

## **A Study of Early Childhood Development in Kenya: Case Study of Kipungani Village in Lamu Island**

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This paper aims to determine the current situation of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Kenya, and the background of issues on repetition at ECD stage. Kenya is known for its development in ECD in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The roll of ECD in developing countries is as a preparation to primary education focusing on playing and learning from experience. The Kenyan government emphasizes this roll and is trying to include ECD as a part of basic education. However, it was revealed that the ECD educators teach according to the demands and expectations of parents, and sometimes this has led to “Early Schooling,” e.g. testing small children.

Kipungani village in Lamu District, my research field, is a fishermen’s village, where traditional lifestyle still remains. There are many pupils who repeat the same class in Nursery. Repetition differs from the concept of ECD, but there is no demonstrative research on repetition of pupils at ECD. Therefore, I tried to determine the reality of repetition in nursery through IST method and semi-structured interviews.

As a result, it was revealed that the ECD educators impose an examination to promote students to the next class according to parents’ demand, and when the pupil cannot pass the exam, they must repeat the same class next year. I also researched the parents’ expectations toward education to understand the reason for that demand. From this research, I found two factors that directly influenced the parents’ need for examination in Nursery. One is strict implementation of automatic promotion in primary school without any repetition and the other is immigration. These factors demand that Nursery class a conduct examinations to guarantee reading, writing, and other skills. The Community network in the village also has a major impact on parents’ attitude toward primary school and Nursery class. They regard problems in the school as their own problems to solve, as in other problems in the village, even those that come from the outside.

Kenyan ECD has developed with the local community, therefore, they tend to change their system and pedagogy according to parents’ and the local community’s demand. We should conduct demonstrative research focusing more on local reality and its effects on children.