



Implementation of the Revised Pre-Primary Education Curriculum in Tanzania: Evidence from a National Monitoring Study

Godson Lema

Director of Curriculum Design and Development, Tanzania institute of education, P.o.Box 35094, Dar es Salaam –Tanzania.

***Corresponding Author**

Godson Lema

Article History

Received: 16.06.2026

Accepted: 29.07.2026

Published: 25.08.2026

Abstract: Successful implementation of curriculum reforms is highly dependent on teacher readiness, availability of teaching and learning resources, supportive learning environment and monitoring systems. After the updated pre-primary education curriculum was adopted in 2023, Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) undertook a national monitoring exercise to evaluate its implementation in the Mainland Tanzania. The implementation of the revised curriculum was explored and key successes, issues and policy action points were captured. A cross sectional descriptive research design was adopted, whereby quantitative data was collected digitally using Kobo Toolbox from pre-primary education teachers in all 26 regions of Mainland Tanzania. The overall number of teachers involved in the study was 843. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and findings were interpreted in light of the contemporary literature on curriculum implementation. The results show promising advances in a number of areas. The majority of teachers had participated in training on the implementation of the curriculum, the teaching and learning of the curriculum was mostly learner-centred, and teachers were very innovative in creating teaching and learning materials which are available locally. However, there are still considerable implementation issues to address. Limitations of instructional resources, lack of teaching and learning materials, insufficient digital integration and uneven access to quality professional development were many of the schools' reports. Schools were perceived as safe places, but there were not enough facilities to adequately support competency-based learning. The study concludes that the revised pre-primary curriculum has laid a solid ground for its successful implementation in Tanzania, however, proper investment in teacher professional development, instructional materials, educational infrastructure and monitoring systems will be necessary to sustain successful implementation. The results will yield empirical evidence which can be used to inform policy, implementation, and future educational reforms in Tanzania and other developing countries. countries pursuing competency-based education.

Keywords: curriculum implementation, pre-primary education, competency-based curriculum, teacher professional development and curriculum reform.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) (CC BY-NC 4.0)

Cite this article:

Lema, G., (2026). Implementation of the Revised Pre-Primary Education Curriculum in Tanzania: Evidence from a National Monitoring Study. *ISAR Journal of Science and Technology*, 4(8), 25-38.

Introduction

Education systems around the world are starting to shift towards developing curriculum to develop twenty-first century competencies. The traditional knowledge-based curricula is slowly being replaced by competency based curricula that focus on skills for lifelong learning and sustainable development such as creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, digital literacy and problem solving skills (UNESCO, 2022). These reforms acknowledge that education should not only be a process of transferring knowledge, but also be a process for applying knowledge in "real life" and adapting to the rapidly changing social, technological and economic environments (OECD, 2020a).

Early childhood education is emerging as one of the most important focuses of the reforms as the cognitive, emotional, linguistic, physical and social building blocks that impact children's future educational success. There is a wealth of evidence that good pre-primary education has positive impacts on school readiness, school performance, social integration and economic productivity (UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2022). As a result, the quality of curriculum, teacher preparation, learning environment, and assessment systems have been a priority in early years of learning for governments all over the world to focus on improving.

The need to enhance learning outcomes and tackle persistent concerns about an education to labour market mismatch, has driven curriculum reform in Sub-Saharan Africa to shift the emphasis over time to competency-based education. For example, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Ghana and Tanzania have adopted revised curricula that focus on a learner-centred approach to learning, that prioritise hands-on learning experiences, that incorporate formative assessment and that also include inclusive education. For instance, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Ghana and Tanzania have adopted revised curricula that espouse a learner-centred approach to learning, prioritise hands-on learning experiences, incorporate formative assessment and include inclusive education. However, these policy changes are not reflected in countries' experience of implementation due to a variety of challenges, including weak teacher preparation, limited resources for teachers to use, overcrowded classrooms, and weak monitoring systems (World Bank, 2022).

One of the most comprehensive curriculum reforms in Tanzania in the past few decades is in its process. The revised curriculum in 2023 aims to build competency-based learning competencies starting from pre-primary, primary, secondary level and teachers education. The revised pre-primary curriculum focuses on holistic child development, play and active learning, inclusion, formative assessment, integration of cross-cutting issues and more exploiting local

teaching and learning resources. The reforms have been designed to be in line with the National Curriculum Framework and the Government's overall vision to enhance the quality of education and meet Sustainable Development Goals 4 (MoEST, 2023).

In a quest to improve the classroom practice, Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) kicked off the country-wide teacher orientation programs, produced new curriculum documents and instructional materials and established continuous monitoring mechanisms to monitor progress towards implementation.

Internationally, however, it has been found that there are many different and interconnected factors which impact on curriculum implementation, such as teacher competence, leadership support, school infrastructure, availability of teaching materials, involvement of the community and continuous professional development (Fullan, 2020; OECD, 2020a). Despite well-designed curricula, if there is a lack of understanding of the challenges to their implementation upfront, desired outcomes may not be met. Hence, the need to monitor the curriculum on a continuous basis becomes an indispensable part of curriculum reform as it offers information and data to the policymaker for quick decision making and re-allocation of the resources.

One of the first attempts on collecting a broad set of information on the implementation of revised pre-primary curriculum in the Mainland Tanzania is from the national monitoring exercise undertaken by Tanzania Institute of Education. The study gathered data from teachers from all 26 regions on teacher characteristics, professional preparation, instructional practices, learning environment, instructional materials, assessment practices, and community involvement, among others, the use of ICTs, and challenges experienced in implementation.

This study offers nationwide evidence of the early implementation of Tanzania revised pre-primary curriculum as opposed to many of the studies conducted in individual districts/regions. The early implementation experiences are especially useful, since early success is often a key to subsequent long-term success with curriculum reforms. The results are thus not only a contribution to the improvement of the implementation in Tanzania, but also to the extensive literature on curriculum reform in developing countries.

Statement of the Problem

The curriculum reforms are large investments, mainly made to raise the quality of the education, the children's performance and national development. But studies always show that more often than not, what matters is the successful implementation of the policy and curriculum design has a lesser role to play (Fullan 2020). In many developing countries, implementing curriculum changes is challenging

due to a variety of factors, such as lack of teacher training, limited teacher skills, inadequate materials, poor institutional support, and low teacher motivation, as well as differences between the policy and the classroom (UNESCO, 2022; World Bank, 2022).

The pre-primary education curriculum was revised in Tanzania and officially introduced to enhance competency-based education and enhance child's development holistically. Much work has been done to prepare teachers, develop new curriculum and share curriculum documents. Despite these efforts, there has not been much empirical evidence available on the degree of the implementation of the new curriculum in the country as a whole. Previous research has tended to be more specific, with most studies examining only one aspect or isolated area of curriculum reform, and few providing policymakers with a national picture of progress in implementing the reform and the areas where interventions are needed.

If not addressed with systematic national monitoring, problems with implementation of the curriculum can be left unnoticed until they have a negative impact on teaching quality and learning outcomes. In addition, variations in teacher readiness, school facilities and learning materials might lead to unequal implementation of the curriculum, which will affect the quality of education and lead to unequal educational opportunities. Therefore, there is need for extensive empirical evidence to establish and find out the level of implementation of the revised pre-primary curriculum across Mainland Tanzania, and what factors are conducive and/or limiting to implementing the curriculum successfully.

This study is tackling this gap in knowledge by examining data from a nationwide monitoring exercise undertaken by the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) that can be used to feed into policy decisions, improve curriculum implementation and to support ongoing pre-primary education improvement in Tanzania.

Literature Review

Curriculum Reform and the Shift towards Competency-Based Education

The publication of the CCE has spurred efforts to reform the curriculum, making it more relevant and of higher quality. Focus on the ability to remember facts and information has been replaced by the importance of having learners who can think, understand and apply knowledge in the 21st century. They must be able to communicate, work with others in a group, think critically, problem solve, be creative and apply their knowledge to new or unique situations. Accordingly, in the OECD Learning Compass 2030, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are considered within the lens of the development of learner agency and individual and collective

well-being. In this context, curriculum reform can be expected to enable learners to take an active role in their learning process in contrast to adoption of a passive form. (OECD, 2020)

The intent and implementation of competency based curricula is different than traditional content-based curricula. Competency-based curricula focus on what they can show, do or produce following instruction, while traditional curricula focus on the content and performance in tests. This will involve teachers planning activities to be done in the real world, furthering participation, linking learning to real life and utilizing assessment as an ongoing tool for enhancing learning. The curriculum content, pedagogy, assessment, teacher training, teaching materials and school management must then be in line with one another for a successful competency-based curriculum.

But, alterations to curriculum documents do not automatically bring about changes in practice. Implementing a policy requires putting the policy intentions into practice, in the daily interactions that take place between teachers, learners, learning materials and learning communities. This can be undermined through reforms which are implemented faster than teachers and institutions can take them in. Thus, curriculum reform is not a mere transfer of new curriculum materials and textbooks, but a process of change which needs to be implemented systemwide. To implement curriculum, teachers need to be well-prepared, curriculum expectations need to be clear, ongoing professional support is needed, and leadership and resources need to be supportive to the competencies that will be expected the student to achieve.

The revised pre-primary curriculum in Tanzania as a whole is a sign of this change towards competency-based education. There is a focus on all aspects of child development, play, active learning, suitable assessment, the use of local resources, cross cutting issues and meaningful involvement of children. The Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) assisted in implementing the program in the following ways: curriculum development, preparation of instructional materials, teacher training and monitoring at the national level.

Importance of Quality Pre-Primary Education

Pre-primary education is a very critical phase of the implementation of a curriculum; the cumulative process of development in the early years of life. The experiences children have during this time affect their language, early literacy/numeracy, physical coordination, emotional regulation, and social interaction and preparedness for formal school. Good quality early childhood education can therefore provide a basis for further educational involvement, success and welfare.

The importance of pre-primary education is also highlighted by recent international evidence that the value of pre-primary education is related to quality and not merely to enrolment. Making the programme available but with no trained teachers, or safe environment, or the appropriate programme and materials, can result in children being placed in programmes which may be inadequate to support their development. Quality standards, sufficient funding, educator preparation and monitoring of children's experiences and growth should be in place wherever possible when providing universal services.

Quality pre-primary education is typically engaging and developmentally appropriate, and is holistic. Doesn't view young children as mini versions of primary school children. Rather it acknowledges children learn from moving, playing, communicating, imitating, exploring, doing and handling concrete materials with others. Content needs to be therefore integrated in the curriculum to include social-emotional development, language, early literacy and numeracy, creativity, health, physical development, environmental awareness and values.

Teacher Professional Development

One-off trainings are rarely effective in changing behaviour in the classroom, although initial orientation is crucial when a new curriculum is introduced. Professional learning is typically ongoing, hands-on, and builds community, and is linked to teachers' work. It should enable teachers to try out new strategies, think about what is difficult and what they have learnt and to take advice and guidance from other teachers. Up-to-date research syntheses suggest that professional learning that is comprised of curriculum knowledge and active, collaborative, contextualised and technology supported learning.

The curriculum content and how young children learn must be part of the pre-primary teachers' professional development. Topics covered will include play based pedagogy, inclusive teaching, formative assessment, classroom organisation, child protection, development of low cost instructional materials and engaging with families. The experiences suggest that peer learning, communities of practice, coaching and an adapted training format, such as 'local' approaches, can help build teachers' confidence in the use of play-based pedagogy in early learning in Africa.

Play Based/Learner-centred Pedagogy

It is known that play is a key characteristic of high quality early childhood education. Children use play to explore, express, interpret, communicate, negotiate and problem solve their social and physical environments. Play allows for cognitive, linguistic, physical, social and emotional development to take place simultaneously as opposed to as subject outcomes. It can also boost children's confidence

and motivation as they are able to take an active part in the learning process and make some decisions in the learning experience.

But it doesn't imply that children are being left to their own devices. Teachers plan and create learning environments, introduce materials, observe children's interactions and ask questions and extend children's thinking. Effective play is thus intentional teaching – the teacher provides opportunities for children to explore and makes links between what they are doing and curriculum competencies. This involves professional judgement and appropriate materials and manageable learning contexts.

The use of games, stories and practical learning among teachers in Tanzania is encouraging as they make up a high percentage of the teachers. It implies general agreement on 'Learning Centred' approaches, and consistency between curriculum intentions and curriculum provision. However, their reported use does not necessarily indicate the quality of the use of these resources or how often they are used because teachers might be aware of what they are supposed to incorporate instead of doing it. It would thus be useful to see how this is actually achieved in classrooms through classroom observation to determine if the participatory approaches are truly enabling children to be more representative in relation to their agency, communication, exploration and inclusion.

Less than half of the respondents used explanation, board work and writing. There is a role for direct teaching in early learning but this should be used sparingly and when necessary, to ensure that explorations and interactions are not diminished. This is where continuous professional development can assist teachers to have a balance of guided learning and play, conversation, movement, practical activity and child initiated learning.

Assessment in Pre-Primary Education

Assessment should be used in early years education to help children to learn rather than to compare children. This can be done in a variety of ways such as observation, conversations, children's work, practical activities, children's communication and systematic recording of children's development. This approach assists teachers to recognise children's strengths and emerging skills and areas in need of further development. The assessment should be continuous, child friendly and should be integrated with the normal classroom work.

Competency-based curricula emphasize the importance of formative assessment since competencies are acquired over time, and can be expressed in various ways. The teachers should know what types of evidence to observe, how to document evidence and how to use the evidence to modify instruction. Assessment guidance should, therefore, be

closely linked to the competencies within the curriculum and have manageable tools for recording.

However, teachers in reality may find it challenging to implement formative assessment in a large class, with little or no training, and/or if record-keeping is cumbersome. Monitoring should thus include: the quality as well as the occurrence of assessment, its frequency, its inclusiveness and its use in making decisions about instruction. In response to this, the Tanzanian report introduces assessment practices as one of the areas of monitoring as part of curriculum implementation, thus recognising that curriculum implementation is a pedagogical process and that the process of evaluation is also part of this.

Integration of ICT in Early Childhood Education

Digital technology can be used to assist in the implementation of a curriculum, providing more opportunities for teachers to access professional resources, teaching ideas, communication and distance-learning opportunities. It can also help collect digital data and monitor the curriculum and disseminate teaching guidance. Digital competence is recognized as a key part of teachers' professional development in the international frameworks.

However, the use of technology in the pre-primary classroom needs to be done in a thoughtful manner. Digital tools are not to replace physical playing, talking, moving and interacting with real objects. The learning value of them is based on appropriateness, purposefulness, teacher competence and equity of access. In many contexts, it might be the most current benefit of ICT to be to enable teachers to enhance their own professional learning and share resources— not to increase children's screen time.

Adopting digital integration can also exacerbate inequalities between schools with regard to access to electricity, connectivity, devices and technical support. What is needed, in a realistic approach, is an integrated program of methods - offline and online - with a practical approach to digital-pedagogy training and the technology must be ready to support the curriculum needs. The application of Kobo Toolbox in the monitoring of the ministries of Health, Social Welfare and Education, and the focus on Smartclass and online platforms in the report shows administrative potential of digital systems, and opportunities to build out teacher support.

Methodology

Research Approach

The study was of quantitative type, aimed at studying the implementation of the revised Pre-primary curriculum in Mainland Tanzania. A quantitative approach was deemed appropriate since the monitoring exercise aimed for getting numerical evidence on curriculum implementation, teacher's

characteristics, teacher training, access to instructional resources, pedagogical practices, assessment, community participation, use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and challenges in implementing the curriculum.

The method allowed the team to achieve a summary of the responses of a great number of pre-primary education teachers and compare the conditions of implementation in the different dimensions. Quantitative data proved very useful with identifying areas that needed policy intervention, gaps in the implementation and dominant patterns.

Research Design

A descriptive survey design of cross sectional was adopted. The second round of national monitoring took place from July 2024 – January 2025 when data was collected. The design gave a quick overview of the curriculum being implemented at the early stage of the implementation of the revised pre-primary curriculum in Tanzania Mainland.

Descriptive survey was suitable as the study was not an experimental study in which any variables were manipulated or there was no experimental intervention. Rather than this, it reported teachers' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of the curriculum in their current school context. The design also enabled the gathering of standardised information from the interviewees in all 26 regions in Mainland Tanzania.

The study looked at a number of factors related to implementation, but primarily it was descriptive, rather than causal. Thus, the results provide indications of patterns and conditions for implementation, but do not directly demonstrate cause and effect relationships between the different teacher characteristics, the various school resources, pedagogical practices, and children's learning outcomes.

The sample was not randomly drawn (e.g. by probability sampling) so the above unequal regional distribution is not surprising. Data were analysed using statistical software SPSS Statistics and descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were calculated for each of the monitoring indicators.

Study Area

The study was carried out in all the 26 administrative regions of the Mainland Tanzania. The geographical coverage would have been used as a tool to generate national level evidence on the implementation of the revised pre-primary education curriculum. It also enabled the monitoring exercise to collect variation between the educational conditions of both urban and rural areas, geographically remote and relatively well resourced areas.

There was an imbalance in the distribution of participants, across the region. The contribution of the three regions of Simiyu (15.9%) respondents, Morogoro (14.12%) and Lindi (9.49%) was found to be higher than the others. There was also a relatively large number of people from Tanga, Kigoma and Shinyanga. The other areas which included the districts of Njombe, Mara and Arusha had few respondents compared to other areas.

There is unequal regional participation and this has an impact on the overall national results as the larger the size of the region, the more it influences the overall national result. As a consequence, the results are not meant to be interpreted as being statistically representative for each region but as evidence from a national monitoring sample.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was gathered electronically, through the use of Kobo Toolbox. The electronic survey instrument (e-questionnaire) enabled the answers to be entered directly into an electronic data collection system, without having to be written on paper first. The gathered data was then put into the Tanzania Institute of Education Data Warehouse to be managed and analysed.

Collecting the data was beneficial in a number of ways in digital format. It has saved time on manual data entry, enabled data collection in geographically more remote areas, enhanced the quality of data submitted and helped to adequately organise submitted data for timely aggregation of national monitoring data.

Results and Discussion

This section shares some of the results of the national monitoring exercise of the implementation of the revised pre-primary education curriculum in Mainland Tanzania.

Analysis is structured around study aims and key dimensions of implementing the curriculum.

The data was summarised using frequencies and percentages of the participants' responses. The number of the responses that were valid varied from item to item, due to some respondents not answering all the questions. The results should thus be presented in terms of the denominator presented for each variable and not the denominator of the overall sample of 843 participants.

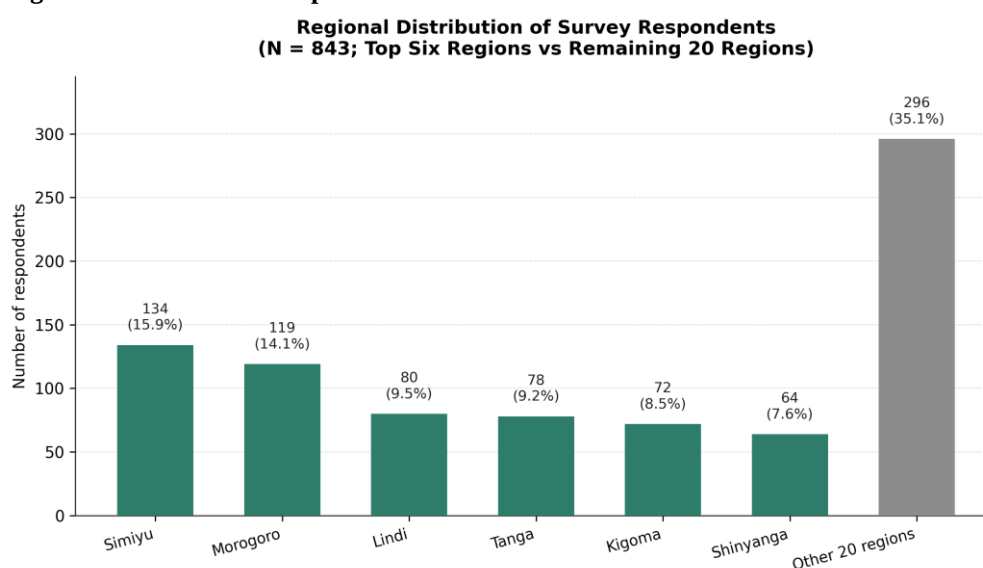
The percentages of participants in the CDC's Early Intervention (EI) system by region.

All the 26 regions in Mainland Tanzania participated in the monitoring exercise. We had a total of 843 respondents with a regional distribution. Simiyu had the highest number of respondents (134) accounting for 15.90% of the total respondents. The next highest, in terms of the number of respondents, were Morogoro with 119 (14.12%) and Lindi with 80 (9.49%).

The respondents were split between Tanga (78 or 9.25%), the Kigoma (72 or 8.54%) and Shinyanga (64 or 7.59%). There was significantly lesser participation from several other regions. Njombe had around 0.24% of the sample, Mara around 0.12% and Arusha was around 0.12% of the sample.

The use of all the Mainland regions ensured wide geographical coverage of the study. However the large variations of sample size among regions will cause overall results to be more representative of some regions than others. The regional distribution does not necessarily mean that there are different levels of implementation of curriculum. It mainly illustrates the status of the respondents that participated in the monitoring.

Table 1: Selected regional distribution of respondents



The outcomes showed that monitoring implementation has gone national but, in the future, monitoring activities should be more proportional in reaching out to all regions.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic characteristics of teachers are the teacher's attributes that affects the effectiveness of implementing the revised Pre-primary Curriculum in this study. The latter consist of: sex, teaching qualifications and teaching experience, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

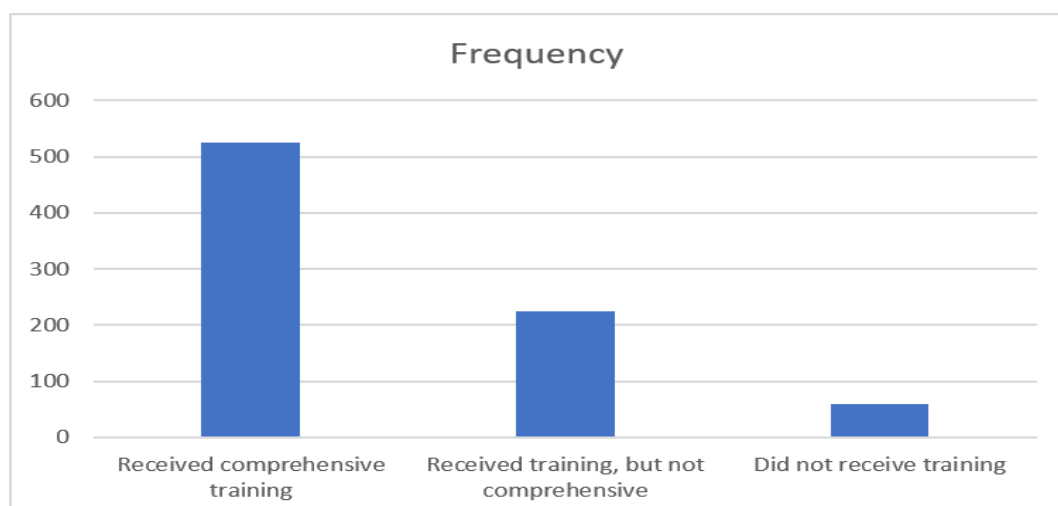
Characteristic		n	Valid %
Gender	Women	416	51.49
	Men	392	48.51
Qualifications:	Certificate	450	55.69
	Diploma	262	32.43
	Bachelor's degree	87	10.77
	Master's degree	7	0.87
	Doctorate	2	0.25
Experience:	1–5 years	484	59.90
	6–10 years	173	21.41
	11–20 years	123	15.22
	21+ years	28	3.47

The gender distribution of the respondents was balanced, but the analysis was limited to teachers with certificate and diploma qualifications who made up 88.12% of all the valid responses. Additionally, the teaching staff in the study was relatively new to their profession with 59.90% reporting that they had 5 years or less experience teaching. This profile also emphasizes the need for support for continuous professional learning since there is still a need for some implementers to be consolidating classroom practice and adjusting to revised classroom expectations.

Training on the Revised Curriculum

The teacher preparation question tapped participants' experience of teacher preparation by asking them if they had been trained on implementation of the revised curriculum. The respondents were 808, with 524 or 62.16% getting comprehensive training. Another 224 (26.57%) had been trained, but felt that training was not long enough. 7.12% (60) of the respondents said they received no training.

Table 3: Teacher Training on the Revised Curriculum



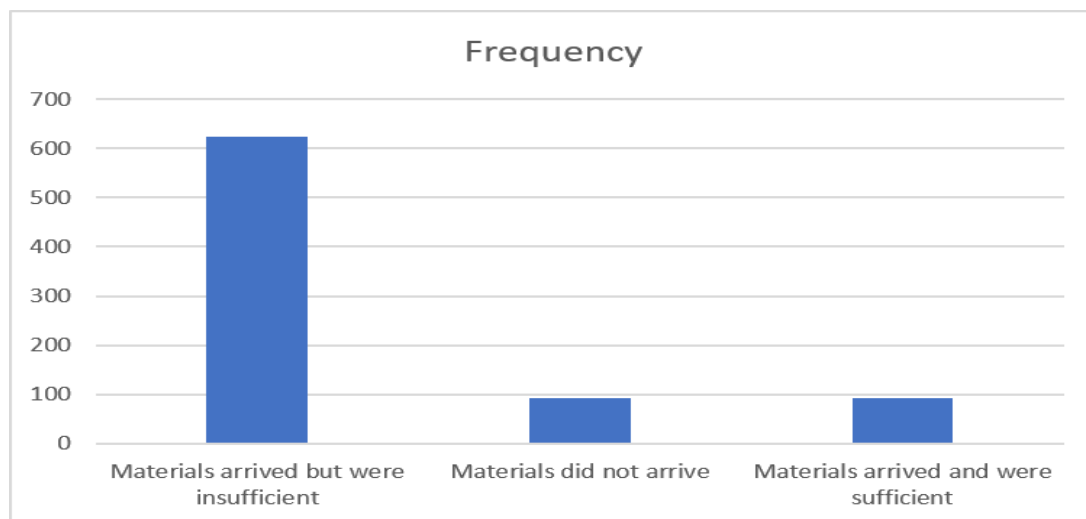
This is a significant accomplishment as nearly 2/3 of respondents found to be having full training. It suggests that there was a considerable number of teachers during the initial implementation phase who were oriented towards the national curriculum. However, there were 284 teachers altogether who didn't get enough training or any training at all. The number of valid respondents represents over one-third of all respondents. These discrepancies in preparation could be factors in the inconsistent interpretation and implementation of the curriculum from school to school. The results indicate that initial training should be accompanied by the following continuous professional development: MEWAKA, mentoring in the schools, professional learning communities, demonstration lessons and digital learning platforms. Training should be targeted at

skills for classroom application rather than just on the explanation of the curriculum documents.

Availability and Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials

Teachers were inquired if the material provided to schools for teaching and learning is available and adequate. The majority of the respondents (623 teachers or 73.90%) reported that materials were received in their school, but not enough. 11.03% (nine out of 93) of the respondents reported that the teaching and learning materials were not delivered to their schools at all. Just 10.91% (92 teachers) indicated that the materials were delivered to their schools and met 100% of their needs.

Table 4: Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials



One of the most prominent implementation issues that arose was the lack of teaching resources. While distribution mechanisms seemed to be working in many schools, there was insufficient amount of resources. The lack of objects, pictures, games, manipulatives, storybooks and practical materials becomes significant in pre-primary education as the children learn from interaction with these. Small numbers of resources may result in sharing of resources with many children or teachers having to explain them verbally.

Results also imply that there are unequal implementation conditions. Children in well resourced schools may be more

likely to be able to engage in practical/play based learning than children in schools without adequate resources and even those without resources at all.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teachers reported about the methods that they used in pre-primary classrooms. Most respondents (733) reported on the use of participatory tools like games, stories and practical activities (86.95%). Most of the teachers (7.83%, 66) used explanation, board work and writing. 1.07% (or 9 respondents) said they used none of the methods and taught via routine practice.

Table 5: Teaching And Learning Methods

Teaching method	Frequency	Percentage
Games, stories and practical activities	733	86.95
Explanation, board work and writing	66	7.83
Routine teaching without specialised methods	9	1.07
Total valid responses	808	—

The high level of use of games, stories and hands-on sessions has been reported, showing good consistency with the intentions of the revised curriculum to be learner-centred. These are especially suitable for young children as they offer the children opportunities for communication, imagination, movement and cooperation and exploration. These data of course are based on teachers' self-report. It was not observed in this study if or how often these methods were used and effective. A teacher can report on a game activity without showing evidence of a clear learning intention and/or meaningful child participation. There is still some board-based and routine teaching being used and this suggests that professional support is required for this. Assessing curriculum implementation needs to be based on

how well the teachers can identify children's learning centred methods, as well as the quality of classroom interaction and children's involvement.

Sources of Instructional Materials

Pupil teachers were inquired about their sources of materials they used in their teaching and learning. Most of the respondents (81.73%, 689 teachers) said they came up with the ideas themselves and made the materials with the children with local materials. 11.51% of teachers (97 teachers) said that the materials were bought in their school. 2.61% of the respondent's said parents were involved in developing teaching materials.

Table 6: Sources of Teaching and Learning Materials

Source of materials	Frequency	Percentage
Prepared by teachers with children from the local environment	689	81.73
Purchased by the school	97	11.51
Prepared with parental participation	22	2.61
Total valid responses	808	—

The results show significant creativity and resourcefulness by the teachers. Making learning relevant, affordable and linked to children's daily experiences can be achieved through the use of locally available materials to prepare learning materials. Children may also have a stronger sense of ownership and practical learning if they help to prepare. Children may also be more creative and feel a sense of ownership if they help to prepare. Meanwhile, the increased use of teacher-made resources could be a result of limited formally provided resources. Quality government provision of essential materials such as books for children to read, play equipment, inclusive learning materials etc, should be backed by, but not replaced by, local improvisation.

The low scores on parental involvement in the preparation of materials also suggest there is a missed opportunity to improve school–family partnerships.

Use of Curriculum and Teaching Guide

In the monitoring exercise, the question was raised around the teaching materials that are used by teachers to make their lesson preparations and to present the lesson. Overall 637 (75.56%) stated that they used the teaching guide, textbook, SM and teacher's guide. Another 165 teachers (19.57%) stated that they use textbooks, supplementary books and teacher's guide. Six respondents (0.71%) mainly used their previous experience.

Table 7: Documents and Guidance used by Teachers

Document or source used	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching guide, textbook, supplementary materials and teacher's guide	637	75.56
Textbook, supplementary materials and teacher's guide	165	19.57
Previous professional experience	6	0.71
Total valid responses	808	—

The results indicate that the majority of respondents had used more than one of the official documents that support the curriculum. This is to be welcomed as it is necessary for each teacher to be aligned with the curriculum expectations, the teacher's guide and the curriculum materials used in the classroom. A very limited number of people used experience as the main source of information. However, the accessibility of curriculum documents cannot translate into teachers' knowledge of how to implement the documents. On-going teacher professional assistance should then enable teachers to be flexible in the use of guides and translate curriculum expectations into suitable learning activities.

Integration of Cross-Cutting Issues

Children are taught about a number of cross cutting issues designed to link what they are learning to the broader social, health, moral and environmental issues. The monitoring report shows, that most teachers felt that the learners'

prepared curriculum content contained cross cutting issues. This indicates that the teachers' view of the revised curriculum was that it was discussing issues that went beyond subject knowledge. In early years, the development of values, health, safety, environmental awareness, inclusion and social responsibility is important as it is through everyday activities that values develop. The integration of the material is still dependent on the quality of teachers' knowledge and the examples provided that are developmentally appropriate. Cross-cutting issues should be introduced or integrated in the stories, play, routines or conversation and through practical experiences, not as didactic information.

Methods Used to Assess Children

Teachers were asked the following question: How do teachers measure their children's learning and development? 46.62% (393) of the respondents used their everyday activities to evaluate children. The other 387 teachers (45.91%) employed assessment instruments that were recommended in the curriculum. Those who used pen and paper tests (n = 28) accounted for 3.32% of the respondents.

Table 8: Assessment Methods used in pre-primary education

Assessment method	Frequency	Percentage
Observation through daily activities	393	46.62
Curriculum-recommended assessment tools	387	45.91
Pen-and-paper tests	28	3.32
Total valid responses	808	—

The outcomes illustrate a wide-range of developmentally appropriate assessment. Children are assessed by the teacher through activities they do throughout the day, where they observe children communicating, co-operating, moving, being creative and applying these skills in a practical situation.

A significant amount of curriculum recommended assessment instruments were also used, which also suggested that there was alignment with official guidance. The fact that a small proportion are using written tests is reassuring as formal tests are not usually a good way to assess young children.

However, the study does not address the quality of teachers' assessment documentation, and the use of the assessment information to adjust the teaching. The need for teachers to give feedback, to record individual progress and to identify any children that need extra support should be evaluated in future monitoring.

Frequency of Assessment

The teachers also indicated the frequency of their assessments of children's development. 46.86% of the respondents (n = 395) did the assessment once a month. An additional 357 (42.35%) teachers made weekly assessments on children. 6.52% of the respondents (55) did assessment once a school term. The other percentage were those teachers who indicated that there was no assessment.

Table 9: Frequency of assessment

Assessment frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly	395	46.86
Weekly	357	42.35
Once per term	55	6.52
Not conducted	1*	Approximately 0.12*
Total valid responses	808	—

The remaining 0.12% of valid responses were made in the final category (not conducted). The findings suggest that most teachers assessed children regularly (weekly or monthly). Assessment can help the teacher identify developmental needs if this is done regularly and modify activities to address those needs. Monthly assessment should not be taken to mean that children are only assessed once a month by the teacher, however. Early childhood education: Assessment should be ongoing and part and parcel of normal classroom activities; formal recording can be at regular intervals.

Parental and Community Participation

The study was conducted on the involvement of parents in implementing the curriculum. Fifty-seven point 06% of teachers (481) reported parents would come in occasionally. There were an additional 311 respondents (36.89%) that said parents were active. 1.90% (sixteen teachers) said that parents were not involved at all.

Table 10: Parental Participation in Curriculum Implementation

Level of participation	Frequency	Percentage
Parents participated occasionally	481	57.06
Parents participated actively	311	36.89
Parents did not participate	16	1.90
Total valid responses	808	—

The results show that there was some parental involvement but this was not always strong. While over a third of teachers said parents are involved in the classroom, most said the parents are involved only "occasionally". Limited participation can have an impact on continuity of learning in school and at home. It can also limit parents' appreciation of the value of play-based learning, bring their resources to the

party, and impact on their attendance and feedback on children's learning. The schools' approach must thus go further than simply calling home for funding or items when they are required. Communication, parent education, and collaborative problem solving and discussion of the progress of children should be a part of meaningful participation.

Responsiveness of the Syllabus to Children's Needs

The teachers were asked about the developmental and learning needs of the pre-primary children which were included in the new Syllabus. A large majority of the respondents – 692 (82.09%) – felt that the syllabus was completely fulfilling the needs of the children. Another 113 educators (13.40%) reported the overall need of children was generally covered by the syllabus, but was not strong on some aspects. The rest of those that responded felt that it was an inadequate response to children's needs.

Table 11: Teachers' Views on the Responsiveness of the Syllabus

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Fully meets children's needs	692	82.09
Meets needs but has some weaknesses	113	13.40
Does not meet children's needs	3	0.36
Total valid responses	808	—

The result was found to be good and the teachers approved the revised syllabus. Most respondents felt that it was applied to children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical and moral development. Perceptions of curriculum design should be separated from implementation conditions,

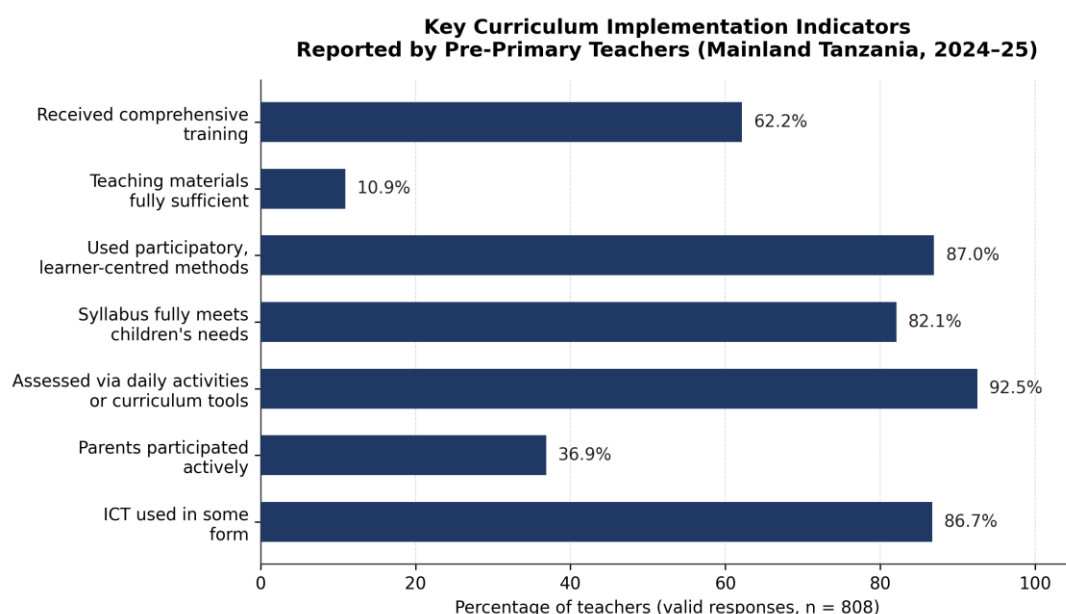
however, positive perceptions of curriculum design. Even a well-structured syllabus can result in unequal experiences if teachers experience a lack of resources, training, and/or adequate learning environment. It is important that this small group of the children's weaknesses should not be disregarded, as their observations may show that there are important gaps in the context and/or in the inclusion.

Use of ICTs in Pre-Primary Education

The results reveal that the implementation of the pre-primary curriculum using ICT still had imbalance. While some teachers indicated that she was using technology, others indicated that access and use was limited. Of particular interest in the report is that 112 respondents (13.29%) reported using ICTs in their settings, but not at all. Based on the results, it can be concluded that ICT was not yet a part of pre-primary education consistently. Factors that may be contributing to the challenges are: lack of digital devices, fluctuating power and internet access, lack of technical support and poor teacher training. There is a need to use ICT in early childhood education judiciously. It should not be used to substitute play, social interaction or activities. Instead, technology can assist the teacher in accessing curriculum resources, professional-development resources, in digital record keeping, educational audio and visual content, and with family communication.

The monitoring experience itself shows that using Kobo Toolbox can enhance the management of curriculum and evidence collection using digital technology. Other similar systems can also provide support for teacher learning and monitoring of teacher implementation (if infrastructure and capacity gaps are mitigated).

Figure 2: Key Curriculum Implementation Indicators Reported by Pre-Primary Teachers



Challenges Affecting the Implementation of the Curriculum

Monitoring results show that the revised curriculum was being put into practice in the context of a number of inter-related challenges. The main difficulty faced was the lack of learning and teaching materials. Almost one-third of the respondents said materials arrived and were inadequate and another said that materials did not arrive at their schools at all. Another challenge was related to school facilities and learning environment. The majority of teachers (86%) indicated their schools were safe, but were lacking in facilities. This may restrict the use of play as a method of teaching, as well as opportunities for practical activities and for inclusive participation. A third challenge was the lack of even access to professional development. While the majority of respondents were given a full training, over a third were given incomplete training or no training.

Limitations

This study has its own limitations which need to be taken into account when interpreting the results. First, the sample was not regionally weighted, regions like Simiyu and Morogoro having a higher proportion of the national teaching population than others, and a reading of the findings should not be the basis of statistical estimates of the region but of what the sample revealed from a national monitoring sample. Second, all the data were self-reported by teachers and, therefore, the figures of pedagogical practice, assessment and material use reflect what respondents believe or wish to report, as opposed to the actual patterns of classroom use, which should be monitored in the future using direct observation of the classroom. Third, the cross sectional descriptive design has a snapshot of the early implementation time period, and does not allow for inference of causal relationships between teacher characteristics, resources available, and implementation outcomes. Lastly, the non-probability sampling frame was not available, and so it was not possible to calculate standard errors and assess for statistical significance the proportions reported.

Conclusion

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the revised pre-primary curriculum in Tanzania at an early stage, based on evidence gathered in the country during the monitoring process by teachers from all 26 regions in Mainland Tanzania. The results show that there is a reform at an early stage with some significant successes but ongoing implementation challenges.

The most promising development is the apparent change of pedagogy that has occurred to become learner-centred education. The majority of teachers used games, stories and practical activities, made materials with children and

evaluated using daily activities or curriculum recommended materials. Teachers also showed great confidence on the revised syllabus being in line with the children's development needs. The results indicate a good level of understanding and acceptance of the philosophy of the revised curriculum by a significant section of the teaching profession.

There is inconsistencies regarding implementation, however. Incomplete training or no training was provided for many teachers, most schools were found to be short of teaching and learning materials and a majority of the learning environments were 'safe' but not fully equipped. The level of parent involvement was often low rather than high and parental involvement in the use of ICTs was limited. The challenges indicate that curriculum reform doesn't end at the moment of approval or release of a curriculum syllabus. Success relies on teachers' ability to make curriculum intentions tangible in children's 'real' life experiences, and to have access to capacity, resources, infrastructure and institutional support.

Based on the findings, it is recommended to make a change from introducing a curriculum to consolidating a curriculum. Tanzania should invest in ongoing teacher training, equal funding, better school climates, better teaching and learning materials, appropriate teacher supports in school, meaningful involvement of the families and better quality-assurance mechanisms. Monitoring should be continued but increasingly the teachers' report and the teachers' evidence of the children's development should be included.

The teachers involved in this study exhibited commitment, adaptability and creativity. They also make extensive use of local materials, indicating that curriculum implementation is not a top down process but is a process that is daily developed by teachers and children in their real classrooms. However, it is not possible for people to commit and improvise to make up for system level shortages. Teachers need to be supported through a coherent education system that provides a match between the curriculum and resources required to meet curriculum needs.

The study findings can be summarized as follows; Tanzania has laid a good groundwork for good quality competency-based pre-primary education. The long-term and equitable impact of this foundation will be determined if there is continued investment and willingness by policy-makers, curriculum developers, local authorities, school leaders, communities and families to view early childhood education as a national development priority.

Recommendations

The study recommends increased efforts in implementing the revised pre-primary curriculum in Tanzania by

continuous investment in teacher training, equitable and sufficient financing, better provision of teaching and learning materials, better infrastructure and better monitoring and quality assurance system. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), Local Government Authorities, Teachers, school leaders, parents and communities, along with development partners, should collectively ensure successful implementation of the curriculum. Special focus is needed to regularly train teachers in the implementation of learner-centred and play-based teaching, formative assessment, inclusive education and effective teacher – child interaction through practice. The government should also develop and implement minimum quality standards for pre-primary learning environments and improve instructional supervision as well as provide more access to digital and offline instructional support materials, and based on monitoring and research, plan and allocate resources. Headteachers should facilitate professional learning communities and ensure that resources are not wasted on pre-primary education in the school; teachers should try to accommodate various learners' needs and encourage students to actively participate in their learning. At the same time, parents and communities need to be actively involved in supporting children's learning and development partners have to be guided to support government-led pre-primary education initiatives in a sustainable way while keeping them aligned with the national pre-primary education priorities.

References

1. Akala, B. M. (2021). Revisiting education reform in Kenya: A case of competency-based curriculum. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 3(1), Article 100107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100107>
2. Akkari, A. (2022). Early childhood education in Africa: Between overambitious global objectives, the need to reflect local interests, and educational choices. *Prospects*, 52, 7–19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-022-09608-7>
3. Buzzelli, C. A. (2018). The moral dimensions of assessment in early childhood education. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 19(2), 154–166.
4. Fullan, M. (2020). *The new meaning of educational change* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.
5. Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange. (2024a). *Early learning: A research synthesis*. UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa.
6. Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange. (2024b). *Teacher professional development: A research synthesis*. UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa.
7. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST]. (2023). *National curriculum framework for basic education and teacher education*. Government of Tanzania.
8. Ndomondo, E., & Mmbando, J. (2022). History teachers' conceptualisation of competency-based curriculum and its implementation in Tanzania. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 6(1), Article 100331.
9. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2020a). *Curriculum analysis of the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030*. OECD Publishing.
10. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2020b). *OECD Learning Compass 2030*. OECD.
11. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2021). *Starting Strong VI: Supporting meaningful interactions in early childhood education and care*. OECD Publishing.
12. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2024). *Curriculum frameworks and visualisations beyond national frameworks*. OECD Publishing.
13. Tanzania Institute of Education. (2025). *Taarifa ya ufuatiliaji wa utekelezaji wa mtaala ulioboreshwa kwa elimu ya awali nchini Tanzania: Duru ya pili, Julai 2024–Januari 2025*. Tanzania Institute of Education.
14. UNESCO. (2015). *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*. UNESCO.
15. UNESCO. (2020). *Teacher policy development guide*. UNESCO.
16. UNESCO. (2022). *Global education monitoring report 2022*. UNESCO Publishing.
17. UNESCO. (2023). *Global education monitoring report 2023: Technology in education—A tool on whose terms?* UNESCO.
18. UNESCO. (2024a). *Global report on early childhood care and education: The right to a strong foundation*. UNESCO and UNICEF.
19. UNESCO. (2024b). *Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession*. UNESCO and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.
20. UNESCO. (2025). *Early childhood care and education: What you need to know*. UNESCO.
21. UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa. (2025). *Continuous professional development for teachers in Africa*. UNESCO-IICBA.
22. UNICEF. (2019a). *A build-to-last framework in support of universal quality pre-primary education*. UNICEF.
23. UNICEF. (2019b). *A world ready to learn: Prioritizing quality early childhood education*. UNICEF.
24. UNICEF. (2023). *The state of the world's children 2023*. UNICEF.

25. UNICEF Innocenti. (2023). What works in pre-primary education provision: A review of evidence on achieving equitable access and quality in low- and middle-income countries. UNICEF Office of Research–Innocenti.
26. UNICEF Innocenti. (2024a). What works in pre-primary education provision: Evidence brief. UNICEF Office of Research–Innocenti.
27. UNICEF Innocenti. (2024b). Improving education in Africa: What the evidence tells us. UNICEF Office of Research–Innocenti.
28. UNICEF Innocenti. (2024c). Mainland Tanzania: Data Must Speak research. UNICEF Office of Research–Innocenti.
29. World Bank. (2018). Early learning system diagnostic: Mainland Tanzania. World Bank.
30. World Bank. (2020). Realizing the future of learning: From learning poverty to learning for everyone, everywhere. World Bank.
31. World Bank. (2022). Boost primary student learning project. World Bank.
32. World Bank. (2023a). Continuous teacher training goes nationwide in Tanzania. World Bank.
33. World Bank. (2023b). Digital skills: The why, the what and the how. World Bank.
34. World Bank. (2023c). Ending learning poverty: Building resilient education systems. World Bank.
35. World Bank. (2023d). Strengthening basic education systems and improving learning outcomes in Tanzania. World Bank.
36. World Bank. (2025). The roles of standards in education and training. World Bank.