



TEACHER BOOSTER TRAINING REPORT

22nd – 26th April 2024 – Munga Primary School

Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub

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April 2024

Introduction

The teacher booster training was conducted from 20th to 24th, and organized in 3 clusters. The mentors were organized to lead the training in the schools within their clusters, with the agenda to re-emphasize the need to teach guided by the activity guide for teaching playgroups (3-year olds) and PP1.

Before the start of the booster training, at each center, two teachers (one from the county and one from RCT intervention) volunteered to give feedback on their experiences during term one in relation to the implementation of the RCT Curriculum intervention. They were asked to indicate what worked for them and what challenges they faced. Each mentor introduced her teachers before two representative teachers from the cluster of 5 schools per mentor were asked to share their experiences.

The agenda of the training covered the content of the items shown in Table 1

Table 1: Teacher booster training programme

	8.30 – 10.30	10.30 – 11.00	11.00 – 1.00	1.00 - 2.00	2.00 – 3.30	3.30 - 4.00	4.00 – 5.30
Day 1	Follow My Leader (page 15) <u>Mathematical Activities:</u> Shapes (whole group & small group activities)	BREAK	Follow Instructions (page 16) <u>Mathematical Activities:</u> Patterns (whole group & small group activities)	LUNCH	Simon Says (page 18) <u>Language Activities:</u> Teaching friendship and emotions skills	BREAK	Funny Clapping Game (page 20) <u>Language Activities:</u> Problem-Solving Stories
Day 2	Naming (page 14) <u>Language Activities:</u> Teaching Vocabulary		Guessing Game – Actions (page 13) <u>Language Activities:</u> Teaching Letters and Letter Sounds		Acting Out Rhymes and Songs (page 10) <u>Mathematical Activities:</u> Teaching number recognition and counting		Follow Instructions with Objects (page 17) <u>Mathematical Activities:</u> Teaching concepts
NB Each session started with a game. The game was a fun activity to keep the energy of the group high and also to help teachers to understand how the games are played and the value of them to the children. The games were done quickly – e.g. 5 minutes. The curriculum areas were integrated such that the Mathematical Activities and Language Activities included curriculum content relating to Psychomotor and Creative Activities, Environmental Activities and Religious Activities							

The meetings were organized in three clusters namely:

1. Maara Cluster hosted at Munga Primary School on 22nd and 23rd April
2. Chuka-Igamang'ombe Cluster at Ikuu Primary School on 24th to 25th
3. Tharaka Cluster at Kamatungu Primary School 25th to 26th April



Figure 1: Mentor Rose and mentor Benson introducing their team of teachers during the booster training for Maara Cluster.

Feedback from Maara Cluster Teachers

The teachers who spoke indicated that they were happy with the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials which were helping them with the implementation activities in all the dimensions aimed at supporting children's development. The material designs made them realize the possibility to make their own material rather than waiting for or relying on donation from NGOs or other institutions interested in helping the schools. The provision for teachers to teach in mother tongue made learning enjoyable to the children making them interested in coming to the school regularly. Additionally, the weekly visits by the mentors helped the teachers remain on track as they were insisting on following the guidance given to them during the training.

Key Challenges

The teachers indicated that different schools were at different levels of implementing a feeding program. Some already had one contributed by the parents but with the idea of sponsorship, some parents were reluctant to contribute. With the intervention some schools proposed a feeding program where they provide porridge over lunch hour. However, the porridge is not adequate for children as the children need solid food to sustain their energy.

Some head teachers were rigid to change and were insisting that they are not gaining anything from the project. For this reason, they kept requesting for fee payment and sending the children home disrupting the ongoing learning of the kids. Other head teachers insisted on intervention class fitting into the school calendar of activities as provided for by the Ministry of Education with regard to games and drama. This was done regardless whether the playgroup and PP1 children were not participating in the activities. During those days no learning takes place in schools as well as the other children may not be in school as other schools may be visiting.

Although some schools have good sanitation facilities and with separate latrines provided for ECDE, some schools still use joint facilities with the other classes that are not suitable for the 3-year-olds. In other schools the latrines are at a distance therefore teachers take a lot of time moving to and from the latrines while escorting playgroup children.



Figure 2: Teachers sharing their experiences with the RCT Curriculum Intervention during the booster training for Maara Cluster

The issues of assessment of the children using exams is leading to demand for a fee payment. Some teachers are insisting that it is a must as the exams measure the success of a child in learning. However the current intervention design does not give room for examinations and the teachers recommend that the project come up with a way of assessing the progress and performance of each child as this was regarded as a measure of performance of the child.

Other challenges include parents who were not clear about the sponsorship their children were receiving. Such parents were not ready to contribute to the feeding program when requested by the schools. This explains why the low turnouts of PG children in some of the schools. Some Parents were concerned about the mixing of 3-year-olds and the 4-year-olds in the same class.

However, the implementation of the curriculum in the 1st term proved that the 3-year-olds are faster in learnings as most of them are very good at playing with the materials.

Some parents complained that children were not being given homework and that the children had poor writing skills. Other parents came to appreciate the impacts of the RCT intervention to their children.

One of the county teachers requested that they should be given an incentive for supporting the projects. The teachers also complained of salary delays and lack of pay slips. They indicated that some of the mats were wearing off at the edges and may require repairer or replacement at the beginning of the second term.

Although the training in Rubate made the invention to look easy, initially it was found to be difficult to transit from the old ways of teaching to the new way of teaching as expected by the curriculum intervention activities.

Responses from Individual Schools

Kajiambaki Primary School is experiencing difficulties in completing the activities assigned both in the whole group activities and the small group activities. For example in teaching letters of week and number of the week, they were struggling because they expected the children to start writing. Further, the parents were questioning the type of learning where children go home without writing. However, after 5 week of implementation, they started seeing children acting differently as they were able to talk and communicate, some parents' started appreciating the change they were seeing in their children. The children were eager to play with the blocks and arranging the blocks from their own creation and sometimes fighting for the blocks.

A teacher from **Rurea** indicated that initially it was challenging to manage the 3-year-olds and could not even make them to sit down. However, with the materials 3 weeks later, they were very happy and sometimes even correcting the teacher.

A teacher from **EAPC Maara** indicated that the head teacher was very positive and the parents over time were becoming positive even though the issues of examination was threatening to interfere with the intervention. They also indicated that the mentors were very supportive

Responses from **Kajiathetu Primary**, indicated that she was happy with the work they were doing in the implementation of the curriculum as children are able to learn what they do. She also indicated that one of the parents wanted the teacher to be taking the child to school.

Kagira Primary school, has 7 children enrolled, 3 RCT children and 5 non-RCT children. However, there is lack of a feeding program, most of the children are needy. The school has no PP2 teacher and the parents cannot afford to recruit a BOM teacher. The head teacher insisted that the 2 teachers in PP1, one to teach PP2. Two children did not report as they were coming from far.

In **Minugu Primary School**, initially they had low support from the parents and therefore low turnouts but after making follow ups all the children reported. She also reported that some of the materials had started wearing out and one of the buckets was already broken. On this note the teachers were advised to take care in handling the materials.

In **Ntuibu ECDE Center**, a feeder school to Karengani Primary School, the county teacher performs administrative activities on behalf of the head teacher, forcing the teacher to multi-task on the administrative roles and the needs of the RCT. The school has a good number of learners; 18 in PP1 and 22 in PP2. Even though it has 18 children, only 2 are 3-year-olds with no letters, but nevertheless the teachers are teaching all the children using the design that was given to them.

Feedback from the Intervention Supervisor

The Intervention Supervisor appreciated the teachers for giving valuable insights about the program and helping the parents understand the process followed in the design. His personal assessment was that the implementation of the intervention has been done well in the 1st term and will be guided further in the 2nd Term. He looked forward for them to do their best. He informed the teachers that there are 5 key protocols

1. Teaching is supposed to be done in mother tongue and should be done so
2. Teachers are supposed to teach as a team (team teaching)
3. The structure of the day allocates only 20 minutes for each activity and they must fit to those timelines
4. There are two types of activities; whole group activities and small group activities

5. The methodology being used should be uniform across all school; therefore anybody in the intervention school must adhere to the protocols and any other way they may be tempted to use will mean that they are not adhering to the intervention.

He highlighted that the Ntuiibu ECDE Center was a big center and was hopeful that the head teacher in Karengani will be more productive in assigning another teacher the responsibilities of a head teacher to relive the County teacher to focus on the needs of the intervention.



Figure 4: One of the teachers demonstration to the other Maara Cluster teachers during their training

Comments by the PI

The project PI explained to the participants that they should look at themselves as the implementers of the intervention itself and they (teachers) work daily to transfer knowledge to the learners (the kids). As the curriculum is a new thing, they will continue learning one day at a time and whenever any challenges arise one should always seek guidance from the mentors. He added that if the activity guide is followed well, they will see the results and impacts of their teaching.

The Mentors are providing coaching to them to ensure that the curriculum is followed and implementing it correctly. They should therefore at all cost follow the guidance given by the mentors and implement the procedures. The mentors were their direct leaders and whatever they tell them will provide good knowledge for the delivery of the contents in the activity guide. This opportunity to be mentored will help them build their capacity as teachers despite the challenges they will be encountering every day. The mentors too are under guidance from the intervention supervisors and they are also being guided on what they are required to do.

All teachers are expected to be implementing the RCT intervention in the same way, with same energy and the outcome of their efforts will be measured through independent assessment of the children for their developmental milestones at the end of the year (baseline assessment). As

they have the opportunity to make the school a second home for the child if they follow the guidance being giving to them by carrying put the curriculum intervention in the right way.

County Director of ECDE

The County Director of Education informed the cluster that the intervention project had already added value to the county education system and is exposing the county through seminars and conferences, for example in the week of 11th to 15th March, the CEC Education and Vocational Training made a presentation at the Eastern Africa Early Childhood Conference that was hosted by Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) under the theme, *Investing in Early Childhood; Building Human Capital along the life Course*.

The County had also recently received a request from the MCAs COG of Kiambu to come for a 2 day bench marking, mainly focusing on ECDE Program with particular interest on the RCT intervention. Therefore he asked the teachers as pioneers of the project to do anything possible to see it through. He also reminded teachers that the project has a social aspect with the teachers being on the radar from the community and anything not accepted by the community can disrupt the program. The community as the primary consumer, they were interested in the well-being of their kids and will always associate this to the schools and the teachers.

The CEC Education together with the CO education, were the policy representative in the project and is helping them look at the project through a 360 degrees, therefore the teachers should be sure they are updated and know what is going on. He urged the teachers to work as a team and provide information whenever they get any challenges so that the county can intervene, or if it's a matter related to the other partners the county will cascade it for intervention.

The Co-PI in charge of the intervention reiterated that failing is not an option as the RCT is a big project that has high investments and asked the teachers not to complain of the experiences of the day and that they should be in the project in body and mind and how they speak about it should be represented in the 60 intervention school as the anticipation was very high at the Rubate Training. Now that they are going through a booster training it will help them go through term two successfully

Feedback from Chuka-Igamang'ombe Cluster at Ikuu Primary School

The booster training meeting at meeting Chuka-Igamang'ombe Cluster begun with an address from the County Director of ECDE. He mention that at the beginning of the RCT Intervention he was stressed with the posting of teachers and mentors to the 60 schools. This was due to external interferences within the county administration. He thanked the KU-WEE Hub for the excellent choice of the 60 teachers form the 1066 applicants and 200 shortlisted following due process that involved the relevant stakeholders including the County the public service. He also thanked Kenyatta University for identifying and selecting Tharaka Nithi County from 47 counties as the place for the experiment. He considered it God's favor to the county and therefore all the teachers in the experiment were highly favored. He told them to count themselves lucky and even if for nothing else but for the benefit they are getting through trainings. They had received one week training at the beginning of the year and now were being engaged in 2 days of booster training. The RCT design and process of implementation had greatly build the capacity of the teachers given the fact that they had never attended such training since they were recruited.



Figure 4: County ECDE Director Joseph Iguna makes his remarks to the Chuka-Igamang'ombe Cluster teachers.

The director further reiterated that in the 1st term he had very limited opportunity to visit schools. However, he will more often visit schools and especially those that have challenges. He told the teachers that the success of the project depended very much on the teachers as they were the ones directly in touch with the child and the parent of the child, therefore if a child is not showing any progress in their developments, the parents will be stressed. If their progress is visible the parent will be happy. Therefore, the teachers have the sole responsibility to make

the child happy with a learning that will make the parent happy. This may lead other parents to start bringing their children to public schools rather than to private school.

The Director further reiterated that county teachers are employed on permanent basis and get an annual salary increment. That in itself has created a difference in salaries with the county teachers earning more than the New RCT teachers. The other cause in variation in salaries is because the teachers are subject to some deductions, including loans, TSC, health insurances, and other mandatory deduction, therefore the difference in gross figures may be due to that. The wish of the director was that the teachers focus more on what they have been employed to

According to the Director, the issues of delayed salaries will always be there as all banks don't operate the same way. For example, clients for Transnational SACCOs get their salaries earlier as soon the pay slips are received as other banks wait for the money first before crediting to the accounts following the due process in every bank.

For purpose of proper auditing the teachers should have;

1. Appointment letter, given from KU
2. Posting letter from the County Education Department
3. A reporting letter signed by the head teacher, indicating that they have reported and assigned duties.

Should there be a need for the teacher to go for sick off, annual leave, or maternity leave, the New RCT Teachers will need to write to the employer KU through the immediate head teacher, requesting for the permission to go on leave indicating that when they are going and when they are expected to return. The county teacher on the other will request for such leaves from the Director ECDE also through their head teachers. This procedure is essential in enhancing effective planning for any relievers to be identified and posted to school in order not to disrupt the intervention process.

With regards to the county teacher, any teacher transferred should receive a transfer letter and clear with the school where they are. Additionally, should any teacher retire from the service, they are expected to receive a letter and clear with the school where they are in indicating that they have surrendered all the materials they were in charge of. Also these procedure will help the project to effectively do a replacement.

The director also informed the group that he has received request from Kilifi and Kiambu County for bench marking visits to see how the implementation of the RCT Intervention.

He urged the teachers and the mentors to also put measure in place to engage more with the parents to inform them more about the project and the support needed from them. The parents' focus should be to observe how their child is developing; physically, socially, and mentally and the director will be interested to receive good feedbacks from them.

He reminded the teachers that the headteachers are their immediate bosses and it's upon them to explain to them about the project. The teachers and the mentors therefore have a responsibility of ensuring the project succeeds in their respective schools.

The Chuka-Igamang'ombe Cluster teachers' Comments

The teachers who spoke during the Chuka-Igamang'ombe Cluster touched on the issues that were highlighted in Munga. They indicated that they will now engage more with the parents as they are the first line of interaction with the child. The routine of time maintenance by the kids has attracted the attention of other teachers in their school.

The teachers indicated that the training worked well for them. The delivery of materials helped them in the implementation of the project but reported a few cases of the children getting admitted late to the intervention. They were also grateful for the opportunity to serve as teachers. Teaching has been good especially with the use of the material and learners enjoy and interact with the materials well. Most learners are now familiar with what they are learning. They love being in class. The children are also learning and able to speak well and appreciate the praise they receive.

The Tharaka Cluster Teachers' Booster training meeting

The Tharaka Cluster Teachers' Booster training was the last of the series of trainings and it took place on Thursday 25th and Friday 27th. Like in other clusters, the teachers who were given the opportunity to share their experiences on the intervention indicated that some parents did not understand the intervention well and had high and different expectations in terms of sponsorship. Their expectation was that the RCT project would fully support learners with everything. When this did not happen, some parents withdrew their children claiming that the

children did not need to go to school as they were still too young. This led to some of the absenteeism recorded in the schools which was later addressed.

Teachers also reported need for provision of additional materials including chalks, exercise books, pencils, and manilla papers for the children to use. They indicated that providing additional materials will ease their burden. Some parents declined paying for the feeding program and when combined with the need to buy uniforms which was unforeseen cost by the project, they were saying that the intervention is expensive for them.

The RCT teachers indicated that the mode of teaching is smart. It has removed boredom from the children and most were not sleeping during class time. As teachers were enjoying the class activities. As learning is continuous from one activity to another. The teachers recommended the adjustments of the curriculum to fit the school calendar in a way that the learning activities do not attract the attention of other classes in the schools.



Figure 5: Teacher Booster Training at Kamatungu Primary School for the Tharaka Cluster

The expectation of the parents was that at mid-term or end term the children were expected to go home with a report card to show their performance which was also a concern of the teachers that without the report how the children will proceed to the next level or rewarded. How will the teachers be assessed and rewarded?

In the meeting it was apparent that the intervention has provided a lot of learning materials which has enhanced the teaching method and because they are colored they are very attractive to the children.