

Challenges and mitigation measures on feeding programme of vulnerable learners in early childhood development centres: a case of Kisumu Central Sub-County, Kenya

Early childhood education is an important stage in learning since it forms the foundation in which knowledge acquisition is laid. Its success is emancipated in the completion of the approved course by the learners; however, there has been indication that there is generally low completion rate among the ECDE learners especially the vulnerable group. Feeding of the vulnerable learners while at school is envisaged to be important in promoting enrolment, retention and eventual completion of ECDE programme. The objective of this study was to investigate the challenges and mitigation measures of feeding programmes in ECDE centres, with regard vulnerable learners. The study was guided by Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. It employed a descriptive survey design. The sample consisted of 62 lead ECDE teachers and 20 head teachers; questionnaires, interview schedules and observation checklist were used to collect data. The findings of the study show that, although a significant proportion (89.1%) of the ECDE centres in Kisumu Central Sub-County had feeding programmes, most of them were poorly equipped and understaffed; both Government support and community involvement were low and inadequate. However, it was established that several measures including effective mobilization of stakeholders, development of school Income Generating Activity (IGA), proper planning and use of locally available foodstuffs were identified as possible measures to promote the programme. It is hoped that these findings, apart from enriching the existing knowledge, it may be used by the relevant policy makers to improve the programme.