CBC brings a new trend on the leverage of African education with the rest of the world. Many African countries have adopted Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) with an aim of getting solutions to the local needs of the populace. In the

developed countries where the curriculum has been implemented, instrumental progress has been realized in the contribution to the standards of the graduates. Most countries have opted for a competency-based curriculum (CBC), which appears as worldwide trends in offering skills that match with the requirements of the society and the employers.

Educational transformation

Rwanda changed to CBC to attain education transformation while ensuring that learning is profound, enjoyable, and habit formation, leading to high standards and improved achievements. That confirms the fact that the relationship between education and the world of work is through the CBC. It provides a curriculum framework which links practice to the theory, avoids dichotomy between knowing “that” and knowing “how,” The curriculum intends to raise graduates’ capabilities and employability skills which enhance the practical application of knowledge. Whether CBC has brought changes in Rwanda as intended or still facing challenges of implementation like many other developing countries needs to be unveiled.

Introduction of CBC in Cameroon intended to produce school leavers with knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for solving social and economic challenges in the society. In Indonesia, the CBC shifted the role of the teacher from being the source of content to education facilitator. They play a leading role in the classroom where they are required to encourage learners to set goals for their learning, support development of critical reflection by supporting learners to retrieve and retain knowledge and use it in practices for lifelong training. This involves a massive mandate of curriculum implementation on teachers especially for young children.

These are massive benefits for any economy. What is not addressed is the question on training and equipping the implementors of the curriculum with appropriate skills to facilitate affective implementation of the CBC. Several scholars have argued that teachers in African countries are ill-trained in CBC and even the policy developers have no clear understanding of CBC (KNUT, 2019). Wongnaa & Boachie (2018) pointed that there was skill deficiency in graduates from the institutions of higher learning as required by the job market. He suggested increased level of skills among the workforce to support industrial production, which would help address unemployment challenges.

Empirical review

Sotco et al. (2018) observed that CBC concept moved to European countries due to the economic recession caused by the widespread unemployment among the youth in the United Kingdom. The existing education system was criticized for low acquisition of appropriate skills by the school graduates. In the USA, the CBC was introduced due to low student achievement and poor quality of teacher training. This promoted the need to structure the outcome of learning and encourage teachers to express their teaching objectives in terms of observable student behaviors, improved effectiveness of teachers, teacher educators, and serve to address society's concern on unsatisfactory performance in the development of programs in teacher education in the USA. However, the CBC is not thoroughly utilized in USA primary schools.

Tanzanian adopted CBC as a result of problems arising in the training system that negatively affected the quality of graduates for the job market. The then-existing education system did not specify the required competencies to be attained by the students by the end of the course of study. However, the adoption of CBC,

emphasize on learning outcomes and skills and not the training of facilitators, equipments for teaching and learning plus teachers' involvement of parents nor the question of numbers in classrooms. The teaching learning environment has not been addressed and the issue of economic status of the parents ignored.

Likisa (2018) said CBC is characterized by responsiveness to a constantly changing world of work or technological advances, focusing both on method and product. The curriculum requires high levels of critical thinking and reflection, skills that are learnt best with some form of discovery as the learners construct their knowledge. CBC takes into account employment-related success, such as practical job skills, technical skills, occupation survival skills, job search skills, and entrepreneurial skills. The focus is on improving knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and performance in the labor context. Its evaluation focuses on education, skills, philosophy, and actual performance. Therefore, CBC requires learners to construct their knowledge, moving in their own pace, graduating based on demonstration of competencies. These features suit the needs of the twenty-first-century worldview sufficiently.

The adoption of CBC could be moving to the right direction in training of manpower but the existing reality is that implementation is happening with no regard to available resources and understanding of what is being implemented, and with an examination of the context. Most challenging is the diverse political and socio-economic difference in different African countries. Several other factors that can restrict curriculum reform relate to both the academic and the context in which the innovation is practiced. Restrictions include issues of time, parental expectations, public reviews, unavailability of required instructional materials, lack of clarity about curriculum reform, teachers' lack of skills and knowledge,

organizational arrangements such as overload, rigid scheduling of time, reporting systems, and failure of the administration to recognize and understand its role in change.

The CBC needs to look into the African countries actual learning environment, its financial ability, human resource's ability, philosophy, job market needs, and vision. The African classrooms face diverse challenges ranging from infrastructures, resource, teachers' capabilities, leadership, and types of students' cohort with classes swollen with learners eager to learn.

All of these factors need to be discussed in the context of different African countries. The reforms and core competencies in primary education are expected to transcend into both Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and university education levels. The initiation of Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024, whose mission is to "Accelerate Africa's transition to an innovation led, competence-based economy in most African countries will need to find a nexus between primary education and TVET which could be achieved through appropriate adoption and implementation of CBC into African context and Kenya inclusive. Shan lax International Journal of Education # S I N C E 1 9 9 0 5 0 <http://www.shanlaxjournals.in>

These will help to achieve continental Agenda goals 2063, which aims to address youth employment through quality and relevant education that will result in skills revolution. The education systems in the African states have made efforts to adopt world/global class education model (CBC), but still, questions should be asked: do the adopting countries consider their "own" existing challenges? Are the states ready to face the challenges brought by that the new curriculum? Do the countries involve the curriculum implementors in the initial stages of curriculum reforms

decisions? For example, in Kenya, the entire curriculum development lies with the Kenya institute of education (KICD) while implementation lies on teachers. The curriculum is a demand-driven where employers need to serve as curriculum advisory committees, provide internships and to shadow experiences of students.

Duplicated curriculum designs

Africa needs to align the well-documented duplicated curriculum designs from developed countries to their educational philosophy and vision. That will require the use of local experts who understand the actual classroom challenges in the development of the curriculum, the long-experienced serving teachers would be in a better position to bring real rich classroom discourse in the curriculum reform and the needs of the employers compared to curriculum developers in the offices. Its worthy noting that there is big gap between the KICD and the teachers in the field.

Attributes associated with CBC are essential for transition to the job market but this cannot be done in a vacuum. More resources and a more focused and realistic approach is required, where all stakeholders are involved. Due to inadequate trained teachers and insufficient resources, The 8-4-4 curriculum ended up being too examinable and losing its goals due to lack of skills and knowledge in the applicability of knowledge as required by the economic sector, a case that has not been resolved to date.

The CBC appears as the worldwide trends in offering skills that match with the requirements of the society and the employers but the diverse economic differences have hampered effective implementation and achieving the set purpose of the curriculum. Whether CBC has brought changes in the developing African countries as intended or still facing challenges of implementation needs to be unveiled. The

teaching learning environment has not been addressed and the issue of economic status of the parents ignored in the education sector.

Among other challenges, the CBC curriculum is very broad. This involves a massive mandate of curriculum implementation on teachers especially for young children. Although the CBC features suits the needs of the twenty-first-century worldview, requirements, rigid time table

It requires learners to construct their knowledge, moving in their own pace, graduating based on demonstration of competencies. These features suit the needs sufficiently.

Though sited as the solution to challenges facing developing African countries, Kenya inclusive, CBC is not fully implemented even in the developed countries like USA. This is a clear indication of the many challenges associated with the implementation of CBC curriculum not only in developing countries but also in developed countries, implying there is work to be done before the attributes associated with the CBC curriculum can be realized worldwide.

However, many African countries are struggling to be at par with the international standards in curriculum development and implementation. Kenya and Tanzania for example adopted curriculum with the philosophy of education for self-reliance, but due to the inadequately trained teachers and insufficient resources, it ended up being too examinable and losing its goals due to lack of skills and knowledge in the applicability of knowledge as required by the economic sector. lack of skills and knowledge, organizational arrangements such as overload, rigid scheduling of time, reporting systems among other challenges hinder the implementation of this curriculum.

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Conclusion

Many African countries are struggling to be at par with the international standards in curriculum development and implementation. Kenya and Tanzania for example adopted the curriculum with the philosophy of education for self-reliance. Key point to any economic growth and personal gain but only if this is coupled with adequately trained teachers and sufficient teaching and learning resources for effective implementation, improve on the teacher child ratio as it is labour intensive and consider time given for completion of tasks. This could be the reason why the CBC curriculum has not been implemented wholly even in the developed countries like USA. Though this is the way to go in enhancing education results as a tool to improved human resource, more needs to be done by the government to improve on the requirements of this good curriculum.

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