



Education for Development: Towards a Holistic Approach to Curriculum Implementation in Kenya.

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ABSTRACT: - Education is key to individual and national development. Promoting education to excellence is critical to socio- economic growth, high productivity increased earnings and reduction of poverty. With increased education, all other facets of life are improved: there is a healthier nation, enhanced democracy, better leadership, and good governance and ultimately a positive move towards development is achieved. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations International Education Fund (UNICEF) and other international organizations strongly advocate for Education for All (EFA), a call which has been adopted globally. At the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000) which Kenya subscribes to governments pledged to achieve EFA goals by 2015. In the development framework, Vision 2030 which is a blueprint towards increase to access to Education and the Millennium Development Goals complement each other in Kenya's quest in achieving EFA goals. Matters of education in Kenya are of high priority as evidenced through the budgetary allocation towards the education sector which ranks amongst the top .In 2013/2014 financial year alone it stood at K, Shs 234 billion. Despite all the efforts undertaken to improve access to and quality of education EFA objectives face major challenges. Up till today 5% of schools going age children are not enrolled in schools, there is a high wastage rate at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. There are ill- prepared graduates who cannot function effectively in the world of work coupled with high unemployment rates. This scenario, dim as it may seem, can be remedied through thorough consideration of incorporating holistic approaches to the curriculum in schools. The school curriculum is meant to cover three main dimensions namely formal, informal and non formal. However, in Kenya, there is over emphasis on the formal aspect of the curriculum alone ignoring the latter two dimensions which are of equal importance for achievement of education goals and objectives. Too much emphasis is laid on passing examinations driving schools into the obsession of realizing high mean scores. The craze for passing examinations gives little regard to whether the means employed are ethical or justified. These means fail to recognize and respect the fact that each individual learner is endowed with different and unique talents, qualities and potentials that require nurturing. Naturally, scores of Kenyans have realized their potentials through promotion of non- formal curricular activities such as games and sports, creative arts and clubs and societies. This paper therefore explores the non- formal curricular activities as a way of realizing holistic development of learners, which lends into all rounded development of learners and wider openings in the world of work and consequently development by suggesting some paradigm shift.

Keywords:- Development Curriculum Implementation, Education, Holistic Approach, Non- Formal Curricular Activities

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered a fundamental tool for national development. Stakeholders in Education regard it as an important vehicle to socio-economic and political development. The general aims of Education in Kenya strive to foster nationalism, patriotism, and promoting national unity, promoting social, economic, technological and industrial needs for national development and self fulfillment promoting respect for development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures. Whereas aims of Education gear towards furnishing individuals with appropriate knowledge skills and attitudes , the realization of the goals can only be possible if individuals to strive to make deliberate efforts towards acquisition of the same. Pedagogy in this regard should provide opportunities for the fullest development of individual talents and abilities through holistic learning so that the learners adjust well to the rapidly changing environment.

The development of Kenyan's education sector has had various challenges and for this reason commissions and task forces have been given the mandate of reviewing the ever changing demands in education. Key among them is the Ominde Commission (1964) which was the first after Independence. Among its many other recommendations was that education be freed from the stratification that the colonial government had established. At the same time, the commission encouraged a child centered education that would prepare the youth with knowledge, skills and expertise to enable development of individual talents and personality for national development. Prior to the commission, education was elitist and individualistic with many striving for white collar jobs on completion of school. Though this commission was to eradicate this stratification, a lot needs to still be done as it stratification remains quite glaring. School has remained a ladder to formal employment and this hung up lives with us up to today.

The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) 2005 – 2010 (ROK, 2005) placed strategies to address key issues among them support for children with special talents. Other Education Commissions maintain relative silence on the question of nurturing talents of the child. Advocacy for holistic approaches to learning remain a myth with the formal dimension taking precedence over the informal and non-formal dimensions of the curriculum. Eshiwani (1993) observes that Kenya suffers from a certificate syndrome in which one paper certificate fails to secure an individual a vacancy to the next level.

Criticism against over emphasis on the formal aspect of education was captured in the disgruntlement of the stakeholders in the Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association Conference held in Mombasa in June 2010 whose theme was 'The Role of Education in Vision 2030'. The delegates observed that there were high numbers of candidates who scored D+ and below, a pointer to mass wastage. In the year 2009 for example 896 000 candidates scored mean grade D+ and E which could hardly allow them placing even in the middle level colleges. The summative evaluation report (KIE, 2009) revealed that there is poor implementation of the curriculum leading to over emphasis of examinations, at the expense of the students' holistic development (The Standard, 2010).

The same feelings were reiterated in fora such as Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama festival in April 2010 in Kisumu and the Kenya Music Festival of August 2010, in Kakamega. It was against this background that the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYAS) with the support from United Nations International Education Fund (UNICEF) endorsed the establishment of a pioneer talent academy in Kasarani with satellite centres in the counties. Research undertaken by UNICEF established that the youth are the majority in Kenya. They suffer from frustration and are evidently a vulnerable lot going by the violence they exuded in the post election violence of 2007 /2008. It was also a follow –up measure to the talent and potentials exhibited in schools in the areas of non- formal curriculum activities. Schools must continue to re-address issues of NFCAS to cater fully for learners of all categories.

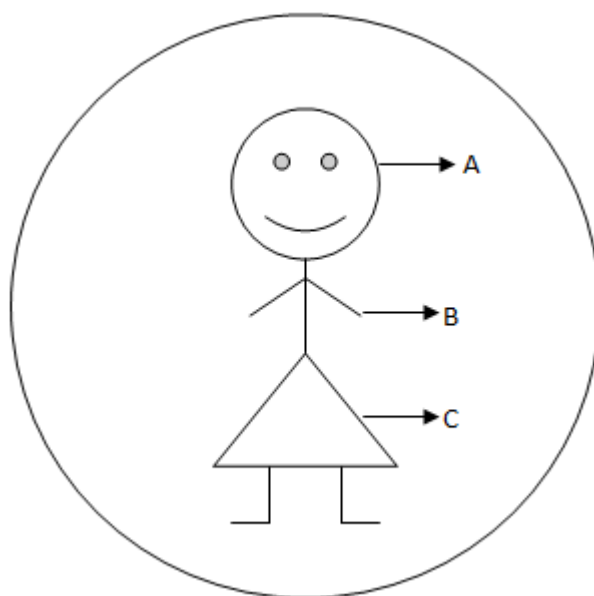
II. HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Quite clearly, Curriculum is broad encompassing three main dimensions; the Formal, Non Formal and Informal aspects. Oluoch (1990) qualifies the formal dimension as the aspect of the school curriculum which consists of those learning activities that students undertake formally in class as well as the curriculum objectives and student assessment methods that relate to them. It is referred to as the explicit curriculum encompassing those subjects that are taught in school. Unfortunately the formal dimension has quite mistakenly been considered to be the true meaning of curriculum because it appears tangible, offering subject matter which is graded throughout the education system(s) running from primary school right up to the tertiary level. The formal dimension contributes mainly to the cognitive dimension, Knowledge, Comprehension, Application analysis, synthesis and Evaluation (Blooms & others, 1986). It is believed that passing examinations offers eligibility into the highly coveted institutions of higher learning and automatic entry into the world of employment.

The second dimension is the informal curriculum. Harahambos (1991) distinguishes the informal dimension as consisting of those things pupils learn through the experience of attending school rather than the stated educational objectives of institutions. Informal learning lives on all the time and is synonymous with "Hidden Curriculum" such as assimilation of desirable habits by students from good examples deliberately given by the staff of a school. In Blooms terminology this is the affective domain of the curriculum .It includes reflex movements, basic fundamentals, perceptual abilities, physical activities, skilled movements and non-discursive behaviors.

The Non formal dimension which is mistakenly defined as extra-curriculum, co-curricular or un-academic activities are the concern of this paper. Non formal Curricular Activities can be subdivided into three groups. For instance, those that are games which develop the physique of the child such as athletics, football, swimming, netball and rugby. In addition, there are those that are academic but impose a new discipline on the child other than that discipline given during formal learning hours. Finally, we have those that give both knowledge and practice not only in using the hands but in creativity such as hobby groups, dancing and any of the performing Arts. To Bloom (1986), this is the psychomotor domain. The experiences in this dimension are found in and outside the classroom.

The three dimensions are equally important and a learner requires all of them to develop wholesomely and therefore holistically. A diagrammatic representation of the holistic approach to curriculum implementation is given below.



- A – Formal Curriculum (Cognitive)
- B – Non Formal Curriculum (Manipulative)
- C – Informal Curriculum (Affective)

Fig 1.1 A Conceptual Framework Illustrating an all - round learner (Adapted from Oluoch, 1990)

When one aspect of the curricular is not fully developed there is a sense of incompleteness. The three aspects of the curriculum ensure a well balanced learner. This aspect of the curriculum is not tested and as a result is neglected by either being partially incorporated in the school curriculum or being totally shunned by the schools.

Theoretical stances

Scholars from different theoretical arenas support the concept that school activities provide numerous benefits to student participants (Shehu ,2008 ;Bis, 2001)Thus NFCAs are an important component in students' well rounded education and schools have the onus to promote them.

From philosophical perspectives Essentialism strove to instill into learners academic knowledge. The learner then was passive and submissive whereas the teacher was the all-knowing custodian of knowledge . As knowledge advanced so also did approaches to learning. Progressivists and Pragmatists vouched for education that was relevant to the needs and interests of the learner. John Dewey, Charles Sanders, William James and Pierce stressed that there must be a psychological insight into the child's capacities, interests and hobbies (Sadker & Sadker ,2000)

Howard Gardner (1983) in his theory of multiple intelligences identifies individuals as different in intellectual potential and proclivity in relation to eight intelligences, linguistic, musical, logical – mathematical spatial, bodily – kinetic, interpersonal understanding and naturalistic intelligence. Astin (1984) suggests that

students involvement has a positive impact on the development of learning. Astin's theory of involvement posits that students learn more the more they are involved in both academic and social aspects of collegiate experience. Involvement aspects include participating in athletic activities, joining students' organizations or student government associations and doing community service.

Socialization theorists argue that students activities assist in combining social development and academic enterprise (Kaufman & Gabbler, 2009) Non Formal Curricular Activities are important in developing social skills. Chickering and Associates (1981) attempts to identify methods that best meet the needs of individual students in the Eclectic approach. Borrowing what is most relevant from all the other approaches is fundamental concern of this theory since singled out on their own the theories may not cater substantively in explaining how students should access and participate in NFCAS

III. NON- FORMAL CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES AS A PREPARATION FOR LIFE

Imagine an individual who has gone to school and achieved the highest possible level of schooling that has enabled them to get a placing in the World of employment and yet they lack basic life skills such as managing time or finances, handling emergencies, running a household or simply just socializing with colleagues at their work place. Holistic Education is meant to enable learners to acquire knowledge develop attitudes and skills that will support the adaptation of healthy behaviors that will help them cope with challenges of life.

NFCA prepares students practically for the future, the Formal Curriculum can only go as far as teaching and educating students about academic theories, but students whose only experience of school or college is one of rigid academics studies may not apply what they have learnt in practice. If NFCA was given an equal footing in students lives there will be an improvement in the student ability to grasp things as a whole. NFCA are particularly good in providing students to work in teams, to exercise leadership, and to take the initiative themselves.

Most NFCA activities are physically active getting the student out from behind their desk and making them try new things. Having a wide range of experiences as provided for by recognition of formal, non formal and informal dimensions of curriculum can provide better preparation for life in a society where an individual may change careers several times in their life time for example, speech and debate clubs might give a doctor or engineer the communication skills to move into broadcasting, teaching and even politics.

A career is adult's life – schools need to make sure they have interests and skills that will help students in their family and leisure life too. NFCA gives students the chance to exercise their rights and opportunities as multi task individuals who do not just think about the future but recognize their varied talents.

Many towns today do not have a civil society and in more rural areas there may be no groups at all for the youth to broaden their experiences. If NFCA are incorporated in schools, it is a way of addressing the weaknesses in modern society as it will equip the young people with initiative and organizing skills to set up their own clubs, teams and activity groups when they leave schools. Finally, building links between the school and the wider community brings local enthusiasts to work with students on community projects among others.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF NON FORMAL CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Kenya recognizes that education and training of all Kenyans is fundamental to realizing development. Vision 2030 (GOK, 2007) a blue print of National development, identifies various impediments in the education sector for Kenya to fully realize its educational objectives. The Government expenditure on educative is equivalent to 7.0% of the country's Gross Domestic product translating into one of the highest expenditure levels per student in Africa, the budgetary allocation of the financial year 2013/2014 towards education stood at Kshs. 234 billion shillings. For a country that invests so highly in education there is need to further re-examine ways in which education can be more relevant. Seeing that the formal education continues to pose great challenges as opportunities for work continue to dwindle there is need to explore other possibilities of absorbing primary and secondary schools students who cannot proceed with formal learning by first identifying, nurturing and enhancing their potentials and talents. Already vision 2030 has addressed and endorsed this need. However what is required is the implementation of the same to be strengthened. Talent Academy is a move

towards the right direction, There is further need to sensitize schools to re-address the issue of Non-formal Curriculum Activities so that they incorporated into the mainstream curriculum.

Oloo (2013) observes that schools continue to compete with each other in their quest for high mean scores. The result of this is relegation of NFCAS. The time allocated to NFCAS is turned into formal learning time and yet NFCAS have a place in the world of employment. Today, Kenya boasts having produced the greatest athletes of the land – One Ezekiel Kemboi, and his predecessors, David Lekuta Rudisha, Tegla Loruppe, Pamela Jelimo, Kipchoge Keino, Catherine Ndereba, Jelimo are among the names that have won accolades besides the personalities earning income from NFCAs. In the soccer world McDonald Maringa, Sylvester Wanyama, Dennis Oliech are footballers with highly coveted salaries ranging to several million shillings; double the salary of the highest paid chief executive officer. Performing arts personalities such Churchil; a comedian; Eric Wainaina a renowned singer all make a living out of tapping from their talents. Today, the dream Achievers Youth organization is empowered to identify youth who are endowed with talent as its contribution to the Millennium development goals by promoting them economically through financial management training and initiating a youth revolving fund. This will ensure self employment and sustainability to the youth in pursuit of developing their talents and potentialities.

With very limited chances of employment self employment is also an alternative option and a right move towards development. As individuals build on their capacities to invest in their talents so also will they become self reliant. The Jua Kali option is still another venture in which citizens may tap from promotion in NFCAs .All efforts in promoting NFCAS lead to National Development.

V. CONCLUSION

It has been the general purpose of this paper to explore how holistic approaches to the implementation of the curriculum can contribute to development in education in Kenya. This has been done against a background of NFCAs being relegated and shunned in schools on the basis that formal curriculum is core to achievement which in turn opens opportunities in the world of employment and is consequently a gateway to better living

Ensuing from this discussion NFCAs have found themselves bearing a positive impact in the lives of Kenyans who may not have the potential to excel in the limited opportunities offered by the explicit curriculum. Each Learner is a unique individual inherent with different skills talent and potentials and should not be locked out in so far as excellence is concerned. They too have an important contribution towards development. If schools harness these potentials in consideration that the school curriculum is broad then the needs of all learners will be catered for by being presented with equal chances. These would ensure that the set aims and objectives for education are ultimately achieved. Schools will as a result be transformed and would stop being considered institutions that would churn out mere robots whose purpose is to achieve high grades and other than that they would have no other skills or knowledge or attitudes imparted in them.

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