

KCDF 
people, giving and working together



Models of Best Practices in Community Based Early Childhood Development




Bernard van Leer
Foundation

Case Studies from KCDF Programme Implementation in
Eastern & Coast Regions of Kenya (2005-2010)

Edited by: Edward Indakwa & Gladys Miriti





About



KCDF

KCDF is a Kenyan philanthropic foundation that provides grants and technical support for sustainable community-driven development initiatives. Formed in 1997, the foundation was established to drive Kenyan communities toward self progress by exploiting locally available resources and creating homegrown solutions to local challenges.

As the only indigenous community development Foundation with an endowment fund in Kenya KCDF's works to promote sustainable development of communities through social -economic investment, resource mobilisation, endowment building and grant-making. The Foundation seeks to promote organised giving in Kenya among corporate, high net-worth individuals, middle-level executives, the youth, the Diaspora and other constituencies interested in the sustainable development of communities in Kenya.

KCDF recognizes the role played by Early Childhood Development (ECD) in community and national development because it not only improves the situation of young children but is also a sustainable development strategy, integral to overall community development.

The purpose of KCDF's ECD programmes, therefore, is to strengthen grassroots community development groups and help them to design and manage sustainable programmes that address the holistic development of children below 8 years of age.

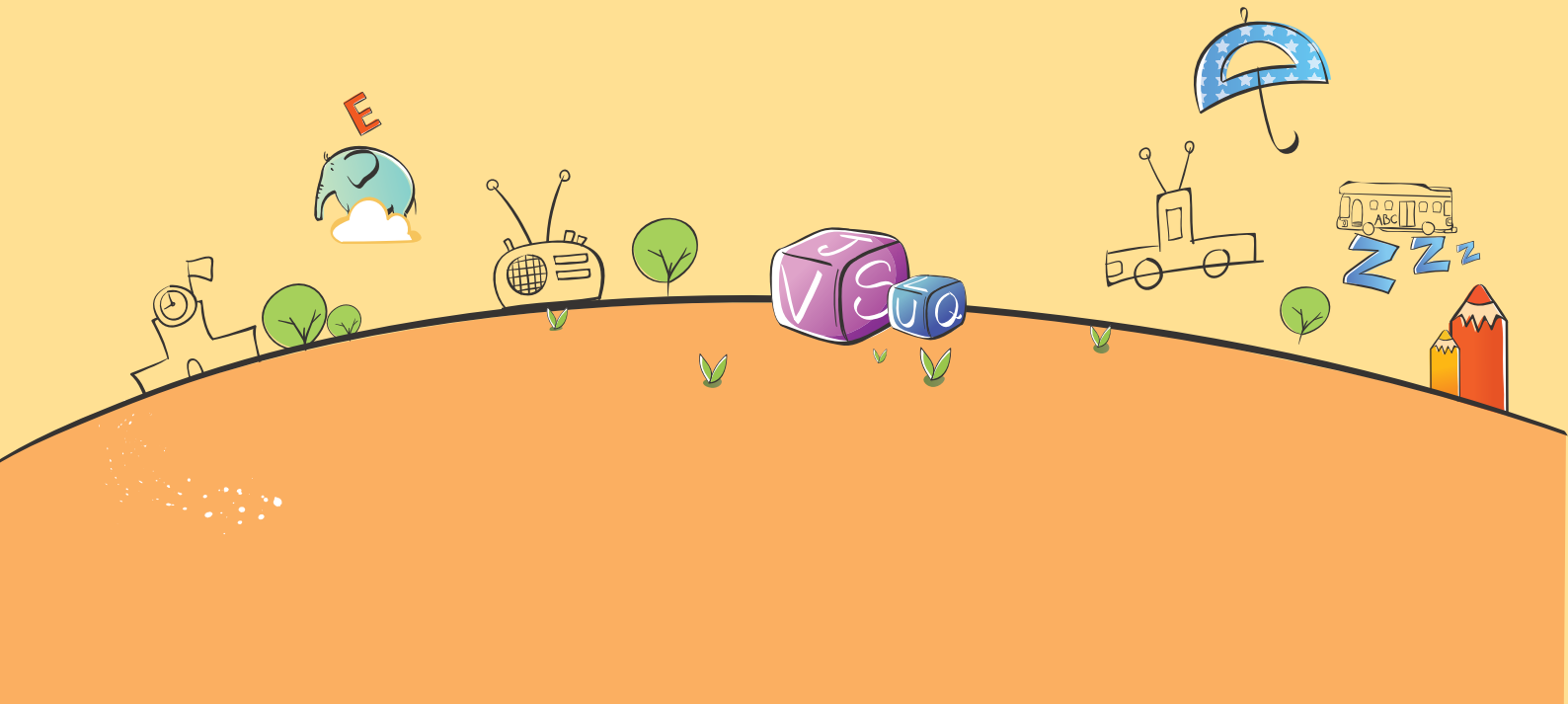
**"It takes a
village to raise
a child."**

AFRICAN PROVERB



Raising an all-round child

*To all the little children of Kenya
who giggle at their own shadows,
marvel at grasshoppers and mould
dreams out of clay.*



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Foreword

It's now universally acknowledged that the environment that we grow in, the warmth, care, attention and the responsiveness that we get as children determines our overall well being in adulthood.

Long ago, African children were raised by and belonged to a community much wider than immediate family – an entire village if you may. But the hustles and individualistic tendencies of modern life have thrust the care of child entirely on their parents. This becomes a major challenge when, for one reason or other, parents are incapable of providing a suitable and holistic environment for nurturing children.

But thanks to sensitisation efforts by community development organisations such as KCDF, the tide is changing with communities, once again, striving to be the focal point for early childhood development. There is increased understanding by families and communities that the future depends on the healthy development of their children and that this can only be achieved if they collectively play a pivotal role in them. That's why, as we see in this publication, communities now actively participate in all aspects of ECD Programmes including building and equipping ECD centres and paying the ECD teachers.

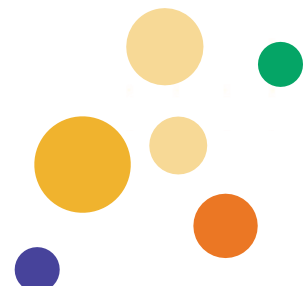
I am awed by the strategic focus and ground-breaking contribution that KCDF and her partners have made towards ECD, not to mention the valuable case studies and recommendations published here. This will undoubtedly not just equip parents, guardians and teachers with in-depth knowledge on raising children in this most critical phase of their lives but will also provide a benchmark upon which development partners and policy makers in Kenya and other parts of Africa can base for future ECD plans and activities.

As populations grow, the challenges facing the world increase. The young ones of today are the capital, the drivers that will solve some of these challenges. We must, therefore, unreservedly invest in them, prepare and nurture them at family, community and at national levels in anticipation.

The progress of a nation is measured by the quality of life enjoyed by its children.

KCDF and her partners have shown us the way.

Arif Neki
Regional Chief Executive Officer
Aga-Khan Development Network



Preface

There are few things in life that are as heartwarming as a little child's smile. Guileless, full of verve and sparkle, a child's smile is a mirror of unbending love, trust and hope. It reminds mankind that life should be a joyful journey; that everyone can dream of a future that's filled with sunshine and hope.

Yet children only smile when they are happy, fed, clothed, healthy, protected and loved. In this happy state, they play, learn and grow up into reliable and productive members of society.

Like a seedling, their formative years are the most significant of their lives, for they determine who they will become as adults. Investing in the child's development in their formative years is, therefore, critical. This, however, goes beyond mere classroom learning. What is paramount is the use of approaches, both at home and in school, that ensure the holistic development to nurture an all around child.


To paraphrase USA Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, it takes a village. It takes a village to raise a child. Thus, Early Childhood Development (ECD) works best when it's placed at the very core of community life. And in our work with communities in parts of Garissa, Kilifi, Mwingi and Malindi Districts, KCDF has demonstrated that community driven ECD programmes protect children and promote good physical, psychological and intellectual development.

It is heartwarming that most parents, even in the absence of material wealth, remain keen on securing the best future for their children. They have played an important role in the success of ECD in the communities that partnered with KCDF. In this book, we share with you the outcome of our work in the past five years. These are select case studies and best model practices in each of the programme districts.

The stories demonstrate that by working together as leaders, parents and youth, our future can be secured by investing in this country's greatest resource – our children. We can no longer consign them to the fringes of life - learning beneath trees, hungry, disheveled, orphaned, lonely, disease ridden and unloved.

It's therefore my fervent dream that, with your support, these models of best practice articulated here will be replicated across Kenya.

Janet Mawiyoo,
Chief Executive Officer, KCDF



We are guilty of many sins and errors but our worst crime is to neglect the needs of young children while in their formative years of their lives. To them, we cannot answer "Tomorrow". Their name is "Today".

ANONYMOUS



Acknowledgement

This publication is an edited version of a technical audit of the KCDF Early Childhood Development programme in Garissa, Mwingi, Kilifi and Malindi districts by Dr. Halimu Suleiman Shauri (lead consultant), Robert Omondi Oswago, P Wanjohi Githinji and Samuel Ngaruiya.

It also borrows significantly from a baseline survey of the status of ECD in the aforementioned districts by Mr Michael Karanja that was the forerunner to this project. KCDF is indebted to these two highly professional teams for their thorough assessments and insight.

This project would have been impossible without the support of KCDF ECD partners, government officials, development partners, community leaders and all the parents who participated in project activities with enthusiasm and contributed a their time, ideas and resources unreservedly.

Finally, KCDF pays tribute to its staff - CEO Janet Mawiyoo, Programme Director Tom Were, ECD Programme Officer Gladys Miriti and Marketing and Partnerships Manager Al Kags together with the entire Communications and marketing team for their incessant support and contribution to this noble project.

KCDF
Nairobi





*Nasikia sauti
Sauti ya mama
Sasa ni saa sita
Mwalimu kwaheri!
Watoto kwaheri! ...*

*I hear a voice
Mama is calling
It's noon
Goodbye teacher!
Goodbye children!*

Nursery School Rhyme - Anonymous



Prelude

The Bernard Van Leer Foundation (BVLf) shares KCDF's theory of change - that communities must take charge of their development. Thus, In June 2004, BVLf and KCDF signed a partnership agreement to help improve the situation of young children in Kenya.

In this agreement, KCDF would be the BVLf partner in Kenya, working with nine community based organizations to strengthen ECD initiatives in parts of Coast and Eastern provinces in Kenya.

By why bother about children when, on the surface, there are far more pressing development needs to be met using limited and scarce resources?

Situational Context

The most critical period of human development is in the first 8 years of life. During this time the brain undergoes its most dramatic growth and development and children acquire the ability to think, speak, reason and learn.

As will be seen in subsequent chapters, the foundation of good health, personality and intellectual development are established during the early childhood years. This, therefore, is precisely the time of development when children need the most care and support.

Country Situation

Like many other developing countries, Kenya faces grim economic challenges with an estimated 46 per cent of Kenya's current population – including an approximate 9 million children - living below the poverty line.

Poverty, unfortunately, can be most cruel to women and children. Among the poor, for instance, infant mortality rates are very high standing currently at 80.1 per 1,000 live births and under five mortality rate at 128 per 1,000 live births. Many of these children suffer malnutrition, child labour, child prostitution and many other forms of abuse .

It is further estimated that more than 400 children die daily from preventable diseases which include malaria, diarrhea and acute respiratory illnesses.

Most poignant, perhaps a pointer to the urgency and importance of the KCDF-ECD programme, only 2.2 million of 6 million children aged 3-6 in Kenya are enrolled in pre-school according to the Kenya 2009 Census Report.

Other than crippling poverty, many other challenges have worsened the situation of children in Kenya. This include the adverse impact of the 2007 post-election violence and HIV/AIDS, which has cost children their parents and mature relatives, denying them quality care in their most critical stage of development. It is heartrending to note that by 2005, Kenya had lost 1.8 million of its citizens to the scourge, rendering 1 million children helpless as orphans.

Given the pressures of modern life, economic hardships occasioned by high inflation rates, persistent and prolonged droughts, diminishing agricultural returns, and increased domestic violence in some families, the psychological wellbeing of many children has been compromised. This has made life for children in some districts extremely and unac-



ceptably unbearable. They are unable to enjoy love and protection, food, clothing, shelter, medical care, sanitation and access to ECD centers among many other basic needs and rights.

While the Kenyan Government has made commendable efforts in the implementation of the Free Primary Education Programme thereby increasing enrolment of children in primary schools to unprecedented levels, there remain troubling regional disparities in terms of quality of education for many children. For instance, facilities and the teacher to pupil ratio, particularly in the districts covered by KCDF and where enrolment rates both in ECD and primary school levels are low, are grossly inadequate.

The Government of Kenya (GoK) has demonstrated commitment to the well-being of all children aged 0-18 years in the past ten years. Kenya is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and the Hague Convention on the protection of children and cooperation in respect of inter country adoption. Kenya has also participated actively in various sessions reporting on the progress made by parties in implementing UNCRC resolutions on children and affirmed commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

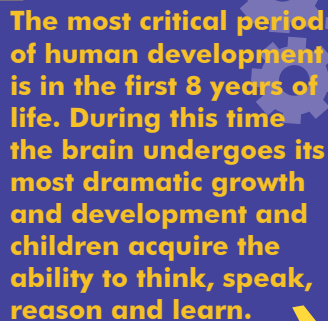
But far from signing International Conventions relating to children, the Government has made efforts to domesticate them through National Laws and Policy Guidelines aimed at advocating for and protecting the Rights of the Child. Examples include: The Children's Act of 2001, National Early Childhood Development

Policy framework of 2006, The National Early Childhood Development Service Standard Guidelines of 2006, Orphans and Vulnerable Children's (OVCs) Policy of 2005, Kenya Health Policy Framework of 2007, Child Participation Guidelines, The Sexual Offences Act of 2006, The National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan, and the Kenya Vision 2030 blueprint, among others.

In addition, Kenya also participated in, and endorsed, the deliberations of 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and the 2000 World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal). Both conferences underscored the importance of ECD programmes in improving the holistic development of children. The GoK has further translated all of these international initiatives into national targets to be implemented at regional, district and community levels across sectors.

Sadly, and most unfortunate, the limited resources allocated to ECD programmes in the annual national budgets mean that most of these beautiful instruments and plans developed with all good intentions only remain good on paper on the bookshelves of the line ministries.

The reality is that there is little planning to achieve age-appropriate ECD services. Neither are there efforts to increase enrollment in preschools and ensure high retention and successful transition to primary schools. In short, the quality and sustainability of many ECD initiatives in the country is bleak and weak.



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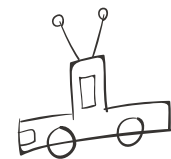
1. Community mobilization and sensitization on Child Rights and ECD issues to entrench local ownership of the programme
2. Initiating holistic interventions aimed at developing a 'complete' child, such as nutrition and health by creating support services
3. Provision of appropriate services for children below three years of age
4. Supporting the infrastructural development for the ECD Centres
5. Investing in income generating activities and mobilizing members of the community to become fully involved in ECD activities for sustainability
6. Awareness creation and capacity building for community leaders, volunteers and teachers on issues surrounding ECD
7. Identifying and making use of existing local resources, ideas and social networks to enhance ECD
8. Putting in place sustainability measures to ensure that the ECD programme continues without external support and
9. Working on factors hindering smooth and successful transition of children from Home to ECD Centres and to primary schools.



Sowing Seed for meaningful ECD

Given the above challenges, KCDF conducted a baseline survey in four target districts – Garissa, Malindi, Kilifi and Mwingi. These districts were selected for various reasons, notably a high poverty index, absence of development agencies involved in ECD work, especially BVLF, and the resultant gap in meeting the needs of children aged 8 years and below.

Tellingly, the results of this survey indicated a high level of economic vulnerability and insufficient investment in early childhood development education. In consultation with BVLF, KCDF designed an ECD programme that would seek the wholesome development of the child. In addition, this programme would promote integration of



ECD centres with income generating activities to ensure sustainability, pursue child rights and support development and use of appropriate teaching and learning methods and materials. To enhance efficiency and resource use, KCDF partnered with nine organisations, thereby inheriting a multiplicity of networks with grassroots connections.

Reasons for Documentation

Despite having supported ECD programme implementation in the last four years, limited or no tangible impact of this effort had been reviewed, analyzed and documented in a bid to share and replicate emerging models of best practices through effective community participation. This means solid case studies and models of best practices risked being lost and forgotten without sharing with key actors in the education sector for Sector Wide Action Planning (SWAP) for future ECD programmes & interventions.

This forms the purpose of this book. The case studies and models of best practices encapsulated here capture the KCDF-ECD work implemented by 7 partner organisations in 5 years. And following stringent external reviews and documentation, several issues emerged as best practices and integral to ECD:

Whereas, on the whole, the KCDF – ECD programme achieved remarkable success, there are certain areas that require strengthening. There is particular need for policy makers, community leaders, politicians and captains of industry to take keener interest and engage more in ECD activities. This would bring ECD issues and challenges to the forefront, heighten community participation and contribute immensely towards resource mobilisation.

What is not in doubt is that children are an important part of society. They require a healthy, safe and nurturing environment with sufficient opportunities to stimulate and sustain their emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual development. Without an enabling environment at this formative stage of rapid and critical development, they face challenges in school at later stages and find it difficult to develop into well-rounded individuals as adults.

It is our hope that our the models of best practices outlined here will stimulate improved planning, investment and implementation of sustainable and meaningful ECD programmes in Kenya and beyond.



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Raising an all-round child



Chapter One

The Early Bird

Experts say the first 8 years of life is the most critical period of human development. During this time, the brain undergoes its most dramatic growth and development. Children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn and reason. By age 6, they have acquired skills, expectancies and notions about their little world and the people in their lives.

They are in tune with culture oriented attitudes as their personality patterns emerge. This is also a time when mental stimulation, nutrition, and emotional attachment all work together to shape their identity, coping skills, intelligence and problem solving abilities needed to help them grow into healthy, intelligent and positively adjusted adolescents and adults.

The extent to which these processes lead to healthy development

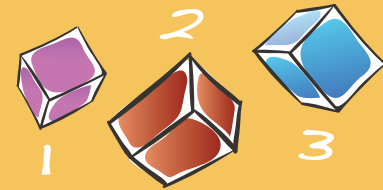
depends upon the qualities of stimulation and support, and in their social environments. Given that the foundations of good health, personality and intellectual development are established during the early childhood years, this is precisely the time when children need the most care and support.

Compared to the other stages of human development, early childhood (defined as the age between birth and eight years) is a period of great mental elasticity and environmental adaptation. Unfortunately, this means that environmental deficiencies and negative experiences are more likely to cause "faulty" development with serious repercussions later in life.

Consequently, early childhood interventions programmes after the age of eight years may be too late and ineffective, leading to educational wastage in terms of dropout, repetition and failure rates in primary and secondary school.

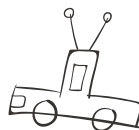


Age



"By the age of three, the brains of children are more than two and a half times more active than the brains of adults - and they stay that way throughout the first decade of life..."

Shore, 1997



From Granny's bosom to the Kindergarten

In traditional African communities, early childcare was provided by mothers and the extended family – especially grandmothers, aunts and cousins. However, and as a result of socio-economic changes due to the cash economy, urbanization, working mothers, single parenthood, rural urban migration and breakdown of the extended family structures, formal and informal early childhood development centers became established. Today, they provide custodial care and early stimulation for young children and free mothers to engage in economic and social activities.

The first ECD centres in Kenya emerged in the 1940s. Referred variously as pre-schools, nursery schools, day nurseries, day care centers and kindergartens, the ECD centers have witnessed a dramatic rise in the number of children and teachers since independence. Majority of the centres (over 70%) are started and managed by local communities through the harambee spirit.

More recently, the knowledge of the importance of the early childhood stage has made many parents take ECD seriously. Early childhood, being the

formative stage, lays the foundation for and determines what adult will emerge from the child.

Quality ECD programmes are thus designed to address the 'holistic' developmental needs of children.

"The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day."
John Milton

Recent brain research indicates that 80 per cent of the brain is developed by age 5 and a lot of stimulation is needed at the early stage for optimum development. If anything goes wrong, it is difficult to, sometimes irreversible, to correct. For instance, chronic malnutrition could result in mental impairment, causing the child to suffer for life.

Thus, investing in ECD provides future returns in reducing wastage in schools, reducing morbidity rates and improving the general health of the population. It not only enhances earnings and social adjustment but, in the long term, plays a big role in poverty reduction and economic advancement.

Early childhood services in Kenya have been managed by several ministries, including Ministries of Health, Local Government, Culture and Social Services and Education. Currently, it's the Ministry of Education that co-coordinates ECD, as mandated through the Presidential Circular number 1 of 1980. However, the main players in the provision of ECD services are the communities who establish, maintain, own majority of the centers and pay the teachers as well.

There has also been significant participation of the private sector whereby individuals, private companies and faith based organizations have established and maintained ECD centers for their workers and communities or as business ventures.



Profile of Target Districts

Malindi District

This also one of the seven districts of Coast Province, Kenya. Climatically, Malindi has two rainy seasons: long rains from March to May and short rains from October to December. The district is hot and humid. It is mainly occupied by the Giriama and the Swahili.

The economic activities include agriculture, tourism, commercial trade, fishing and salt extraction. Approximately 70% of the district's households are engaged in arable farming. The main crops grown are maize, cassava, cowpeas, mangoes, coconuts and pineapples. Livestock reared include Zebu-cattle, goats, sheep, poultry and beekeeping.

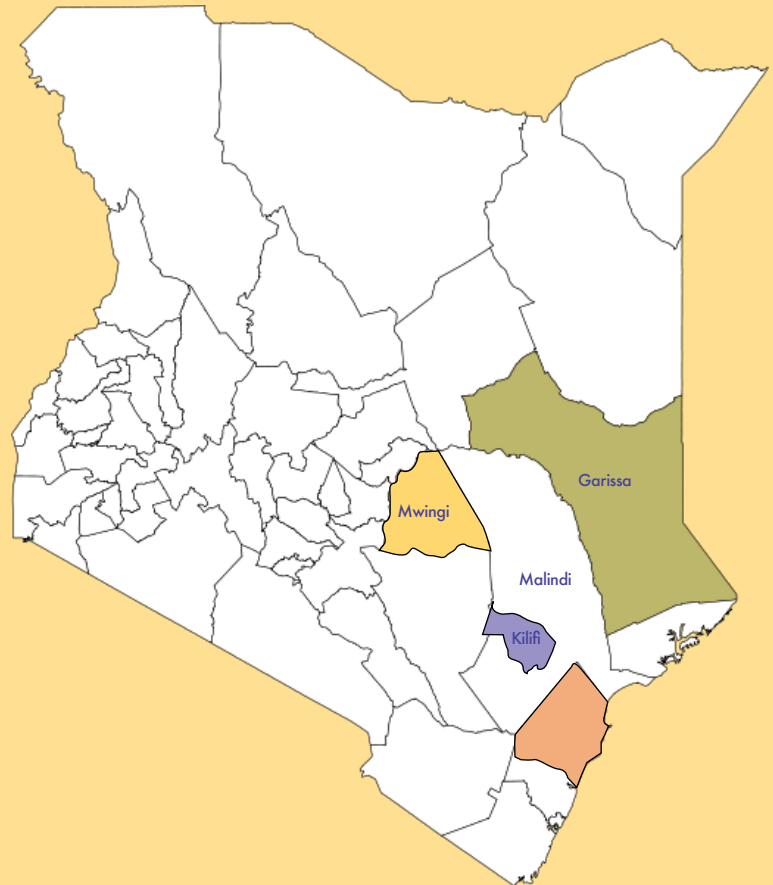
Tourism is the mainstay of the district's economy. There are 104 tourist resorts with a 6305 bed capacity. Tourist attraction sites include historical sites, wildlife, beaches, the Indian Ocean, forest, marine and national parks.

Garissa District

This is one of the four districts of Kenya's North Eastern Province. The Tana River, flowing along the western boundary of the district, is the only permanent water source here with tremendous effect on climate, settlement patterns and economic activities.

Lying in an arid and harsh environment, Garissa has very low and unreliable rainfall, making it dry most of the year. The district is inhabited by Muslim Somali with unique cultural beliefs and practices.

The Somali are nomadic and reputable traders. They keep camels, goats, and sheep. There is also some irrigated farming along the Tana River for maize, bananas, mangoes, oranges, watermelons, onions, and tomatoes.



Mwingi District

Situated in Eastern province, Mwingi district is a semi arid area with low and unreliable rainfall. Water is scarce and people depend on seasonal rivers, dams and rock catchments. Residents, however, engage in subsistence farming, growing millet, sorghum beans, green grams, mangoes, lemons and oranges. They also do bee-keeping and livestock rearing. The population is predominantly made of the Kamba and a few Tharaka.



Kilifi District

Kilifi is one of the seven districts of Coast province, Kenya. It borders the Indian Ocean to the East. Its main ethnic community is the Giriama.

The district experiences two rainy seasons: long rains from March to May and short rains from October to November. The district boasts of the dense Arabuko Sokoke Forest, a national game and forest reserve with unique bird and animal species and the Kaya forests, home to religious shrines and mangrove forests along the coastline.

The main socioeconomic activities here include agriculture, tourism and fishing. The crops grown are cereals, legumes, cassava, sweet potatoes and horticultural crops among others. Dairy farming is also practiced. The major tourist attraction sites include the ruins and historic sites, mangrove forests, sandy beaches and Kaya forests.

"Life doesn't count for much unless you're willing to do your small part to leave our children - all of our children - a better world."

Barack Obama, 2008

How it was before KCDF

The extent of ECD service provision in Malindi, Kilifi, Garissa and Mwingi districts varied, mainly as a result of disparities in community wealth, number and capacity of service providers, resources available, geographical and population characteristics and the individual initiatives among the service providers.

Whereas the ECD programme in the four districts was found to be fairly developed with the necessary structures such as DICECE, ECD management committees, ECD centers and teachers/caregivers in place, areas within Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASALS) such as Garissa recorded low enrolment and gender disparities.

Overall, the quality of ECD services in the four districts was found wanting. Facilities were poor, teaching methods were inappropriate, there was inadequate play for learners and teaching and learning materials were mostly unsuitable. The situation was compounded by inappropriate feeding programmes, poor Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP)

services and low morale among ECD teachers and caregivers.

Economic challenges were thought to contribute to the poor quality of ECD services, especially in the absence of viable income generating projects (IGAs) and other sustainability options. Notably, though, a few NGOs and CBOs were supporting community ECD initiatives in some areas.

Other critical challenges were observed. For instance, awareness among the communities and ECD teachers on child rights, apart from the right to education, probably as a result of the national free primary education policy, was very low.

In addition, there was little support for children orphaned through HIV/AIDS given that most of the communities



Raising an all-round child

struggle with meager resources. Further, although there were many partners involved in ECD and child rights in the districts, there was little effort to form networks to strengthen, lobby and advocate for ECD.

Most worrying, however, was that care for children below the age of three years was left to individual families without any formal ECD structures while children with special needs were not properly integrated in ordinary classes in line with the current thinking on inclusive development and education.

As a result, the baseline survey made several critical recommendations that were built into KCDF's ECD programme in the four target districts.

Raising an all-round child

CHAPTER TWO

ECD: Towards ECD Best Practices

There is a garden in every childhood, an enchanted place where colors are brighter, the air softer, and the morning more fragrant than ever again... Elizabeth Lawrence

Case

Based on lessons learnt during five years of programme work, and after evaluation by external experts, best practices in ECD were recorded. These include the pursuit of holistic child development, use of appropriate and effective teaching and learning methods, community resource mobilisation and integration of sustainability strategies in ECD.

KCDF assessed developed appropriate intervention strategies for each district. In so doing, the area's administrative structures, type, role and interests of private individuals in community development were considered. The number of NGOs, religious and community organizations and the community's cultural beliefs and practices were also incorporated within the intervention strategy.

Area specific interventions were necessary because each district was found to be unique in the manner it operates and implements ECD. The contexts through which each of the KCDF partner groups operates in regard to poverty, diseases, drought, famine and other disasters were equally diverse, making uniformity difficult.

Holistic Child Development

Typically, parents take their children to educational centres to learn. There is a tendency to consider "learning" as confinement - a classroom where there is a

“Holistic child development initiatives are best interlinked so that each enriches and is strengthened by the other”

Best practice

Kanani Primary School in Mwingi was constructed with resources from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and other donors. Unfortunately, enrolment levels were very low despite the new permanent classrooms, leading to the school's shutdown at some point. An ECD centre set up by the community working with MEDA and government agencies in 2009 started with only 20 children. Tellingly, introduction of a school feeding programme saw enrolment rise to 120 in the ECD centre and 125 in classes one to three by the close of the year. The vastly improved enrolment challenged the government to post trained teachers to the school, further improving prospects for transition from nursery to lower primary and bringing hope and sunshine to the community.



group of learners and a teacher with a piece of chalk in hand. In most rural settings, this could be under a tree or a poorly roofed room; the teacher is likely to be an untrained individual, with time on their hands but not sufficient skill, pay or motivation.

In such scenarios, the child's early environmental experiences are hostile with caregivers are unable to inculcate crucial knowledge, skills and attitudes to children. Consequently, holistic child development – said to be anchored in the child's language and mental, physical, social, moral, spiritual, emotional and aesthetic development and perceptions - is impaired. As a result, and sadly so, an all-rounded and well developed adult does not emerge from the child.

Holistic child development was, therefore, considered integral to the KCDF-ECD programme. Two broad approaches were adopted. One was to integrate support programmes to enhance holistic child development. Second was provision of age appropriate services for children below the age of three years who are often cut off from formal ECD programmes.

Support Programmes For Holistic Child Development

How does one make a child 'complete'? By enhancing and stimulating each aspect of their growth and development – over and above teaching them in the classroom. KCDF and their partners in Malindi and Mwingi districts achieved this through a number of ways.

Learning on a Full Stomach

Every parent knows this. Young children, when they can, feed nearly all the time. This is the right thing because at his stage, their bodies and brains are growing exponentially - like beanstalks. Unfortunately, due to unfavourable socio-economic conditions among many Kenyan families and communities, a healthy meal for many a school-going child is a pipedream.

Sadly, without proper nutrition, their growth is impaired, reducing their ability to concentrate and learn effectively in school. KCDF and their partners, therefore, initiated school feeding programmes supported either by donors or the parents and guardians of children in ECD centres.

Donor supported programmes were predictably most prevalent in most ECD centres, involving, mainly, the supply of enriched cooking flour by Red Cross, Government of Kenya and KCDF. Parents, however, boosted donor efforts by



Case

Omega Child Shelter, in conjunction with other donors and the Government of Kenya, initiated distribution of free agricultural inputs to communities in the rain and food-stressed Mwingi district. Project workers strategically integrated holistic child development with training for this programme. Mama Kyalo, a beneficiary, says: "I am very happy! I expect a good harvest. I won't have to buy food this year as I normally do because my children will be well fed from my own farm."



providing fuel and preparing the food or collecting money to pay volunteer cooks. Aside from benefits accruing to the child, donor feeding programmes were seen to increase child enrolment and retention in many pre-schools.

Where school feeding programmes were supported by parents and guardians, successful community mobilisation saw money for the programme included in every child's school fees. Modalities for payment varied from centre to centre with parents opting to pay per term, monthly or daily. At Al-Fathi Muslim School, for instance, each parent paid Ksh 2 daily, money that was used to buy flour for preparing porridge for the young ones. Bellies full, they listened to their teacher and learned and played with renewed vigour.

But best of all, the community mobilisation leading to parent-supported school feeding programmes provided opportunity to discuss and advocate for the importance of proper diet in holistic child development within the community.

Teaching Communities to Fish

School feeding programmes are a must in some areas because hostile weather patterns hinder agricultural production, resulting to poverty and food scarcity. Unfortunately, donor supported school feeding programmes are not sustainable. sadly, gains made could be quickly reversed when projects end.

What emerged as a best practice was the integration of income generating activities into the school feeding programme. Such activities provide many additional benefits because they enhance environmental protection, increase food production at family and community levels and realize revenues for meeting basic needs such as medical bills and school fees for children.

Greening the Home Garden

Mwingi district is perennially dry. Some lucky farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture, which is unreliable, forcing them to solicit for food aid or foodstuffs purchased from outlying districts. This is not much of an option given the prohibitive costs involved.

As a best practice, Omega Child Shelter initiated greenhouse farming with support from KCDF. A greenhouse not only improves crop pro-



Best practice

Mwingi is renowned for its first class kiondos. The aptly named 'Musyi wa Syana' (The Home of Children) is one of the CBOs here. Members, mainly women, meet every Thursday to work on their wares and review market orders.

The group has now broadened its income generating activities through production of soap from the medicinal and locally available aloe vera plant. With members purchasing the medicated soap at special price of only Ksh 15 (US\$ 0.2 or less), chances of children suffering from ring worms and other fungal infections are minimised. Through their partnership with Omega Child Shelter, the production and marketing of their merchandise has greatly improved, boosting incomes and members' abilities to provide essential and basic needs of their children and children under their care.



duction, especially horticulture, but is also less labour intensive than conventional arable farming. Through drip irrigation and stringent water conservation methods, greenhouses reduce reliance on rainfall and other climatic elements, making it an ideal technology transfer to areas with similar climatic and weather challenges.

Through this initiative, Omega Child Shelter now produces some of its own foodstuffs, saving money and making steps towards self-sustainability with income realized from sale of surplus food from the green house and fruit/tree seedlings from its fruit/tree nursery project.

Like all well-thought out projects, Omega Child shelter's income generating initiatives have surplus benefits such as providing income and job opportunities for mothers who work in the greenhouse and tree nursery. In addition, the tree nursery has spurred interest in growth of fruit trees and the medicinal aloe vera within the community. These are income earners that also boost holistic child development.

Best practice

In Malindi, the Ramkani TBA group based at Ramada received training on pre and post natal care of expectant women and their new born babies. Later, they were introduced to holistic child development, challenging them to start Upendo, an ECD centre based at a local church. The centre which has a volunteer teacher now caters for 27 children who would otherwise have missed the opportunity for formal schooling at that age.

Building ECD on Community Enterprise

There are hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Kenya. Their main purpose is to uplift individual livelihoods through joint enterprise. That members are organised for the shared pursuit of a better future for their children makes them a fertile ground for propagating progressive ideas on early childhood development.

By partnering with CBOs in Mwingi district, Omega Child Center has promoted holistic child development initiatives to large numbers of women who constitute the majority in these groups and are the primary caregivers of children in traditional societies. These partnerships are a platform where ideas and issues surrounding holistic child development are debated and shared with great enthusiasm. Thus, by providing such CBOs with

technical and material support, members' fortunes and incomes improve with resulting benefits to the holistic development of their children.

Take Mutinda (not her real name) for instance. The 35 year old mother of six was fine, until she contracted a skin disease that spread all over her face and part of her neck and back. Fearing that her young children would be infected, too, she avoided holding them, unconsciously denying them what every child cherishes most: a mother's touch.

But through use of aloe vera medicated soap from Musyi wa Syana, a local CBO, her skin infection has been cured. She now feels secure, knowing that even her children won't contract similar infections because she bathes them with medicated soap. As a bonus, her interaction with Omega Child shelter through Musyi wa Syana has given her new insight and helped her improve care for her children thereby enhancing holistic child development



TOTs in Forum for Orphans, Malindi facilitating a HIV/Aids and Health Education campaigns in an ECD center.



Breeding Milk Goats to Nourish the Child

Goat milk is highly nutritious, especially for growing children. What's more, goats are hardy animals. They consume less water and food than cattle, making them a more rewarding enterprise for dry lands such as Mwingi. Through Farm Africa (a local non-governmental organization) and the European Union (EU), a goat breeding programme is now in place.

Households first receive training on the nutritional value of goat milk and the importance of proper nourishment for holistic child development. Then five households pool together to purchase one breeding goat whose progeny is distributed until each family has its own, thereby sharing and spreading the benefits of training.

Other than milk sales, these goats have a higher market value than traditional breeds, retailing between Ksh 10,000 (US\$ 130) to Ksh 15,000 (US\$ 200). These are substantial amounts that help meet educational needs for children at a later stage and meet medical bills and other sudden obligations that require large amounts of money.

Tapping Unique ECD Trainers

Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) are among the most respected members of the community. In rural areas where access to maternal health care is restricted for economic or social reasons, they assist expectant mothers before and during childbirth. The close interaction between TBAs and mothers builds immense trust, making them unique and trusted advocates for holistic child development.

For TBAs to go beyond their traditional role of attending to expectant women by integrating running of

“ **Growth monitoring is therefore an essential monitoring tool for assessing progress in early childhood development. In particular, it helps to check on the nutritional status of the child by detecting cases of stunting and malnutrition through monthly height and weight measurements of each child.** ”

ECD centres is both unique and very innovative. As a best practice, it's a model that can be replicated with ease to enhance holistic child development in areas where public schools are scarce.

Is the Child Growing Right?

In as much as all these initiatives are novel, it must not be forgotten that they aim, at the very core, to ensure that child development is proceeding on course. Growth monitoring is therefore an essential monitoring tool for assessing progress in early childhood development. In particular, it helps to check on the nutritional status of the child by detecting cases of stunting and malnutrition through monthly height and weight measurements of each child.

Unfortunately, this critical aspect of gauging child development is not fully entrenched within ECD centres for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of weighing scales and inappropriate or inconsistent use where equipment is in place. Further training and investment in this area is important.

Best practice

MEDA also realised the importance of investing in the youth, especially young girls, regarding services and care for children below three years of age. During sessions on reproductive health, the girls were taught how to improve their health and that of their children when they became mothers in future. They were also sensitized about the dangers associated with early pregnancies to both mother and child.

CHAPTER THREE

Caring for Children below three years of age

If children aged below three could articulate their needs, what would they demand of their parents and guardians? The National Policy Framework on ECD in Kenya says it all begins with quality antenatal care, delivery and post natal care. It also lists ingredients that are critical for holistic child development for children aged below three years of age as:

- An adult with whom to form an attachment
- An adult who can understand and respond to their signals
- Protection from physical danger
- Adequate nutrition and health care, including appropriate immunizations
- Things to look at, touch, hear and smell
- Opportunities to explore their world
- Appropriate language stimulation
- Support in acquiring new motor, language and thinking skills
- Opportunities to develop some independence and learn to take care of themselves
- Help in learning how to control their own behaviour and
- Daily opportunities to play with a variety of subjects



Best practice


Partnering with the Safaricom Foundation in Mwingi, Omega Child Shelter constructed a clinic to create basic healthcare for children, especially those under three years of age from underprivileged households. This facility, however, still faces teething problems and requires more support. A similar initiative has been started at Dabaso Primary school at Gede in Malindi with support from Clayton Construction Company.



Raising Awareness

A typical well developing child achieves key milestones by the age of three. This is a period associated with rapid development and a plastic and flexible brain among children. If not stimulated to develop at this critical stage, a child becomes unable to realise their full potential. KCDF-ECD partners, therefore, found it prudent to address services for children below the age of three years with focus on awareness creation, provision of health services, construction of children friendly centers and promotion of baby care classes in Malindi and Mwingi districts.

In general, care for children below three years of age has not been strengthened within Early Childhood Development. Creating public awareness is therefore the starting point in the provision of appropriate services. Public meetings or barazas were particularly effective especially when coupled with training of local community leaders and opinion shapers.



"Taking care of young and mature mothers is our responsibility. We want to have healthy children in our community,"

Traditional Birth Attendant, Ramkani.

Best practice

At Nidhamia in Malindi, a day care centre was established through the programme. This center provides items for indoor and outdoor play and enough space for children to play under the guidance of teachers. It also has weighing machines and other equipment for monitoring child growth. Such day care centres foster holistic child development and give a leg up to youngsters when they enter formal pre-school, aged four. This is because children play with other children of similar age, which develops their social skills.

Best practice

As a best practice, ASPECT Kenya, a CBO, established a Child Friendly Space with support from Save The Children Federation and UNICEF, among others. Here, children learn by drawing, reading and writing numbers. The center also provides assorted toys and space for indoor and outdoor playing activities, allowing the little ones to hop and skip confidently into the future.

Best practice

The TBAs were trained to emphasise the importance of mothers attending pre and post natal clinics for advice on pregnancy development, appropriate diet, immunization and prevention and treatment of communicable diseases. They were also taught Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV Virus. The Ramkani TBA association also established a modest clinic with a delivery and recuperating room, another milestone for these spirited grass-roots caregivers whose work will reap multiple dividends for their community in future.

Using Community Trainers of Trainers

In Malindi, MEDA, a KCDF partner, also involved community trainers of trainers and ECD teachers as resource persons. This enhanced the link between the community and ECD centers and tremendously improved the transition of children from home to the centers.



Providing Better Health Care

Where health facilities are far apart and generally inaccessible to a large proportion of the population, it is children aged below three years who are most vulnerable. Provision of basic health services is therefore integral to holistic childhood development.

Improving Traditional Birth Attendant Services

Close to 60% of all expectant women in Malindi district give birth at home with the support of Traditional Birth Attendants. TBAs therefore have considerable knowledge, experience and skills that can be tapped to improve care of children



below three years. To ensure proper care for both the children and mothers during birth, Mission for Community Initiative and Development (MICODE) identified, brought together and trained - with support of government health officials and KCDF - 28 TBAs in Ramada. Working under the name Ramkani, the TBAs now understand referral procedures to formal health institutions and are provide technical support during delivery in addition to prenatal and antenatal services in groups or from door to door.

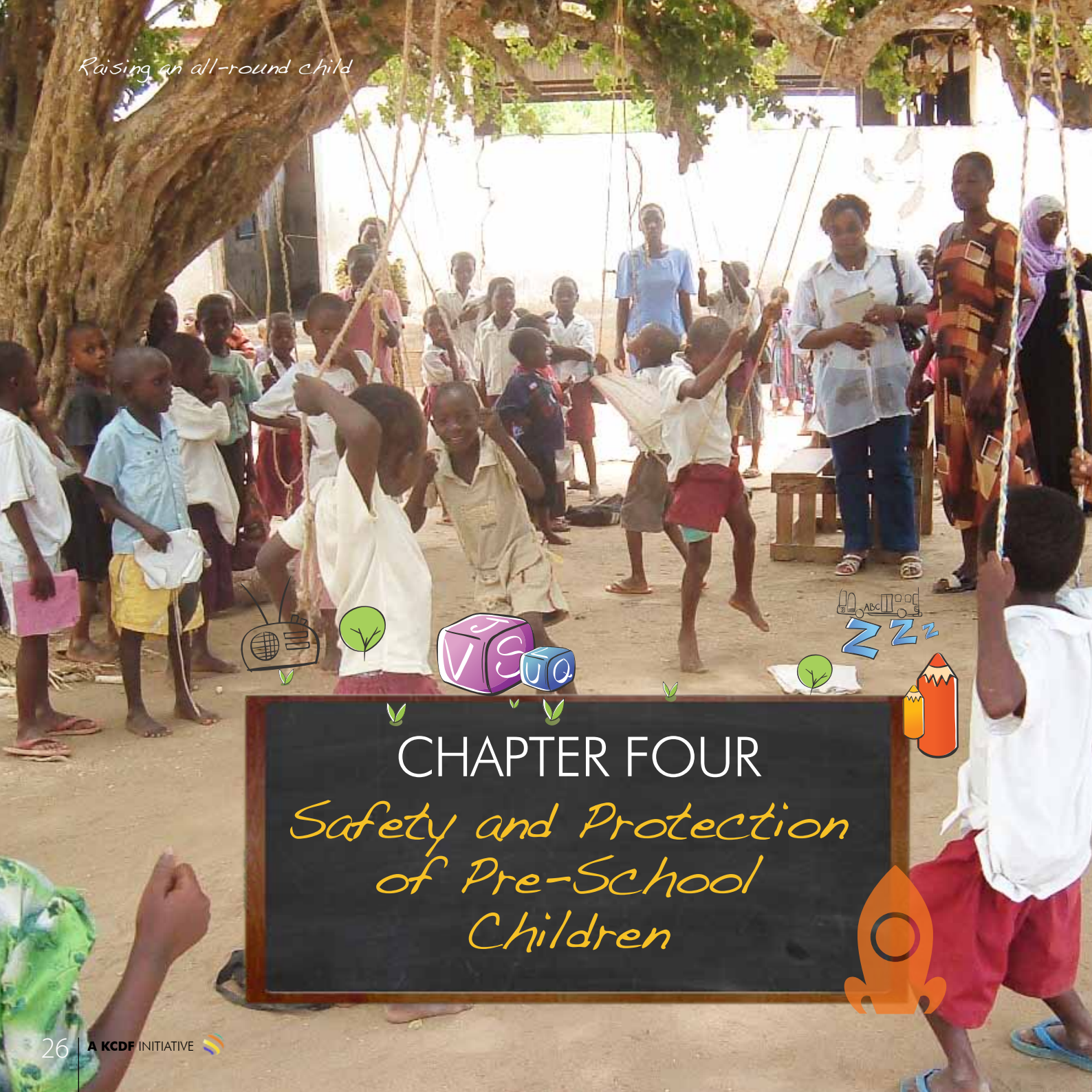
Providing Day Care Centers

Reality is that mothers, the principle caregivers for children below the age of three years in most traditional societies, also deal with many other household chores leaving little or no time to dedicate to the young ones. This necessitates provision of day care centres to ensure that children receive care as their mothers engage in other economic and social activities.

Creating Child Friendly Space

While taken for granted, play – and the space to do it – is integral to a child’s development, especially when it allows children from different households to interact socially. In Dabaab, a marginalized and thinly populated area hosting a refugee camp and whose residents are nomadic, children may not have access to peers with whom they can play.





CHAPTER FOUR
*Safety and Protection
of Pre-School
Children*





“To lose a child ... was something that could end one’s world. One could never get back to how it was before. The stars went out. The moon disappeared. The birds became silent.”

Alexander McCall Smith

Children are most vulnerable to many dangers in their formative years, making safety and protection a key aspect of holistic child development. Recognizing this, KCDF and its ECD partner organisations not only emphasized this within their programmes but also set up the following initiatives aimed at protecting and keeping the young ones at ECD centers safe.

Caring for the Orphaned and Vulnerable

While the number of orphaned and vulnerable children is on the rise – mainly as a result of HIV/AIDS – care and support systems remain weak because of dwindling social networks in families and communities. Tragedy is that some children are orphaned quite young, making them miserable and vulnerable to abuse. From lack of adequate food, psychological support and care and access to school, their world crumbles at a critical stage of their development leaving them with – in the absence of proper intervention - lifelong scars.

KCDF and its ECD partners, therefore, initiated programmes to cushion and give respite to orphaned and vulnerable children. This involved providing basic needs, especially food supplies to

Case

Mama Teresia Nduku (not her real name), a 60 year-old Mwingi grandmother, had to take care of five grandchildren when her son and daughter died in quick succession. Overwhelmed by the death of her own children, not to mention the challenge of raising heartbroken orphans with multiple needs, she sought and received training from Omega Child Center.

Today, the children attend a local ECD centre where they benefit from the school feeding programme. The granny also receives food rations, enabling her to provide for and support her grandchildren.



"If we inform our children that they have rights, they will grow 'horns' and disrespect us. Children should obey their parents. We have the right to treat them as we wish because we brought them to this world," Malindi resident during a 'Rights of the Child' training session.



their guardians, school fees, school uniforms and basic medical care. In addition, their guardians received training on the psychosocial needs of their charges to enable them to provide better parental care.

Creating Networks for Child Rights

Child abuse revolves around neglect, child labour, defilement, forced marriage, sodomy, rape and the physical beating or infliction of pain among others. Children undergo abuse in physical or psychological ways. There are also cases where parents deny their children an education or enroll them late. These issues relate to child rights and form essential part of all KCDF-ECD programme work.

“ She wanted an abortion but MEDA officers counseled her and 'Baby Bahati' was born. ”

In Malindi, for instance, village elders were instrumental in creating awareness, reporting cases of neglect and abuse and supporting police and community trainers.

In Garissa, KCDF, working with Women Concern, Kenya, helped form and galvanise an ECD/Child Rights Network into action. This network has been at the forefront of advocacy campaigns, capacity building and training. It has also taken the lead in documentation and sharing of rights information and the formation of divisional rights committees, helped underline Girl-Child education and increased school enrolment and participation of men in ECD programmes.

As a result, there has been an improvement in the reporting of child rights violations to relevant authorities. More remarkable is that child abuse incidents in the district have reduced. Similar interventions were equally successful in Mwingi and Malindi, taking child rights messages to village level, minimizing duplication of activities and ensuring more effective use of resources.





CHAPTER FIVE

Effective Teaching and Learning Methods

Does an elephant brush its teeth? This is the question a three year old posed to her teacher, avidly demonstrating the wild imagination and curiosity of the average toddler. Yet for all their curiosity, a child's attention span is exasperatingly short, and they could be off and skipping before you say, 'elephant.'

How then do teachers sustain the learning process? According to the Kenya ECD Policy Guideline, learning ought to be child centered, based on activity, participation, manipulation of materials and lots of play. Learning should also be holistic, emphasizing early stimulation and adapted for children with special needs.

Thus, ineffective teaching and learning methods could erode all investments towards holistic child development, the reason why KCDF and its partners recognized this as core to the success of the ECD programme.

When It's Fun They Learn

Play is the first and most important mode of instruction for young learners. When properly thought out and directed, play helps children to develop self confidence and learn to collaborate with others to solve problems. The KCDF-ECD programme documented various teaching and learning methodologies that could be considered good practice.

- **Brainstorming**

Conducted for either small or large groups, brainstorming sessions encourage children to focus and contribute to the free flow of ideas. The teacher initiates the session by posing a question or a problem or



You are worried about seeing him spend his early years in doing nothing. What! Is it nothing to be happy? Is it nothing to skip, play, and run around all day long? Never in his life will he be so busy again!

JEAN-JACQUES
ROUSSEAU, 1762

by introducing a topic. He or she accepts all contributions without judgment or criticism, only motivating the children to open up and participate.

By voicing ideas and listening to what others say, children get new ideas, learn listening skills, accommodate new information and increase their level of awareness. They also learn that their knowledge and language abilities are valued and are encouraged to take risks in sharing their ideas and opinions.

This approach was widely used and found appropriate for teaching nearly all subject activity areas in ECD centres within the four target districts.

• Theme-based Teaching

One of the easiest ways to make children learn is by seeing patterns and connects. This helps them to manage and organize information in their tender minds. This mode of learning is achieved when the teacher helps them to categorise ideas or objects into groups that describe common features.

In many ECD centers within the KCDF-ECD programme, for instance, learning and teaching materials were organized into 'environmental corner', 'kitchen area' and 'shop' among other categories, helping children to learn with an identified category or theme in mind. Teachers paid attention to the children's ability to understand relationships among items, the ability to categorise items independently using more than one theme and encouraged them to participate in the activities.

• Choral Speaking

In choral speaking, children recite verses from memory. This deepens their understanding of literature and teaches them to experiment with voice, movement and gestures. This way, they develop self confidence and also hone public speaking and presentation skills

that will be useful to them as adults. Choral speaking is most effective when learners are involved in determining voice variations, gestures, movement and when the poem in question relates to a child's experiences with useful and practical learning messages.

This method of teaching and learning was employed in nearly all the ECD centres within the four target districts.

• Conferences

Equally applied in most ECD centres were conferences – an approach where the teacher and children discuss a drawing, an experience or a project together. This gives them an opportunity to plan future learning experiences and discuss their successes and difficulties. Starting with simple ideas and activities, they progress to more challenging activities. Do you see a future leader, a teacher, a manager in the making?

However, the sessions observed in select schools showed that this mode of teaching needs to be better structured and planned. Children's comments, concerns and understanding of specific learning activities should also be recorded for monitoring purposes. Nonetheless, it was noted that sessions involving painting, writing or building blocks helped improve the learning environment and relationships between children and their teachers.

• Cooperative Learning

How do you improve the social development of the child? One way is through cooperative learning, an approach that involves children

working together to complete a given task or project. The tasks are structured in such a manner that each child must contribute to make the task complete. In this manner, interdependence and cooperation are promoted as opposed to competition; developing the concept of a community of learners.

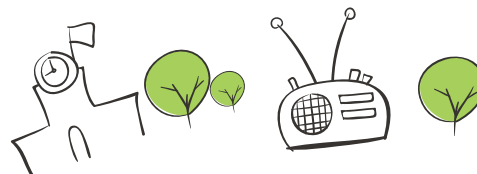
These teaching and learning methods can be reinforced using other approaches, especially through play, singing, question and answer sessions and activity based learning. Note that there is little or no cost involved in using these methods making them suited for practically any ECD center in Kenya.

Development and Use of Learning Aids

Teaching and learning methods, however sound, are not effective without use of appropriate learning materials or aids. But because most rural ECD centres serve communities with limited financial resources, it is strategic to encourage development and use of local learning materials. This was employed by KCDF and its ECD programme partners in some areas with spectacular success. The approach was as follows:

- **Involving teachers and parents to develop learning aids**

In many centres, teachers and parents combined efforts in this exercise with those who had undergone training in turn training others within the community. By dividing ECD centres into clusters along Zones, Divisions and District, selection of parents and teachers for training ensured equitable representation. Training helped participants to identify locally



available materials, make play/learning materials child-centered and appreciate the importance of aids to a child's learning process.

At Khairat Primary School, parents and teachers set rules such as when to meet and what materials to bring. They agreed on 'fines' for those who broke rules. On set days, parents brought sisal sacks, maize cobs, sticks, cartons and blocks of wood, old calendars, magazines, newspapers, bottles and tins or cans. They also carried along strings, sewing thread, needles, ropes, sisal fibres and paints among others. They were then taken through the process of learning resource development by a trained teacher or an 'expert' from MEDA. As a result, classrooms at the school are now full of all sorts of exciting and colourful teaching and learning resources.

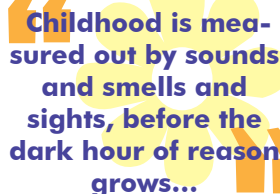
• Teachers Taking the Initiative

At Kakokeni Primary School in Malindi, teachers trained by MEDA took it upon themselves to make learning materials for their ECD centers. They collected raw materials from colleagues, friends and parents. Then they made unique and colourful learning materials with a multiplicity of uses which they displayed within easy reach of the children, exciting them to no end. Supportive parents and an enabling environment provided by the school administration boosted this process a great deal.



• A Model ECDE Resource Centre

What would be the best way to demonstrate that learning materials can be sourced and developed locally other than to establish a resource centre using local materials? That is precisely what one community did when they set up Mahenzo Malezi Resource Centre – a Giriama people's traditional hut using local materials. What's more, they developed ECD materials using local material with guidance of trained teachers and parents. These were displayed according to clusters or themes such as language, mathematics, social studies, music, art and craft, religion and life skills. A caretaker ensures the materials are cleaned and well arranged and the resource centre can be used by children or for training other teachers and parents.



“Childhood is measured out by sounds and smells and sights, before the dark hour of reason grows...”

John Betjeman

• Material Exhibition Days

To cup it all, MEDA, together with ECD centres in Malindi, have consistently organised Material Exhibition Days at Cluster (ECD centres in close vicinity) and Zonal levels. Parents, teachers, members of the community and local leaders participate, providing an avenue for public awareness on early childhood development, sharing of ideas and interaction of parents and teachers. Prizes are awarded for outstanding exhibitions. This, and the participation of local leaders, has catapulted ECDE, learning materials development and the Material Exhibition Day into high profile community activities.



CHAPTER SIX

Mobilising Community Resources for Sustainability

Donor dependency negates socio-economic development. Well meaning as it may be, aid stagnates community development and erodes, at the outset, any chances of projects being sustainable in the long run. Community development agencies must therefore strive to empower grassroots communities through training in resource mobilisation for sustainability. Sustainability is therefore a critical aspect of KCDF Grant making process to ensure that all supported projects continue beyond the KCDF support.

The KCDF-ECD programme recorded various success stories relating to what communities can achieve when they are supported and their capac-

ity enhanced through training. The ECD Learning Material Exhibition Day in Malindi easily comes to mind. Equally impressive were the establishment of village, location, divisional and district child rights committees and the integration of income generating activities with ECD in Garissa and Mwingi districts.

Community Mobilisation

What lessons emerged as best practice? Call a baraza. Move from door to door. Run a seminar. Network. Involve government officials, community leaders and local opinion shapers. Entertain and educate gatherings. Identify and



TOTs understand what ails their people and come up with solutions that are acceptable because they hail from the community



If men and youth become fully involved in ECD activities, challenges such as land to set up ECD centres and salaries for teachers would be easier to resolve



How pleasant it is for a father to sit at his child's board. It is like an aged man reclining under the shadow of an oak which he has planted.
Walter Scott

train trainers of trainers. And pass key messages - about holistic child development, child rights, learning resource development and every important aspect of early childhood development and education.

For community development to succeed, one must invest in people and train them to create and harness social networks needed to implement and sustain programmes. This investment must start at the grassroots level – with the parents of children in ECD centers – then rope in the wider community. That's how a sense of community ownership, the very basis of sustainability, is nurtured.

Bringing community trainers a board

Community development programmes are successful when they gain momentum day by day right from the grassroots, especially when community members take the lead. To attain programme objectives, KCDF and its partners in four districts facilitated Trainer of Trainer courses (TOTs) on a wide variety of ECD issues, among them children's rights, community resource mobilisation and learning materials development.

The TOTs played a tremendous role in furthering ECD objectives; including creating awareness on children's rights, importance of learning materials and involvement of youth and men in ECD work. They were also at hand, intervening when children suffered abuse and facilitating remedial legal action.

Volunteers greatly boosted community mobilisation efforts, too. Apart from the fact that volunteers are not paid making their service cost effective, they approach tasks with a great deal of commitment, being driven by passion and an inner desire to make a difference. However, to be more effective, TOTs require material, financial and logistical support, especially in expansive geographical regions like Daadab and Magarini in Garissa and Malindi districts respectively.

Involving Men and Youth in ECD Programmes

In traditional African societies, men were – and in some places still are - the custodians of resources. Youth, on the other hand, are viewed as a critical resource because they are prospective parents with zest and energy for the future. Yet these two groups are often at the periphery of early childhood development, a role left to female caregivers with too much on their hands.

In an effort to harness this critical mass of society, KCDF partners motivated men and the youth to participate in ECD activities - involving them in committees, meetings, income generation activities, learning materials development and parents'



days. This effort has seen a remarkable increase in the involvement of men in ECD activities and spurred the youth to volunteer and participate. It's however not surprising that more young women opted to work as ECD teachers while their male counterparts assumed more 'patriarchal' roles, such as sitting on committees and participating in income generating activities.

More still needs to be done, however, because in some places, men still remain conspicuously absent from ECD activities, denying the community a vital pool of ideas and resources. It is, therefore, important to sensitize the wider community that men and youth have a significant role to play in community development programmes. The traditional perception of society, based on the notion of patriarchy, that ECD is a 'domestic role' to be carried out by women needs to be changed.

Beyond Donor Support

A healthy community development programme requires a steady flow of human, material and financial resources to implement, monitor, evaluate and sustain it. To implement quality, viable and sustainable programmes, resource mobilisation became a priority activity, given the high levels of poverty in many communities and the fact that the ECD sub-sector receives minimal grant support from the Kenya Government.

This was accomplished by creating endowment funds in partnership between KCDF and communities, integrating micro-enterprises with ECD, establishing income generating activities, and the use of local resources, especially for teaching and learning materials. In addition, there was use of organized fundraisers, private donations and use of devolved funds such as the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF).

Partner organizations also supported the very needy ECD centres with material donations such as toys, chairs and tables while in many instances, parents and committee members contributed labour.



Income Generating Activities

Integration of income generating activities and ECD was particularly successful, especially in Mwingi and Garissa with partner organizations initiating activities such as small scale agriculture, bee keeping and tree nurseries, among others. Other than feeding the children, these activities also generated revenue to buy essential goods and materials.

Similarly, use of local materials in Malindi was thought to be a most cost effective means of crafting learning materials, giving poor children a learning experience equivalent to that in well funded ECD centres.

Endowment Funds

While use of endowment funds is still in its infancy among the KCDF partner organisations, it is one of the most viable options for sustaining programmes of this nature if they are based on a sound management system. Established and operated by partner organisations, it can be enriched through training CBOS in grant proposal writing, contributions from the community and other well wishers, alms, private donations and fund raising activities.

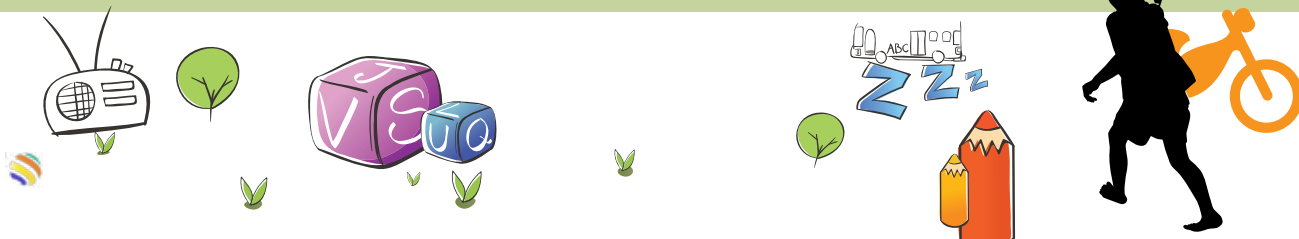
This is one area which corporate institutions are encouraged to explore as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes since contributions from members of the community, who are often poor, are too meager to sustain the kitty.



Devolved Funds

Devolved funds such as LATF and CDF are equally a viable pool of resources, especially because they are managed at grassroots level. With increased sensitization on importance of early childhood development, they can be employed to fund infrastructure development. They can also provide relief for hard-pressed households by providing bursaries and helping to deal with the impact of HIV/AIDS.

A bit more thought should, however, be given to project selection and planning, corruption and mismanagement of funds and the overall quality of work done. This can be achieved with more community participation in project prioritization and implementation as this promotes patriotism and engenders transparency and accountability, vital for programme sustainability.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Best Practice in Management of ECD Centres



LOCAL MATERIALS

More admirable is that the centre uses local materials for construction and making teaching and learning materials

SHARING INFO

Involving the District Coordinator for Early Childhood Education and sharing information with other partner organisations and government line ministries helped avoid duplication and cut costs

The KCDF-ECD programme was implemented through partner organisations running ECD centres within their localities or districts. Over time, several approaches emerged that were novel and innovative with profound impact on the success of ECD. These include establishment of 'model' ECD centers, strategies for quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation.

Model ECD Centres

In Garissa, Women Kind Kenya raised donations from well wishers and other organisations and established a model ECD centre. This centre offers a safe haven for a number of children, most of them orphans, and provides boarding and playing facilities. Most enchanting is that the centre has a fruit tree planted and managed by the children that teaches them a sense of responsibility while young.



In Mahenzo, Malindi district, the community set up a similar facility – Mahenzo Malezi Centre – with technical advice from Forum for Orphans (FOM) and financial support from KCDF and other organisations. Other than contributions from parents, the centre runs several income generating projects such as a tree nursery, a cassava seed bank and bee keeping. These are run by volunteers, cutting costs considerably. It also hosts an ECD centre with numerous teaching and learning materials.

From 48 children at inception in 2007, enrolment at the centre had risen to 80 in 2009 in each of its three Kindergarten classes. Unfortunately, finding market for their produce such as tree seedlings and honey remains a challenge, something that ECD centers intending similar initiatives should take into consideration.

Quality Assurance of ECD Programmes

ECD programmes are a major investment and are critical because they aim to improve the growth and development of children. Unfortunately, all the time and resources invested can go to seed and expected outcomes squandered if quality is not assured. KCDF-ECD partners, especially MEDA in Malindi, employed several mechanisms to ensure programme objectives were on course.

- **Regular Visits**

KCDF helped each partner organization to purchase at least one motorbike each to facilitate movement of their staff to ECD centres within their areas of operation. Such visits

were augmented by similar audits by relevant government officials. Keen observations regarding enrolment by gender, enrolment of children with special needs, nature and usage of school facilities, teaching and learning materials, record keeping, community involvement and performance of teachers and school committees. This was meant to ensure that the centres were implementing activities in line with set standards.

- **Assessing ECD Teacher Skills**

To cut down on costs given the expansive areas involved, KDCF and its partner organisations trained TOTs to supervise and provide skilled support for ECD teachers within their locality. On their quality assurance visits, the trainers examined schemes of work, lessons plans, health and health records, among others. They also observed availability, neatness and use of documents.

- **Refresher Training for Teachers**

Refresher courses were deemed vital in keeping ECD teachers up to date with methodologies of teaching and the development and use of teaching and learning materials among other skills.

- **Field Visits by KCDF Officers**

Regular field visits by KCDF staff ensured that grants were used for the stipulated purpose and in line with laid down guidelines. Other than bolstering and getting first-hand information on actual progress, these visits helped provide vital information for future programmes and also acted as a follow-up to issues agreed upon during annual meetings with programme partners.





This centre offers a safe haven for a number of children, most of them orphans, and provides boarding and playing facilities.

- **Use of Government Experts**

The government has a pool of officers with professional skills on various aspects of ECD. By working closely and collaborating with them, the programme partners ensured that all activities were planned and implemented in line with government policies, guidelines and development plans. This is a sure way of enhancing sustainability and ownership of the initiatives by the government which has the responsibility of providing essential services.

- **ECD Teachers' Welfare**

Through MEDA, the KCDF ECD partner organisation in Malindi, Zonal ECD Teachers Associations to cater for Christian ECD teachers were formed. Muslim teachers in turn formed Integration ECD Associations. These two associations work closely together. They have organized a savings and credit program which is now linked to the Kilifi Teachers Savings and Credit Society, enabling them to access credit to finance further education and personal development programmes. In addition, MEDA also initiated a skills-enhancement programme for ECD teachers without 'O' Level qualifications to continue with their studies as private candidates.

These initiatives have also been instrumental in improving terms of service for ECD teacher. From a monthly low of Ksh 500 (US\$ 6.7) and a high of Ksh 2,000 (US\$ 26.7) their salaries rose to Ksh 3000 (US\$ 40) and a high of Ksh 8,000 (US\$ 106.7) in three years. The associations also organise excursions for its members to relax and bond. Members also meet regularly to explore ways of improving their skills using initiatives like Teaching and Learning Materials Exhibition Days.

Ultimately, such initiatives motivate teachers and boost their welfare and morale and have profound impact on ECD.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies**

Although KCDF-ECD partners initiated mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, MEDA stood out as a unique practice because it was inclusive of all the players involved in ECD in Malindi district. This framework involved key MEDA personnel ranging from its Chief Executive Officer to line government ministries, the District ECD Teacher Association and community members.

The strategy, shown below, was instrumental in helping to track the progress and gains, or lack thereof, by the ECD programme in the district.

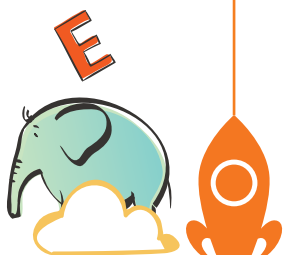
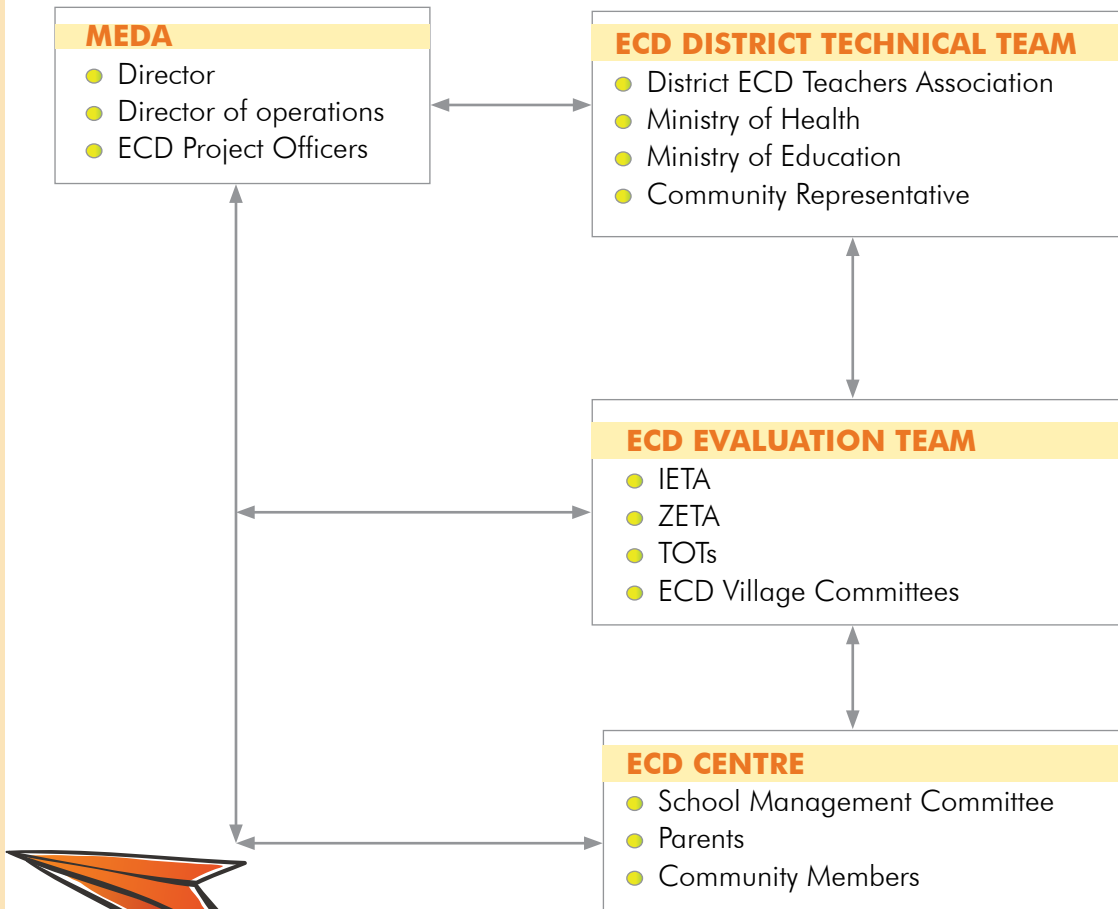


Figure 1: Cascading Monitoring and Evaluation Tool for MEDA in Malindi





Integrating ECD with Islamic Religious system is an innovative and cost effective approach because it kills two birds with one stone and reduces the age at which children join primary school programmes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Twining Madarasa and ECD: A Case Study

Islamic communities, almost without fail, provide religious education for children at a tender age through Islamic schools known as Madarasa. Unfortunately, this may occur at the expense of formal ECD programmes.

Following a visit to Madarasa Resource Center in Mombasa and other organizations implementing integration of ECD and Madarasa, MEDA, a KCDF partner organization, realized that, children who spent their early years in Madarasa tended to join ECD and primary schools late, contributing to high school dropout rates. When KCDF support commenced, inten-



sive community sensitization campaigns on the importance of integrating ECD programmes and Madarasa were done. At first, this idea faced strong resistance from devout Muslim communities who held that ECD Programme was a secular Programme that would interfere with the positive development of children's faith and water down the Islamic community values.

MEDA however engaged and positively lobbied the Islamic religious leaders through meetings and other awareness campaigns. This enhanced their understanding of the issues and some started supporting the idea. Exchange learning visits were conducted for leaders to learn and share experiences with organizations that were already implementing similar projects. In no time, leaders appreciated that marrying ECD and the Madarasa enhances quality holistic development as the child gets exposed to both secular and spiritual education.

In Malindi and Garissa districts where majority of citizens are Muslims, Islamic religious teachers were trained on the procedures and practice of formal education systems such as schemes of work and lesson planning. Modes of integration varied. In Malindi, ECD curriculum was introduced into existing Madarasas, using same infrastructure for both secular and religious teachings. Alternatively, Islamic religious education became part of existing formal ECD centers in integrated schools where ECD and Islamic education are taught as one.

Garissa, on the other hand, had parallel system of sorts referred to as Dugsi. Here, children would report to a Dugsi at 6.30 a.m. and receive instruction from a Sheikh (Islamic teacher) in reciting the Quran (Islamic Holy Book), Hadith and Sunna (Prophet Moham-



med's sacred sayings and deeds respectively). Thereafter, they would be released to attend formal ECD centers at 7.00 a.m. Alternatively, the children would spend half the day at ECD centers and the afternoon at Dugsis receiving Islamic religious education.

Integrated centers proved very popular among the grassroots communities. It must, however, be observed that despite their popularity and success in enhancing enrolment and the transition of children from home to ECD centers, there are gaps and challenges to integration that must be dealt with. These include lack of teachers versed in both systems, salaries for ECD teachers, the challenge of dealing with children of other religious faiths, limited teaching and learning material, especially in Dugsis, and limited skills in teaching and learning resource development.



ECD teachers in class during a 3 days refresher course at Tahdhib Hall.

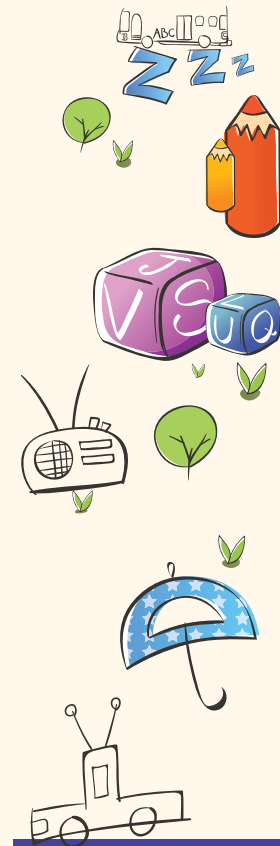


CHAPTER NINE

Recommendations For Improved Practice

The following recommendations may help improve the provision of ECD services in the model areas.

1. There is need to reduce the levels of donor dependency on the school feeding program by progressively increasing the involvement of the parents and the community members in the provision of the main inputs. This could be done by sensitising the parents and community members and only reserving the donor support in periods of food stress.
2. More training on the use of the growth and monitoring equipment is required in many of the centres that already have them. The training should include the appropriate ways of taking measurements and how to record, interpret and use the information. Many centres however lack these equipment and appropriate investments need to be made.
3. There is need to improve/establish Day Care Centres in many areas. Most require infrastructure overhauls, especially in the rural areas where some have mud floors and walls.
4. There should be increased use of the children's officer and the provincial administration because they have the necessary infrastructure for reporting and dealing with cases of child abuse.
5. Refresher training for trained ECD teachers and immersion training for untrained teachers is required to improve teaching and delivery of the concepts to ECD children.
6. Proper provision for storage materials is needed in many of the centres with locally developed teaching and learning materials.
7. There is need to improve the exchange programmes between KCDF-ECD partner organisations to enhance learning and sharing of information between these partners.
8. There is need to design an appropriate marketing strategy for income generating activities and improve packaging and branding of products. This can be done through collaboration with other organisations dealing with similar products for community empowerment.
9. Policy makers, community opinion leaders, politicians and individuals in the private sector should be encouraged to participate and take keener interest in ECD programmes. This is critical for community and resource mobilisation.
10. ECD model centres can, and should, be implemented in all the other districts to enhance the delivery of service for the ECD programmes.



"If our system doesn't have a place where a child fits, there's something wrong with the system, not the children..."

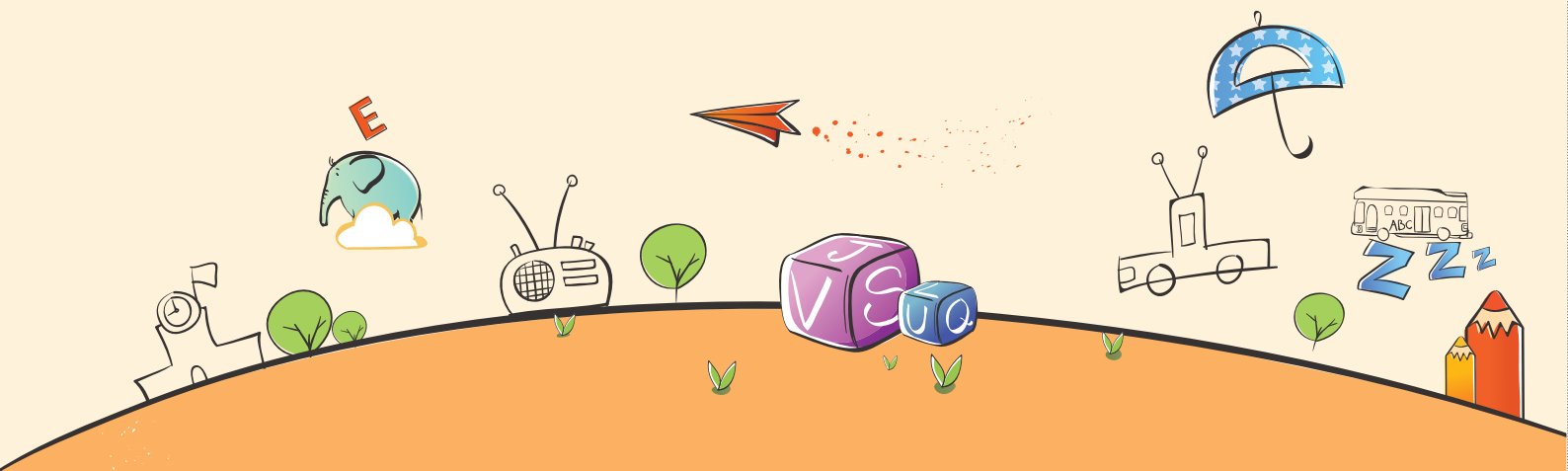
William G. Defoore

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusion

The KCDF- ECD project has made significant achievements with partners developing and executing numerous observable and admirable best practices along several key thematic areas. Despite the numerous challenges highlighted, the programme was cost effective and had essential inbuilt mechanisms for sustainability, quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation. These achievements notwithstanding, certain areas require strengthening while others need greater focus and attention, particularly the involvement of men in ECD activities.

Overall, though, the programme has demonstrated that early childhood development and education can be made part and parcel of community development work; that enthusiasm, goodwill and resources for ECD exist at grassroots level and that these can be harnessed through capacity building and awareness creation. Most significant is that many of the models of best practice outlined here can be replicated in other parts of Kenya once issues regarding transferability are sufficiently thought out.





Children participating in arranging benches during ECD 0-3 years parents meeting at SDA P. School Watamu Zone.



A 0-3 year's parent sharing her experiences during ECD 0-3 years parents meeting at SDA P. School in watamu.



KCDF ECD Partners during ECD Advocacy Workshop- Malindi.



Participant receiving her certificate at the end of the ECD TOT training workshop- Malindi.

Profile of **KCDF Partnering Organisations**

1 Malindi Education and Development Association (MEDA)

MEDA was registered by Muslim youth in Malindi district as a CBO in 1997 to increase school enrolment rates and improve the quality of education through awareness campaigns. The organization serves disadvantaged communities in Malindi Urban, some parts of Malindi rural and Magarini divisions in Malindi district. Currently, it has 18,000 children beneficiaries through ECD.

2 Omega Child Shelter

Omega Child Shelter was formed and registered as a CBO in 2000. The organisation addresses the needs of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and poor families in Mwingi district.

In addition to children served through ECD Programme, Omega reaches out to more than 11,000 children through integrated services for holistic child development and community wellbeing. The organization also provides medical and psychosocial support through community care giver groups to well over 600 Orphaned and Vulnerable Children.

3 Forum for Orphans, Malindi

The organization was registered in year 2003 as a network of CBOs addressing the needs of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and families in Malindi district.

Forum reaches out to more than 9,000 children with direct and indirect ECD and other related services. Their main activities include HIV/aids awareness and support for orphans and vulnerable children, Rights of the child awareness and advocacy for the protection of orphans and widows, health education and Early Childhood Development activities support.

4 Women Concern Kenya (WCK)

Women Concern Kenya is a Garissa district based CBO. It was formed in 1998 by a group of women professionals (teachers, health workers etc) from Garissa in response to destruction and community suffering caused by the El-Niño rains.

5 Appropriate Sustainable Pastoralist Empowerment for Community Transformation (Aspect) Project

Women Concern's partnership with KCDF commenced in early 2005. WCK reaches out to more than 6,000 children directly and indirectly through ECD services.

The organization was registered as a CBO in 1998 and operates in Daadab, Jarajila and Liboi divisions in Garissa district, addressing the development needs of the non refugee community in Dadada and Jarajile divisions of Garissa district. Through the ECD Programme, ASPECT serves more that 8,000 children aged 0-8 years.

6 Mission for Community Initiative and Development (Micode)-Malindi

MICODE is Malindi based CBO that has been in partnership with KCDF since July 2006. The organisation's main activities are ECD Programmes for children aged 0-8 years, HIV/aids prevention, control and care, economic empowerment for families and community and lobbying and advocacy on key issues affecting the community. MICODE serves more than 6,000 children through ECD services.

7 Woman Kind Kenya (WOKIKE)

Womankind Kenya is an indigenous organization founded in 1989 in Garissa and Ijara districts. It's key areas of focus are community sensitization and advocacy on the rights of the children, girl child and women,

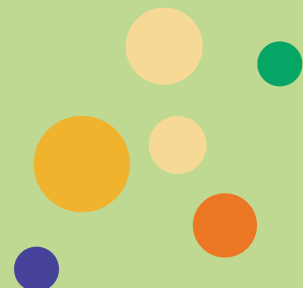
8 Ngolanya Community Aid Programme (NGOCAP)

ECD Primary and secondary school education support, food security support, rescue centres for girls in dangers of being subjected to retrogressive social cultural practices e.g. FGM, early forced marriages, IGAS for the organization and community and elimination of gender based violence.

Ngolanya Community Aid Programme (NGOCAP) was founded as a CBO in 2000 in Mwingi. With an active membership of 33,809 community members, the CBO supports poverty reduction processes at house levels through community initiatives and institutional capacity building among affiliated groups. These include community water and sanitation initiatives, construction of pre-school and primary school classrooms, health education and food security activities, among others.

9 Muungano CBO

The organization was registered as a CBO in year 2001 and drives its membership from self help groups in six villages in Kilifi district. The organisation is mainly involved in community mobilisation, formation and strengthening of community groups, ECD, water management, child rights sensitisation and advocacy, women social-economic awareness, HIV/Aids and village banking.



List of **Abbreviations & Acronyms**

AIDS	:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASPECT	:	Appropriate Sustainable Pastoralist Empowerment for Community Transformation
BVLF	:	Bernard van Leer Foundation
CCF	:	Christian Children's Fund
CDF	:	Community Development Foundations
DCC	:	Day Care Centre
DICECE	:	District Coordinator for Early Childhood Education
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
ECDE	:	Early Childhood Development and Education
ECE	:	Early Childhood Education
FGDs	:	Focus Group Discussions
HIV	:	Human Immune Virus
IETA	:	Integration ECD Teachers Association
IGAs	:	Income Generating Activities
KCDF	:	Kenya Community Development Foundation
LATF	:	Local Authority Transfer Funds
MEDA	:	Malindi Education and Development Association
MICODE	:	Mission for Community Initiated Development
MRC	:	Madrassa Resources Centre
NACECE	:	National Coordinator for Early Childhood Education
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organisation
OB	:	Occurrences Book
OCS	:	Omega Child Shelter
OVCs	:	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
TBA	:	Traditional Birth Attendants
TOTs	:	Training of Trainers
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children Education Fund
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
ZETA	:	Zonal ECD Teachers Association

GLOSSARY



Adequate Nutrition: Refers to both the right quantities and the nutritional value of food- a balanced diet.

Basic Needs: Something one cannot do without in order to survive e.g. food, water etc

Case study: A detailed account of the development of a situation over a period of time.

Child Growth: Increment in size and shape.

Community Endowment funds: Funds invested in perpetuity to earn income to ensure availability of funds for a specific purpose or cause.

Community Mobilization: To organize a group of people to work together to achieve a common goal.

Day Care Centre: A formal or informal set up (Institution or under a simple shade) where children are brought together to be taken care of by a mature adult and where various activities to enhance development are undertaken.

Duksi: An institution where Islamic faith and religious systems are taught. A word commonly used by North Eastern region communities.

Early Childhood Development: The most rapid period of development in a human life which occurs during the ages 0-8 years.

Education: A process through which knowledge, skills and values are acquired through formal and informal set ups.

Holistic Child Development: Notable progress or advancement in all areas of child development ; physically, mentally ,socially, emotionally, Language development and morally.

Integration of programmes: Process of implementing two or more programmes so that they enhance the quality of benefits received by those targeted.

Locally Available Resources: Supply of various things and human power which a community can identify and tap for use to enhance their development initiatives and for wealth creation.

Madrasa: An institution where Islamic faith and religious systems are taught. A word commonly used by coast region communities

Model ECD Programme: Something such as a system or a programme that is considered an excellent example and can be copied by other people or be replicated elsewhere.

Networking: A system of trying to meet and talk to other people who may be useful to your work.- Working together with people of are implementing similar programmes to leverage resources.

Orphaned and Vulnerable Child: A child who has lost one or both of his/her parents and made vulnerable by poverty and adverse social-cultural factors in the environment where they live.

Participation: To take part in or become involved in an activity

Rights: Entitlements by law or legal

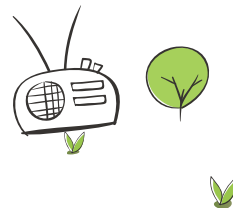
Rights of the Child: Entitlements of children as enshrined in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and as domesticated in Kenya through Children's Act, 2001 reviewed in 2003.

Social Enterprise: An initiative aimed at benefiting a group of people or a community

Stimulation: To make part of the body function, make one feel more active and healthy.

Sustainability: Ability to continue operating or providing services for a long time without external support.

Transition: A process or a period of changing from one state or condition to the other



Raising an all-round child



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