

**ASSESSMENT OF THE BENEFITS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE,
DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION PROVIDED BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATIONS IN RURAL AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF CHIBOMBO
DISTRICT IN CENTRAL PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA**

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DECLARATION

I, **PHYLLIS KANENEKA** do solemnly declare that this dissertation represents my own work, which has not been submitted for any degree at this or another university.

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APPROVAL

This Dissertation of Phyllis Kaneneka is approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration at the University of Zambia.

Examiners' Signatures

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my supportive only brother Mr Hudson Kaneneka for encouragement and financial assistance during my studies.

To my three children, Harry, Harriet and Henry Choolwe Kaluba, for their unfailing love, understanding and encouragement to me in leading the way in my academic achievements.

To my first grandson, Luyando Ozzy Simusokwe for his perseverance throughout my studies and this should lead the way for him. The sky is the limit to all of them.

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ABSTRACT

In 1990, the Education for All EFA movement was launched at the World Conference in Jomtein, Thailand. At this conference, 155 countries and 150 organisations agreed to universalise primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade. The EFA movement focused on the need to provide learning opportunities for everyone in the world, from infancy to adulthood UNESCO, (2006). With the introduction of the EFA movement a globalisation of early childhood development took place, with a much broader emphasis on holistic development of the child Marfo et al, (2004).

It was for this reason that governments and Non Governmental Organisations NGOs have been committed to providing basic education for children, youth and adults from all over the world. One of these NGOs is Plan International, whose vision is of a world in which all children realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity. Plan is active in more than forty developing countries across Africa and it promotes children's rights and their lifting out of poverty. Zambia is one of the countries in which Plan operates in. It supports poor children especially in rural areas through the establishment of Early Childhood Care Development and Education ECCDE centres in communities where these children live. It is for this reason that this study assessed the benefits of Early Childhood Care Development and Education provided by Non Governmental Organisations in rural areas looking at Chibombo District.

The quantitative data were analysed using programmed excel spread sheets to generate frequency tables and bar charts. The data collected from qualitative questions, focus group discussions and interviews were analysed and coded according to merging themes. The results were used to establish what the benefits teachers and parents got from ECCDE centres provided by NGOs in rural areas.

The key findings were cited by almost all the respondents, who agreed that the services provided to ECCDE centres were beneficial to rural children, teachers and parents. These benefits were in terms of:

- a) Improved retention and completion rates
- b) Reduced dropout and repetition rates
- c) Reduced absentees
- d) Increased interest in learning. And many more benefits cited in the document such that respondents wished the program could be extended to all parts of the district so that all children in the district had the same type of educational foundation which was firm and acceptable.

The overall conclusion was that it was possible for communities and basic schools to establish ECCDE centres in their catchment areas so that all the children who enrolled in regular schools would have ECCDE background and enter school with a firm foundation. It

was also realised that the MOE has not been able to support the works of the NGOs may be because of the policy document which was not yet in place.

The recommendations are made to stakeholders in the education sector and the government. These are:-

- a) The Ministry of Education through Cabinet office should finalise the ECCDE policy.
- b) The Ministry of Education should support the efforts of the cooperating partners in the provision of ECCDE in rural areas as stated in the National Policy document.
Educating Our Future.
- c) The Ministry of Education should send the trained preschool teachers to ECCDE centres.

ACRONYMS

ECCDE	Early Childhood Care Development and Education
ECD	Early Child Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESO	Education Standards Officer
EFA	Education For All
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DESO	District Education Standards Officer
FBO	Faith Based Organisations
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SNDP	Sixth National Development Plan

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The chapter will start with the background of the topic, the Statement of the problem, the Purpose of the study, Specific Objectives, Research questions, Significance of the study, Operational Definitions, Delimitation and end with the summary.

1.1 Background

The World Conference on Education for All EFA, held in 1990 Jomtien, Thailand, was attended by 155 countries and 150 Organisations that agreed to universalise primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade. This EFA movement focused on providing learning opportunities from infancy to adulthood UNESCO, (2006). It is through this EFA movement that the globalisation of early childhood development took place, with a much broader emphasis on development of the child Marfo et al, (2004). At this world summit, the international community came together and agreed on the framework for provision of education for all placing early childhood education as objective number one. Countries were urged to expand early childhood care and development activities including family and community interventions; especially for the poor, disadvantaged and disabled children. This was reaffirmed at the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000.

It is from this background that governments and Non Governmental Organisations NGOs got involved and committed into the provision of basic education for all children from all over the World. Many countries embraced early childhood education because it is a holistic approach within the rights based perspective, to ensure proper child care leading to the survival, maximum development, participation and protection of young children through child friendly, family focused and community based programmes. This combines health, nutrition, hygiene, cognitive and psychosocial development UNICEF, (1997).

The findings on human development provide evidence that the child's earliest years are by far the most important in shaping personal characteristics, social, emotional, physical and intellectual development Goodkontz, (1947). From the day a child is born it moves through a growth period and whatever is done during each developmental stage ties in with the past and future as observed by Anderson, (1947). This makes learning in early childhood an important foundation on which later educational experience can be built Gray, (1970).

In Zambia, Early Childhood Care Development and Education ECCDE had never been a responsibility of the Ministry of Education as evidenced in the major educational reports such as **Educational Reforms** (1977), **Focus on Learning** (1992) and **Educating Our Future Policy** document (1996). The Ministry of Education was mandated with the responsibility through the Government Gazette Number 547 of 2004 on Statutory Functions, to start running the ECCDE centres. But before 2004, a remarkable achievement in this sub- sector throughout the 1990s was however, in teacher training where the number of trained teachers in pre-school education increased from 473 in 1990 to more than 1,200 in 1997. Additionally, there was an increase in the number of pre-school teacher training colleges established by private individuals and government institutions (UNESCO, 2006). Despite the training of teachers, the provision was still under Ministry of Local Government. The Ministry of Education has now incorporated ECCDE in the education sector chapter of the **Fifth National Development Plan** and adopted it as a first Sub-Sector. This sector of education is offered to children below the age of seven (7) years. The National Policy document of 1996 (**Educating Our Future**) acknowledges the important role that early childhood education plays in multi – dimensional development of young children.

The MOE focus since 2004 has been on the establishment of early childhood programmes for children living in rural areas and poor urban areas. To achieve this, the Ministry has been working with partners; ministries, district councils, local communities, NGOs, religious groups, families and individuals UNESCO, (2006). Strategic Plan (2003-2007) states that ‘‘ lack of preparation through preschool is a contributory factor to under-achievement especially by rural children and the poor in basic schools’’. This was in line with EFA commitments and PRSP where the government was showing interest in helping the young children with emphasis on community based activities. At this point MOE strongly committed itself that ECCDE would become part of basic education, which will make it easier for basic schools to host programmes and increase access for rural children. With such commitment put in place, the MOE should have been seen to render support to NGOs providing such services in rural areas because that is the only way we would improve readiness and performance of pupils entering grade 1 especially in rural areas. The support should have been intensified after noticing that the enrolment of children in Grade one with preschool or nursery experience had increased significantly although the number remained small in relation to overall enrolment. For instance, children enrolled with preschool experience in 2009 were 75,047 countrywide

which represents an annual average increase of 26.7 percent MOE, (2009). What was not pleasing was that the rural enrolments remained significantly very low with Western Province having the lowest percentage of grade one entrants with preschool experience of 4.0 percent followed by Northern and North Western provinces with 4.5 percent and 6.1 percent respectively.

The FNDP, (2005) state that severity of poverty is more acute among rural households than urban households. This is due to inadequate food security in the majority of households that depend on consumption of their own agricultural produce. Because of this the Zambian government is committed to providing quality early childhood education to all eligible children as reflected in the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2003-2007. Unfortunately, this aspiration at the moment is merely an illusion as this education sector is still largely in the hands of private providers, 64.2 percent and is mainly middle class oriented. Whereas Non Governmental Organisations accounts for 19.2 percent and Faith Based Organisations 12.3 percent. Community based early childhood programmes run by Non Governmental Organisations solely rely on support from donor agencies such as UNICEF and other International Non Governmental Organisations like Plan International in Central, Southern, Eastern and Luapula provinces of Zambia .With this scenario in place, the introduction of ECCDE in rural areas by Non Governmental Organisations served as a blessing because it gave chance to mothers to concentrate on their farming activities and enabled the siblings who acted as caregivers to have time to go to school.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Non Governmental Organisations have been offering Early Childhood Care Development and Education in some rural areas of Zambia and yet schools in Zambia face numerous problems. Moreover the Ministry of Education has not started offering it despite taking it over from the Ministry of Local Government. Therefore, there was need to find out the facilities and services offered to ECCDE centres by Non Governmental Organisations where they operate. There was also need to find out why the Ministry of Education had not started offering ECCDE despite taking it over from the Ministry of Local Government

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the benefits of having ECCDE in community and basic schools offered by the Non Governmental Organisations NGOs where they operate. Another purpose was to identify the problems that arise with the NGOs' provision of such services. The study therefore, seeks to assess the benefits rural teachers and parents get by taking their children to ECCDE centres provided by NGOs where they operate.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- 1). Establish the benefits rural teachers get by teaching children from ECCDE centres
- 2). Identify the successes and challenges of ECCDE from the time of its inception in various centres and schools where it operates.
- 3). Assess the acceptance of the curriculum being offered to ECCDE learners by the Ministry of Education.
- 4). Establish the benefits rural parents get by taking their children to ECCDE centres.

1.5 Research Questions

- 1). What benefits do rural teachers get by teaching children from ECCDE centres?
- 2). What are the successes and challenges experienced by ECCDE from the time of its inception?
- 3). Is the curriculum offered by NGOs to ECCDE centres acceptable by the Ministry of Education?
- 4). What benefits do rural parents get by taking their children to ECCDE centres?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is expected that the study would create awareness among stakeholders on the importance of establishing ECCDE centres in learning institutions. It is also hoped that the study might help policy makers make changes that would promote and effectively monitor ECCDE centres thus enhancing quality and maximizing the retention rates.

1.7 Operational Definitions

Benefits – refers to the long lasting gains parents and children get by attending ECCDE centres

Care giver – The custodian of a child at any institutional level such as family, ECCDE centre, preschool or orphanage. This person can be a parent, guardian, preschool teacher, manager or any other responsible worker at an ECCDE centre or orphanage

Children – These are persons between the ages of 0 – 7 years in an educational institution below grade 1 in Zambia.

Completion Rate – The proportion of pupils who reach the end of the education system

Dropout Rate - The proportion of pupils who leave the education system without completing a given school year.

Early Childhood Care Development and Education Centre –Organised institution which provides learning to children below the age of seven (7).

Effects – Changes that have taken place in the lives of children or adults who passed through ECCDE centres.

1.8 Limitation

Since the study was done in Chibombo district of the Central Province and in ten basic schools and ten (10) ECCDE centres only, the findings may not be generalised to the rest of the country.

1.9 Delimitation

The study was limited to one (1) district of the Central Province, namely Chibombo District. Out of 74 ECCDE Centres and 115 basic schools in Chibombo district of the Central Province only 10 were purposively sampled run by Plan International (Zambia). The respondents were limited to head teachers, lower basic school teachers, Care givers, parents, District Education Standards Officer, NGO and MOE Officials. These were expected to give information on benefits of ECCDE provided by Non Governmental Organisations in rural areas. The sample would have been widened, but for limited resources.

1.10 Summary

This chapter focused on background information, Statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, the delimitation and definition of terms. The next chapter will focus on relevant literature of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter will highlight the relevant literature on the topic under discussion as written by other scholars. It will basically look at the background, pre schooling, Early Childhood Care Development and Education, Effects of ECCDE, Benefits of Early Childhood Development programs, Early Child Development in Developing World, Development of ECCDE in Zambia and the summary of the chapter.

2.1 Historical Background

The matter of early Childhood Care Development and Education ECCDE is not at all a new subject; Hildebrand (1981), points out that between the time of the Greeks and today there had been more than two thousand years of ideas and experience relating to the subject. Initially Early Childhood Education served as a social service rather than as an education function. It was a way of helping out mothers who had to go to work in order to support their families during upheavals which came as a result of the Industrial Revolution, The Great Depression and Second World War Lancaster and Gaunt, (1975). However, as the knowledge of child development grew, the objectives of nursery schools and kindergarten changed from babysitting to catering for the total child. The administrators of nursery schools began to design programmes to cover, deal and sharpen the emotional, social, intellectual and physical aspects of the child. In so doing, those programmes prepared the child for the school experience which the home environment could not give.

2.2 Pre-schooling.

It is wrong to assume that children do not need a home environment. As a matter of fact, the best climate for the growing child is the home. But it should not be just any home; it ought to be a home that provides affection, security, a sense of belonging and a sense of personal worth. Because many homes are unable to provide all these components, preschools or ECCDE have been established to supplement and compliment the home Lewanika, (1983). The motive is not necessarily to replace the home or to take over the responsibility of the parents, but pre-schools are designed to pick up where the homes end and provide

opportunities and materials that some homes are unable to provide. For example, language development can be enhanced at preschool level.

Even though education at home especially in a rural setting, has its own advantages: the child is often left in a situation where he or she is unable to make the most of his or her later educational opportunities. This is because even when a home is good and satisfying, research has revealed that children who have had educational experiences outside their homes are advanced in social response, motor co-ordination and their health habits are much more adaptable to new situations than those who do not have the Early Childhood Educational experience, Goodkontz, (1947). Kelly and Kanyika, (2000) stated that early childhood education has been seen by a number of educators and child psychologists as a possible solution to many of the massive social problems of illiteracy. It is also believed by relevant stakeholders that children with early childhood education experience learn how to extract a better education from the education system. Therefore, the quality of early childhood education is beneficial to young children, their parents and later contributes to positive benefits countrywide. Hence, early childhood education would help the children to escape poverty which could follow them from their parents.

2.3 Early Childhood Care Development and Education.

ECCDE is a concept that focuses on all support necessary for every child to realize their right to survival, to protection and to the care that will ensure optimal development from birth to the age of seven. It combines elements from the areas of infant stimulation, health and nutrition. It is generally the psychological support a child needs Evans et al, (2000). This assertion is supported by the findings of Young, (1995) who reported that early childhood development programmes promote the physiological and intellectual development of young children, helping them to be ready for further schooling and play a productive role in society. Early Childhood Development ECD and human development are closely linked. The latter refers to the combination of physical, mental and social development in the early years of life. These dimensions are commonly addressed by integrated programmes of ECD. These programmes include interventions to improve the nutrition, health, cognitive development and social interaction of children in their early years Myers, (1990).

Young, (1995) defines human development as the overarching objective of most international and multinational development programmes since human development is closely linked to

ECD. Investing in ECD is the natural starting point for those programmes and for the public policy that frames these programmes. ECD can improve the lives of low income children and their families and it can additionally enhance the quality of life for the community as a whole. Participating in preschool and initial education programmes can improve the child's school readiness skills Schweinhart, (1993). Other benefits include the lowering of primary school enrolment ages, reduction of repetition and dropout rates, increasing retention rates/ progression rates and improvement of academic performance. She further noted that parental involvement in programmes also appears to strengthen the positive impact of early childhood interventions.

The early years are critical in the formation and development of intelligence, personality, and social behaviour of a child. Because infancy is a period of unusually rapid maturation, sensitivity and a high degree of environmental stimulation is needed for the development of secure conceptual structures and social relationships in later life Schweinhart, (1993). Programmes of ECD can facilitate increased primary school attendance where older siblings have been forced to drop out of school to act as caregivers for young children Young, (1995). A lot of siblings have been denied chances to advance their formal education because of the responsibilities which are given to them when parents go out to work in the farms or fetch food wherever they think they might get it.

When the burden is lifted from them, a number of benefits will be seen through the increased performance in academic work; children will raise the prospects for higher productivity and future income and reduce the probability that they will become burdens on public health and social services budgets Young, (1996). Heckman, (2002) states that both medical and education research have shown that mental growth that is the development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour occurs most rapidly in humans during their earliest years. Studies have shown that lack of proper handling and affection has affected children's growth or gets then stunted just as much as lack of proper food. The other scholars Pilling and Pringe, (1978) stated that preschool attendance lays the foundation on which academic skills can be based. In this way, every parent would desire his or her children to have proper education and survival skills which would make them stand any situation they are faced with in life. Parents struggle to see their children become self reliant in life. This can only be achieved if a proper foundation is laid for them by passing through ECCDE.

2.4 Effects of ECCDE

Cohen and Bagshaw (1973) carried out a study in Britain and found that the attendance of two and a half hours a day at a British nursery school appeared to result in children attaining greater improvement in language proficiency and concept formation than those of a similar social economic background who had not attended nursery school. The Educational Priority Area Project in Britain also carried out a similar study and the results were compatible with those of Cohen and Bagshaw (1973). The provision of early childhood education to children gave gains in relation to national norms. These research findings give us information that wherever, a child could be and if the service is provided, it would add an advantage to the parents and children's achievement in their future prospects such as improving language and upgrading social skills among the children.

Klaus and Gray (1972) investigated the effects of early childhood education and their results indicated that children who attended early childhood education were ready for reading, language and personality characteristics. This was also observed by Baruth and Duff, (1980) who wrote that recipients of early education indicated greater interest for the alphabet, vocabulary, number work and were ready to interact with books. The second finding was that they scored higher in reading skills and learned faster. From the above research findings, it can be deduced that preschool, kindergarten or early childhood care development and education experience help promote school performance even if the children are from the low socio- economic stratum. This is supposed to be encouraged and provided to all citizens.

At Boston University, in the United States of America, a program for paediatricians and other health care workers called 'Research out and Read'' was initiated by Zuckerman. He trained paediatricians to present a simple book to care givers and children. As he examined children, he encouraged caregivers to read with children not as a means of teaching reading, but rather to promote positive and nurturing care giving practices, emotional bonding and love for learning. The results from a number of studies indicated that this approach significantly improved children's cognitive development both in the USA and in developing countries such as Jamaica.

Harold and Temple, (1960) carried out research on child performance in four different schools and their findings were that children who attended nursery schools were better in painting and manipulative control than those who were admitted into school straight from their homes. The

children included those from the low socio-economic class. Their conclusions were that preschool or kindergarten experience helped the school performance to increase for every child who was given chance to pass through the mentioned services. Children coming from nursery classes got engaged in more purposeful play and complex activity and chose more demanding educational activities than those who had no preschool background.

As mentioned already, many studies confirm that the first years of life could be seen as very important years in terms of the child's physical and psychological development. If the child's body and brain develops well, his or her learning potential will increase. But children who are insufficiently supported by their surroundings run the risk of delayed cognitive development Evans et al, (2000). The potential and full participation of the children in society as adults depend, to a large extent, on the foundations laid during the early years of life Heckman, (2006). These foundations can be laid through an early childhood programs which serve as a supplement to children's home environments, because these programs create a familiarity with school institutions and procedures which have a positive impact on formal schooling later on. Adults who participated in a high-quality early childhood education program in the 1970s are still benefiting from their early experiences in a variety of ways, according to a new study.

2.5 Benefits of Early Childhood Development Programs

The benefits children, families and communities get from ECD programs are: reduced dropouts and repetition rates, improved school achievements, greater adult productivity, and higher levels of social and emotional functioning which are encouraged by ECD programs and help to make them a highly cost – effective means of strengthening society as a whole by ensuring that its individual members live up to their full potential.

Evaluations of well conceived programs designed to foster early development demonstrate that children who participate in these programs tend to be more successful in later school, are more competent socially and emotionally and show better verbal, intellectual and physical development during early childhood than children who are not enrolled in high quality programs. Benefits of ECD interventions can be found in the following areas:

- Higher intelligence scores
- Higher school enrolment

- Less grade repetition and lower dropout rates
- Higher school completion rates
- Improved nutrition and health status
- Improved social and emotional behaviour
- Improved parent child relationships
- Increased earning potential and economic self- sufficiency as an adult
- Increased female labour force participation

The United States has provided considerable data supporting the positive impact of Early Child Development programs. One of the most striking results of the evaluations is that many of the programs resulted in increased school completion rates. Most studies of the economic returns of high school completion indicate that an additional year of high school is associated with an 8 percent increase in life time wages, Currie and Thomas, 1995, Angrist, (1990). It is also well established that academic performance in the early grades is a significant predictor of eventual high school completion.

Therefore, if an ECD program can improve performance in the early grades, it can increase the probability of high school graduation with attendant improvements in future wages and employment opportunities. Even a few years of early schooling, it appears, can substantially increase the economic value of an individual's skills, Gaag and Tan, (1998). In addition to increased earnings through increased schooling, participation in ECD programs is associated with reduced criminality and reduced welfare utilisation as an adult, Schweinhart et al, (1993). The long- term impact of early interventions dramatically influences their cost- effectiveness.

2.6 Early Child Development in Developing World.

Evaluations of ECD programs operating in developing countries show considerable positive outcomes for participating children. Several longitudinal studies demonstrate the substantial long-term impact. The following benefits have been firmly linked to integrated interventions in early childhood:-

- Improved nutrition and health, by providing psychosocial stimulation. ECD programs can enhance the efficacy of health care and nutrition initiatives. Programs can also monitor growth and provide food supplements and micronutrients.
- Improved cognitive development and school achievement through early education activities.
- Help the disadvantaged and reduced social inequality. There is mounting evidence that interventions in early childhood particularly benefit the poor and disadvantaged.
- Children who are nurtured and well cared for are more likely to fully develop their learning and language as well as emotional and social skills. They are more likely to grow up healthier and to have higher self- esteem. Each one of these areas is crucial to their later well being as adults. Experience in early childhood truly shape who a person ultimately becomes.

Moreover, ECD programmes can break through inter- generational cycle that prevents children from achieving their full potential as a result of malnutrition constant illness, impaired learning, and eventually school dropout. Despite the clear benefits which have been highlighted by several scholars many rural provinces of Zambia are still lagging behind in the provision of early childhood care development and education as shown in the table.

Table 1 Number of Grade One entrants with preschool experience 2004-2010 as stated by Matafwali and Munsaka, (2011).

	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010
National						
Male	50.40%	48.60%	48.30%	49%	47.60%	48.40%
Female	49.60%	51.40%	51.70%	51.00%	52.40%	51.60%
Total	15.90%	20.30%	17.10%	16.10%	17.20%	17.30%
Provincial						
Central	12.70%	20.40%	21.20%	21.20%	18.50%	21.20%

Copper belt	37.90%	35.80%	29.30%	30.20%	32.30%	35.50%
Eastern	5.90%	9.90%	9.10%	8.10%	7.30%	7.60%
Luapula	5.70%	10.60%	8.70%	6.80%	7.10%	8.00%
Lusaka	34.10%	48.50%	39.20%	44.30%	42.80%	45.80%
N/Western	6.00%	10.10%	6.60%	7.30%	6.10%	8.00%
Northern	5.90%	11.00%	6.20%	3.30%	4.50%	5.10%
Southern	17.70%	19.20%	18.70%	16.40%	18.60%	18.50%
Western	4.40%	5.80%	5.00%	2.80%	4.00%	4.20%

The table on page 13 shows the discrepancies in the provision of early childhood education in the country. This is contrary to the indication in the Education Act of 2011 which states that the education system would start with early childhood care, development and education in every learning institution. The picture reveals that the rural provinces of Zambia are still lagging behind in the provision of the service. But what gives hope is that the sector is enshrined in the national documents and is hoped that the government would take it serious to ensure that all provinces respond to the provision of early education.

2.7 Development of ECCDE in Zambia.

UNICEF, (2002) states that 180 countries agreed that every child should have a good start in life and should have a nurturing, caring and safe environment to survive and to be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and be able to learn. Among the signatories to this agreement were the developing countries which needed a sound and strong foundation for their young ones in order to minimise the economic difficulties they had been going through. Many African countries embarked on the provision of Early Childhood Care Development and Education because they realised that investments in early childhood development would not only pave way for improved individuals' health, mental and physical performance but also help in a major ways to minimise related problems such as juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy and social violence Ettlting et al, (2006).

The Zambian government, like many other governments and organisations, had been influenced by the strong stance of international organisations on **Education for All**. This was in response to pronouncements of the World Conference on Education for All, which had been convened in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand. During this conference government including that of Zambia, committed themselves to, among others things, ensure the expansion of Early Childhood Care Development and Education ECCDE activities, embrace family and community interventions, especially for the poor and disadvantaged children. Since there was a growing need and recognition in many parts of the world on the importance of ECCDE, the cooperating partners like Plan International, whose vision is a world in which all children realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity, realised their obligation to start offering the services to the rural children who among others are desperately in need of the service. This is because child development is the foundation of human development. The convention on the Rights of the child states that a child has the right to develop "to the maximum extent possible". Exposure to quality ECCDE programmes can prepare children for school participation and enhance their chances of benefiting from later education and social services. They are likely to be more productive, healthy and lawful citizens who would reduce future costs of education, medical care and other social spending.

Making children from rural areas pass through ECCDE would help them get full benefits from school and successes in the market place. This would also help to meet the goal for Universal Primary Education. Berger, (2000) stated that in Uganda it is believed that infants from the Baganda community are advanced in their motor development because of their mothers' commitment to train them in basic skills early in life.

In Zambia, early childhood education has existed as far back as 1957 when the Day Care and Nurseries Act (Chapter 313 of the Laws of Zambia) was passed in recognition of the importance of Education for Child Development. Later in 1972, the Lusaka Pre-school Association was formed which later became the Zambia Pre- school Association. Ettlign et al, (2006) states that under colonial education up to 1964 ECCDE was provided only by the African Traditional Society, notably through the extended family system. That was so, especially in the major towns where several such institutions had been established. These were divided into different categories of Day Nurseries, Community preschools, Day Care Centres and private preschools. These offered different services to the children Zimba, (1989). These facilities were run differently according to the service providers' desires. Some were

mainly established for the mere purpose of making money or may be with the offer of social, emotional and educational skills.

Others did not provide these skills because they lacked qualified and experienced teachers who were aware of early childhood development and educational ethics. Additionally, there is currently no standard curriculum framework for early childhood in Zambia. What is there is that which is provided by NGOs and guidelines from the Preschool Association of Zambia. But MOE has accepted that to be used meanwhile. Having no MOE curriculum to follow arguably makes the teaching provided at early childhood level less responsive to the needs of children and this has to a larger extent compromised the quality of education being provided at this important education level Matafwali & Munsaka, (2011).

Quality control and monitoring is another important component of quality early childhood education provision against which effectiveness can be measured. The study by Matafwali & Munsaka (2011) however revealed that there are currently no standard norms of practice for ECCD in Zambia, and that quality control and monitoring is nonexistent. This is exacerbated by lack of policy and curriculum framework to guide implementation of early childhood in Zambia. Needless to mention that the Ministry of Education with the help of UNICEF has been working on the early childhood policy since 2006. Thus, lack of quality monitoring and the absence of policy framework leave the direction of this important sector at the mercy of private service providers and some who may not possess adequate knowledge and expertise in child development.

Meanwhile, early childhood development includes all interventions directed at children or their caregivers, preferably as a package of services that support the holistic development of the child UNICEF, (2000). Ministry of Education Strategic Plan (2003-2007) and the Sixth National Development Plan for Education (2006-2010) state that Early Childhood Care and Development ECCD, has been described as the level of education which a child aged 0-6 years undergoes before attaining the compulsory age (7 years as is the case in Zambia) of entry to a primary school MOE, (2003). Further, the 1977 Education Reform defines preschool education as education intended for children below the age of seven years who normally will not started full-time education MOE, (1977). It must be noted however that, there could be variations in the age coverage depending on the country's implementation approach and to some extent the age of entry into grade one. For instance, the National Policy

on Education of the Ministry of Education, *Educating Our Future* (1996) focuses on children aged 3-6 years, not on the age group 0-2 years.

This is simply because ECD in Zambia is currently confined to pre schooling instead of offering a more comprehensive learning experience by the providers, which are NGOs, FBO, Private Individuals and Families. The developmental period is important because, it is a period of life during which significant transformations take place. It is during this period that the child is equipped with basic skills that serve as a foundation for later learning. The education a child gets from ECCD centres increase the return on primary and high school investment. It can also contribute to human capital information, raising productivity and income levels and reducing public expenditure by lowering welfare, educational and health costs. It is upon this realisation that Zambia along with many countries around the world started placing emphasis on the institutionalisation of early childhood education Matafwali & Munsaka, (2011).

Ettling et al, (2006) indicates that a child in a society can be compared to a foundation of any building. Unhealthy, deviant and poorly behaved children automatically mean an uncertain and shaky future for any society since children of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Early Childhood is the most rapid period of development in human life. For better or for worse, the period zero to six (0 - 6) years has an enormous effect on the future health, cognitive development, cultural attitudes and productivity of an individual. Of course no one would want to see his or her child grow into a worse person in society.

Every parent strives to have children who will be productive and respectable in society. That is why many Zambians appreciate the role traditional education was playing in our children. Because they were trained in such a way that they would be responsible citizens and be self reliant as they grew up. This was through appreciating their history, language, customs and values. Traditionally, every community member had a responsibility to see to it that the young ones were brought up in a way which was acceptable to everyone. This was to be done to any child not necessarily your biological children.

Mwamwenda, (1985) indicates that the influence of early childhood education does not stop with the child's intellectual development but extends to other domains such as the social, emotional and physical aspects. There is evidence that early education also influences the child's non intellectual development Eyken, (1971). In short the findings suggest that nursery

schools or ECCDE attendance was a worthwhile intellectual experience with children of all classes. Learning in early childhood was important as a foundation on which later learning would be built, whatever, the circumstances. One could easily say that evidence was there in children who had been to preschools or ECCDE in intellectual and educational attainments as compared to those who had not been to preschool.

Kasanda and Chondoka, (2004) state that; all levels of educational provision in Zambia except for ECCDE had more or less clear institutional arrangements, legal framework, roles, functions and responsibilities of the providers and key stakeholders. To leave the current situation as it is would most probably imply that there was neither conviction nor good will in Zambia to invest in the care, development and education of the most important future human resource, the child. CSO, (2000) Census Report indicates that as many as 150,000 children may be completely without adequate adult care, living in child – headed households or on the streets. If all these children were left unattended to by the government, through the non establishment of the ECCDE centres, then the country will not have well qualified leaders to take the nation forward because their foundation would have been weak.

The Ministry of Education states that they will encourage the establishment of programmes that support all round early childhood development, particularly those programmes intended for children living in rural and poor urban areas. It would also monitor the standards and assist in the formulation and designing of materials. It further states that it would train teachers for preschools and develop curriculum materials for use in preschools MOE, (1996). This has been repeatedly cited in the policy documents of MOE Strategic Plan of 2003- 2007, the FNDP which has placed ECCDE as its first sector, the SNDPs emphasis on the importance of ECCDE and Education Act of 2011. All these documents in place reflects the government's commitment in ensuring that ECCDE should be put in place especially for rural, peri urban and other disadvantaged children. This will help the country attain the status of being a prosperous middle – income nation by the year 2030. This could only happen if the foundation for the young ones is well established. Schweinhart et al, (1993) state that children who went through the preschool programme had become economically self-sufficient and socially responsible adults. It was hoped that if children from rural areas were provided with this service they would improve the status of their families when they grew up.

This was the reason why Plan International an NGO among many others that provide the Early Childhood Care Development and Education in rural areas of Zambia such as Chibombo district had to start implementing their programs which was to ensure that all children receive early education and prepare them for regular schooling and reduce repetition and dropout rates which were rampant in rural areas. Childhood was the most crucial development period in an individual's life. It is the foundation which facilitates the realisation of a child's basic right to future growth and development. Damage at this stage would not be overcome later in life, and poor parents were likely to pass poverty onto their children, perpetuating the cycle. It was worth noting from the onset that investing resources in children is a developmental matter Young, (1996).

2.8. Summary

The chapter discussed Literature review in terms of historical background, pre-schooling, early childhood care development and education, effects of ECCDE, benefits of ECCDE programs, ECD in developing world and development of ECCDE in Zambia related to the study. It is important to note that the Zambian government has taken cognisance of the important role of early childhood education in child development and that early childhood education can make a key contribution to poverty reduction as reflected in the Sixth National Development Plan (2011-2015). The Zambian government aspires to increase access to early childhood from the current 17 percent to 30 percent by the year 2015. However, early childhood sector has a number of challenges such as having a small number of children passing the ECCD centres, having the policy in draft form for a long time, no official curriculum and lack of monitoring by MOE. The next chapter will look at the methodology to be used, the study area, research design, target population, study sample, data collection instruments, data collection and data analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section describes the methods which were used in collecting data and how this data was analysed. It also describes the research designs which were employed, the target population, sample size and sampling method. Data collection procedure, the data collection techniques, the data analysis, the challenges which were encountered during field work as well as the instruments used was also discussed.

3.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Chibombo District in Central Province of Zambia, targeting ten 10 ECCDE centres out of 74 and ten 10 basic schools which received children from the centres.

3.2 Research Design

A Research design is defined as, “the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step. It is a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test specific hypothesis under given conditions” Bless and Achola, (1988:54). This study adopted a case study approach. It gave an opportunity for one problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time frame.

Case studies describe and analyse a situation, an event or process thereby evaluating an educational event or program. They can also be used to identify policy issues affecting an education program. Case studies focus on processes rather than outcomes. Finally, they contribute to large scale research projects and serve as a preliminary to qualitative research. This study has both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

3.3 Target Population

In the context of research the term “target population” has been defined as all members of any well defined class of people, events, or objects who have been designated as being the focus of an investigation. It is also known as universe or a special universe. It is called special universe in order to distinguish it from the general universe or population to which the study’s

findings can be generalised. A population should not be too small or too big. Use of a small population would be too limited in terms of generalisations while the latter would make the study too involving if not impossible to carry out. In this study the target population included all the 74 ECCDE centres in Chibombo district.

3.4 Study Sample and sampling procedure

This was determined by the researcher's specific needs. The power and logic of purposive sampling was that a few cases studied in depth yield many insights into the topic. In this study ten 10 ECCDE centres were picked or selected from a rural setting.

Ten 10 head teachers, fifty 50 class teachers, ten 10 care givers, one 1 Standards Officer, one 1 Ministry of Education official in charge of ECCDE at Curriculum Development Centre, one 1 NGO official and five 5 parents from each centre were selected from each basic school which received children from the ECCDE centres. It was hoped that these may be information key informants and would likely be knowledgeable and informative.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study employed questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The interview schedules and focus group discussion collected qualitative data.

3.6 Data Collection

Data were collected using the instruments mentioned. The researcher was on site administering questionnaires, conduct interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed by converting it into numbers while the rest of the data were qualitatively analysed through descriptions.

Data was analysed for it to make sense, be meaningful and useful in answering the research questions out of the bulk information collected. In this study data was quantitatively and part of it qualitatively analysed. This was to make the research highly advantageous and enriching.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical concerns were observed in this study. All data collected during the study was kept secretly and used for intended purpose as outlined in the section on the purpose of the study. Subjects were allowed to participate voluntarily. Names of the respondents and of schools were not disclosed.

3.9 Summary

This chapter presented the research design, target population, study sample and data collection procedure and other research methodology aspects of the study. The next chapter would present the research findings according to merging themes from the laid down objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research on the assessment on the benefits of Early Childhood Care Development and Education provided by Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) in rural areas. The findings were based on the research objectives as detailed below:

Professional Qualifications of respondents.

a) Gender of respondents

The sample population for the head teachers was made up of ten 10 respondents. Male respondents were eight 8 and female respondents were two 2.

b) Age of respondents

The data revealed that the age range of respondents was in different categories from thirty – thirty-five 30 – 35 with one 1 from thirty- six – forty 36-40 with two 2, forty –five 45 and above with seven 7. This showed that age of the head teachers were widely spread across.

c) Number of years worked in current position by respondents

The data revealed that four 4 of the head teachers had served below five 5 years, one 1 had worked for five 5 years, three 3 were in the same position between five-ten 5-10 years and two 2 had been in the same position for more than ten 10 years.

d) Highest qualification of respondents

The data revealed that seven 7 of the head teachers had diploma and three 3 were degree holders.

e) Proximity to ECCDE Centres

The data showed that nine 9 of the respondents said that they had ECCDE centres near their schools and only one 1 said did not have the facility. This indicated that the majority of the schools were able to have children with an ECCDE background in their classes

4.1 Advantages of rural teachers had in teaching children with ECCDE background

a) Grade 1 entrants with ECCDE background

The data revealed that nine 9 of the respondents reported that they enrolled children from centres with ECCDE background. It was stimulating seeing that children from rural areas were able to access such services which their counterparts in urban areas were provided with. The rural teachers had advantage also by teaching children who obtained good educational foundation from the centres. Teachers found it easy to teach because the children already had interest in skills of writing, reading and many more.

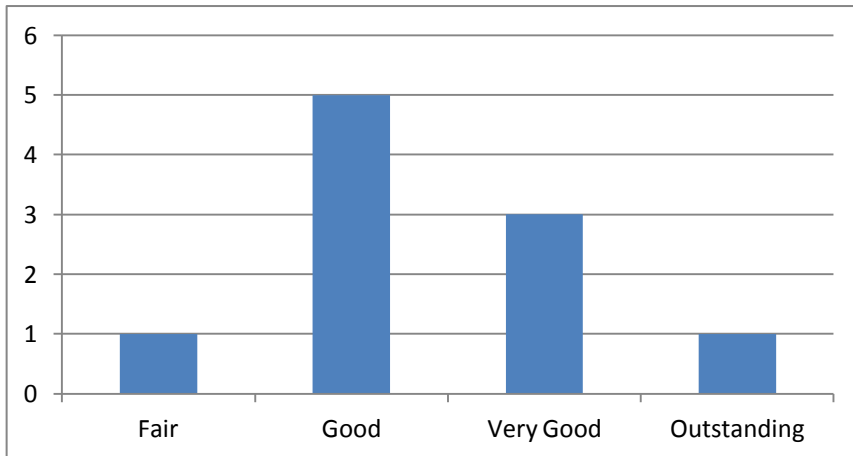
b) Number of children enrolled from ECCDE centres.

The data revealed that four 4 of the schools had enrolled twenty 20 children, two 2 enrolled thirty 30 children and three 3 enrolled above fifty 50 children from the centres.

c) Performance of children from ECCDE

The data revealed that the performance of the children from ECCDE centres had been good. From the results one 1 of the respondents said performance had been fair, five 5 said it was good, three 3 said it had been very good and one 1 said it was outstanding as shown in the bar chart on page 24 where the head teachers reported the performance of the children in their schools. The head teachers further lamented that, the larger number of children attending ECCDE may increase the performance in regular schools and enhanced the quality of teaching and learning in class. It also promotes retention and completion rates in children. The dropout and repetition rates were reduced.

Figure 1: Bar graph: Performance of children from ECCDE centres.



d). Involvement in the ECCDE activities

The data showed that eight 8 of the head teachers got involved in the activities of the ECCDE centre and tried to help in the running of the centre by providing professional advice, encouraging parents to take their children to the centre before they were enrolled into the regular school. There were many head teachers who showed interest in the activities of ECCDE centres. Their involvement was in the supply of educational materials such as teaching and learning aids, sensitizing the parents on the importance of sending children to centres, helping in establishing centres, attending meetings at centres and encouraging parents to give a token of appreciation to care givers. The remaining two 2 head teachers who did not participate may be very new in appointment or they could have answered the questionnaire on behalf of the head teachers.

d) Benefits from ECCDE background

The data showed that all the ten 10 respondents agreed that they had got benefits from the children who came from ECCDE centres. Other benefits cited by head teachers were that children had rich and firm educational backgrounds; they entered the regular schools with pre-reading and writing skills. Moreover, children who at an early age, developed high interest in school work, easily socialized when they went to regular schools, were prepared to learn and able to speak English. Good discipline was also instilled in them at an early age and that developed long life interest for school.

e) Grade 1 entrants to have ECCDE background

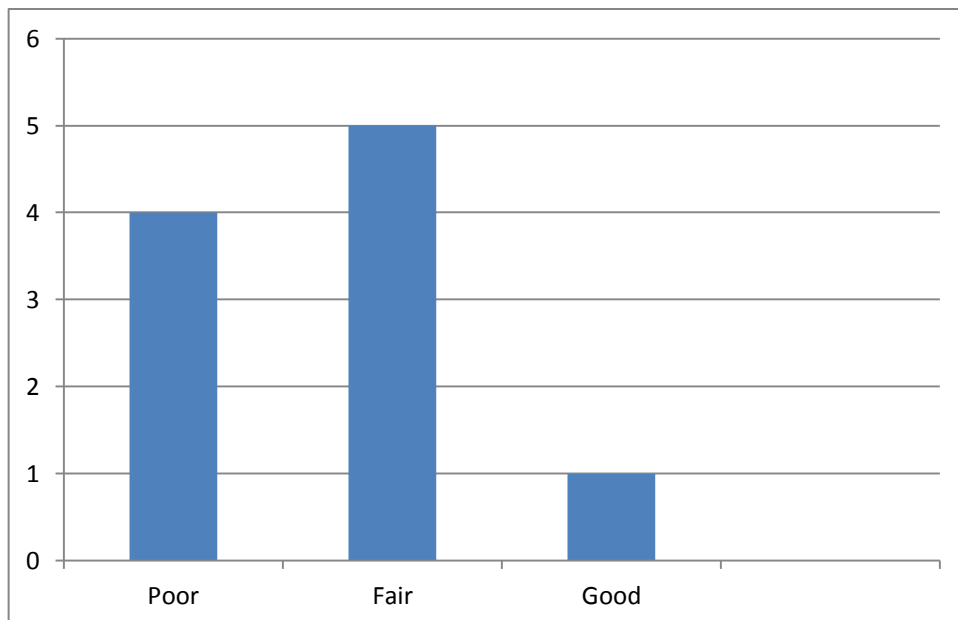
The data showed that the ten 10 of all head teachers who responded agreed that they had enrolled children who had ECCDE background to grade 1 because of the advantages the school got from such children in terms of performance, retention, progression and reduced dropout rates. On average schools enrolled 50% of the children from ECCDE centres.

4.2 Distribution of respondents in terms of successes and challenges of ECCDE centres.

a) Educational facilities

The data on educational facilities was categorized as follows: Four 4 of the respondents said the facilities were poor, while five 5 said they were fair and one 1 said they were good as shown in the bar chart below. This depended on where the facility was situated and how keen the community was in taking care of it. The other challenges were that the caregivers were not trained. In addition they were poorly paid and at times nothing was given to them by parents, and that this de-motivated them very much. The partners (Plan International) were able to cite the challenge of sustainability of the centres once handed over completely to the community. They lamented lack of support from the Ministry of Education (MOE) in terms of monitoring, supervision and financial support from the mother body.

Figure 2: Bar graph: Educational facilities



b) Possibility of having ECCDE centres in all community and basic schools

The data showed that all the ten 10 respondents agreed that all community and basic schools could establish ECCDE centres where the children could be learning from. This would increase educational interest and enhance the quality of education in all schools.

4.3 Acceptance of ECCDE Curriculum by Ministry of Education

From the respondents, nine 9 of them agreed that the curriculum used in the centres was accepted by the MOE and only one 1 disagreed. This showed that the formulation of the curriculum was done in consultation with (MOE) officials and stakeholders. The partners always worked in consultation with the Ministry of Education officials at planning and review stages where their input was taken into consideration as cited by an NGO official. The curriculum is that of guided play, Art and Craft, Music, Movement and Dance, Discovery, play, science, Pre Reading, Pre Writing, Language and Book Play and Pre Mathematics.

4.4 The benefits rural parents get by sending their children to ECCDE centres

All the ten 10 respondents agreed that rural parents gained by sending their children to ECCDE centres because they gave them chance to do household chores, farm work, selling of farm produce and any other work which needed their attention without much disturbance from their young ones. It further showed that their children could develop early interest in school and reduce repetition rates in rural areas

a) Possibility of having ECCDE centres in all community and basic schools

The data showed that all the ten 10 respondents agreed that all community and basic schools could establish ECCDE centres where the children could be learning from. This would increase educational interest and enhance the quality of education in all schools as shown in the table below.

4.5 Distribution of Responses from teachers in terms of gender

a) Gender of teachers

The data showed that 44.8% twenty-two 22 of the respondents were male while 55% twenty-seven 27 were female bringing the total to forty-nine 49 and one 1 did not respond.

b) Age of the teachers

The data showed that the ages of teachers serving in rural areas varied as tabulated, twelve 12 were between twenty-five – thirty 25-30 years old, twenty- three 23 were thirty-one – thirty-five 31-35 years, eight 8 were thirty- six- forty 36 -40 years and six 6 were above forty 40 years. It was good to see that young teachers were found in rural schools.

c) Number of years in service

The Data revealed that eleven 11 teachers were below five 5 years in service, twenty-six 26 had served between five-ten 5-10 years, seven 7 had served between eleven – fifteen 11-15 years and five 5 have been in service for more than fifteen 15 years.

d) .Marital status of respondents

The data revealed that twelve 12 of the respondents were single, thirty- five 35 were married, one 1 was a divorcee and one 1 was a widow.

4.6 Teachers' perception on teaching children with ECCDE background.

a) Number of years taught grade 1 class.

The data revealed that thirty-two 32 of the respondents had taught grade 1 class, less than two 2 years, six 6 had taught the grade above for five 5 years which gave them a lot of experience in the handling of the grade and the other five 5 had never taught the class.

b) Number of years served in rural areas

The data showed that two 2 had been in rural schools for one 1 year only, six 6 had been in rural schools for two-three 2-3 years, six 6 had been there for the period of four- five 4-5 years

and finally thirty-four 34 had been in rural areas for more than five 5 years. Only one 1 respondent did not indicate.

c) Accessibility to ECCDE centre near school

The data revealed that forty-two 42 agreed that they had ECCDE centre near their school, only six 6, disagreed and one 1 did not respond.

d) Number of children from nearby ECCDE centre

The data revealed that 67% thirty-three 33 reported that they had taught grade 1 children with ECCDE background from the nearby centre and 32% sixteen 16 denied having taught children with that background. The respondents said they got a lot of benefits by teaching children with ECCDE background such as children being active in class, paying attention to lessons and instructions, already knew how to read and write. Further, children had high interest in learning and finally the teachers were able to achieve their set objectives.

The data further, revealed that seventeen 17 teachers had ten 10 children in their classes with ECCDE background, six 6 had fifteen 15 children, four 4 had twenty 20 children in their classes which was a very good indicator. Finally five 5 did not respond to the question.

e) Necessity of ECCDE background

The data revealed that 100% forty- nine 49 respondents agreed that it was very necessary for the children to have an ECCDE background before they went to regular schools. This was because of the numerous benefits which both the teacher and the child got after acquiring an early education. The children easily understood concepts, got equipped with learning skills and were focused on their work.

f) Possibility of having ECCDE centres in all basic and community schools

The data revealed that 89.7% forty-four 44 of the respondents were sure that it was possible to establish centres near all basic and community schools, only 10% five 5 disapproved.

g) Are children with ECCDE background having interest in learning?

The data revealed that 91.8% forty-five 45 of the respondents agreed that children with an ECCDE background had very high interest in learning as compared to their counter parts, only 8% four 4 disagreed. The ones who said a bit might not have taught the grade 1 class

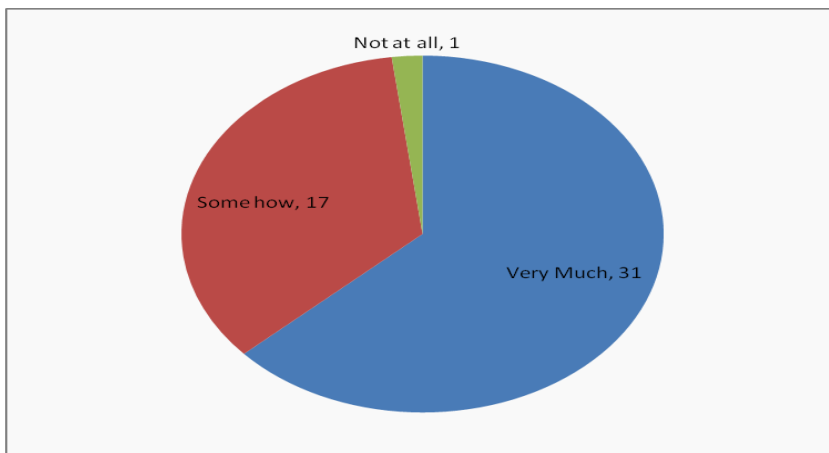
h).Participation by ECCDE children

The data revealed that 10% five 5 said the participation of the children from ECCDE centres was fair, 42.8% twenty-one 21 said it was very good, 38.7% nineteen 19 said it was outstanding and only 8% four 4 could not give their stance on the rating of the children and those could be the ones who had never taught the grade 1 classes.

i). Quality of teaching/learning enhanced by ECCDE background

The data revealed that 63% thirty-one 31 said quality teaching and learning was very much enhanced by children from centres, 34.6% seventeen 17 said somehow, the quality was enhanced and 2% one 1 said it was not enhanced at all as shown in the pie chart below. The children were ready for school and they came motivated from the centres because they already knew why they should be in school.

Figure 3: Pie Chart: Quality of teaching and learning enhanced by ECCDE



j). Need to have ECCDE background in the district

The data showed that 87.7% forty-three 43 of respondents would want all the children in the district to have ECCDE background and only 12% six 6 disagreed to that.

k) Advantages of teaching children with ECCDE background

The data revealed that 100% of the respondents forty-nine 49 agreed that it was advantageous to teach children with ECCDE background

4.7 Successes and challenges of ECCDE centres.

The advantages teachers got in teaching children with ECCDE background went with successes which were noted; such as children being able to socialize with others, to be able to read and write, paying attention to school work and having a desire to learn.

The challenges were that the centres lacked trained human resources, essential educational materials for teaching and learning processes and inadequate infrastructure. The caregivers were not given tokens of appreciation by parents, making them lose concentration. Moreover, centres were not monitored by MOE officials and there was lack of adequate financial support.

The respondents said if they were given chance to help the care givers they would organize workshops for them to acquire teaching skills, help them to improvise with teaching/learning materials and how to be creative so that they could motivate themselves.

The respondents went further to make recommendations to the Ministry of Education which included:

1. Training caregivers.
2. Educating all head teachers on the importance of ECCDE.
3. Providing teaching and learning materials to centres.
4. Putting infrastructure for the centres closer to communities because children were small and could not walk long distances.
5. Providing play parks and equipment for the children.

4.8. Acceptance of curriculum by Ministry of Education

The data revealed that 79.5% thirty-nine 39 of the respondents said that the curriculum was accepted by MOE, 14% seven 7 said that it was not and 6% three 3 did not respond.

4.9: Gains rural parents get by sending their children to ECCDE centres

a) Reduced dropout rates

The data revealed that 89.7% forty-four 44 accepted that ECCDE background could reduce dropout rates which were so rampant in rural areas and only 10% five 5 did not accept.

b) ECCDE background increase retention and completion rates

The data revealed that 32.6% sixteen 16 of the respondents class teachers said ECCDE background increased retention and completion rates, 63% thirty-one 31 said it did help to some extent, only one 1 said it did not help at all. Finally 2% one 1 did not respond.

c). Professional advice to caregivers

The data revealed that 44.8% twenty-two 22 confirmed having gone to the centres to give professional advice to the caregivers while 55% twenty-seven 27 had not taken that responsibility before.

4.10 The District Education Standards Officer's perception on ECCDE provision in rural areas.

The interview was handled by a female Education Standards Officer aged fifty-four 54 years and she was a widow. She had been in the civil service for more than thirty 30 years and had been in her current position for more than 5 years. Her highest professional qualification was a bachelor's degree.

She said that the district had Early Childhood Care Development and Education offered by NGOs. She acknowledged that schools enrolled children from the centres as evidenced by Education Management Information System (EMIS) forms which were filled in every year by all the schools. Over five hundred five hundred 500 children from ECCDE centres were enrolled into regular schools every year.

She had never visited any centre in the district due to inadequate funds to monitor schools. She said the professional advice she gave was done through workshops with care givers. The advice to partners would be that of minimum qualification for care givers, though they were not employed by the government.

The advice to the Ministry of Education was that they should get involved in what the partners were doing to our children in rural areas. This could be through sending pre-school trained teachers, provision of educational materials, furniture and infrastructure.

The Standards Officer agreed to recommend partners to extend the service to other parts in the district so that all the children who went to grade 1 pass through ECCDE centres. This would help the district to uplift the education standards and quality teaching /learning in schools. The children enrolled from centres came with adequate knowledge of school work and already built up interest in learning. The advice to the communities where the service was being provided by partners was that they should embrace and support the programme.

There were many notable successes at regular schools by pupils from the centres such as high performance by children from the centres, high interest in school work, good progression rates, reduced dropout rates and increased retention rates in schools as reported by the Education Standards Officer. In all the basic schools whose children had been to ECCDE centres, teachers were able to finish their syllabus because they did not waste time in their initial stage of school work.

There were challenges in the centres such as low staffing levels where one (1) care giver was made to handle more than thirty (30) children. This was a big number for smaller children who needed more personal attention. The care givers were not trained and therefore, their low levels of education hindered quality delivery of work to children coupled with non appreciation by parents. Lack of adequate furniture, teaching and learning materials and equipped play parks hindered the provision of quality education.

The parents in rural areas gained a lot from the centres because it gave them time to do their work freely without interference from the young ones. Absenteeism was reduced among their children as they were not left home to take care of the young ones. The other gains were that their children developed interest in school early and they grew with it. Since this service was beneficial to rural parents, the partners were encouraged to extend to other parts of the district so that quality primary education delivery would improve. This would help all the children receive the same foundation in education.

4.11 The responses from the care givers.

The caregiver's role was to provide guided play to children of different ages and teach them according to what was contained in the module. Caregivers were burdened with work because children were small and they needed a lot of attention. They agreed that teaching young ones was very difficult and called for patience, love and care. The situation was worsened with the increased number of children, inadequate furniture, toys, or play parks and lack of teaching and learning materials.

Caregivers reported that there was low participation by parents in the running of centres as they feared to contribute to the upkeep of the caregiver. Further, they emphasized that children should pass through the centre before they went to grade 1 as the centre was able to sharpen them.

They said parents benefitted a lot by sending their children to the centres as already cited because they were able to do a lot of work and in turn increased their outputs. Their children developed interest in school early and were able to excel in education because they acquired a strong foundation from the centre. Finally these did not easily dropout of the school system.

Caregivers said it was easy and possible to set up centres for all basic and community schools because building materials were found locally. They also reported that the curriculum was accepted by the MOE because officials participated in its formulation.

The respondents also noted that parents' reasons for not being able to pay the caregivers were that they lacked sensitization on the importance of them sending their children to centres and why they should help a person taking care of their children while they did their own work.

4.12 Perception of parents over ECCDE benefits.

The views of focus group discussions held with parents of the children who attended ECCDE centres revealed that they were happy and appreciated the services given to their children. Moreover, it had brought progress on their side in that parents were able to do farm work, gardening, selling merchandise at roadside and house work freely. Their children had strong and firm foundation in education. The education at the centres also removed fear in them and enabled them to socialize, unlike other children who did not pass through the centres.

The parents confirmed that their output (from farms) had increased from the time they started sending their children to the centres. They also said the children who had passed through ECCDE centres had reduced dropout rates, repetition rates and increased progression rates in schools. Voice from a parent:

“My children have benefited a lot because they do not mess themselves as they go to regular school like what other children who do not pass through ECCDE do.” This was said by a woman at Mukalashi.

The other voice was on children having the zeal and desire to learn.

“With the coming of ECCDE my children have shown the zeal and the desire to learn.” This was said by a woman from Malombe.

Some parents had their income increased from the time they started sending their children to ECCDE centres and were able to send all their children into basic schools. The trend of older children remaining taking care of the young ones had been done away with because the latter went to the centres. This reduced absenteeism and increased education for older children. Parents were able to reserve funds for their children in higher grades. Those with children at the centres were able to encourage other parents to take their children to the centres because they were happy with the performance of their children in the centres.

When children went to centres they prepared them local foods which were easily found in their homes. They all acknowledged that it was beneficial to send children to ECCDE centres.

4.13 Response from the NGO official

The data from the NGO official revealed that there were seventy –four 74 centres in one 1 constituency of Chibombo district under research and that there were three thousand and forty –one 3,041 children in the centres. The organization had been offering the ECCDE service since 2003.

There were a number of notable successes the NGO had scored from the time they started offering the service. These included huge enrolment, overwhelming response from parents, increased number of centres, holding workshops for care givers, and providing furniture to some centres, play park equipment, teaching and learning materials and developing modules

together with MOE officials especially during planning and review meetings. In short the NGO had been tabling the activities together with MOE officials.

However, there were a number of challenges faced by the centres. These include lack of sustainability and support for caregivers' inability of parents to pay caregivers, absence of support from the MOE in terms of monitoring and lack of political will. Despite, the challenges faced by the NGO, parents and caregivers, the organization has intentions of expanding service to the rest of the district.

4.14 Response from MOE official

The MOE official was that the policy on ECCDE was still in draft form awaiting cabinet approval. The Ministry was in support of what partners were doing because it helped children to acquire values, skills and knowledge in their early years. The MOE official agreed having visited centres run by partners.

It was revealed that partners needed a lot of guidance in the absence of national policy on ECCDE. If guidance was not offered to them, the numerous challenges that they were facing such as lack of approved curriculum and trained manpower would continue. She also indicated that children from the centres created smooth transition to regular schools.

She pointed out that the partners were doing a recommendable job by creating the initiatives in the provinces they were offering the service. The District Education Standards Officers (DESO) were expected to visit the centres and give professional advice, but were unable due to limited financial resources.

Summary

The chapter highlighted the findings from the research according to the laid down objectives. The findings were tabled following the merging themes. The next chapter will discuss the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will basically give a comparative discussion of the findings that have been presented in the previous chapter. The researcher will endeavour to discuss the findings in relation to the research objectives that have been presented in chapter two. For qualitative data that had been presented, there would be subjectivity as opposed to quantitative data that will be discussed objectively. The researcher will try as much as possible to objectively interpret the data that had been presented more especially through tables and figures. Therefore, constant reference to the previous tables, figures and titles shall be made so as to make the discussion coherent and systematic.

b) Year of administrative service of respondents

The statistics in the previous chapter revealed that four 4 of the head teachers had served below five years and those that had served more than ten years were two 2. The highest number of head teachers had served very few years in their position. This suggested that they had not gained sufficient grip on how to run schools. Aspects of job- on training were very pronounced in them, and therefore, had a bearing on the effective running of the schools. However, three 3 of those that had served between five and ten 5 – 10 years gave more light on their leadership experiences.

It was interesting to note that most of the schools under research were run by head teachers who were diploma holders i.e. seven 7. Only three 3 were degree holders. This raised a serious concern as to whether diploma holders had the much needed academic expertise to effectively run schools. Among the questions that arose was why there were few degree holders in rural schools and whether this did not affect the running of the school? What measures could be put in place to have more graduate head teachers in these schools? What were the notable differences between the schools headed by diploma holders and those headed by degree holders? More light will be shed as the discussion unfolds in this very chapter.

a) Schools Proximity to ECCDE Centres

There was overwhelming evidence that most schools nine 9 of them had ECCDE centres near them. Therefore, children from such schools were not barred from having access to education from the centres as explained in the previous chapter.

5.1 Advantages of teaching children with ECCDE background in rural areas.

a) Grade 1 entrant with ECCDE background

The teachers in rural areas who taught children with ECCDE background greatly benefited in that they taught children who had already obtained a good educational foundation from the centres. For example, scholarly behaviour, interest in reading and writing which first developed when children went to ECCDE centres. As a result, by the time children got into grade 1, they faced fewer hurdles because they had been already introduced to the art of reading and writing. This in turn made the job of the teacher who handled them in grade 1 easier than that of the teachers who taught children who had not been to the ECCDE centres. These findings were in line with the literature stated by Kelly and Kanyika, (2000).

b) Number of children enrolled from ECCDE centres and their performance.

The data presented in figure 1: in the previous chapter revealed that four 4 of the schools had enrolled twenty 20 children; three 3 enrolled thirty 30 children and three 3 enrolled above fifty 50 children. With regard to performance, children from ECCDE centres had proved to do better than those without an ECCDE background. The ratings showed that one 1 of the children from ECCDE centres had a fair performance while five 5 were good. It further showed that three 3 had a very good performance with the remaining one 1 having an outstanding performance.

These results showed that there was indeed a very close correlation between the education state of the children and that of the teacher. It was extremely difficult for the teacher to yield good results if he or she was teaching pupils who were blank or had no clue of the educational matters which must be within their scope. If that was the case, the first thing he/she would do would be to build the educational levels of the pupils so that meaningful interaction could take place. That took much time and the teacher who found himself or herself in that predicament had no option but to do that. On the contrary, the teacher who handled children that had an ECCDE background had no need to lay any educational foundation whatsoever, because that had already been done.

As a result, his or her major role was to teach what had been provided in the syllabus. From the research findings, it was observed that the high performance of children from the centres

had greatly enhanced the quality of teaching and learning going on in class. With a systematic and uninterrupted provision of education in schools with ECCDE centres the retention and completion rates were promoted as shown earlier on. The dropout and repetition rates which were a very big drawback to education were considerably reduced.

c) Head teacher's involvement in the ECCDE activities and the benefits accrued.

From the data presented in the previous chapter, we saw that eight 8 of the head teachers got involved in the activities of the ECCDE centres. Their involvement was seen by the manner in which they provided professional advice, motivated parents' interest in sending their children to ECCDE centres before joining the regular schools. For them to perform such roles, an assumption could be made that they had practically seen the educational light that emanated from the activities in the centres. Without this light, they could not have endeavoured to do such tasks.

Additionally, the assistance that most head teachers rendered to ECCDE centres showed how enlightened they were on the kind of education they wanted their pupils to have. By supplying educational materials such as teaching and learning aids and encouraging parents to send their children to ECCDE centres, they were indirectly uplifting the educational standards of their schools because the children they assisted in these centres were the future pupils in the schools they were running. It was borne at the back of their minds that they did not desire to recruit educational misfits who would give them much difficult to transform. The professional advice that they gave to parents that they pay the care givers could not be underestimated. As for the two 2 that did not participate in the ECCDE activities one may assume that they were new in appointment hence still orienting themselves to the job or the questionnaire was answered by someone in an acting position. Therefore, issues of amateurism could not be completely ruled out.

The benefits that head teachers got by recruiting pupils with ECCDE background were immense. Such children were well grounded in educational content and it was this foundation that enabled them to develop much interest in the reading and writing skills that they came across in grade one. Issues of socialisation were not a barrier because this trend had already been inculcated when they were in ECCDE centres. In short, they entered grade one when they were ready to learn and hence maximizing their learning experiences. Teaching children in schools was one thing, but ascertaining as to whether they were willing to learn was another. It could be a sheer waste of time for the teacher to teach children who were not willing to learn. No matter how much effort he or she puts in the results would always be

minimal because the children would not appreciate what goes on in class. Their thoughts would always be far away from the lesson. If that happened, then the rate of dropouts and repetitions would increase making it difficult for schools to be effectively managed.

Many cases of indiscipline in schools were as the result of pupils who did not want to move at the same pace with their teachers. If such pupils continue to move at a different wave length with their teachers, they would end up frustrating the efforts of their teachers by indulging in anti academic activities such as noise making, not writing their homework, absenteeism and many more. Others would even discourage their friends from acknowledging the value of education.

It was not therefore, surprising to note that all the ten 10 head teachers who responded to the questionnaire wanted to enrol children who had an ECCDE background in their schools. They wanted their teachers to build on the already established educational building blocks established in ECCDE centres.

5.2 Distribution of respondents in terms of Successes and Challenges of ECCDE centres.

a) Educational facilities

The distribution of educational facilities available in rural areas was uneven as shown in figure 2 page 22 in the previous chapter. One of the major challenges was that the community was not keen enough to take care of the facility. Respondents who said the facility was poor were four 4, and this on its own tells a story. It meant that they were not satisfied with how it was run and also not well maintained by the proprietors of the facilities. Five 5 respondents said the facilities were fair and one 1 said they were good. As alluded to earlier on, the caregivers were not trained and that brought about incompetence in the manner they handled their work. Although they could have the zeal to work, lack of training had robbed them of the smooth and professional running of the facilities.

The other factor that could have brought about the poor educational facility was the non payment of the caregivers from parents and the government at large. It was really unfortunate that they had to work like a charitable organisation when in reality they desperately needed money for their daily sustenance. The caregivers could therefore, not put in their best because they were highly de-motivated. Hence, it was noticed that the spirit of volunteerism had greatly weakened the operation of the facility.

It was moreover, noticed that the other major challenge that the facilities faced was the lack of support from the Ministry of Education MOE. The Ministry was not sending its Standards Officers to help monitor and supervise the operations of the facility. The facilities were just

left to operate like orphanages, for example, without any guidance from either the community or the government through the Ministry of Education. Therefore, perpetual making of mistakes by such centres became the order of the day. To make matters worse, the facilities did not receive financial support from the mother body, MOE. That made it difficult for them to do secretarial work due to lack of stationery. Their caregivers' morale also got dampened due to lack of money.

b) Provision of ECCDE in all Community and Basic Schools.

The need to have ECCDE centres in all community and basic schools was supported by all the respondents that were interviewed. Although not receiving the support from the Central government, all respondents appreciated the role that ECCDE did to the children. It was from such centres that the children's interest in education was stimulated and where their sense of responsibility was first inculcated. In their later life, the quality of education was enhanced thus making them better citizens who viewed education as the key to success. Their knowledge horizon was increased thus enabling them to decide what was right and wrong.

5.3 Government's approval of the ECCDE Curriculum

Information received from the respondents showed that nine 9 of them agreed that the curriculum used had been accepted by the Ministry of Education because that was used by Preschool Association of Zambia. Matafwali and Munsaka (2011) highlighted that the MOE had not come up with its own curriculum yet hence accepting what was provided by partners. As to whether it had been approved or not, one could not tell because there was no written report to that effect. Our argument therefore, could only be based on the data collected from the respondents and the literature. If the general feeling of most respondents was that the ECCDE curriculum was accepted by the Ministry of Education then it would be true to assume that they had a hand in its formulation. Those who ran ECCDE centres as pointed out by an NGO official seek advice from the Ministry when it came to planning and reviewing programmes. This trend had boosted their centres and gave them the confidence that any person or organisation could get after receiving the support from MOE. Though the MOE had accepted the curriculum used in ECCDE centres, it was not of its formulation as it was still struggling to come up with one as stated by Matafwali and Munsaka (2011).

5.4 Advantages of ECCDE Centres to rural parents.

Parents were greatly assisted in the upbringing of their children. Naturally, children needed a lot of care and attention from their parents and the ECCDE centres greatly assisted the parents in their upbringing. That gave parents chance to attend to their household chores, do

farm work, and sell farm produce and many more other works. On the other hand, the children's interest in education was built.

5.5 The Perception of teachers on teaching children with ECCDE background.

a) Number of years taught grade 1 class, served in rural schools and accessibility to ECCDE centres.

It was very evident that 65% thirty-two 32 of the respondents who had taught the grade one class had very little experience because they had taught the class for just less than two 2 years. They were on the job on training hence we could not generalise the results based on their perceptions. Only 10% five 5 had not taught the grade 1 class. Although many of the respondents had not taught grade one for more than a year, the results indicated that 69% thirty-four 34 had been in rural areas for more than five 5 years. This meant they had lived in rural areas long enough to get acclimatised to the rural setting. They knew the domestic and educational challenges that schools faced and were therefore, better placed in offering solutions to those challenges.

From the findings, 85.7% forty-two 42 of the respondents said that they had ECCDE centres in their schools. This implied that, they not only had access to these centres, but also access to what went on in these centres. Though with unguided knowledge, they knew the strengths and weaknesses of these centres and hence the data they gave should not be ignored. Moreover, the activities that took place in these centres should have influenced their perception both at home and in the schools they taught. It would be different to their counterparts who were far away from the ECCDE centres.

a) Number of children from nearby ECCDE centres and those with an ECCDE background

The number of respondents who had taught grade one children with ECCDE background far outweighed the number of those who had taught grade one children without the ECCDE background. This was according to the revelations presented in the previous chapter. During Focus Group Discussion, respondents who taught children with ECCDE background gave a fair share of the advantages of teaching such children. To begin with, they argued that such children were active in class. The question we could pause is: what brought about this activeness in class? Was it because they had a clue to what was supposed to take place in class and therefore, in helping the teacher meet his / her lesson objectives, they actively

participated. They were not passive as was the case of the children without the ECCDE background.

Children with the ECCDE background paid attention in class because they already knew how to read and write. When it came to learning, they were enthusiastic making the lessons more lively and interesting. They were not the kind of pupils who had a wait and see kind of attitude. By so doing, they did not only motivate themselves, but also their teachers. No teacher could be motivated by teaching a docile class, which was always gullible. A challenging class made the job of the teacher easier.

Results of children with the ECCDE background presented in the previous chapter revealed that in all the schools and classes under study, there were a sizeable number of children with the ECCDE background. The results went further that at least the ECCDE centres were slowly but surely penetrating the rural areas and that there was either formal or informal awareness on the importance of the ECCDE background to school going children. As for the 10% 5 of respondents who did not respond to the questionnaire, the number was too small to stop us from basing our arguments on the 89.7% forty-four 44 who responded.

c. Necessity of ECCDE background as well as the possibility of having ECCDE centres in all basic and community schools.

As alluded to earlier on, all the respondents expressed their views on the necessity of having children with the ECCDE background. It was very easy to agree on an idea and very difficult to implement it. Although 89.7% forty-four 44 respondents said it was possible to establish ECCDE centres in all basic and community schools, they did not give the strategies on how this could be achieved. The sincerity of the answers could not be measured because their views had no basis. The researcher only hoped that planning strategies should not only end at discussion level but at implementation stage. We shall revert to this issue later on in our discussion.

d) Interest and participation of ECCDE children in learning.

The majority of respondents 91.8%, forty-five 45 argued that children with ECCDE background had a very high interest in learning. The yardstick they used to measure children's interest could have been derived from the experiences they had in the classroom when teaching those with the ECCDE background. Without that, their views could have been treated with contempt. Experience to them became their teacher.

When it came to participation, children with the ECCDE background participated effectively in class. Statistical records had been displayed in the previous chapter. The participation of

such children in class prompted teachers to do serious teaching so that they did not display elements of incompetence in front of their learners. The participation of such children in class also lessened the chances of having dull moments in class. The dull moments came about when the teacher taught children who did not follow his or her lesson and participate effectively in the learning process.

e) Quality of teaching in the ECCDE Centres

The general feeling of most respondents was that the quality of teaching in the ECCDE centres was very good. Children from the ECCDE centres were educable and always ready to upgrade their knowledge as they entered regular schools. This in turn enhanced the learning going on in the classrooms as shown in figure 3 page 29 in the previous chapter where 63% thirty-one 31 said very much, 34.7% seventeen 17 said somehow and one 1 argued that quality of teaching is not enhanced by having children with the ECCDE background. The children were self motivated and eager to learn unlike children who were not self motivated, especially those without the ECCDE background.

The data presented in the previous chapter, showed that 89.7% forty-three 43 of the respondents wanted all the children in the district to have the ECCDE background as opposed to 12% six 6 who did not want. This overwhelming response suggested that the ECCDE background had some distinctly noticeable positive features which could not be ignored. As mentioned earlier on, 100% forty-nine 49 of the respondents confirmed that it was beneficial to teach children with the ECCDE background.

5.6 Successes and Challenges of ECCDE Centres.

The research findings revealed that one of the notable successes of teaching children who had passed through ECCDE centres was that they were able to socialise with their classmates and other children within the school. The socialisation of children among themselves made them learn from each other. They were building and upgrading the sense of unity which inspired them to read and write together. In other words, they were not loners during their pursuit of education.

Some of the major challenges that they faced were that the centres did not have trained human resources as well as educational teaching materials. At the time of study, there was no recognised government college which had been established to train caregivers. Therefore, the caregivers that were found in all the centres were untrained people who did their job out of sheer interest and on humanitarian grounds. Although they had the zeal to teach, they lacked

the professional skill to improve their services. To make matters worse, the government did not supply them with educational materials so that they could enhance the quality of their lessons. The other serious hurdle that the caregivers faced was that they were not paid any token of appreciation hence lowering their teaching morale. It's a well known fact that appreciation gave confidence to any person, institution or organisation. As long as people had money in their pockets, they would always execute the job diligently. Money made people at work forget about other tasks which were not part of their job hence increasing the input to what they had been employed for. Not paying caregivers, made them drift attention and employ other means that would provide them with money.

Lack of monitoring of the ECCDE centres was another cause for concern. The Ministry of Education officials may not be adequately funded hence not doing their job of monitoring the centres. All those problems revolved around money – the efforts of not funding all the stakeholders involved in the running of the ECCDE centres. The other major challenges were those of not having the policy document and official MOE designed curriculum to be used in the centres.

The only help which the respondents said they could give the caregivers was that of organisation of workshops for them to acquire teaching skills aimed at improving their teaching techniques. The workshops could also train them on how to be creative enough to promote real learning in their centres.

5.7 What ECCDE Centres have done to rural parents?

The revelations of the data in the previous chapter were: that 79.6% thirty-nine 39 of the respondents acknowledged that the curriculum had been accepted by the Ministry of Education. Among the many benefits that rural parents got by sending their children to ECCDE centres were:

a) Reduced dropout and repetition rates

Although no research had been conducted to find out the rate of dropout rates in the previous years, with the introduction of the ECCDE centres, the number of dropout rates had considerably reduced as reported by 89.7% forty-four 44 of the respondents. We could not only base our analysis on what the respondents said because through their discussion, they could tell how the ECCDE centres had impacted on the rural parents.

b) Retention and completion rates

According to the research findings in the previous chapter, the ECCDE background had increased retention and completion rates. By retention, what was meant was that pupils had

the ability to keep what they had been taught and used it at the right time. They were not forgetting hearers who could not retain or keep what they had been taught. The ability to retain what they have been taught in the long term memory of the brain enabled them to be ideal pupils who were constantly on track with what went on in the classrooms.

The expectation of school going children was that they should complete their studies. A child who started grade one was expected to complete his or her primary education, for example pass his and her grade seven examinations and proceed into upper basic (grade eight and nine). Most respondents interviewed were contented that the ECCDE background had increased the completion rates among children. We therefore, assumed that the many dropout rates and lack of completion in the previous years was mainly attributed to lack of the ECCDE centres in the district.

c. Professional advice to Caregivers

The number of respondents that did not give professional advice to care givers outnumbered those that gave advice. As mentioned earlier on, lack of interest was the major reasons. The other reason was due to understaffing which teachers in rural areas faced and had many issues to attend to. This implied that professional advice did not come cheap, because the few teachers in rural areas could not abandon their filial duties (of teaching double or triple sessions) only to go and advice caregivers in the ECCDE centres.

5.8 How the ECCDE provision was perceived by the District Education Standards Officer in rural areas.

The fact that schools enrolled children from the centres as evidenced by Education Management Information System (EMIS) entailed that the Ministry of Education through the District Education Standards Officers valued the role played by these centres in advancing the cause for knowledge. It was indeed with no doubt of the authenticity of the views from one of the respondents (female Standards Officer) who had served in the ministry for more than thirty 30 years. For regular schools to enrol five hundred 500 children from the ECCDE centres meant that they had enough confidence in the quality of children that graduate from these centres.

Further, data of the same respondent revealed that she could have done even more than just giving professional advice through workshops with caregivers if she had the way. Lack of funding hindered her from visiting the centres. Therefore, we could see that the caregivers lacked educational information and this made them face many challenges in running the

centres. The caregivers had no credentials and this made them lack the confidence they needed when doing their job. Because they had no academic qualifications, they may be considered as disgruntled people who had failed in life and only wanted to quench their frustration in becoming caregivers to centres.

Faced with this challenge, government should not leave this problem unattended to. The services of the partners needed the attention of the government. It should not only be urban children who should receive government attention, but even the rural children. In urban areas, children had access to pre- schools where they were taught by trained pre- school teachers which was not the case in rural areas. The best way to help the rural children would be either sending pre-school teachers to rural areas or providing training to caregivers so that they do the right thing. One should, however, bear in mind that the fact that caregivers were not trained did not mean that they did not completely know and understand what they were doing.

Government should also provide educational materials to the ECCDE centres in rural areas. If it does not, the caregivers may end up relying on old materials that were slowly out living their usefulness. In addition, they should provide proper furniture and infrastructure in the ECCDE centres in rural areas. There is absolutely no need for children to sit on the ground or under a tree as if that is the first time education was being introduced in the country. Something serious needed to be done.

The Standards Officer saw the need to have the ECCDE in different parts of the district so that education standards among children in rural areas could be uplifted. From her arguments, one could see that she had embraced the concept of having the ECCDE centres in rural areas. This developmental initiative was not only aimed at benefiting the children but the country as a whole. Laying a foundation for quality education was and remained the goal of educational providers.

Children, who, prior to being in grade one passed through the ECCDE centres had been a beacon of light especially to their counterparts who did not go to such centres. Their interest in school work was admired by both their teachers and school authorities. When it came to school work, those children did not mangle. They put a concerted effort, thus enabling them to finish the syllabus on time as well as motivating their teachers to work hard.

As highlighted in the research findings, low staffing levels was one of the major challenges that the ECCDE centres faced in rural areas. For instance, the situation was one caregiver to handle thirty 30 children which compromised the quality of education offered. The

financially de- motivated caregivers found it difficult to execute their duties diligently. This was a very serious setback to the provision of quality education.

However, the benefits that rural parents got from the ECCDE centres were abundant. It gave them inner gratification to have children with high interest in education. Apart from that, it accorded them an opportunity to attend to their farm work chores whilst their children were being attended to by caregivers. Children at times could be a burden, especially during their early years of life because they needed constant care and attention. Since farming was perhaps the only source of livelihood in rural areas the role caregivers provided to children made their parents meet their objectives.

5.9 The Views of the Caregivers

Most caregivers bemoaned the heavy workloads they coped with as they gave their services to children. Since they attended to children of different ages, they had to make sure they satisfied the needs of each age group. They had to be patriot and level headed. Therefore, they needed to be self motivating. They should also be provided with adequate furniture, play parks and as many teaching and learning resources as possible.

The zeal that caregivers had towards coming up with centres in all basic and community schools should attract the attention of everyone who has the interest of the children at heart. The researcher, however, found the parents' reasons for not helping in the payment of caregivers to be baseless and very unfortunate. They argued that they needed sensitization on why they should send their children to the centres and yet they were the ones in the forefront of sending them there. Such kind of contradictory attitude and behaviour was typical of people who did not want to be responsible. Although it was not obligatory that they should pay the caregivers, they should at least learn to "give Caesar what belongs to Caesar". This could be done by paying the caregivers because of the immense work they did to their children.

5.10 Parents' perception of ECCDE

Parents had repeatedly praised the role that the ECCDE centres had done to their children. The output of the farm produce had increased due to more time allocated to farm work unlike caring for their children (the job done by caregivers). The roles of the parents and children had therefore, being defined by the establishment of these centres and their children's role was to learn as much as possible and the parents' role was to work as much as they could hence increasing productivity. In turn this productivity by parents enabled them to sponsor the education of their older children. There could be nothing more fascinating for a parent

than seeing his or her offspring excel in education and later becoming of great help to them in their old age.

Parents' cry to have trained teachers in the centres implied that they sufficiently understood what these centres did to their children. They wanted the best for their children and knew that although caregivers did their level best to help children, they lacked the professional expertise to discharge their duties diligently. Parents did not want the quality of education offered to their children to be compromised. This indeed was a very good observation.

5.11 Response from the NGO official

The NGO official who gave statistics on the number of centres in the district as well as the number of children enrolled pointed out the successes of the centres. The same notable issues observed by parents were also identified such as offering training to caregivers, providing furniture, teaching and learning materials.

The NGO had also bemoaned the non payment of wages/ token to caregivers and also lack of technical support from the Ministry of Education in terms of monitoring and evaluation. For the Ministry to intervene there must be political will. Government should demonstrate wisdom by funding the centres and attending to the financial needs of the caregivers.

However, the NGO official had expressed willingness to help expand the operations of the centres as soon as their aid received the blessing of the Ministry of Education. There must therefore, be Mutual Corporation between government and the NGO so that meaningful education was delivered to the rest of the district.

5.12 Response from MOE official

Nothing much could be discussed about the ECCDE Policy document because it was still waiting for approval from the Ministry of Education. This was in conformity with Matafwali and Munsaka (2011) literature that since 2006 the MOE was still working on the policy document for ECCDE. In the meantime, the partners needed a lot of guidance. The stakeholders as well as various educationists from the University and colleges should provide professional and academic leadership, as you know that government alone could not manage to provide meaningful education to everyone. That was the reason the National Policy **Educating Our Future** (1996) allowed Partners to offer such facilities to Zambian children. That was the only way the standards at the centres were going to rise to higher heights.

5.13 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings based on set objectives of the study which are: advantages of teaching children with the ECCDE background, number of children enrolled from the

ECCDE centres and their performance, successes and challenges of the ECCDE centres, provision of the ECCDE in all community and basic schools, government's approval of the ECCDE curriculum, advantages of the ECCDE centres to rural parents, the perception of teachers on teaching children with the ECCDE background, number of children from nearby the ECCDE centres and those with the ECCDE background, interest and participation of the ECCDE children to learning, quality of teaching in the ECCDE centres, reduced dropout rates, retention and completion rates, how the ECCDE provision is perceived by District Education Standards Officer (DESO) in rural areas, parents' perception of the ECCDE, response from NGO and MOE officials.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The previous chapter discussed the findings on the Evaluation of the benefits of Early Childhood Care Development and Education provided by one of the Non Governmental Organisations in rural areas of Chibombo district in the Central Province of Zambia. This chapter makes conclusions and recommendations based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter. The overall conclusion of the study is that both teachers and parents of children in rural areas of Chibombo District of Zambia benefited from the services rendered to children at the ECCDE centres by NGOs despite their having inadequate infrastructure and teaching staff.

Nearly all respondents (head teachers, teachers, parents and the MOE official acknowledged the tremendous work which was rendered to children in rural areas by NGOs; the service was of great value to the Zambian child out there who needed special attention in order to alleviate the levels of poverty the parents were going through.

A good number of respondents were involved in the activities of the ECCDE centres because they directly benefited from their services. The parents had children with firm and strong educational foundation while teachers had pupils who could excel in academic work and making it easy for them to achieve their objectives.

The notable successes of the ECCDE centres were the children's ability to socialise when taken to regular schools, to read and write easily, improved retention and completion rates in schools, reduced absenteeism repetition and dropout rates. Parents' benefited too in terms of them being able to do farm work with less disturbances from the young ones, their increased productivity on the farms: which led to reduced hunger in their families. Older siblings also benefited by being able to attend classes regularly as they could not be left home to take care of the young ones as they used to do before the ECCDE centres were introduced, just to mention a few.

However, there were a number of challenges which were noticed during the research. These were: none availability of trained caregivers, inadequate furniture, infrastructure and teaching and learning materials. The caregivers were not given any token of appreciation by parents of the children they were teaching. These de-motivated the workers (caregivers). This was made worse by the non availability of Standards Officers to monitor the activities of the ECCDE

centres and none availability of financial assistance to caregivers. These and many other factors mentioned in the document hampered the works of the centres.

The NGOs focus was on the improved children's readiness for going to school and increase the likelihood that all children enter school and complete primary education (Plan, n.d). From the findings, one would easily conclude that, sure this was being achieved in one way or the other because the children had been seen to be in school and their completion rates had been noted while their parents were seen to be advancing in their agricultural work which has improved their livelihood.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, discussions and conclusions contained in this study, the following summative recommendations are made to all stakeholders in the education sector and the government.

- a) The Ministry of Education through Cabinet office should finalise the ECCDE policy
- b) The Ministry of Education should support the efforts of the cooperating partners in the provision of Early Childhood Care Development and Education in rural areas as stated in the National Policy document **Educating Our Future**.
- c) The Ministry of Education should send trained preschool teachers to the ECCDE centres.
- d) The Ministry of Education should devise the curriculum itself to be used in the ECCDE centres.
- e) The Ministry of Education should expedite the establishment of the ECCDE centres in rural areas so as to help all the children to have the same educational foundation.
- f) The parents and partners should motivate Caregivers in their work.
- g) While waiting for the Ministry of Education to establish the ECCDE centres, parents should set up temporal ones using local materials.
- h) NGOs should continue training the Caregivers through workshops so as to equip them with the necessary skills.
- i) Ministry of Education should offer tips to all head teachers of regular schools on how to run the ECCDE centres so that they are able to advise caregivers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DEBS/ STANDARDS OFFICERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the University of Zambia carrying out research for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration. The theme of my study is Evaluation of the benefits of Early Childhood Care Development and Education provided by Non Governmental Organisations in Rural areas. A case study of Chibombo district of the Central province of Zambia. The questionnaire is intended to capture data with regard to my research topic. The outcome of the study will be for academic purposes and for the fulfilment of the partial requirements for the award of the said degree. Therefore, all the information provided in the questionnaire shall be treated as confidential. Kindly tick or fill in your answer as truthfully and correctly as possible.

Personal details of the Interviewees

Gender

(a) Male

(b) Female

Age

(a) 30 – 35yrs

(b) 35 – 40yrs

(c) 40 – 45yrs

(d) Above 45 yrs

Marital status

(a) Single

(b) Married

- (c) Widow
- (d) Divorced
- (e) Widowed

No of years in service.

- (a) 15 -20yrs
- (b) 20 – 25yrs
- (c) 25 – 30yrs
- (d) Above 30yrs

No of years in the current position

- (a) Below 1yr
- (b) 3yrs
- (c) 5yrs
- (d) Above 5yrs

The highest professional qualification

- (a) Adv diploma
- (b) Degree
- (c) Master
- (d) Ph D

Answer the following questions with a tick against the appropriate answer

1. Do you have any Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) in your district?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
2. Do your schools enrol children in grade 1 with ECCDE background?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No.
3. Approximately how many children have been enrolled into grade 1 this year with ECCDE background?
 - (a) Below 100

- (b) 100 []
- (c) 500 []
- (d) Above 500 []
4. Have you ever visited an ECCDE centres in your district?
- (a) Yes []
- (b) No []
5. If the answer to question 4 is yes, what was your mission?
-
-
6. If the answer to question 4 is no, why?
-
-
7. Does your office give any professional and administrative support to the Centres?
- (a) Yes []
- (b) No. []
8. What would be your advice to the partners in the way the centres are being run?
-
-
-
9. What would be your advice to the Ministry of Education officials on the way ECCDE centres are being run and the curriculum being used?
-
-
-
10. Would you recommend the partners to extend the services of ECCDE centres to other parts of the district?
- (a) Yes []
- (b) No. []
11. If not why?
-
-
12. What advice would you give to the community receiving ECCDE services?
-

13. Do you think ECCDE background can enhance quality of education

delivery?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

14. If the answer to question 13 is yes explain

15. Have you ever guided the centres on the type of educational materials they can use?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

16. If not why?

17. What are the notable successes of the ECCDE centres in your district?

18. What are the challenges faced by the ECCDE?

19. Do you see the rural parents benefiting from the ECCDE services provided to their children?

20. If the ECCDE services are beneficial to rural areas, would you encourage the partners to extend the services? Explain.

END

Thank you very much and God bless

Appendix 2: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR HEAD TEACHERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the University of Zambia carrying out research for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Education Administration. The theme of my study is Evaluation of the benefits of Early Childhood Care Development and Education provided by Non Governmental Organisations in Rural areas. A case study of Chibombo district of the Central Province. The questionnaire is intended to capture data with regard to my research topic. The outcome of the study will be for academic purposes and the fulfilment of the partial requirements for the award of the said degree. Therefore, all the information provided in the questionnaire shall be treated as confidential. Kindly tick or fill in your answer as truthfully and correctly as possible.

Personal details of the Interviewees

Gender

- (a) Male
- (b) Female

Age

- (a) 30 – 35yrs
- (b) 35 – 40yrs
- (c) 40 -45yrs
- (d) 45 and above

Marital status

- (a) Single
- (b) Married
- (c) Divorced

- (d) Widow
- (e) Widowed

No of year in current position

- (a) Below 5yrs
- (b) 5yrs
- (c) 5- 10yrs
- (d) Above 10 yrs

Highest professional qualification

- (a) Certificate
- (b) Diploma
- (c) Advanced diploma
- (d) Degree

Answer the following questions by using a tick against the correct answer.

1. Does your school have any ECCDE centre nearby?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No.

2. Do you get children for grade 1 class from the ECCDE centre?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No.

3. Approximately how many children do you enrol from ECCDE centre per year?

- (a) 20
- (b) 30
- (c) 40
- (d) Above 50

4. How have been the performance of the children from ECCDE centres?

(a) Fair []

(b) Good []

(c) Very good []

(d) Outstanding []

5. Do you get involved in the activities which take place at the centre?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

6. If the answer to question 5 is yes, to what extent do you get involved?

7. Has your school benefited by having children with the ECCDE background?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

8. Would you want all the grade 1 entrants to have ECCDE background?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

9. If so why?

10. How are the educational facilities at the nearest ECCDE centre?

(a) Poor []

(b) Fair []

(c) Good []

(d) Very good []

11. Is it possible for all the community and basic schools to have ECCDE centres in their catchment areas?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

12. Do you think the curriculum used in the ECCDE centre is acceptable by the MOE?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

13. If not why? _____

14. What would be your advice in the running of ECCDE centres by the partners?

15. Is it possible to have ECCDE centres in your catchment area of your school?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

16. If the answer to question 14 is no, why?

17. Do you think the parents of the children benefit by sending their children to ECCDE centres?

(a) Yes []

(b) No

18. If yes, in which way explain?

19. If no, why?

20. Is the curriculum used in ECCDE centres acceptable by the Ministry of Education?

(a) Yes

(b) No

21. What are the notable successes in the ECCDE centres near your school?

21. Sight some challenges faced by the centre:

23. What would be your advice to the Ministry of Education officials over the running of ECCDE centres in your area?

End

Thank you very much and God bless.

Appendix 3: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the University of Zambia carrying out research for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration. The theme of my study is Evaluation of the benefits of Early Childhood Care Development and Education provided by Non Governmental Organisations in Rural areas. A case study of Chibombo district of the Central Province. The questionnaire is intended to capture data with regard to my research topic. The outcome of the study will be for academic purposes and the fulfilment of the partial requirements for the award of the said degree. Therefore, all the information provided in the questionnaire shall be treated as confidential. Kindly tick or fill in your answer as truthfully and correctly as possible.

Personal details of the Interviewees

Sex

- (a) Male []
- (b) Female []

Age

- (a) 25-30yrs []
- (c) 30- 35yrs []
- (d) 35-40yrs []
- (e) Above 40yrs []

Marital status

- (a) Single []
- (b) Married []
- (c) Divorced []

(d) Widow []

(e) Widowed []

Highest professional qualifications

a) Certificate []

b) Diploma []

Number of years

(a) Below 5yrs []

(b) 5 -10yrs []

(c) 10 – 15yrs []

(d) Above 15yrs []

Answer the questions below by putting a tick on the answer of your choice

1. For how long have you taught grade 1 class?

(a) Below 2yrs []

(b) 3- 4yrs []

(c) 4- 5yrs []

(d) Above 5yrs []

2. How long have you been in rural schools?

(a) 1 yr []

(b) 2-3yrs []

(c) 3-4yrs []

(d) Above 5yrs []

3. Do you have ECCDE centre near your school?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

4. Have you ever taught children from the nearby ECCDE centre?

(a) Yes

(b) No.

5. Approximately how many children in your class have ECCDE background?

(a) 10

(b) 15

(c) 20

(d) Above 20

6. What are some of the benefits you have had from ECCDE children?

7. Would you want all the children in your class to have ECCDE background?

(a) Yes

(b) No.

8. In your own analysis as a teacher, is it possible for all the community and basic schools to have ECCDE centres in their catchment areas?

(a) Yes

(b) No

9. Do you think children with ECCDE background have more interest in learning than those without it?

(a) Very much

(b) A bit

(c) Not at all

10. How is class participation by children with ECCDE background?

(a) Fair []

(b) Good []

(c) Very good []

(d) Outstanding []

11. Is quality of teaching/ learning enhanced by having children with ECCDE background?

(a) Very much []

(b) Somehow []

(c) Not at all []

12. Do you think the ECCDE background can reduce dropout rates?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

13. Can the ECCDE background increase retention and completion rates?

(a) Very much []

(b) To some extent []

(c) Not at all []

14. Would you want the whole district to enrol children with ECCDE background?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

15. If the answer to question 14 is yes, why?

16. Have you ever gone to the ECCDE centre and give professional advice to the Caregiver?

(a) Yes []

(b) No. []

17. If the answer to question 16 is no, why?

18. Is the curriculum used in ECCDE centres acceptable by MOE?

Yes []

No []

19. If not why?

20. As a teacher in rural areas do you think teaching children with ECCDE back ground is beneficial to you?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

21. If yes in which way, explain

22. List the notable successes at the centre

23. What are the challenges faced by the centre?

24. If given chance, how would you help the caregiver at the centre?

25. What would you recommend to the Ministry of Education in as far as ECCDE is concerned?

END

Thank you very much and God bless

Interview Guide for Care Givers

- As a caregiver in a centre, what is your role?
- Is it an easy job to be a caregiver?
- List a number of challenges you face in the centre
- Would you want all the children in the village to pass through ECCDE centre before they are enrolled into grade 1?
- Do you think parents of the children in the centre benefit by bringing their children to the centre?
- Is it possible for all the community and basic schools to establish ECCDE centres in their catchment areas?
- Do you think the curriculum you use is acceptable by MOE?
- Are you paid for the work you are doing?
- Who pays you?

Thank you very much

Focus Group Discussion for Parents

- Why do you send children to ECCDE centre?
- In which way are you benefiting by sending children to ECCDE centre?
- What is your source of income?
- Has the income improved after being free from the young ones?
- If income has improved, are you able to send all your children to basic school?
- Are you happy with performance of your child or children at ECCDE centre?
- Would you encourage other parents to take their children to ECCDE centres?
- Do you think a child with ECCDE background would have a strong foundation in his/her education?
- What do you give your child as he/she goes to the ECCDE centre?
- Do you like what children do at the centre?
- Have you made progress at your work without interference from the young ones?
- Do you think it's good to send children to ECCDE centres?
- What is your advice to the government over ECCDE centres?

Thank you very much

Interview Guide for NGO Official

- How many centres do you have?
- For how long have you been offering ECCDE services?
- What are some of the successes you have achieved in your service of ECCDE?
- What challenges are you facing in these centres?
- Have you ever tabled you activities with MOE officials?
- Are you intending to expand your services to the rest of the district?
- If not why?

Thank you very much.

Interview Guide for MOE Official

- Do you have a policy on ECCDE?
- Have you ever visited any centre operated by NGOs?
- If not, why?
- If yes, do you think the partners are doing the right thing for our children?
- Have you allowed the Standard Officers in the district to visit the centres?
- If not why?
- When is the MOE expected to start offering ECCDE services?

Thank you very much

PERMISSION LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PICTURE FOR THE ECCDE CENTRE



Figure 2: One of the visited ECCDE Centres.