

**ESTABLISHING CHILDREN COMMUNITY LIBRARY AND  
RESOURCE CENTER AT KAHAWA ESTATE, KIAMBU COUNTY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF COMMUNITY  
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TANZANIA**

**2013**

**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that I have read this work and hereby recommend that this project is accepted by The Open University of Tanzania in partial fulfillment of requirement of the Degree of Masters in Community Economic Development. It is an independent work carried out by Japhet M. Kiunga under my supervision

.....

Dr. Felician Mutasa

(Supervisor)

Date.....

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Signature.....

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## ABSTRACT

Early Child Development (ECD) learning is a basic foundation that prepares children for primary school, globally embraced as part of Universal Education for every child. Kenya recognizes education for every child within educational and sustainable development policies such as Vision 2030. Although country is currently implementing a free primary education which was established in 2003, preschool, the foundation of ECD learning is not funded by the government leaving parents and non profit organizations as the sponsors (MOEST, 2005). The reading habits of preschool remain sketchily understood. This research aims to assess the challenges and needs of preschool children in a peri-urban urban set-up. The research is guided by the following research questions: What are the attitude of children on school and learning? What factors influence children attitude on school and learning? What factors and resources enhance early child development learning? The review of related literature focused theoretical, empirical, policy and other pertinent content analysis. Field research formed the primary data for the study while resources from booksellers, libraries, internet and Ministry of Education formed the main secondary data. The primary data is summarized using SPSS; then merged with secondary data and interpreted to draw the main trends about children reading habits.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

CNA Community Needs Assessment

ECD Economic Community Development

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 PARTICIPATORY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The concept of people's participation is not a new phenomenon as far as community development is concerned: it has been talked about and written about since the 1950s and even before (Guijt and Shah, 1998). Many authors and development agencies argue that genuine people participation can increase the efficiency, self reliance, coverage and sustainability of development projects and programmes (Kumar, 2002).

The participatory needs assessment was conducted by the researcher in collaboration with a forum comprising teachers drawn from the ministry of education, teachers, owners of school as well as parents and producers of preschool learning resources. The objective of this forum was to identify community felt needs and get first hand information which was useful in further study. The ultimate goal was to design and implement a project that would adequately address them in a sustainable manner in conjunction with the community.

Beginning with participatory assessment and moving through the design and implementation of programs, stakeholder inclusion develops the livelihoods of community members by providing work in areas that also directly benefit children, improves the parenting and care of those children not directly served by raising awareness, maximizes resources by leveraging social and material assets in support of programming, incentivizes participation, and creates demand (Lucas, Jitta, Jones,

& Wilczynska-Ketende, 2008).

It is particularly important to identify and work with key local community members who will be able to advocate for programming because interventions by entities outside the family in the earliest years of a child's life can be politically and socially sensitive. These local advocates may be educators, religious or political leaders, prominent business people, existing nongovernmental organization actors, or members of influential families who can use their positions and leverage to engage and motivate their peers and others in their home communities (Cabanero-Versoza & Elaheebocus, 2008).

Within the various government agencies responsible for ECD, parallel efforts to raise awareness of the importance of addressing the learning needs of the young children and to leverage political support for local and national efforts are also crucial to success and sustainability of the project

In this case participatory assessment was conducted by the researcher in collaboration with a forum comprising teachers drawn from the ministry of education, teachers, owners of school as well as parents and producers of preschool learning resources.

The objective of this forum was to identify community felt needs and get first hand information which will be useful in further study. The ultimate goal was to design and implement a project that would adequately address them in a sustainable manner in conjunction with the community.

## **1.1 Community Profile**

Kahawa estate is in the Ruiru ward, Kiambu County of Kenya's Central Province. Located within three kilometers of Nairobi's city boundary, Kahawa is a dormitory estate for the nation's capital, and is connected by both rail and road. The suburb town covers an area of 7 km<sup>2</sup>, and is surrounded by numerous coffee plantations.

In 1999, Ruiru ward had a population of 5,000, but has undergone rapid population growth in response to shortage of available housing in Nairobi. According to the Center for Sustainable Urban Development in 2005 the population was estimated at over 8,000. The estates with controlled development have struggled to adapt to the influx of people. The surrounding estates which do not fall under controlled areas have grown tremendously putting further strain to social amenities and infrastructure as people from those estates seeks schools, shopping and recreation facilities located within the estate. Kahawa estate has 8 pre schools with a population of over 800 children in baby class, nursery and pre-unit.

## **1.2 Community Needs Assessment (CNA)**

During this Phase the key objective was to access the learning needs of preschool children in urban setting and how those needs can be addressed by the community, and to provide information for further action.

### **1.2.1 Specific objectives of CAN**

- a. To assess attitudes of young children to school and learning.
- b. To assess the factors that influence children attitude towards school and learning.



- c. Identify factors and resources that enhance early child development learning.
- d. Identify parental factors that enhance early child development learning.

### **1.2.2 CNA Research Questions**

The research questions are:

- a. What are the attitude of children on school and learning?
- b. What factors influence children attitude on school and learning?
- c. What parental factors enhance early child development learning?

### **1.2.3 CNA Methodology**

#### **1.2.4 Research Design**

This study adopted an exploratory, participatory and observation research design. Exploratory studies are key ways of finding out what is happening to seek new insights, to ask questions and to access a situation in a new dimension. Robson (2002) notes that exploratory studies are used to explore relatively unknown fields.

#### **1.2.5 Exploratory**

Interviews were conducted to estate residents, leaders, teachers, parents and children focusing on priority needs and issues in the estate.

#### **1.2.5 Focus Group Discussions**

Focus group discussion is a form of structured and guided group discussions involving stakeholders with knowledge and interest of a particular topic. Focus

groups provided an opportunity to brainstorm and get the feelings of the key community members. A meeting was conducted in the estate. The participants of the meeting evaluated the existing needs and resources of the community that can be used to address those needs.

### **1.2.6 Observation**

According to Goode J. W and Paul K. (1989) science begins with observation and must ultimately return to observation for its final validation. Observation was used to analyze children in school and non school setting in order to identify observable needs and stressors.

### **1.2.6 Research Tools**

The following research tools were used:

- i. Questionnaires
- ii. Observations
- iii. Reviews of community records in newspapers, schools and pamphlets

### **1.2.7 Sampling Techniques**

The intention was to study a representative sample of the schools in the study area. As Gay (1987) states, "It is important that the sample be representative of the larger population from which it was selected". Since it was not economically possible to reach the entire population in Kahawa estate, sampling was chosen as the best alternative. For practical purpose of research on the preschool children learning habits three samples were considered necessary, namely, the parents, teachers and the children.

Probability sampling (simple random) was used to get the schools and non probability sampling (purposive) used to get the parents, teachers and the children. In this type of sampling, the researcher primarily selects information-rich cases for study which was a situation applicable for the Kahawa quota.

### **1.2.8 Data Collection Methods**

Having secured permission from the head of schools and other stakeholders of Kahawa community, the researcher proceeded with the administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were personally delivered and collected from schools. Information from teachers was gathered through interviewing. The teachers had more information on the learning need of the Pre Schoolers since they spent a lot of time together hence it was important to have their views. The parents too being the first social agents and directly related to the children had to give out their views. Personal interviews were conducted by the researcher. The researcher had to expose his mission to the interviewees and the purpose and scope of the study were outlined. A structured interview was prepared which contained both open and closed questions.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to explore the needs and views of the community.

### **1.3.0 Data Analysis Methods**

Data collected from the field were coded and cleaned to remove outliers or missing values and categorized manually according to the questionnaire items using frequency distribution tables and percentages. Simple descriptive statistics such as

percentages have an advantage over more complex statistics since they can easily be understood especially when making results known by a variety of readers. The coded data was then transferred to a computer sheet and was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Martin and Acuna (2002) observe that SPSS is able to handle large amounts of data; it is time saving and also quite efficient. Frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts were used to analyze the quantitative data.

The responses to open ended items (qualitative data) in form of phrases and words were organized followed by creating categories, themes and patterns related to research questions. This was analyzed and reported by descriptive narrative (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The results of the data gave the researcher a basis to make conclusions about the study.

### **1.3.1 Community Needs Assessment Findings**

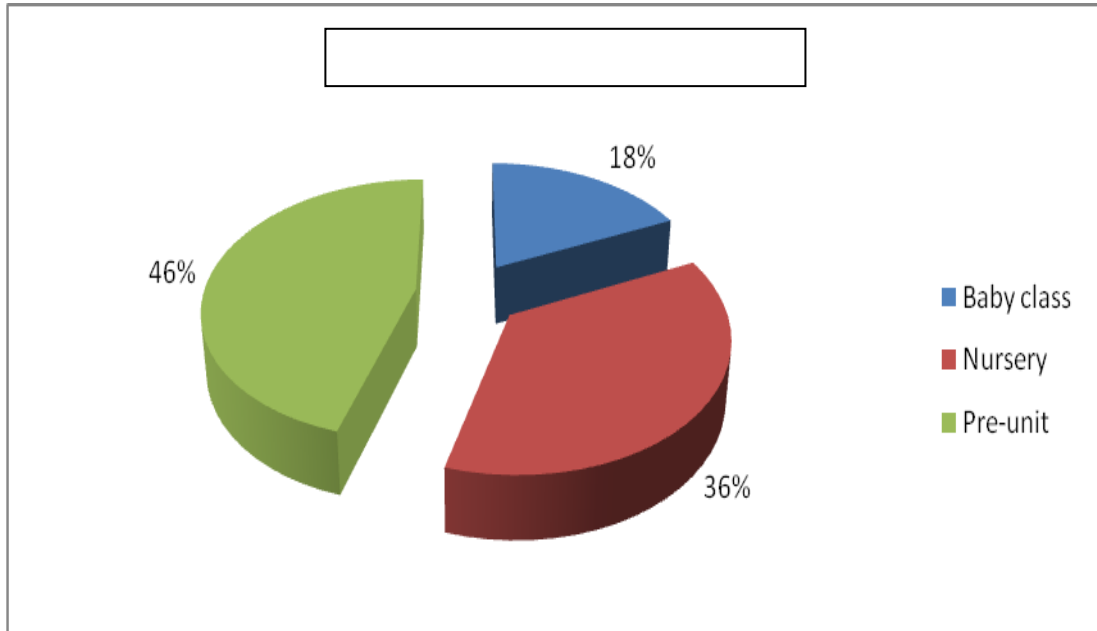
This section covers the findings, presentations and discussions of the results for the study on assessing the learning needs of preschool children. The main sub headings includes demographic characteristics of the respondents, attitudes of young children towards school and learning , the factors that influence children attitude towards school and learning and the factors that enhance early childhood development learning.

### **1.3.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents**

Responses to the pre school teachers, pre school children and parents interview schedule were analyzed on the basis of their background information. This section

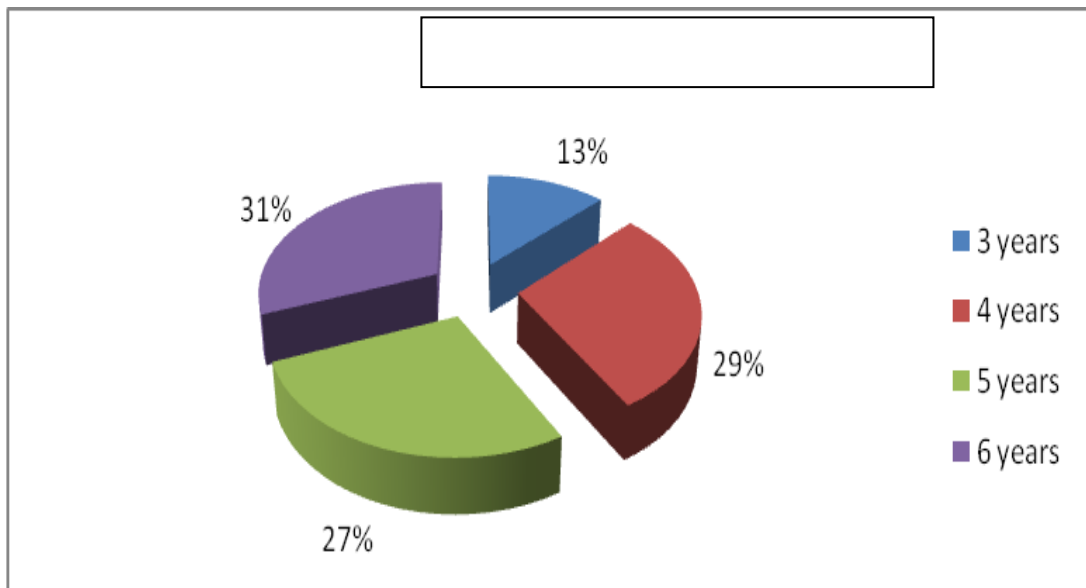
focuses on gender, level of education.

### 1.3.3 Background Information of the Pre School Children



**Figure 1: Class of the Respondent Pre Scholars**

**Source:** From field data, 2012

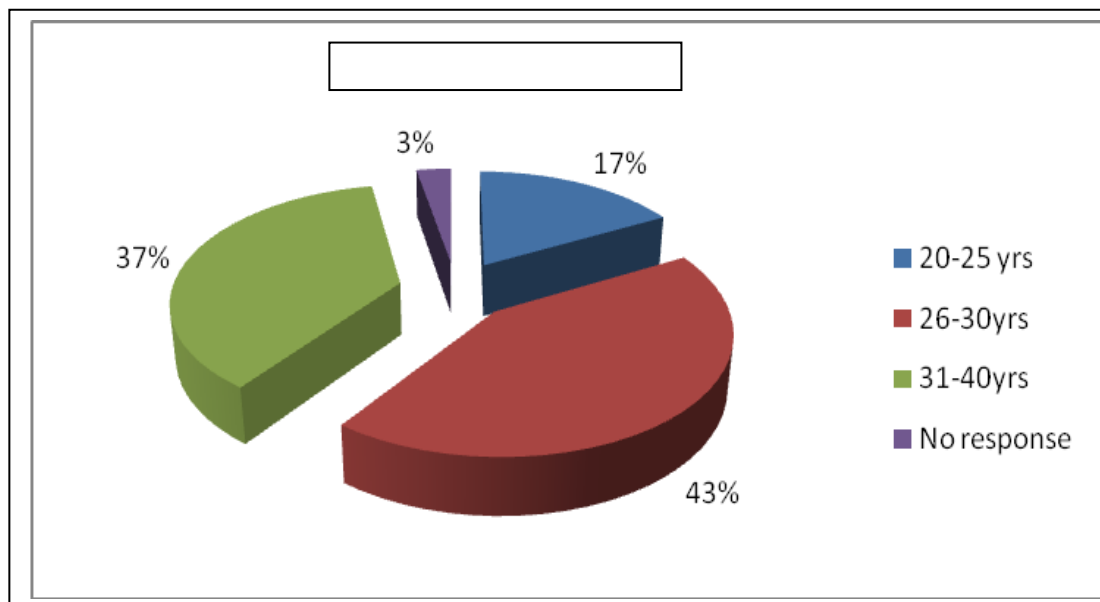


**Figure 2: Age of the Pre Scholars**

**Source:** From field data, 2012

Trend observed in figure 2 above indicate that, in relation to age of the Pre School respondents, 31 % of the preschool children were 6 years of age while, 29 % were 4 years, 27% were 5 years. However, only 13 % were aged 3 years. Children in Kenya start formal schooling after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and before their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.

At age 3 the children are in baby class and not so interactive and may know little importance of learning so the study focused mostly on the children who are in pre unit (age 4 -6) because at this age the children are intuitive and mostly interested in learning.



**Figure 3: Age of Parents**

**Source:** From field data, 2012

Majority of the parents were aged between 26- 30 and 31- 40 years, that is 43 and 37% respectively. Only 17 % were between 20-25 years the age factor was important in analysing the learning needs of the children. For example a study done by Keown LJ et al ( 2001), indicated that compared to older mothers, teen mothers

display lower levels of verbal stimulation and involvement, higher levels of intrusiveness, and maternal speech that is less varied and complex.

### 1.3.3 Gender

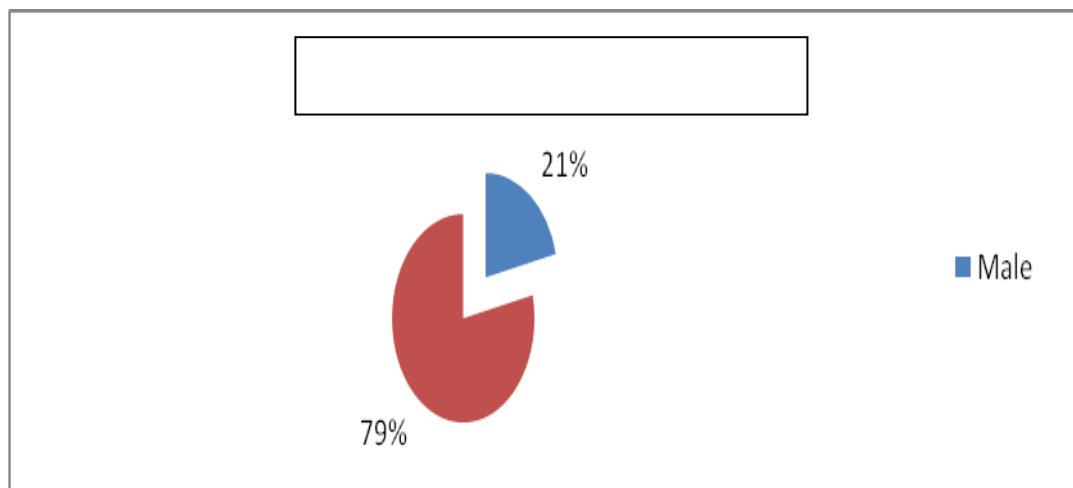
The study sought to find out the gender of preschool pupils, teachers and parents. Among the preschool children, 54% were male as compared to the female (46%) as shown by Figure.

**Table 1: Pre School Children Gender**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Male	19	54
	Female	16	46
	Total	35	100.0

**Source:**

### 1.3.4 Gender of Teachers



**Figure 4: Gender of the Pre School Teachers**

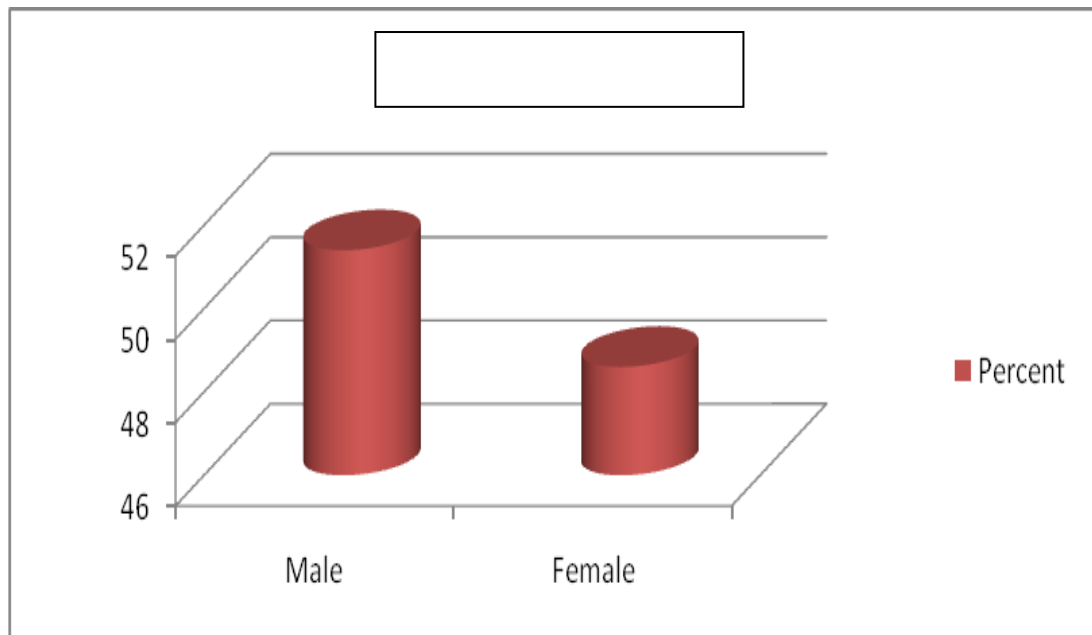
**Source:** From field data, 2012

The data for the study was collected from 28 pre schools teachers. An item was included in the interview schedule which sought information on the gender of the teacher. Out of the 28 teachers, 22 were female and 6 were male. The studies revealed that majority of the teachers 78.6% were female while only 21.4% were male. Figure 4 presents the distribution of teachers by gender.

The study revealed that majority of pre schools teachers are females.

### 1.3.5 Gender of the Parents

Majority of the parents (51.4 %) were male while 48.6 were female. In general, it emerged that there were more male respondents' than their female counterparts in this study as indicated in the Figure 5.



**Figure 5: Gender of Parents**

**Source:** From field data, 2012



### 1.3.3 Number of Years in Service of Teachers

On number of years on teaching experience, the study revealed that 46 % of the class teachers had a teaching experience of between 1 – 5 years, 25% had an experience of less than one year while those who had 6-10 years were only 17.9 %. The study revealed that majority of the pre school teachers had a teaching experience of between 1- 5. Table 9 presents information on class teacher’s experience.

**Table 2: Number of Years in Service of Teachers**

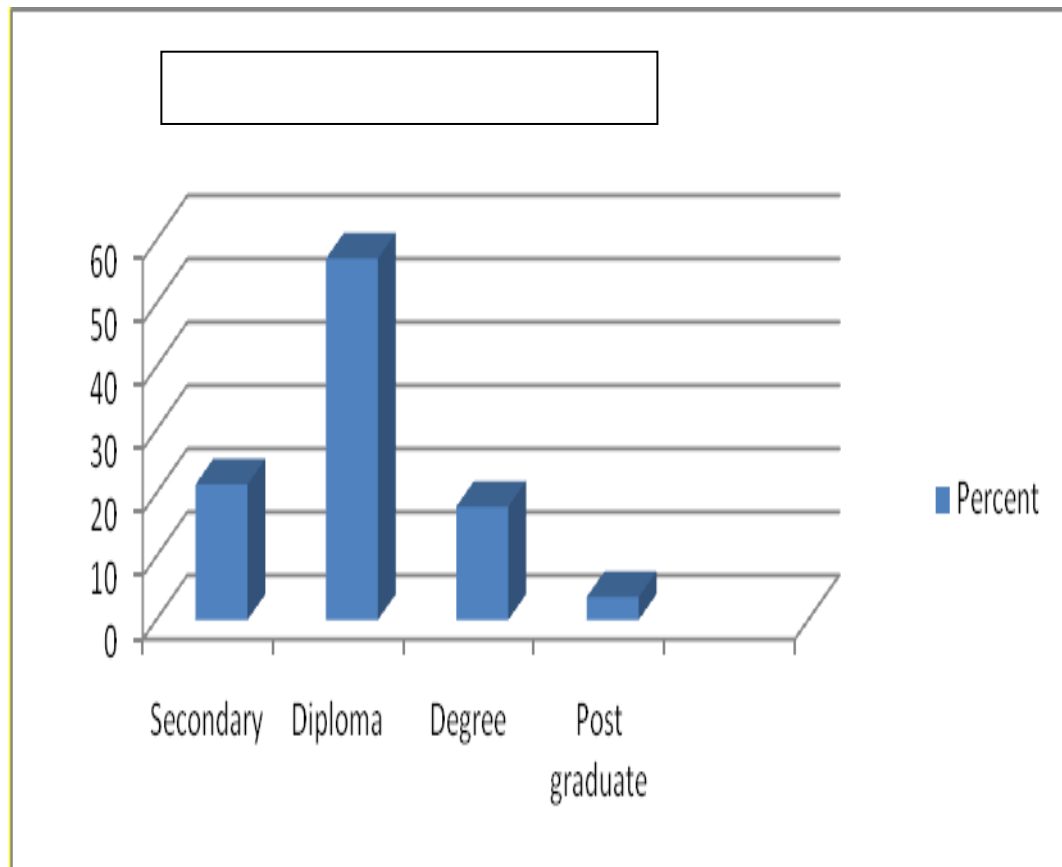
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Under 1 year	7	25.0
	1-5yrs	13	46.4
	6-10yrs	5	17.9
	Others	3	10.7
	Total	28	100.0

**Source:** From field data, 2012

Majority of teachers have a teaching experience of 1-5 years is a clear indication that they were in a position to comment on the reading habits of the pre school children.

### 1.3.4 Level of Education

The study sought to establish the education level of parents and preschool teachers. Out of the twenty eight teachers who participated in this study, only one had a post graduate degree (3.6%), five (17.9%) had degree; six has secondary education (21.4%) while the remaining sixteen had a Diploma (83.3%). This implies that most preschool teachers are educated to diploma level as shown in the figure 6.



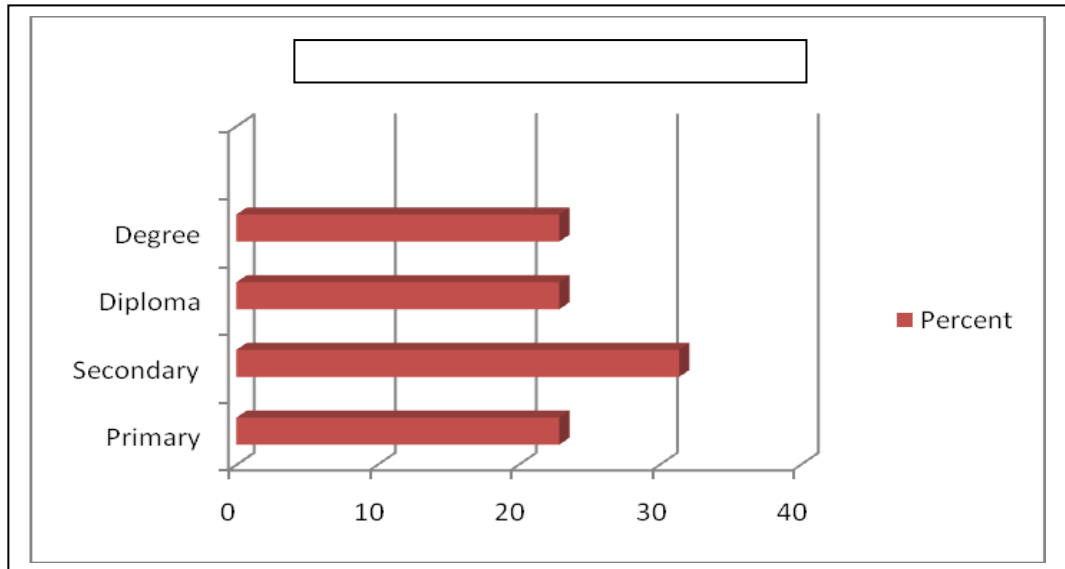
**Figure 6:** Level of Education of Parents

**Source:** From field data, 2012

### 1.3.5 Level of Education of parents

Researchers agree that parenting is multiply determined by characteristics of both parents and children. In terms of parent characteristics, parent age, education, occupation, just to mention a few have all been shown to relate to the learning needs of the children.

According to the study findings majority of the parents were literate. Though many had reached the secondary levels (31%), those who had degree were (22.9%) diploma and the primary education was 22.9%.



**Figure 7 : Parents Reading to their Children**

**Source:** From field data, 2012

The findings of this study concurs with the findings done by (Rowe M.L. et al., 2005) who states that parents with fewer years of education read to their children less frequently and demonstrate less sophisticated language and literacy skills themselves, which affects the quantity and quality of their verbal interactions with their children.

In support of this statement is a study that was conducted by the National Household Education Survey, 1996) which showed that 77 percent of children whose mothers have a college education were read to every day, while only 49 percent of children whose mothers had a high school education were read to daily . Parental education in turn, relates to household income: poverty and persistent poverty are strongly associated with less stimulating home environments (Gottfried A.E et al., 1998), hence poor habits of buying books. ie families buy book curriculum books only .

### 1.3.6 Parent as Avid Reader

**Table 3: Parent as an Avid Reader**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	25	71.4
	No	10	28.6
	Total	35	100.0

**Source:** From field data, 2012

A vast majority of the parents (71%) of the parents responded that they were avid readers. Only 28.6 % indicated that they were not avid readers. This implies that parents set a good example by letting their children see them reading. This cultivates the habit of reading to their children because they view it as an important exercise which their parents embrace.

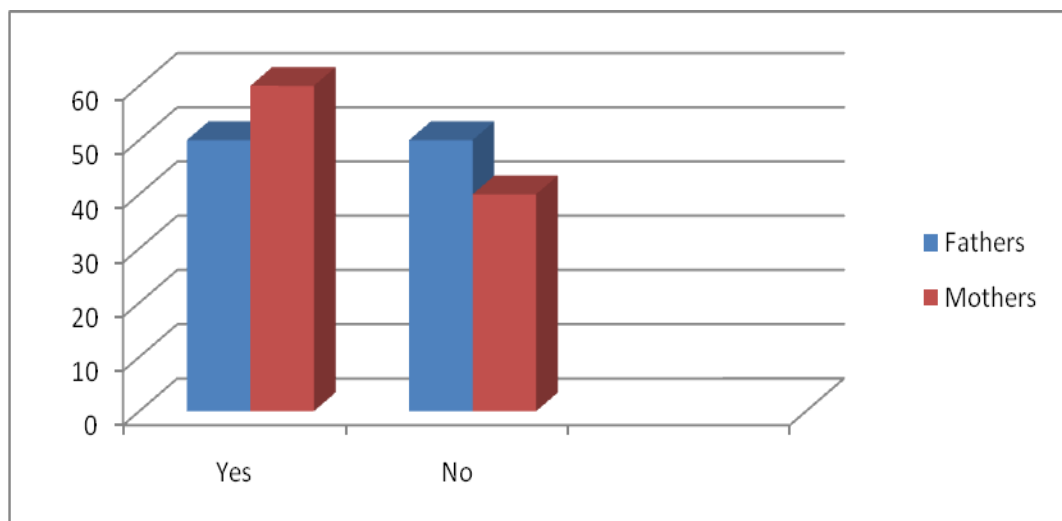
When children never experience listening to stories or are never read to at home, when the family is so poor that buying books, or getting to where books are become impossible, and an overcrowded home allows no privacy for reading, the development of the reading habit will almost inevitably be influenced negatively (Radebe, 1995).

### 1.3.7 Parents Reading to their Children

The figure below is a summary of the response from the preschoolers if their parents read to them. The study reveals that mothers read more to their children than the fathers at 60%. A half (50%) of the father read to the children while the other half

did not read to the children.

One way that interest and access relate to reading motivation is the social influence of teachers, peers, and family members, particularly mothers. The example and recommendations of others can motivate students to select and read books that they would not otherwise encounter (Wendelin & Zinck, 1988). Although teachers have many opportunities to share books, research identifies peers and family members as more influential in children's reading attitudes.



**Figure 7 : Parents Reading to their Children**

**Source:** From field data, 2012

Dickinson determined that parents reading to their child is very important and helps to support phonological awareness. However, it does not directly lead to an increase in reading skills. These skills grow by parents trying to teach print and by how often parents read for pleasure, giving children a positive message of reading (Dickinson et al., 2002).

### 1.3.8 Attitudes Towards School and Learning

**Table 4: Attitude Towards School and Learning**

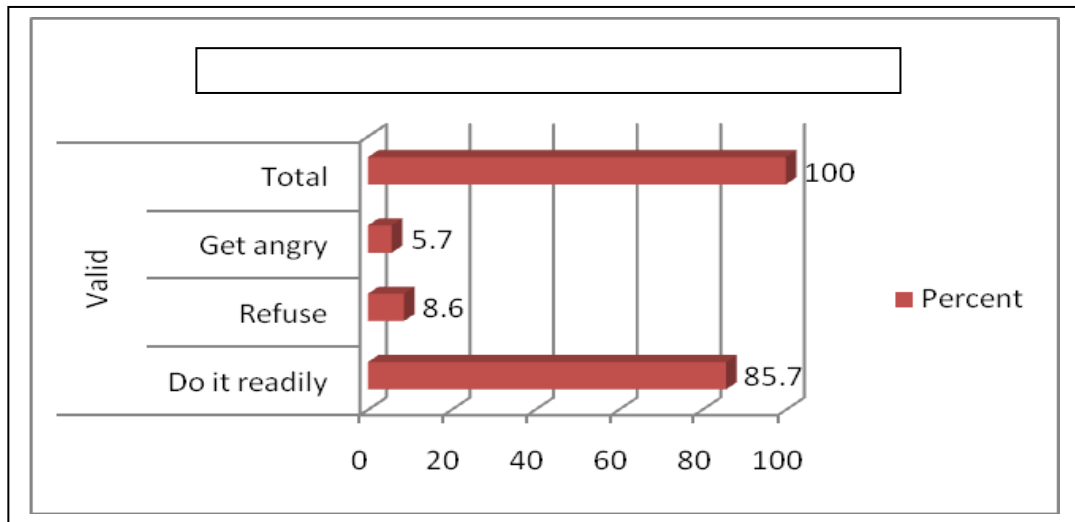
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	52	94.5
	No	3	5.5
	Total	55	100.0

Although a sizable majority of children responded to the question that they liked schools 94.5%, they liked school for various reasons but playing was the major only 25.5 % of the children indicated they like the school because of playing reported intentions of sharing their books with their friends.

**Table 5: Children Seeing their Parents Reading**

		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	25	71.4
	No	10	28.6
	Total	35	100.0

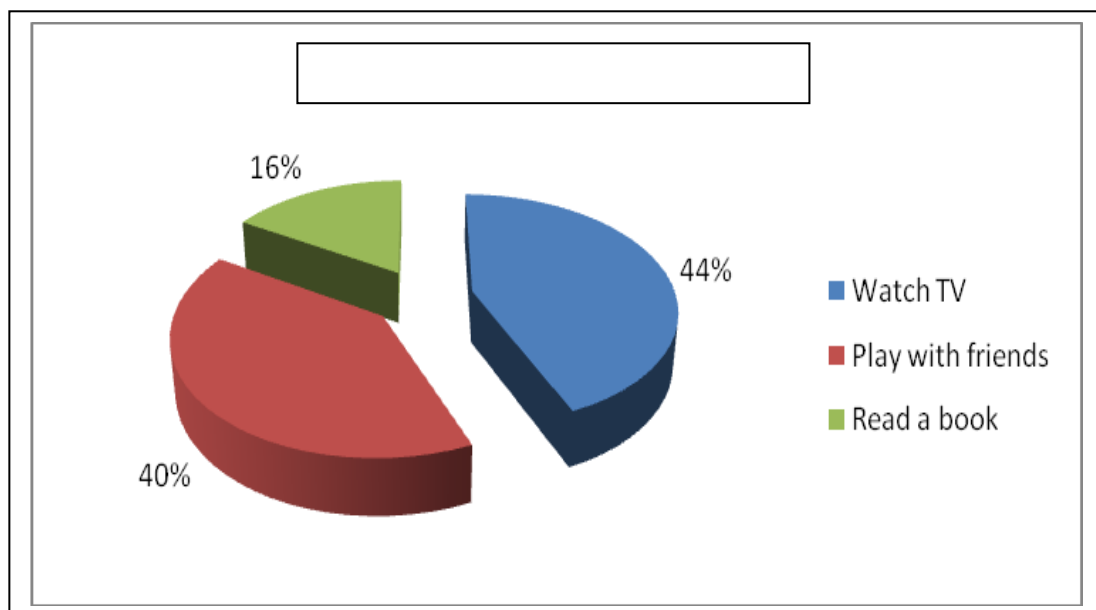
71% of the parents responded that their children see them reading while 28% of them said their children did not see them read.



**Figure 8: Children’s reaction when they are told to read**

Source: From field data, 2012

**1.3.9 Factors that Influence Children Attitude Towards School and Learning**



**Figure 9: Preferences of the Pre Schoolers**

Source: From field data, 2012

The most preferred activity by the preschoolers was watching television at 44%. This was closely followed by playing with friends at 40%. Reading a book was rated third with only 16%. Reading was not a preferred activity which indicated that it was not frequently done only 16% choose reading.

#### **i) Summary of Needs**

From the analysis the following needs were identified:

#### **1.4 Community Needs Prioritization**

This section shows that prioritization of needs was conducted for ranking the needs in order to come up with a project that addresses the most pressing needs. Needs prioritization was done by focus group discussion through concession.

The following needs were identified:

- i. Need to train parents on how to motivate and encourage children to develop reading habits at home.
- ii. Need to develop a sensitization campaign to promote early childhood learning lead by educationist
- iii. Need to start and equip a library and resource centre within the estate where children will spend free time reading and playing relevant games under guidance.
- iv. Need to train teachers on how to motivate children to like books and reading both within and without the school.

After the needs were listed focus discussion group prioritized and ranked them according to the most pressing and achievable within the resources available.



According to pair-wise ranking setting up a community children library and resource centre was the most practical and sustainable. They noted that the facility will indirectly address other needs.

**Table 6 Pair-Wise Ranking of Kahawa Estate Needs**

Need/Problem	Training Teachers	Training Parents	Lack of Books	Lack of Library	Score	Rank
Lack of Library	Lack of Library	Lack of Library	Lack of Library		10	1
Lack of books	Lack of books	Lack of Books			9	2
Training Parents	Training Parents				7	3
Training Teachers					4	4

### 1.5 Conclusion

The need to establish a community a community library and resource center was ranked as the first priority and required immediate action. Other problems would be addressed later when resources are available. The research further noted that there are several children play and recreation facilities in town usually attached to hotels where parents take their children during their free time. This further supports the notion that the project has highest chances of sustainability because it is bringing a service that is already in demand close to the community.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

#### 2.1 Background of the Study

Achieving education for all is one of the Millenium Development Goals and the government of Kenya has made significant progress towards achieving it, which is also in line with its vision 2030 development goals. Making education compulsory for every child is a good step towards this realization. Education is the most important development investment a country can make towards a sustainable development as it leads to better health, higher incomes and increased enrolment in the community life (KIE, 2002). Although preschool enrolment is high in there are issues with the quality and attitudes of preschool children which has direct implication to the overall performance of the pupil.

ECD learning has generated a lot of interest with the government of Kenya. Through the Kenya Institute of Education the ministry of education has formulated a syllabus to be used in preschool. However preschool is not included in free primary education fund program. This poses a great implementation and supervisory challenge. Research is revealing overwhelming evidence of the importance placed on understanding of child development as crucial to provision of high quality curriculum for the early years (Blenkin et al, 1995).

According to Heckman & Carneiro (2003), the returns on investment in Early Child Development (ECD) programs are numerous and interrelated. A child's ability to think, form relationships, and live up to their full potential is directly related to the

synergistic effect of good health, good nutrition, and appropriate stimulation and interaction with others during early years.

Numerous studies and opinions of key scholars point out that children with solid base enriched with good ECD programs tend to be more successful in later school, are better grounded socially and emotionally, and show higher verbal and intellectual development later in life than children who are undergo poor ECD programs. This implies that investing in strong child development is the best sustainable asset in a community's social and economic future. Investing in ECD will eventually lead to social equity, increase the efficacy of other investments, reduce poverty and gender related inequalities while reducing considerable cases of maladjustment in the society.

This research will seek to access learning needs of children in Kahawa, Ruiru Ward, Kiambu County. The ECD is very important for children because it helps children fit to an adult world, (David Messer and Stuart Millar, 1999.)

## **2.2 Problem Statement**

Education is seen as the most important factor in liberating the world's poor from the plagues of poverty, hunger, disease, inequality, gender equality, and environmental degradation. Millennium Development Goals features universal education as a powerful step towards creating a better world free from a host of problems mentioned above in sustainable manner. Basic education that starts at birth has been hailed as a significant factor in determining the lives of an individual, although much of education input is concentrated from primary school level. Therefore although the

community, the government and other stakeholders are investing a lot in the education sector, very little research has been done to assess the learning needs of preschool children.

For instance child care and early education have traditionally been assumed by mothers or other female family members of young children. However, as more and more women enter the workforce, in both the formal and informal economies, their ability to provide full-time care and support of their children's learning needs are challenged.

Research into the factors that promote learning in young children is central to addressing achievement gaps that exist in children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. There is an urgent need for constant and regular studies on preschool needs because we live in a rapidly changing world which influences the needs of preschoolers. Such changes include technology changes, rural and urban settings and social changes in the society.

The purpose of this study therefore is to assess the learning needs of preschool children in urban setting and how those needs can be addressed by the community.

### **2.3 Project Description**

This section will discuss the project description and its physical location. The title of the project to be implemented is Kahawa Children Community library and Resource Centre. During the exercise of community need assessment, it was established that

most of the community needs are related to issues that can be best addressed by a well established community library run by professionals who understands children learning needs.

It was established that most parents in Kahawa estate are educated in and in full employment which means they have little time and interaction with their children.

### **2.3.1 Target Community**

The beneficiaries of this project will be children aged 3 to 12 years. Although preschool children are aged 3- 6 years, it is notable that most of them have siblings who are older and cannot be excluded in the project. Also notable is children within this age group share common learning needs and play things.

### **2.3.2 Stake Holders**

The key stakeholders in this project are parents who will take the leading role of financing the project and facilitating their children to attend the facility. Other stakeholders are:

- i. Publishers and other philanthropic organizations that will be solicited to donate children books and other learning materials
- ii. Community members who will be expected to popularize the project and sensitize others on its benefits
- iii. Teachers in the school who will be required to develop effective programs to be implemented so as to compliment what is taught in school

### **2.3.3 Project Goal**

The goal of this project is to create a community library for children which will complement what they learn in school. The library will be specifically equipped to cater for developmental learning needs of children. In this respect it will be equipped with children indoor and outdoor playing things. The playing things will ensure children engage in plays that contribute to their growth and development especially academic development where they will acquire adequate guidance from qualified attendants.

#### **2.3.3.1 Project Objectives**

The objective of the project is to create and inculcate reading habits to children so that they love and appreciate books as they grow up. To achieve this goal the project aims at:

- i. Organizing parents to raise initial amount required to rent a premises for the establishment of library. A five bedroom house within the estate with big compound would be idea initially. This will be done before end of March 2013
- ii. To recruit and train a librarian and three pre-school teachers who will man the project by end of March 2013
- iii. To fund raise money to buy books and other items by end of April 2013. Donations both cash and kind will be solicited.

### **2.4 Host Organization**

The host organization is Queenex Publishers. This is because Queenex publishers are general publishers in Kenya with special inclination to children literature and they

support the research from the beginning to the end.

Queenex Publishers will also seek support from other publishers and booksellers in the country as well as dealers in children play things.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The focus of this project was to enhance the learning needs of preschool children and improve the reading habits of the preschoolers. In order to do this it is important to articulate the literature reviews and information from different authors on the subject of learning needed of preschools to provide a more understanding on the impact of library on the reading habits of the preschoolers.

This chapter is divided into three main sections; the first section gives the theoretical literature where the concepts, principles and theories related to preschool learning will be looked upon. The second section gives empirical literature which emphasizes on studies that have been done by others on the same. While the third section details different policies that support the study.

#### **3.2 Theoretical Literature**

This work was anchored in the writings of scholars such as Bruner and Vygotsky who posited that learning occurs in a socio-cultural context in which adults and primary caregivers support or “scaffold” young children to higher levels of thinking and acting. According to this view, children who experience sensitive, cognitively stimulating home environments early in development are at an advantage in the learning process.

According to Vygotsky all learning is mediated between the child and a knowledgeable other. His theory is often referred to as social constructivism,



because he believed that teachers and older or more experienced people, like parents, play important roles in teaching children in a social setting. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development theorized that students can, with help from adults, master concepts and ideas that they cannot understand on their own.

The role of the parent is to facilitate cognitive growth as do teachers and other members of the child's community. Adults such as parents and teachers are the ones who provide the tools of the culture, including language, and it is their responsibility to nurture early language and literacy in young children. These knowledgeable others play a powerful role in preparing young children for future school success. Vygotsky further believed that school learning should occur in meaningful context and not be separated from out of school experiences. Thus the parent's role, out of school, takes on greater importance if they are to reinforce the experiences of their child in school with what their perceptions and attitudes out of school. This becomes increasingly important for those children who are experiencing difficulty in school with such activities as learning to read.

Research into human brain development is proving that parents truly are their children's first teachers. What parents do, or don't do, has a lasting impact on their child's reading skill and literacy. For example, there is considerable evidence of a relationship between reading regularly to a child and that child's later reading achievement (National Research Council, 1998). In 1998 and 2001, Whitehurst and Lonigan examined the relationship between language development and early reading in preschool children. Their research showed that early literacy skills are organized

into inside-out skills, phonemes and graphemes, and outside-in skills, narrative concepts and vocabulary (Dickinson et al., 2002).

Dickinson determined that parents reading to their child is very important and helps to support phonological awareness. However, it does not directly lead to an increase in phonological skills. These skills grow by parents trying to teach read and by how often parents read for pleasure, giving children a positive message of reading (Dickinson et al., 2002).

Radebe (1995) identifies several determinants of reading interest and quotes a number of authors who highlight home background as the major influence on the development of the child's early attitudes towards leisure reading (Radebe, 1995). Crucial aspects of home background emphasized by authors such as Bettelheim and Zelan; Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin; Jubber and Smith (Quoted in Radebe, 1995: 163), and which would apply regardless of race, are the following: emulation by the child of the parents' reading involvement, educational background of the parents (including their attitudes towards reading, as well as the extent of their use of reading for personal reasons), the number of books in the home, the accessibility of the school and public library or bookstores, the size and social position of the family, and family interests and hobbies or absence of them.

As we have already noted, when children never experience listening to stories or are never read to at home, when the family is so poor that buying books, or getting to where books are become impossible, and an overcrowded home allows no privacy

for reading, the development of the reading habit will almost inevitably be influenced negatively (Radebe, 1995).

### **3.3 Empirical Literature**

This section reviews examples of ECD programs in Kenya and the other parts of the world in order to totally understand the practicability of these programs. ECD programs can contribute to leveling the playing field for children who are socio-economically and otherwise disadvantaged. Indeed, research indicates that the benefits from quality early childhood experiences are greatest for those who are most marginalized (Barnett et al., 2005; Heckman, 2006). To maximize this effect, programs should focus first on the neediest and build to scale by gradually expanding to serve families and communities who have more resources. On the other hand programs that train people to provide high-quality ECD as small businesses stimulate the local economy and engage people while supporting children's development.

#### **3.3.1 Case Studies of ECD Programmes in Kenya**

There are numerous cases of ECD studies in Kenya. For instance in 1986 with support from the Aga Khan Foundation to address the needs of disadvantaged Muslim children in the Coast Province of Kenya, the Madrasa Early Childhood Development Program initiated a project to support communities as they develop sustainable, locally relevant preschools to serve the needs of the young children in their midst. Through a process of intensive communication and awareness rising, capacity building, technical support, evaluation, and reflection, communities are

guided through an implementation cycle and eventually “graduate” to sustainable, self-managing status.

Madrassa Resource Centers (MRCs) in Kenya, Zanzibar, and Uganda serve as support and technical assistance providers to communities throughout this process. The program has provided more than 20,000 children with access to a meaningful, high-quality, low-cost early childhood experience. Research indicates notable impacts on participants’ academic achievement and persistence in schooling compared with those of their peers in non- MRC schools.

The Madrassa Early Childhood Development Program refers to the first stage (the assessment element) of its implementation cycle as “contact.” The contact stage is an intensive process of asset and need exploration with community representatives and an opportunity to more broadly raise awareness of the importance of ECD programming. It is a moment for establishing community ownership of efforts moving forward. The assessment can take up to a year to complete, but they set the tone and clarify common understandings and commitments, which smoothes later implementation (Aga Khan Development Network, 2008; Mwaura & Mohamed, 2006).

### **3.3.2 Case Studies of ECD Programmes in Other Parts of the World**

In Turkey the Mother Child Education Program and Summer Preschool Program since 1991, has been providing a program of parent support that is intended to smooth the transition from home to school and ensure strong support at home for

children's cognitive and psychosocial development.

The three strands of the mother's program (parenting support, reproductive health education, and support for stimulating children's cognitive development) have been complemented since 2003 by a 9-week preschool program for extremely disadvantaged children about to enter school who have never participated in an organized preschool. Both programs are implemented by the Ministry of National Education, with support from the Mother Child Education Foundation, the Open Society Institute, Spunk Foundation International, and the Vodafone Turkey Foundation.

This multiple-strategy effort, administered through the education sector, has had significant positive effects on children's learning, retention in school, social integration, workforce participation, and income, as well as on their parents' child-rearing practices and self-confidence and home environments. Demographic priorities and a broad range of developmental factors are addressed through the integrated ecological approach of the programs, and the coalition of public and private partners involved in supporting the program has ensured a broad base for its acceptance and sustainability (Bekman & Kocak, 2010; Kagitcibasi et al., 2009). The program has since been adapted and adopted in countries as diverse as Switzerland and Saudi Arabia.

### **3.3.3 Case of Global**

The Going Global project, a partnership between UNICEF and Columbia and Yale Universities, has helped countries including Brazil, Ghana, Jordan, Paraguay, the

Philippines, and South Africa develop research based, locally meaningful standards for early learning and development that inform preschool curricula, teacher training, and monitoring and evaluation efforts for individual programs and national efforts.

A highly participatory standards development process ensures that stakeholders across the spectrum (including parents and children) are involved in discussing accountability and in setting expectations for meaningful performance (Kagan & Britto, 2005). Essentially, the early learning and development standards process allows each country to define its own framework, terminology, and dimensions such that national perspectives can be reflected while ensuring holistic child development.

### **3.4 Policy Review**

According to the Ministry of Education (1989), the role of ECD learning is to provide an informal education geared towards developing the child's mental capabilities and physical growth which will enable them develop good habits for effective living as an individual and a member of the society. It is geared towards developing a child's imagination, self reliance and thinking skills which enrich the child's experience in preparation to adequately cope with primary school life.

EDC learning is a significant aspect of basic education that provides a sound base for primary education and personality development which can contribute immensely to the child's future (MoEST, 2006). Although the central government is funding free primary education since the year 2003, ECD learning is under the care of parents, community, non-governmental organizations (NGO), religious organizations and

other private providers (MOEST, 2011) who must pay tuition fees and provide learning materials.

### **3.5 Literature Review Summary**

The available information from the government, scholars and the community reveal that there are serious issues that need proper and agent attention in the ECD learning. Unlike in the past African social system where parents and siblings were critical care givers and educators, today this crucial responsibility is largely left in the hands of teachers. However parents and siblings too, have a role to play. There are a lot of activities going on the area of ECD learning ranging from educational materials, schools and policy formulations, all aimed at enhancing and regulating the area. However, challenges are many due to varying interest of providers. For instance the ministry of education is interested in formulating policies that will lead to wholesome education in line with the country's development goals as stipulated in Vision 2030.

Parents want quality education for the children at the lowest cost and convenience. School owners are interested in producing competitive pupils who will pass next level entry exams well. This will market their institutions and guarantee them future business. Since exam is only based on academic performance, other aspects of growth are usually not well regarded and emphasized. Issues such as lack or insufficient nurturing and nutrition, parental interaction, spiritual development and social skills if not well addressed lead to developmental deficit that hampers their success in preschool, kindergarten and beyond.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The implementation of this project began in January 2013 during the CNA exercise. The project is implemented by members Kahawa community in collaboration with the researcher and Queenex publishers as the main host community. The project is implemented by a committee elected democratically by members together with volunteers. Together they form the management team. The project will start by drawing an implementation strategy which will ensure successful accomplishment of the goals and sustainability after the researcher exits from the management team.

The first phase of the project scheduled to end in October when the researcher will exit and leave it under the management of community members.

#### **4.1 Project Output**

It is expected that the children will benefit. In six months, time it expected that, up to 600 children from the estate would be reading from the library. It is also expect that the project will be successful in changing the reading habits of the children.

#### **4.2 Project Planning**

This section comprises of key activities which are planned to be carried out to ensure the success of the project. It will focus on inputs and outputs. Inputs are resources required to undertake the project in order to achieve the goals while output are the project deliverables.



The project was planned in conjunction with Queenex Publishers as the main sponsor and CBO. The key aim of the project is to incorporate and involve local community in finding solutions for their problems using internal resources. The projects is planned in such a way that it will be easy for the researcher and host CBO exit and leave it to run independently and in a sustainable manner.

#### 4.2.1 Implementation Plan

Before starting the project, the researcher conveyed a meeting of the community leaders who indentified key stakeholders and hummer for support to ensure maximum participation and support. During this meeting the issues discussed are securing a residential house to be used as community library, raising money to pay rent, hiring staff, reaching out to target group and fundraising for initial start-up fund. This was followed by sensitization campaign to get as many residents register to bring their children to the community library once it starts. The campaign focused on the benefits of introducing children to books as a way of building a solid base for their future.

**Table: 4.1: Implementation Plan**

Objectives	Activities Planned	Timeline
Identify a suitable house to set up the library	Raise initial money to pay rent	1 month
Identify key staff	Advertise and recruit staff	2 months
Project Implementation	Lay project foundation and roll it.	3Months

**Source:** From field research, 2012

Implementation plan timeframe, activities, resource materials and resource persons

#### 4.2.2 Project Inputs

There are various resources that were used in the project, which include finances, the premises for the library and also the people to support the project.

**Table 4.2: Inputs for the Project**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Input</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1	Identify children aged 3-11 years for recruitment to the library	Money for sensitization	Number of children enrolled
2	Equip the library	Books and toys bought or donated	Books in shelves
3	Create likes for books	Relevant books	Frequent use of the books

Source:

#### 4.2.3 Staffing Pattern

The project will have 4 permanent staff and at least 8 volunteers. Volunteers will mainly be required to work over the weekends and holidays when we expect children to be many because they will not be in school. Each of the employed staff will have job description to easy reporting and to avoid inefficiencies.

The staffing structure will include: Project coordinator, senior librarian, assistant librarian and general worker. The table below is a summary of their job description:

**Table 4.3: Staff Job Description for Kahawa Community Library and Resource Centre**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Supervisory role</b>
Project Coordinator	This will be leadership. As the Mced student, I undertook the full charge of the project, and project liaising with the children, the community and funders.	I also undertook supervisory and the implementation of the project to achieve the stated objectives.
Project Officer	The person will mainly secure the project documentation, and also follow up with the community for public support	This person will supervise the volunteers
Accounts Clerk	The person will ensure good bookkeeping	Be in charge of finance.
Librarian	The person will manage the library resources	Take care of book and other materials
Volunteers	These will support the children mainly but as this is a project, they can also be assigned support services	To give support to children.

Source:

### **4.3 Project Implementation**

Project implementation basically is carrying out the activities as outlined in the work plan. Implementing a community project is a complex activity because it requires participation and goodwill of as many people as possible. It also requires organizing a wide range of activities, overseeing of a team managing the budget in a transparency manner and constant communication to all stakeholders on the progress. This section provides the steps involved in implementing the budget and are divided into 3 parts as seen the Table 4.4

**Table 4.4 Project Budget Plan**

<b>Type of costs</b>	<b>Cost in Ksh</b>
Preparation cost: Allowance for trainers, recruiting staff, sourcing premises,	200,000.00
Direct costs: Salaries for staff, rent initial inventory	300,000.00
Administrative costs Training materials, publicity materials, refreshments and stationery	280,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>780,000.00</b>

**Source:** From field research, 2012

### **4.3.1 Project Implementation Report**

The project goals and objectives as establishing during CNA and prioritization stages are were actualized. This was found to be an important stage operation stage, through which the various targets were achieved, with tangible change and improvements. Thus this section highlights a report of activities involved in the implementing the library and resource centre project for Kahawa estate. The project implementation began in February 2013 to August 2013. After the community chose library and resource centre as their preferred project. The following achievements were recorded;

#### **1. Participatory Assessment**

After the research was conducted and concluded all the tools necessary for

assessment such as methodologies, questionnaires, and designs were put in place. Through research the needs were indentified, ranked and prioritized. This enabled the project to kick off.

## **2. Project Proposal**

It was proposed that a community library and resource centre be established in order to help create a solid reading culture among the students aged 3 to 12 years within the estate. The proposed cost was Ksh 780,000 as shown on the breakdown on page 44. However, it was agreed that much of the cost could be reduced significantly by getting volunteers and initial inventory in kind rather than money.

## **3. Preparation of the Implementation Plan**

This plan was prepared as a guide to enable the project implementation team gain more insights and know what task to be done and by whom at any given time. Monitoring and evaluation plan was done as well. Preparation of sensitization campaign was done to gain the goodwill of all stakeholders even before the actual project start operations.

## **4. Equipping the Library**

The library was equipped using resources generated within the community. It was found that many members of the community liked the idea of having the library and those who were having books they no longer used, were encouraged to donate, thereby contributing to the project. Implementation reports, objectives and activities

### 4.3.2 Project Implementation Chart

2013					
ACTIVITY/MONTH	Feb	March – April	May- June	June –July	August
Project Planning Writing					
Project Fundraising and staff recruitment					
Project Implementation and Monitoring					
Project Implementation. Monitoring continues/ feedback. evaluation					
Project completion/ and exit strategies					

This project was very broad and while most of the objectives were covered. This project was developed and completed within six months. The initial search for the project and the actual operation phase for the projects were interrelated.

### 4.3.3 Project Implementation Outcome

The call for donation in kind was very successful because parents including those who did not have children within the target age bracket donated books. However, it was increasingly hard to get cash donation. There only source of income was registration and membership fees which incidentally could only be realized when the

facility is fully operational. A local church, African Faith Church offered its facilities for the cause and some of the members offered to volunteer to do some of the services. This enabled the project to start on time.

However, there was unforeseen challenge with attendance and recruitment drive. Some community members associated the resource centre with the church and did not encourage their children to attend. This called for another strategy to educate the community members that the church is just hosting and not owning the project.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 PROJECT PARTICIPATORY MONITORING, EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides detailed information on the project monitoring, evaluation and sustainability including the role of stakeholders in the entire process. Participatory method is particularly important because it involves all the stakeholders to ensure a communal ownership and responsibility of the project.

This project provides the details of the project monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring would constitute the day to day activities while the evaluation will cover the overall project activities over a period of six months. The monitoring initiative would ensure that the on a continuous basis the reading is actualized; this would ensure both the necessary books are available, the student are regularly making use of the facility and that the community is supporting the initiative.

Monitoring would therefore give a detailed understanding and improvement of the project and review areas that were not working well, while at the same time affirming what is working well. While evaluation, come as the end, it will be an important element in the project as it would give a compressive feedback about the entire project cycle.

#### **5.1 Participatory Monitoring**

Participatory monitoring is the systematic recording and periodic analysis of information that has been chosen by insiders with help of outsiders. The key



objective of participatory monitoring was to provide information during the life of the project, so that adjustment and modifications could be made if need be. It provides a broad picture so that all stakeholders can stay updated and know if project is progressing as planned.

Initially, the project objective were clearly defined and their potential to succeed reviewed and understood also, the management of the project was clearly discussed with delineation of roles, and as the one in charge, I took full responsibility. Other factors discussed include the project time table, and also a clear process in every stage so as to secure the ownership. The procedures for recruitment were also discussed with the community. All this provided that at each stage everything was thoroughly securitized.

### **5.2.1 Evaluation**

The key objective of evaluation was to provide useful feedback to the project and was done at the end of the project. Its function was to give feedback and also get to know the areas for further improvement or affirming.

### **5.2.2 Types of Evaluation**

The importance participatory evaluation was the key, as this was community based project. The formative evaluation, focused on the objective at the start while the summative was at the end. The end results were to look at the prudent use of the resources, within the project plan, and the actual implementation. The role and the execution of duties were quite important to the project. Organisational and the

challenges as well as the clear accountability in term of time and resources and the real results related to children were the most critical.

### **5.2.2 Project Sustainability**

The sustainability of the project of Kahawa community resource centre is predictable due to several factors. First education is basic human right that is treasured and promoted by the government, non-governmental organisations and members of the community due to the vital role it plays in the national and individual wellbeing. The National development goal dubbed Vision 2030 is hinged on universal education as an important pillar.

Secondly, the community has shown and demonstrated its willingness to support the project by donating resources to be used. The fact that even parents without children in the target group supported is a true sense of community commitment to the project. The challenge of raising liquid cash to start the project on an independent project with its own staff without any affiliation to a body that may raise concern is a temporal one. It will be overcome in the short term when many members join and contribute membership fees. It is also expected that many people will contribute when they see its initial benefits.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter highlights a summary of all project activities in a summary form starting from participatory assessment, literature review, the project implementation, participatory monitoring and evaluation as well as the sustainability of the project.

It will also give the recommendations based on the research findings, research interpretations and deductions. The challenges and lesson learnt during the interpretation will also be put into consideration.

#### **6.2 Conclusion**

The project of establishing a community library and resource centre at Kahawa estate was planned after a comprehensive community need assessment CNA was carried out and needs listed. The needs were then listed down and ranked according to the priority in view of the available resources to implement it and the benefit to the society.

The establishment of a community library and resource centre was ranked the highest on a pair-wise ranking. It was argued that education for the children is the best gift a society can give to the future leaders and pillars of the society. The need assessment was aimed at identifying a project that will solve the most pressing need of the society and at the same time solicit community support by a way of involving them in the whole process.

This study adopted an exploratory, participatory and observation research design. Exploratory studies are key ways of finding out what is happening to seek new insights, to ask questions and to access a situation in a new dimension. Robson (2002) notes that exploratory studies are used to explore relatively unknown fields. Interviews were conducted to estate residents, leaders, teachers, parents and children focusing on priority needs and issues in the estate.

Focus group discussion is a form of structured and guided group discussions involving stakeholders with knowledge and interest of a particular topic. Focus groups provided an opportunity to brainstorm and get the feelings of the key community members.

A meeting was conducted in the estate. The participants of the meeting evaluated the existing needs and resources of the community that can be used to address those needs. According to Goode J. W and Paul K. (1989) science begins with observation and must ultimately return to observation for its final validation. Observation was used to analyze children in school and non school setting in order to identify observable needs and stressors. Questionnaires were the main research tool used.

The intention was to study a representative sample of the schools in the study area. As Gay (1987) states, "It is important that the sample be representative of the larger population from which it was selected". Since it was not economically possible to reach the entire population in Kahawa estate, sampling was chosen as the best alternative. For practical purpose of research on the preschool children learning

habits three samples were considered necessary, namely, the parents, teachers and the children.

Probability sampling (simple random) was used to get the schools and non probability sampling (purposive) used to get the parents, teachers and the children. In this type of sampling, the researcher primarily selects information-rich cases for study which was a situation applicable for the Kahawa quota.

Having secured permission from the head of schools and other stakeholders of Kahawa community, the researcher proceeded with the administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were personally delivered and collected from schools. Information from teachers was gathered through interviewing. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to explore the needs and views of the community.

Data collected from the field were coded and cleaned to remove outliers or missing values and categorized manually according to the questionnaire items using frequency distribution tables and percentages. Simple descriptive statistics such as percentages have an advantage over more complex statistics since they can easily be understood especially when making results known by a variety of readers. The coded data was then transferred to a computer sheet and was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Martin and Acuna (2002) observe that SPSS is able to handle large amounts of data; it is time saving and also quite efficient. Frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts

were used to analyze the quantitative data. The responses to open ended items (qualitative data) in form of phrases and words were organized followed by creating categories, themes and patterns related to research questions. This was analyzed and reported by descriptive narrative (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The results of the data gave the researcher a basis to make conclusions about the study.

The implementation of this project began in January 2013 during the CNA exercise. The project is implemented by members Kahawa community in collaboration with the researcher and Queenex publishers as the main host community. The project is implemented by a committee elected democratically by members together with volunteers. Together they form the management team. The project will start by drawing an implementation strategy which will ensure successful accomplishment of the goals and sustainability after the researcher exits from the management team.

The first phase of the project scheduled to end in October when the researcher will exit and leave it under the management of community members. It was expected that up to 600 children from the estate would be reading from the library. It is also expect that the project will be successful in changing the reading habits of the children. Although this target was not achieved within the planned time, appreciable progress had been made.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

The areas of children education is very important to the national development and cohesion and therefore there is need for more intensive research to find appropriate

ways of funding and promoting good reading habits. Community initiatives can go a long way in increasing access and enhancing the learning of children. However, a research need to be conducted in conjunction with the communities involved to ensure they participate in the whole process. Even in absence of key resources, the society can readily improvise and innovate if they are directly involved in the project implementation. Project implementation should be done in a transparent way so as to attract the involvement of other stakeholders in the community.

Monitoring plan and tools should be done well and in a participatory manner so that the project progress can be tracked and any deviation corrected on time and in a professional manner. The government should involve the community in education and other matters affecting the society at grassroots level. It is necessary to conduct research and come up with tailor made solution for individual groups and communities since the needs are as diverse as the communalities within the national geographic settings.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A : Interview Schedule For Pre-School Children

*Dear Parent/ Teacher,*

*The data collected in questionnaire is purely for academic use and will be treated with due confidentiality. The child will be assisted to answer the questions.*

#### Section A:

Name of school -----

Class: Baby Class  Nursery  Pre-unit

Age of pupils: 3  4  5  6

Gender of pupils: male  female

#### Section B: Attitude Towards School and Learning

1. Do you like school? Yes  No

2. Do you like reading? Yes  No

3. Do you have story books? Yes  No

4. What would you like as a present? Book  Toy

5. Does your mum or dad read books to you?  No

6. What do you like most in your school? -----

7. What don't you like in school?-----

8. Do you read books at home? Yes  No

9. What would you rather do during your free time?

Watch TV  Play with friends  Read a book

## Appendix B: Interview Schedule For Preschool Teachers

Dear Teacher,

*The data collected in questionnaire is purely for academic use and will be treated with due confidentiality.*

### Section A:

1. Name of pre-school:

.....

2. Gender: Male  Female

3. How long have you been a pre-school teacher? Under 1 year

1-5 Yrs  6-10 Yrs  Others

.....

4. What is your level of education?

Primary

Secondary

Diploma

Degree

Post Graduate

### Section B:

1. What do children like doing most in

school?.....

2. What do children not like about school? .....

3. Do children talk about their books with others? Yes  No

4. What major challenges do children face in school, which if addressed would make them love school and reading more?

- a. -----
- b. -----

5. What major challenges do children face outside the school which if addressed would make them love school more?

- a. -----
- b. -----
- c. -----
- d. -----

**Appendix C: Interview Schedule For Parents**

Dear Parent

*The data collected in questionnaire is purely for academic use and will be treated with due confidentiality.*

**SECTION A**

- 1. Gender: Male  Female
- 2. Age of parents: 20-25  26-30  31- 40   
Others -----
- 3. Occupation-----
- 4. Level of education

Primary

Secondary

Diploma

Degree

Post Graduate

### SECTION B

1. Are you an avid reader?

Yes  No

2. If yes, does your child see you read? Yes  No

3. Do you read books for your child?

Yes  No

4. If yes to No. 3 how does he/she react?

Get relaxed and listen

Desire to read too

Get bored

Refuse to listen

5. Do you buy books other than those recommended by school to your child?

Yes  No

6. How does your child react when told to read?

Do it readily

Refuse

Ignore

Get angry

7. Does your child like school? Yes  No

8. What major challenges do children face at home, which if addressed would make them love school and reading more?

- a. -----  
-----
- b. -----
- c. -----

9. What major challenges do children face outside home which if addressed would make them love school and reading more?

- a. -----
- b. -----
- c. -----
- d. -----