

AN EVALUATION OF NEGST
NURSERY SCHOOL PROGRAMME
TRIZZER WAMBOI MUNGAI

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**NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

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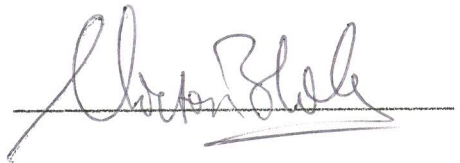
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TRIZZER WAMBOI MUNGAI

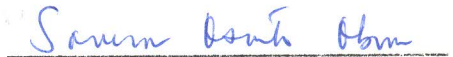
**A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts in Christian
Education**

Approved:

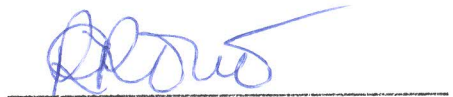
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to evaluate four crucial areas in NEGST Nursery School programme, namely: aims and objectives, Planned activities, teaching methods and facilities. The data were gathered by means of a questionnaire, observation and written records. The criteria were adopted from Kenya Institute of Education.

The NEGST Nursery School did not have any written down aims and objectives. Teachers' opinions, however, suggest that the aims and objectives of the Nursery school were: to develop the child morally socially, physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, academically for primary education and to motivate parents to bring their children to school. All these aims and objectives met Kenya Institute of Education (K.I.E.) standards except the last two listed. Planned activities of the NEGST Nursery School were found generally appropriate for a pre-school. They were geared towards meeting the perceived aims and objectives. The teaching methods used were appropriate for the planned activities, play being the core teaching method. Two classes met the K.I.E. standards with reference to the number of pupils per class and room per child. However, none of the classes had a chalkboard. Papers were the most commonly used teaching materials. The other teaching materials that were used occasionally seemed appropriate for a pre-school.

DEDICATION

To my husband Eddie

our daughter Eva

and my sister Jane

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The work of writing this thesis required the help of many people. It would be difficult to name all the individuals who contributed toward the completion of this study. Therefore, I acknowledge all the people who prayed for me, encouraged me and who, in one way or another, participated in this study. I am indebted to:

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) Nursery is a school for young pupils preparing to go to primary school. It was started in 1984 and it admits pupils whose parents are students at NEGST and a few others from the neighborhood.

The school admits children from ages six months to six years old. Of these only children from two and a half to six years were considered for evaluation for involvement in academic instruction.

When NEGST students go to their classes, most of their pre-school age children go to the Nursery school. It will be of interest to the students to ask such questions as: how are these children taught? What are they taught? Who are their teachers? What influence do they get from other children in the school? Some of these questions will help the parents of the pupils at the NEGST Nursery School to understand what goes on in the school. It is not reasonable to simply assume that such a programme is well run. Early childhood education is increasingly becoming an important as well as a delicate issue. This makes it absolutely necessary to ensure that all that is done in educating the children is done right. It is for this reason that Warger makes the following comment:

At the time of high interest and fast growth in establishing public programs for young children, it is important to carefully examine what's happening, why and how we can effectively resolve the many issues surrounding early childhood programs.

It is this background which creates an interest in evaluating the NEGST Nursery School programme.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the NEGST Nursery School programme, specifically, the study sought to evaluate four crucial areas in teaching. These included: goals and objectives, planned activities, teaching methods and facilities.

Research Questions

The evaluation of NEGST Nursery School programme is based on the following questions under the researcher's area of interest.

1. What are the aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery school?
2. Are the planned activities for NEGST Nursery school appropriate for meeting pre-school objectives?
3. How do the planned activities relate to the aims and objectives?
4. Are the teaching methods used in NEGST Nursery School appropriate for the planned activities?
5. Is classroom organization appropriate for the learners?
6. Are the teaching materials appropriate?

The answers to the above research questions served as the basis of evaluation of the NEGST Nursery School programme.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant because the report and recommendations will enable the NEGST Nursery School programme to improve its effectiveness in training the children. It is also hoped that other Nursery schools will benefit from this study. It is expected that the parents (most of whom are students at NEGST) and the community around will be aware of nature of the programme at the Nursery school.

Limitations and Delimitations

This evaluation focused on those children who are involved with academic instruction. These are children from ages two and a half years to six years old, even though those under the age of two and a half years are part of the programme.

Financial aspect of the school was not considered.

Definition

Pre-school is used interchangeably with Nursery and Kindergarten to mean childhood programmes for ages six and below.

End Note

- ¹. Cynthia Warger, A Resource Guide to Public Childhood Programs (Alexandria, VA.: ASCD Edward Brothers, Inc., 1988),3.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pre-school is a topic widely discussed by a large number of scholars. It is of interest in this research to discuss some of these because they can be usefully applied to the NEGST Nursery School.

However, not all materials about kindergartens or pre-school will be discussed here. Incidentally, quite a number of topics deal with 'how pre-school programmes run'. In this review the researcher will concentrate on topics most useful to the research. These will include: aims and objectives, planned activities, teaching methods and facilities.

Since K.I.E. pre-school guidelines are very crucial in the evaluation of this research, the researcher has devoted considerable space in this chapter to underscore the standards laid down by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. In this taste, there will be two sections of the review; one, on standards by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines, the other, on pages eleven and following, covering discussions by selected scholars.

Guidelines for Pre-school Education in Kenya as set by the K.I.E.

Aims and Objectives

In highlighting the national goals for education in Kenya, the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines Guide states that:

Kenya has one fundamental goal..... to prepare and equip youth to be happy and useful members of the Kenyan society. To be happy, they must learn and accept national values, and to be useful they must actively work towards the maintenance and development of this society.¹

This shows that education provided has to be mutually beneficial. It has to benefit the individual receiving it and at the same time benefit the society in which it is provided. This has to start right from the beginning.

The Guide further discusses the importance of enhancing an all-round development in children. The growth process here includes: physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and mental development.² Failure to provide any one of these, therefore, means that the educational system might cripple the children educationally and also in all the other aspects.

There should be, according to K.I.E. pre-school guidelines, a warm relationship between home and school, which should enhance growth and development of the young children.³ In this respect both the

home and the school must make sure that what is taught in school is not contradictory to what children have already learnt at home.

Clearly stated in the Guide is the importance for the teacher to understand the child. Knowing the background of the child is a prerequisite to understanding him/her. Thus, the teacher should strive to understand the physical, emotional and social needs of the child.⁴

A pre-school should offer activities geared towards developing the whole child. Thus it should offer every opportunity to contribute to the child's learning. The programme should be carefully planned, being based on the needs, interests and abilities of the children.

The aims and objectives set by the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines were used as a standard measure against the consensus on the opinions of the teachers as to what should be the aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery school.

Planned Activities

Since the main aim of pre-school is to foster the all-round development of the child, it must be ensured that the programme is planned in such a way that it facilitates growth and development.

The plans made should be both long-term and short-term. Long-term plans will help to reflect on the sequence of activities and to select simpler skills that must be achieved.

The time-table and daily programmes must be based on both the needs and abilities of the pre-school children.

Each day, children should be given the opportunity for:

a/ Indoor free choice activity e.g. painting, counting, sorting, weaving, construction, copying etc. b/ Group activity e.g. story telling, rhymes, poems, singing, nature walks, dancing, etc. c/ Routines e.g. roll call, inspection, toileting etc. d/ Rest--especially for full day nurseries. e/ Feeding: the teachers should encourage the parent to organize provision of mid-morning refreshments and of lunch for children who stay at school the whole day.

The above planned activities were used as standard measure against NEGST Nursery school planned activities. Table 1 shows the time allowed for every activity.

Teaching Methods

Since the pre-schoolers are active and curious, they learn by doing. They therefore learn spontaneously through play. K.I.E. pre-school guidelines recommend that play should be the central learning method. Play should be made the core of pre-school activity. Adequate time should be provided for free indoor and outdoor play.⁶ However, this is

made possible when adults who are in close contact with the child, provide a free, informal and secure atmosphere. The idea here should be to ensure that child's play is for the purpose of learning rather than playing for the sake of it. The teacher should make sure that all activities are integrated. These activities should complement each other and be interrelated.

Table 1 *Time allocated for every activity.*

Timing	Activity Area
20 minutes	Arrival, assembly and prayers
45 minutes	Indoor free choice activities
30 minutes	Language activities
45 minutes	Outdoor play and break
30 minutes	Pre-number activities
30 minutes	Pre-science/Art and Craft/ Music and movement (2 periods each for pre-science and art and craft, and one period for music and movement during the week)
15 minutes	Preparation for lunch
Afternoon	Lunch } for whole day nreschools Rest } Quiet activities and preparation for home.

Source: (K.I.E. pre-school guidelines 1993:21)

Teaching Materials

Children learn through firsthand experience. Hence a wide variety of materials is necessary in pre-school. Teachers should use familiar materials first, then introduce the unfamiliar materials gradually. And

when this is done, care must be taken to explain well to the children what they are. If this is not done, there are dangers of inhibiting children from learning much with such materials. Toy apparatus should be changed from time to time so that the classroom frequently offers something new. The familiar materials include pictures, charts, puppets, toys, chalkboards and models.⁷ But even with these, it must not be taken for granted that every child is familiar with them. It will be necessary for teachers to check in order to be sure all children understand them.

Organizing and Arranging the Classroom

The classroom arrangement should be guided by children's needs and interests. The way materials are displayed affect the activities in the class.⁸ Materials' display must be done in such a way that children can see everything clearly. Sequence is also important in order that confusion is avoided during the various class activities which need to use displayed materials.

K.I.E. pre-school guidelines also recommend twenty five to thirty pre-schoolers in one room per teacher. This should take into consideration the resources available and the interaction between the teacher and the

pupils during a lesson.⁹ Crowded rooms are neither desirable nor do they offer conducive atmosphere for teaching - learning process.

The Classroom and Facilities

The classroom must meet the basic standards of space with facilities necessary for comfort and safety of young children. The following criteria are given for selecting or building a classroom: “It is recommended that for a class of forty children, the room should be 8m. X 8m. or at least 1 m² per child.”¹⁰

Other Literature on Pre-School

Aims and Objectives

Kenneth Gangel defines objectives as:

The goals, aims or end results towards which a curriculum design, a curriculum, a course, a unit, a lesson or a learning experience is directed. The function of the objective is to set the way, determine the means and assure success.¹¹

A goal tells in relatively broad terms what the pupils should attain in the course of instruction. Therefore, a clear understanding and a statement of the goal is needed for a good lesson planning and good teaching on the side of the teacher. Goals or objectives require to be stated in measurable terms.

Pre-school institutions in Kenya are geared towards enhancing all-round development in children . The growth process includes physical, social, emotional, moral, and mental development. The K.I.E pre-school guidelines give the following as the general objectives of pre-school education :

1. To provide an informal education geared towards developing the child's mental capabilities and his physical growth.
2. To make it possible for the child to enjoy living and learning through play.
3. To enable the child to build good habits for effective living as an individual and a member of a group.
4. To enable the child to appreciate his cultural background and customs.
5. To foster the spiritual and moral growth of the child.
6. To develop the child's imagination, self-reliance and thinking skills.
7. To enrich the child's experience so as to enable him to cope better with primary school life.¹²

K.I.E. pre-school guidelines do not seem to emphasize academic preparation as a purpose of pre-schools. It emphasizes more of the well-being of the child, that is, physical, social, emotional, moral, and mental development.

Warger seems to be on the same line as she suggests that:

....according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the United States, it's perspective on fitting 4 and 5 year-olds to the traditional school program, that is, preparing them for the academic tasks for the first grade, is not the appropriate purpose for kindergarten programs.

Both K.I.E. pre-school guidelines and Warger would agree on the objectives of a pre-school as a preparatory stage for schooling. Warger

also quotes Hill (1987), who suggested Kindergarten as having three functions namely:

1. To minister to the nature and needs of 5 year olds. Kindergarten should fit and meet their abilities, developmental level learning styles and interests.
2. To lay foundation for good start in school subjects and activities.
3. To provide comprehensive assistance with children's medical, nutritional and psychological needs.¹⁴

Both K.I.E. pre-school guidelines and Warger disagree with Hill on the function of the kindergarten as a foundation for grade one subjects. But the first and third functions given by Hill are fully encompassed in the objectives given by the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. These functions aim at the development of the child's physical, social, emotional and mental needs.

Goals and objectives are therefore important for educators to recognize when establishing kindergarten programmes. The objectives and goals should be traced back to the needs of the programme as well as be related to the contents taught in class.

Planned Activities

Planned activities in the pre-school should not be geared to academic readiness, according to Warger. For a pre-school child, learning is something which takes place within him or her. It is not

something that we do for him or her. Shepard and Lee say that "teachers can help the children to learn as a garden helps plants to grow by providing proper conditions, and by wise guidance".¹⁵ They suggest the following ways to help children learn in the Nursery school:

1. The provision of the materials which give children the opportunities to learn through self activity. 2. Provision for association with other persons which will give the child opportunities for growing as a member of a group, but will not place strain upon him because of continued demands from others. 3. Stimulation of interest and guidance which causes the child to reach out and absorb ideas of religious value. 4. Protection from distractions caused by large groups of children, physical discomfort or fear of the surroundings.¹⁶

It is evident from Shepard and Lee that children in pre-school require enough time to involve themselves with what is of interest to them, failing which boredom results, especially if they are forced to do what they do not want. Also children have very short concentration span; if they are taught what does not interest them, they will not get much from the lesson.

In order to know the types of planned activities appropriate for pre-school children, it is important to look at some characteristics of children below the age of seven. Russell has come up with the following as their characteristics:

1. Activity with increasing purpose and usefulness. 'Everything in turns and nothing long'. This is the motto of the age. 2. Imaginative; this is that power to make pictures in the mind so clear that they almost appear to be real and actual to the bodily senses. Children at this age have a wonderful power of making such images. 3. Curiosity; they are forever trying to find out about everything they see or hear. 4. Love for imitation; they want to do what they see the adults do. 5. Love change and variety; they like changing position and occupation as they move all over.¹⁷

According to Piaget's cognitive theory, development is said to occur in stages. Most pre-school children would fall in the pre-operational stage. They are able to think in symbolic forms and think logically in one direction. At the same time they will find it difficult to see the other person's point of view.¹⁸ This means that all planned activities should be of interest to pupils.

Warger has classified learning of the childhood programme into four types, namely: knowledge, skills, dispositions and feelings. She sees knowledge during the early childhood period as the information, ideas, stories, facts, concepts, schemes, songs, names and others that involve the mind. According to her, these should be covered in the curriculum.¹⁹

"Skills are relatively small units of action or behaviors that are easily observed and occur in brief periods."²⁰ These include things like walking along a balance beam, cutting out a circle, writing out one's name. Skills can be learnt partly from observation, imitation, trial and error, instruction, directions and optimum amount of drill and practice. Lessons

and workbooks could be used to aid acquisition and strengthening of skills. There are oral reading, reading readiness, and writing readiness skills that should be learnt by the pre-schoolers.

Dispositions are sometimes referred to as attitudes. They are usually difficult to define. For the purpose of this study they are broadly defined as: "relatively enduring `habits of the mind' or the characteristic ways of responding to experience across types of situations."²¹ Examples of these dispositions are curiosity, generosity, avarice and charitability. Dispositions are learnt from observation and emulations of models. Not all dispositions are desirable, hence, the need to be weakened. Among the dispositions to be strengthened include co-operativeness and resourcefulness.

Feelings can be defined as subjective, emotional or affective state. Among the feelings that concern early childhood educators are belonging, self-confidence and acceptance.

Pre-school educators are not obliged to choose between emphasizing one of these categories of learning over another. They are to design curricula so that achievement of goals in all four categories are

mutually inclusive and that the acquisition of worthwhile knowledge, useful skills, desirable dispositions, and feelings are all addressed equally.

Appropriate pre-school programmes do offer children the choice of many learning activities. K.I.E. pre-school guidelines suggest that play should be the core of the planned activities in the pre-school. This allows the children to learn through exploration and interaction with the adults and other children. The teacher, being an adult, should observe and guide the children during the play. The teacher should make sure that the children are playing in a secure environment where they cannot be hurt. She should make sure children do not hurt one another during play.

The children should be provided with concrete activities that are relevant to their own life experiences. These would include activities like arts and craft. They should be encouraged to work individually or in small groups but informal groups most of the times are preferable.

Teaching Methods

Ratcliff defines teaching as: "the intentional facilitation of desired learning."²² Teaching and learning are reciprocal activities. Teaching is defined by the learning outcomes which are intentionally produced

through instructional activities. Where there is no learning, there is no teaching, even if the teacher tries hard to bring about learning.

Methods are important for teaching. The word, method is simply descriptive of the processes and techniques used by the teacher to communicate information to the students. Classes differ in interests, mental abilities and attention span, therefore the teacher must use the teaching methods which are appropriate for his group. Children have learning characteristics that differ considerably from those of adults. This means that methods which may be very effective with adults will not necessarily achieve good communication with children.

The age of the students is, however, one of the issues involved in choosing the appropriate teaching method. Another major factor is the objective of the lesson. What goals should be accomplished in the classroom period? Can the goals chosen be best achieved through large amount of pupil participation or do they require transmission of a generous portion of the content? The third factor is the content of the lesson itself.

The three factors are perhaps the most important criteria for choosing the appropriate method of teaching, but they are not the only

ones. Gangel adds to the list, available resources, educational background of the pupils and the time allocation for the teaching period. He has also come up with instructive play as a method of teaching pre-schoolers. He says, "Teachers who work with small children would include play-methods. This includes various kinds of games, such as toys, puppets, puzzles, action songs, simple role plays and contests."²³ Gangel seems to emphasize the need for the teachers to guide play. Play is an important teaching tool and should not be left to chance.

Warger suggests that four and five year old learn best through doing, direct and immediate involvement with the environment and through sensory input of observation, manipulation and experimentation.²⁴ A pre-schooler should always be involved in the learning - teaching process. For children learn more if they see and do at the same time, rather than seeing alone. They have the very nature of exploring, experimenting and investigating. Therefore, they learn best when they are provided with the opportunities for doing so.

Collins, quoted by Barbour, points out four useful functions of children's play besides pleasure:

"1.Provides for release of energy. 2.It stimulates thinking and learning. 3.It helps children develop motor skills. 4.It encourages the acting out and understanding of adult role for the future."²⁵

Collins looks at play as a way of developing the child physically, mentally and socially. These are some of the objectives set by the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

Good education curriculum for two's and three's do not require children to sit in an orderly manner for an hour. Instead they start each session with a suggestion for a free play. Playing could be with dolls, blocks, looking at books or handling nature objects. This makes the class environment to be more informal than formal.

Traditionally, the field of early childhood education has been characterized by its support of play as an educational tool. McDaniel and Richards say that:

Teachers at the Nursery and kindergarten level organize their classrooms for play activities in the belief that through these activities, young children can best learn what they are expected to learn.²⁶

For play to be educationally useful, the teacher must guide and supervise the children as they play. Unguided play is a waste of time for it just makes the learners tired, having learnt nothing.

Elkind has suggested story telling as a useful tool for teaching pre-school children. The stories used for children should be preferably written by professional writers who understand the craft of story-telling, since

they have an intuitive sense of what is interesting to children. Moreover, they know and follow some basic rules about story-telling to children.²⁷ This shows that not all stories are useful to children. Teachers therefore need to be very selective on which stories they teach or encourage in class.

Other methods that are appropriate for pre-school include lecture, question and answer, group discussion, singing, peer learning and drama.

The teacher who wishes to be really effective will ensure that his teaching is characterized by variety. As Edge observes: "the worst method is the method used all the time. No one method is best; variety is the spice of life."²⁸ Variety will motivate learners and make them concentrate for long during the lesson.

In order to use variety, the teacher must use the lesson plans and keep records that enable him to compare various teaching strategies.

Teaching Materials / Instructional Aids

Children learn through active involvement. Hence, a wide variety of materials is necessary in pre-school. Variety helps the children to avoid doing the same thing over and over.

The teacher should try to use familiar materials first and then gradually introduce unfamiliar ones. Children in pre-school learn better through the use of pictures. Thus the use of materials such as charts, models, puppets, and chalkboard to present what is real is more profitable to them. Clark and Stair say that the chalkboard helps chiefly in four ways for children under seven years: "to make a stage on which characters can move, to show objects, to explain or add interest and finally to teach new verses of hymns."²⁹ Most of the above mentioned materials are familiar to learners because before they reach pre-school age, they have come across them at home. So the teacher should start from the known to unknown materials.

The type of teaching materials depend on the age of the children. The teaching materials call for the learners' involvement in various activities that allow them to express some aspects of lessons they are learning. For this reason, the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines urge the teacher to vary the teaching materials from time to time during the lessons.

Edge has classified teaching aids into non-projected visual aids and projected visual aids. Non-projected visual aids include chalkboard, maps, flat pictures, field trips, bulletin board, objects, graphs and drama.³⁰

Projected visual aids utilize certain basic principles of learning. These principles include: learning as based upon interest, need, activity, individual difference among learners and common experiences of the learners.³¹

Non-projected visual aids may be regarded as good for pre-school children. However, any aid that will help the teachers to communicate more effectively can be used. The most important thing is to have an aid that is relevant to the instructional objective of the lesson.

Class and Classroom Organization

When arranging the classroom, the teacher should be guided by children's needs and interest. She should think of the different activities that children engage in and ensure that children can get access to materials for these activities on their own.

K.I.E. pre-school guidelines suggest the following learning centres for a pre-school: blocks, woodwork, construction, painting and drawing, modelling, designs and patterns, nature and the world around us, shop, home, dressing up, book corner, sand and water and the outdoor equipment.³² The learning centres have different teaching materials that the learners could utilize. The learning centres are models of a real

situation. For example, a home learning centre has those things that are found at home, for example foodstuff, utensils and many others.

The display of these materials by the teacher affects the activities in the classroom. The materials should be at a convenient height for the children. For example, K.I.E. pre-school guidelines suggest that the height of the blackboard should be 60 centimetres from the floor. At this height it is low enough for the children to use, because most pupils in the pre-school are less than a metre tall.³³

The classroom should be spacious enough, about one square metre per child. This gives enough space for learners to move from one learning centre to another. In case the space is not enough, the outdoor space should be utilized. The children should be involved as much as possible in planning and organizing the learning centres. This is a learning experience for them. While they use these centres they will not find things that are strange to them since they have been involved in the whole process of planning and organizing.

The provision and the arrangement of the furniture and equipment can affect the way children work and play. It should be done having in mind that young children are active, curious and move from one place to

another. The children's furniture should be easy to move about.

"Therefore the children's furniture should be low chairs, suited for small people with short legs."³⁴ If the chairs are immovable the learners will not have enough space to use during indoor free choice activities and also during group activities.

If the classroom is large there can be a central place where group activities could take place. They should preferably sit on a mat since it would not occupy as much space as chairs would.

Robert Troutman, writing on the junior church, gives detailed instructions on class organization in terms of age group and numbers. This is also applicable to pre-school children. Grouping of children enables the teacher to give more individual attention to the learners. Concerning the size of the class he states: "fifteen to twenty per class is appropriate. Beyond thirty children the class should be divided into groups."³⁵

K.I.E. pre-school guidelines recommend twenty-five to thirty pre-schoolers in one room to one teacher. I would prefer that the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines recommendation be adopted to evaluate pre-schools in Kenya because it is more realistic in the Kenyan context which is limited

in facilities. More so if we consider rural pre-schools where children sit under the tree to learn.

It is worth noting that most of the materials reviewed here are covered in one way or another in the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. However, some authors have provided useful details that can be helpful in the general process of evaluation of pre-school programmes. The researcher has adopted the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines because they are in use in most Kenyan pre-schools.

Case Studies on Pre-schools

Several studies have measured child care quality in pre-school programmes and have examined variations in the child development and behaviour as a function of quality. These studies have helped shed light on the various aspects of concern of the research. Below are some of the studies that have been carried out in pre-schools.

Decker and Decker reported a research done by Vandell and Powers who assessed adult-child ratio, the abundance of toys and staff education in sixteen different pre-school programmes in the United States. They found that six out of the sixteen programmes are classified; two as high, two as medium and two as low in quality. Comparisons revealed

that children in high quality programmes are significantly more likely to engage in positive behaviour and vocalizations with adults while children in low quality and medium programmes were likely to engage in solitary and unoccupied behavior.³⁶ From this research it is evident that variety of teaching materials and number of children affect the behaviour of children and hence the quality of the programme.

Decker and Decker also reported another research done by Ruopp *et al* on pre-school programmes in the United States which revealed that differences in staff-child ratio, group size and training of teachers were related to child behaviour and performances on standardized tests. Pre-school programmes with high staff-child ratio, smaller groups and staffed with trained teachers were associated with more positive children's behaviour like cooperation, less hostility and more class involvement. In the same programmes, children scored highly in standardized tests.³⁷ When training is held constant, the fewer the students in the class the better the performance. I would think that the reason for this was that a teacher was able to give more time for each learner. Also the teacher-learner interaction is evident in a small class. Since NEGST Nursery school had fewer than 15 learners per class I would expect a high quality programme.

A survey was done by Educational Research Service (ERS- A body that is concerned with survey of Kindergarten policies and practices) in 1986. The survey covered 1,200 pre-school principals in the United States. The survey wanted to find out the Pre-school programmes priorities. Findings from the survey showed that preparation for school and children's social, emotional and language development received more attention than academic achievement. 62.5% of the principals who responded to the survey indicated that primary focus of their pre-school programmes was preparation of both social and academic readiness and 22% gave primary focus to academic skills and achievement.

When the principals were asked to rate the list of ten possible priorities, they gave priorities to different areas. Over 80% ranked social and language development and 70% ranked emotional development and self discipline as high priorities. 50% of the principals ranked physical development, health development and work development as high priorities. Personality was ranked high by 39.9% of the principals. Academic achievement was ninth on the list with 29.3%. The last was artistic expression with 28.8% . From the above survey it was evident that developmental readiness for academic tasks was appreciated in the pre-schools programmes in the United States.³⁸

End Notes

- 1 Kenya Institute of Education, Guidelines for Pre-school Education in Kenya (Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, 1993), 3.
- 2 Ibid., 5.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid., 10.
- 5 Ibid., 20.
- 6 Ibid., 14-15.
- 7 Ibid., 15-16.
- 8 Ibid., 16-17.
- 9 Ibid., 6.
- 10 Ibid., 23-24.
- 11 Kenneth Gangel, 24 Ways to Improve Your Teaching (Wheaton, Illinois: SP Publications, Inc., 1974), 48.
- 12 K.I.E., 4.
- 13 Cynthia Warger, A Resource Guide to Public Childhood Programs (Alexandria, VA.: ASCD Edward Brothers, Inc., 1988), 10.
- 14 Ibid., 11.
- 15 Corrie Shepard and Mary Lee, "Synthesis of Research on School Readiness and Kindergarten Retention," Educational Leadership 44 (February 1986): 15.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Brenda Russell, Leading the Children (London: Brown Knight and Truscott Ltd., 1952), 16.
- 18 Herbert Klausmeier, Educational Psychology 5th ed. (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985), 58-60.
- 19 Warger, 35.
- 20 Russell, 35-36.
- 21 Warger, 35
- 22 Donald Ratcliff, Handbook of Pre-school Religious Education (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1988), 155.
- 23 Gangel, 7-8.
- 24 Warger, 3.
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- 26 Elizabeth McDaniel and Lawrence Richards, You and Your Pre-schooler (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 57.
- 27 David Elkind, Child Development and Education (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 112.

- 28** Findley Edge, Helping the Teacher (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1959), 74.
- 29** Leonard Clark and Irvings Starr, Secondary School Teaching (New York: MacMillan Company, 1959), 53.
- 30** Edge, 164.
- 31** Ibid., 30.
- 32** K.I.E., 16.
- 33** Ibid., 17.
- 34** Russell, 43.
- 35** Robert D. Troutman, Children in Worship (Kansas City, MO.: Hill Press, 1980), 6.
- 36** Celia Decker, and R. Decker, Planning and Administering Early Childhood Programs (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1988), 48.
- 37** Ibid.
- 38** Warger, 8.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Entry

The researcher made an appointment to meet the headmistress of NEGST Nursery School in her office. The researcher discussed with her the desire to do a study in the NEGST Nursery School. When the request was accepted, the teachers in the Nursery were informed by the headmistress about the desire for the study.

Data Collection

This is a field study with data collected from the NEGST Nursery School. The information for this study was collected from:

1. Teachers in the different classes of NEGST Nursery School.
2. Records on the NEGST Nursery school.
3. Researcher's own observations.

Information from the Class Teachers

The information gathered from class teachers covered the aims and objectives, planned activities and teaching materials. This was gathered by the use of questionnaire. This is a device for getting answers by using a form which the respondent fills by him/herself. A direct contact format was used whereby the researcher personally presented the questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaire that was used for this study consisted of both open and closed items.

A questionnaire was formulated, and the researcher together with her supervisor went through the questionnaire. This ensured the clarity of the questionnaire before it was used for pre-testing. The questionnaire was then given to three teachers of St. Mark's Nursery school. The researcher explained the aim of the questionnaire to these teachers before they could comment on it. This exercise tested for its clarity and validity. A space was provided in the questionnaire for them to make comments about the questionnaire. They were requested to indicate whether some questions seemed ambiguous to them, or whether provisions should be made for some responses that were not included in the questionnaire, or to make any other alterations they might find useful to improve the questionnaire.

In the light of the recommendations, a revised questionnaire was formulated which was then given to the NEGST Nursery School teachers. Since the NEGST Nursery School head teacher is also a teacher, she was requested to respond to the same questionnaire. (A sample of the questionnaire to the class teachers is found in Appendix 1).

NEGST Nursery School has six teachers and one caretaker. The three classes observed had forty pupils with one teacher for each class. The questionnaire was directed to the six teachers involved in academic instruction in the different classes of the Nursery school. All the six teachers responded to the questionnaire. The researcher was responsible for distributing the questionnaires and explaining questions that needed clarification to them. The researcher requested the teachers to hand in the completed questionnaires (having responded to them) to the headmistress who then gave them back to the researcher.

Researcher's Observations

Observation is a direct method of studying the overt behaviour of people. The advantage of this method is that one records behaviour as it happens.

There are two types of observations, controlled and uncontrolled.

The controlled type was adopted. A checklist with activities to be

observed relevant to the research problem was prepared. This was preferred because the observations were done more than once in each class.

The researcher observed three Nursery classes in session. When the researcher went for the observations, she found five classes. Two of them of ages two and a half years to four, one of ages four to five, one of ages five to six and one of varied mixed ages (This last one was a temporary one). The researcher observed three out of the five classes. Since the four to five year old and the five to six year old classes were one each, both were observed. However, for the two and a half years to four years old, which were two, the researcher observed the one class which had a broad spectrum of ages as compared to the other class which had an estimated 80% of the learners aged two and a half. The latter did not have much of academic instruction. The class with the mixed ages was not observed because it was temporary.

Since the researcher already had the schedule of activities at the Nursery school, she carefully selected the sessions that were useful for the evaluation based on planned activities under observation. Time schedule to observe the above classes was set together with the headmistress. The researcher did not inform the teachers exactly when the observations

would take place, but instead went unexpectedly so that she found the classes in a natural and normal setting. The researcher visited each of the classes at least three times for observation sessions. This helped in establishing the pattern of the planned activities of the programme. The researcher prepared a checklist to assess each of the observed classes to avoid subjectivity during the observation exercise. (The checklist is found in appendix 2).

The elements that were observed in each of these classes included:

indoor free activity, group activity, routines, rest, feeding, play, other activities, teaching environment, learning centres, room per pupil and chalkboard height from the floor.

The aim of observing these classes in session was to find out the class features of the NEGST Nursery School as compared with features of a typical pre-school class as defined by the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

Information from the Records on the NEGST Nursery School

There are different types of records where information in a pre-school can be contained, depending on the type and purpose. In keeping with the type and purpose of records, data for this study were taken from

the records that showed the teaching activities and teaching materials for each class.

The researcher studied the records and selected the following information.

1. Records showing the planned activities of each class in the Nursery School.
2. Teaching materials used during the above planned activities.

There was no written record at the Nursery on its aims and objectives.

Once a study was done on these records, a careful comparison was carried out with what had been observed during the researcher's observation sessions and with the information gathered from the questionnaire.

The comparison brought out a clear picture of the NEGST Nursery School programme, which provided grounds for evaluation.

Plan for this Evaluation study and Criteria for judgement

Data gathered from the NEGST Nursery School teachers' questionnaire, the records of the Nursery, and the researcher's observations

provided descriptive data for the NEGST Nursery school programme. These were compared with the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines listed below.

Three components for evaluation were used, namely: description, criteria and judgement. Description was provided by the data collected using the questionnaires, observation and records. Criteria were provided by literature review concerning the Kenya Institute of Education pre-school guidelines as provided in Chapter 2. Then a comparison between description of NEGST Nursery school and the criteria was done.

Evaluative judgement was done basing it on how much the programme abides by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. Chapter four of this study provides a descriptive data of the NEGST Nursery School programme.

Below is a summary of categories from the research questions and criteria for evaluation of each item as prescribed by the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

Category: Aims and Objectives

Criteria for judgement: Is the programme geared towards enhancing physical, social, moral, emotional, spiritual and mental development of the child?

Category: Planned Activities

Criteria for judgement: Do these include free choice activity, group activity, routines,

rest and feeding?

Do other activities include art, craft, music, pre-science language and pre-number?

Is play the core of the activities?

Is the time allocated for each activity appropriate?

Category: Teaching methods

Criteria for judgement: Do teachers provide a free, informal and secure atmosphere while teaching?

Do the teachers integrate the planned activities?

Does play form the core teaching method?

Category: Teaching materials and aids

Criteria for judgement: Are there a variety of teaching materials?

Are there commonly available materials like toys, clay, paints, paper, plasticine, chalkboard, puppets and charts?

Category: Class and Classroom organization

Criteria for judgement: Do the classes have between twenty five and thirty pupils?

Does the class have at least one square meter per pupil?

Are the chalkboards sixty
centimetres from the floor?

The descriptive data collected from the NEGST Nursery School reflect the programme of the school. The categories are provided by the research questions while the criteria for judgement are deduced from the standards set by the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. From this comparison, evaluative judgement was made.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Data for this study were collected by means of a questionnaire, observation and written records. The researcher used a checklist (the checklist is in appendix 2) to observe and collect the required data. For guidance in class observation, the researcher consulted the NEGST Nursery school time table and came up with a schedule of where and when to go for observation. The time table of the NEGST Nursery school, is part of the appendices. Table 2 is the schedule that was used to observe the NEGST Nursery school classes, namely: Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3. Class 1 was for ages two and a half to four years, Class 2 for ages four to five and Class 3 for ages five to six years.

Table 2 *Schedule for Class observation*

Class	Date	Time
I	7/2/95	7:30 - 12:00 noon
	22/2/95	9:00 - 9:45 a.m.
	28/2/95	8:00 - 9:45 a.m.
II	6/2/95	7:30 - 12:00 noon
	21/2/95	11:00 - 12:45 p.m.
	22/2/95	11:00 - 12:45 p.m.
III	9/2/95	7:30 - 9:40 am, 11:00 - 12:45 p.m.
	16/2/95	9:00 - 10:30 am
	28/2/95	12:45 - 4:00 p.m.

The researcher got a file from NEGST Nursery school head teacher. In this file, there were schemes of work and records of work for each class. The researcher extracted from this file information that was relevant to the research.

Aims and Objectives

Question 1: What are the aims and objectives of NEGST Nursery School?

It was found out that the NEGST Nursery School had no written aims and objectives. In view of the fact that NEGST Nursery School did not have any written aims and objectives, the researcher wanted to find out the consensus that would emerge from the teachers on their perception of the aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery School. From the teachers' response to the questionnaire, the researcher was made to understand that the aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery School are: to develop the child mentally, socially, morally, emotionally, physically, spiritually; to motivate parents to bring their children to school and to prepare the child academically for primary education. From the findings, all the teachers agreed on the moral development of the child as one of the aims of the NEGST Nursery School. Table 3 shows the

findings on aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery School as indicated by the teachers.

Table 3 *Aims and objectives of NEGST Nursery School as perceived by teachers*

Teachers' response	Frequency	Percentage
Develop the child morally	6	100
Develop the child physically	5	83
Develop the child mentally	5	83
Develop the child socially	5	83
Develop the child spiritually	5	83
Develop the child emotionally	4	66.7
Academic preparation for primary school	1	16.7
Motivate parents to bring their children to school	1	16.7

The aims and objectives of a programme depend on the philosophy under which the programme is built. NEGST Nursery School from teachers' opinions seem to be geared towards upholding the moral values of the children. This is deduced from table 3 where moral development of the child was indicated by all the teachers. Spiritual, mental, social and physical development of the child were each indicated by 83% of the teachers. Spiritual, social and mental development of the child would contribute to the building up of good morals in the children. This may be the reason why each was indicated by 83% of the teachers, next to moral development.

Only 16.7% of the teachers (see Table 3) indicated academic preparation for primary school as an objective of the NEGST Nursery School. In Chapter 2 of the literature review, Warger was quoted as saying that academic preparation is not an appropriate purpose of pre-school. Her point seems supported by opinions of the teachers in the NEGST Nursery School.

Table 4 *Measurement of indicated aims and objectives by criteria.*

Criteria for Judgement	Teachers' response
Enhancing moral development	100%
Enhancing physical development	83%
Enhancing spiritual development	83%
Enhancing social development	83%
Enhancing mental development	83%
Enhancing emotional development	67.7%

According to Kenya Institute of Education guidelines, pre-schools should be geared towards enhancing the spiritual, moral, physical, social, emotional and mental development of the child. Table 4 shows that 100% of the NEGST Nursery School teachers reached a consensus on moral development as an aim of the NEGST Nursery School programme. This aim met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines (K.I.E., 1993, P. 5). 83% of the teachers perceived in the same way the need for spiritual, social, mental

and physical development of the child. This also met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

Planned Activities

Question 2: Are the planned activities of the NEGST Nursery School appropriate for meeting pre-school objectives?

From the teachers' response, the following were indicated as the planned activities of the NEGST Nursery School: Indoor free choice activity, group activity, routines, rest, play, feeding and individual activity. Besides the above mentioned activities, art, music, craft, pre-language, pre-number and pre-science were deduced from school records and the researchers' own observation. The researcher used K.I.E. pre-school guidelines category of activities to confirm the corresponding activities indicated by the teachers.

Indoor Free Choice Activity

Indoor free choice activity refers to painting, sorting, weaving, construction, tracing and modelling. Among the above mentioned activities, only construction was observed in Class 3. Class 1 and Class 2

did not have expected indoor free choice activities. Instead, these classes had unguided play during the indoor free choice activity lessons. Tables 5,6 and 7 show the findings on indoor free choice activities of Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 respectively.

Table 5 *Expected versus observed indoor free choice activities in Class 1*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
45 min.	Painting	-	-
	Counting	-	-
	Sorting	-	-
	Weaving	-	-
	Construction	-	-
	Tracing	-	-
	Modelling	-	-
	-	45 min.	Unguided play

All the activities expected by the researcher were not observed in Class 1. Apparently, the teacher in Class 1 felt the learners were carrying out indoor free choice activity. The children were left to run around and jump up and down all over the room.

6 *Expected versus observed Indoor free choice activities in Class 2*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
45 min.	Painting	-	-
	Counting	-	-
	Sorting	-	-
	Weaving	-	-
	Construction	-	-
	tracing	-	-
	Modelling	-	-
	-	45 min.	Unguided play

None of the expected activities were observed in Class 2, instead unguided play was observed. Apparently, the teacher in Class 2 too felt that the learners were carrying out indoor free choice activity. The children were left to run around the class, jumping up and down.

7 *Expected versus observed indoor free choice activities in Class 3*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
45 min.	Painting	-	-
	Counting	-	-
	Sorting	-	-
	Weaving	-	-
	Construction	45 min.	Construction
	Tracing	-	-
	Modelling	-	-

The teacher in Class 3 gave learners 'legos' only for construction. These were used to construct houses, cars, and cutlery models. There was therefore no variety of indoor free choice activities.

Tables 5, 6 and 7 show that only Class 3 had what could be called a semblance of indoor free choice activity. Class 1 and Class 2 left their indoor free choice activity to unguided play. This was because learners were not given materials to use during the specified activities. Class 3 on the other hand did not have a variety of materials for use in the different activities.

K.I.E. pre-school guidelines expected all the specified indoor free choice activities. But only one of them was found in Class 3. This shows that the teachers did not plan for specific indoor free choice activity. Time allocated for the indoor free choice activity was however sufficient.

Group Activity

Group activity refers to story telling, rhymes, poems, singing and dancing. Group activity was observed in Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 of NEGST Nursery School. K.I.E. pre-school guidelines had not allocated any time for this activity since it was expected to be part of other planned activities. In NEGST Nursery School, the teacher could start other

activities, for example pre-number, pre-language and pre-science, with group activity or end with it. It was used as a way of motivating learners.

Tables 8,9 and 10 show the findings on group activity in Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 respectively.

Table 8 *Expected versus observed group activities in Class 1*

Expected activity	Observed activity
Story telling	-
Rhymes	-
Poems	-
Singing	Singing
Dancing	Dancing

Two out of five of the expected group activities were integrated during pre-language, pre-number and pre-science in Class 1. For example, during pre-number lesson, the learners started with the song, “One, Two, Three, Jesus loves me. Four, Five, Six, He is good to me. Seven...”. In this song there was an aspect of counting numbers and also a religious aspect.

Table 9 *Expected versus observed group activities in Class 2*

Expected activity	Observed activity
Story telling	Story telling
Rhymes	-
Poems	-
Singing	Singing
Dancing	Dancing

Three out of five of the expected group activities were observed in class 2. They were integrated during outdoor and indoor play, pre-number, pre-language and pre-science. For example, during pre-language, the lesson started with the song, “Apple, arrow, a a a...”. This song was introducing learners to sounds.

Table 10 *Expected versus observed group activities in Class 3*

Expected activity	Observed activity
Story telling	-
Rhymes	-
Poems	-
Singing	Singing
Dancing	-

Among the expected activities, only singing was observed in Class

3. Singing was integrated during play, pre-number and pre-science as a way of introducing the lesson or for concluding the lesson. For example, during a pre-number lesson, the teacher introduced the lesson with the song, “I am a square, I have come to class...”. This song was aimed at introducing learners to different shapes of objects.

On comparing Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3, singing was observed in all three classes, while dancing was observed only in two of the classes.

This suggests lack of variety of group activities. The teachers seem not to know how to integrate variety into other planned activities. This shows non-creativity by the teachers or lack of training. One out of five of the expected group activities met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

Routines

Routine refers to those activities that are done daily in school.

These activities are mainly three, namely, roll call, inspection and toileting. Routines were observed in all of the three classes of NEGST Nursery School. Tables 11, 12 and 13 show findings on routines in Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 respectively.

Table 11 *Expected versus observed routine activities in Class 1*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
	Roll call	5 min.	Roll call
20 min.	Inspection	5 min.	Inspection
	Toileting	-	-

Roll call and inspection were observed in Class 1 for 10 minutes.

This could be because Class 1 had less than 15 learners. In the roll call, the teacher called out the learners' names, to which they responded by saying "Madam", if present. The teacher then went around checking

whether the learners' hair, nails and clothes were clean. If not, the teacher asked them not to come in the same manner the following day.

Table 12 *Expected versus the observed routine activities in Class 2*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
	Roll call	5 min.	Roll call
20 min.	Inspection	-	-
	Toileting	-	-

In Class 2, only roll call was observed. It took 5 minutes to carry out the roll call. This could be because learners in Class 2 were less than 15 and no inspection was done. During the roll call, the teacher called out the names of the learners, to which each responded by saying, "present Madam", if the learner was in class and attentive.

Table 13 *Expected versus the observed routine activities in Class 3*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
	Roll call	5 min.	Roll call
20 min.	Inspection	-	-
	Toileting	-	-

It took 5 minutes to take roll call in Class 3. The teacher called out the learners' names, to which they would respond by mentioning the first letter of their first name. This class also had less than 15 learners.

In all of the classes teachers took roll call for five minutes each. This took a short time since all classes had less than 15 learners. It was only in Class 1 where inspection was carried out. Toileting was not done in any of the classes. It might have been done at home prior to learners coming to school.

One of the routine activities met K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. K.I.E. pre-school guidelines did not allocate specific time to each routine activity. So it is difficult to say whether roll call met time specification or not.

Play

Table 14 *Expected versus observed play activities in Class 1*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
60 min.	Outdoor play	60 min.	Outdoor play
	Indoor play	-	-

Play refers to outdoor and indoor play. Class 1 had outdoor play for 60 minutes. The teacher stood by the swings as the learners swung. At the same time she was making sure learners at the see-saw were playing safely.

Table 15 *Expected versus observed play activities in Class 2*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
60 min.	Outdoor play	30 min.	Outdoor play
	Indoor play	30 min.	Indoor play

Class 2 had both outdoor and indoor play for 60 minutes. Each of these activities took 30 minutes. During outdoor play, the teacher supervised learners as they played with swings and see-saw. During indoor activity, learners were provided with 'legos' to construct houses, cars, cutlery and flower models.

Table 16 *Expected versus observed play activities in Class 3*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
60 min.	Outdoor play	-	-
	Indoor play	40 min.	Indoor play

Class 3 had indoor play for 40 minutes. The learners were involved in different singing games. The remaining 20 minutes were not spent for outdoor play since it was raining outside. The learners went to do pre-number which was the next activity on the time table.

A third of the classes were involved in either outdoor or indoor play. On average NEGST Nursery School classes utilized eight ninths of

the expected play time. Only Class 2 met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to play.

Feeding and Rest

Learners that did not go home for lunch carried their food to school. During lunch time, their teachers warmed their food for them. They were then brought in one room and one of the teachers supervised them as they ate. This took 30 minutes.

In all the 3 classes, learners were allowed to rest for 90 minutes. Teachers spread mattresses on the floor in the classes. Boys and girls were made to rest on different mattresses although in the same room. The time allocated for feeding and rest totalled 2 hours for all the classes. All the classes met K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to rest, feeding and time allocated for these activities.

Other Activities

Other activities that the researcher expected in the Nursery school classes were: Music, art, craft, pre-language, pre-number and pre-science. In Class 1, all these activities were observed except pre-number. In Class 3 only pre-number and language were observed. Tables 17, 18 and 19 show findings on other planned activities in Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 respectively.

Table 17 *Other expected versus observed activities in Class 1*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
30 min.	Music	45 min.	Music
30 min.	Art	30 min.	Art
30 min.	Craft	30 min.	Craft
30 min.	Pre-language	15 min.	Pre-language
30 min.	Pre-number	30 min.	Pre-number
30 min.	Pre-science	30 min.	Pre-science

Four out of the six observed activities were allocated sufficient time in Class 1. However, music was allocated more time than expected while pre-language was allocated less time than required. This could be because learners in this class are young (two and a half to four years), hence music was more interesting to them than pre-language. The teacher spent time for pre-language on music. The time allocated for music and pre-language needed to be balanced.

Table 18 *Other expected versus observed activities in Class 2*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
30 min.	Music	-	-
30 min.	Art	-	-
30 min.	Craft	-	-
30 min.	Pre-language	45 min.	Pre-language
30 min.	Pre-number	40 min.	Pre-number
30 min.	Pre-science	35 min.	Pre-science

In Class 2, half of the other expected activities were observed.

Other activities took only two thirds of the expected time.

Table 19 *Other expected versus observed activities in Class 3*

Time	Expected activity	Time	Observed activity
30 min.	Music	-	-
30 min.	Art	-	-
30 min.	Craft	-	-
30 min.	Pre-language	35 min.	Pre-language
30 min.	Pre-number	45 min.	Pre-number
30 min.	Pre-science	-	-

In Class 3, two out of the six expected activities were observed.

But they only took a little over one third of the expected time.

Only Class 2 spent the required 3 hours. The other two classes took an average of 55.6% of the total time. Since all the time was not spent, these two classes did not meet the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to other expected activities and the time required for those activities.

Table 20 *Core planned activity as indicated by teachers*

Teachers' Response	Frequency	Percentage
Group activity	4	66.66
Play	1	16.67
Individual activity	1	16.67
Totals	6	100.01~100

The researcher wanted to find out from the teachers, which of the indoor free choice activities, group activities, play, feeding, rest and others they allocated most of the time. 66.66% of the teachers indicated that they

had allocated most of the time to group activities while 33.4% indicated play and individual activities. This is shown in Table 20.

Then observation was performed to ascertain what the teachers had said. It was found out that all the 3 classes allocated 29.4% of the time to rest when hours of the whole day were considered, that is from 7.30 am to 4.00 p.m. But when only morning hours, that is, 7.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. were considered, all the classes had allocated an average of 9.8% of the time to play. This is shown in Table 21.

Table 21 *Core planned activity as observed*

Observed Activities	Percentage Time
Rest	29.41
Play	9.80
Free choice indoor activity	8.82
Music	8.82
Feeding	5.88
Art	5.88
Craft	5.88
Pre-language	5.88
Pre-number	5.88
Pre-science	5.88
Group activity	1.96
Routine	1.96
Changing from one lesson to another	3.95
Total	100

There seems to be a discrepancy between core activity as reported by the teachers and what was observed by the researcher. The reason might be that the teachers never considered feeding and rest as part of the planned activities. Also the teachers seemed not to have taken play as a planned activity or they were not aware of the classification given by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

The Relationship between Aims and Objectives and the Planned Activities

Question 3: How do the planned activities relate to the aims and objectives?

Table 2 gives the aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery school programme as indicated by the teachers. These aims and objectives include: to develop the child morally, physically, mentally, socially, spiritually, emotionally, academically for primary education and to motivate parents to bring their children to school.

The following are the planned activities that were deduced from NEGST Nursery school programme: indoor and outdoor play, singing, dancing, story telling, roll call, inspection, feeding, rest, music, art, craft, pre-language, pre-number and pre-science.

The above objectives might not have a specified way in which they are met by the above listed planned activities. But the aims and objectives might be met in a general way from the above activities.

Moral development of the child might be met through singing, indoor and outdoor play, dancing and story telling. For example, during the researcher's class observation, it was noted that whenever two or more children were playing and one happened to talk harshly to another, the teacher insisted that the child in the wrong apologize.

Physical development of the child might be achieved through outdoor and indoor play, unguided play, rest, inspection and feeding. When a child plays, she/he is able to keep fit. In the same way feeding caters for physiological processes of the child's body. Rest is important for small children for they grow during rest.

Singing, story telling, dancing, unguided play, outdoor and indoor play are geared towards contributing to the social development of the child. As children play, sing and dance together, for example, they can interact and socialize.

Pre-number, pre-language, pre-science, art, craft and music are geared towards preparing the child academically for primary education.

For example, pre-number would prepare the child for mathematics in primary school while pre-science would prepare the child for science. Spiritual and emotional development had no specific activities prepared for them. However, good integration of other activities could touch these aspects. For example, prayer and Christian songs during assembly could lead to spiritual development of the child.

Relationship between Planned Activities and teaching methods

Question 4: Are the teaching methods appropriate for the planned activities?

Under teaching methods, the researcher wanted to find out whether free, informal and secure environment was adopted by teachers in their teaching. She wanted also to find out whether the planned activities were integrated, and whether play was the core teaching method.

When the researcher went out for observation, she found out that the learners were able to interact with the teachers without fear. At the same time the learners were able to answer questions even without the permission of the teacher. Other learners were seen walking from one place to another as the teacher taught. This was an evidence of free and informal environment during the teaching learning process.

The classes seemed secure as the researcher never observed objects that could endanger the lives of the children. A secure environment is important for pre-school children since they are adventurous and they can easily pick objects that are dangerous to them. For example, a child once put a bean in the nose to find out what would happen.

On how the planned activities of the NEGST Nursery school were integrated , the researcher found that story telling and singing were integrated during pre-number, pre-science and pre-language. For example in Class 1, pre-number lesson started with the song “one, two, three, Jesus loves me” In this song there was an aspect of numbers and also a religious aspect.

Construction was integrated during indoor play. Learners were given ‘legos’ to construct houses, cars and cutlery models. Pre-language was integrated during the listed planned activities of NEGST Nursery school, for during each of these activities, the teachers communicated in the English language. Singing and dancing were integrated during music lesson. The teachers taught different songs during the music lessons. In one way or another, each of the NEGST Nursery school planned activities interrelated with each other.

Tables 14, 15, and 16 show that play was part of the planned activities in NEGST Nursery school. This implies that play was a teaching method. However only Class 2 of the NEGST Nursery school classes met the standards of K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to play time.

All the NEGST Nursery school classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to a free, informal and secure environment while teaching. The integration of planned activities also met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. However only one of the classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines on using play as a core teaching method.

Classroom Organization

Question 5: Is the classroom organization appropriate for learners?

From the teachers' responses, all the classes had less than 15 pupils. Having less than 15 pupils per class is a strong point for NEGST Nursery school because in such a small class, the teacher is able to give individual attention to each pupil according to their needs and varied learning abilities. According to the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines, a class in a pre-school should have a maximum of 25-30 pupils. NEGST Nursery school classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

The researcher went with a tape measure to measure the perimeter of each class. She then calculated the area from the perimeter. The area of each class was then divided by the number of learners in each class. This gave how much room each learner occupied.

Table 22 *Class physical structures as compared with criteria*

Area of observation	Observation	Criteria
1. Room per child		
Class 1	1.19m ²	1m ²
Class 2	0.75m ²	
Class 3	1.95m ²	
2. Chalkboard height from the floor		
Class 1	None	60 cm
Class 2		
Class 3		

In Class 1, each learner occupied an area of 1.19m², in Class 2 an area of 0.75 m² per learner while in Class 3 an area of 1.96m² per learner. None of the three classes had a chalkboard.

Table 22 shows the findings on physical structures of each class as compared with criteria. From table 21, two out of the three NEGST Nursery school classes had more than 1m² room per pupil. These two classes seem to be spacious enough for teaching-learning process. The learners had enough space to be able to move from one corner of the room to the other as they tried to utilize the learning centres. But it might also

imply that bigger classroom space is needed to maximize the use of manpower. These two classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines which require each student to occupy a minimum space of 1m^2 . The researcher did not observe a chalkboard in any of the three classes. Instead, the teachers used slates for each individual learner. So, none of the NEGST Nursery school classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to chalkboard.

The use of slates is a good idea though, since the teacher is able to work with each child according to his/her ability. However, a chalkboard is still important in a pre-school: when the teacher wants to show something to all learners at the same time; when the teacher does not have enough time to give attention to each learner and when she wants the learners to learn from each other.

Teaching Materials

Question 6: Are the teaching materials appropriate?

NEGST Nursery school teachers listed the following as the teaching materials that they used most often: threading beads, charts, paints, counters, real objects, papers, plasticine, lettered board, crayons, maps, puzzles and cut-out numbers. From the teachers' report, papers

seemed to have been used most often, followed by threading beads, charts and counters.

Comparison of teachers' report and the researcher's observation revealed that there was one point of agreement on the use of papers, another point of slight disagreement on the use of charts and a major point of disagreement on the use of plasticine on the one hand, beads and counters on the other hand. Other materials that were seen to be in use, although not often, were counters, paints, lettered-boards, real objects, crayons and cut-out numbers.

The K.I.E. pre-school guidelines expected the following to be in most common use in a pre-school. Toys, clay, paper, plasticine, paints, chalkboard, charts and puppets. These materials are cheap and available in Kenya. Out of the teaching materials listed by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines, only paper, plasticine and charts were commonly used in NEGST Nursery school. The others, such as paints and clay were not in common use. However, those teaching materials that were stated and confirmed to be in common use in NEGST Nursery were appropriately used during the lessons and they were typical of a pre-school.

In summary, the perceived aims and objectives of NEGST Nursery school that met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines were: to develop the child morally, socially, mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The following were expected activities in a pre-school by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines: indoor free choice activity, group activity, play, routine, feeding and others. Of the expected indoor free choice activities, only one class had what could be called a semblance of indoor free choice activity. However, time allocated for the indoor free choice activity was sufficient.

Only one of the classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to play and time allocated for it. All the classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to rest, feeding and time allocated for these activities. And only one of the three classes in NEGST Nursery school met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to other expected activities by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. The perceived aims and objectives of NEGST Nursery school were met in a general way by the planned activities deduced from NEGST Nursery school.

As expected by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines, all the teachers in NEGST Nursery School adopted secure, free and informal environment in their teaching. Play was a core teaching method from the researcher's

observation. Also the planned activities were integrated during the teaching - learning process. Two out of the three NEGST Nursery School Classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to the number of pupils per class and room per child. However none of them had a chalkboard. Of the expected common teaching materials, only papers met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to evaluate the NEGST Nursery school programme. Specifically, the study sought to evaluate four crucial areas, namely: aims and objectives, planned activities, teaching methods and facilities. From these areas, six research questions were developed to gather information. Data were gathered by means of a questionnaire, observation and written records of the NEGST Nursery school. The criteria for judgement were taken from the Kenya Institute of Education pre-school guidelines.

Findings

Aims and Objectives

Question 1: What are the aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery school?

The researcher was informed by the head teacher of the NEGST Nursery school that there were no written aims and objectives of the NEGST Nursery school. But from the teachers, the aims and objectives of NEGST Nursery school are: to develop the child morally, socially, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually; to motivate parents to bring

their children to school and to prepare the child academically for primary education. These objectives with the exception of two met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. They are: to motivate parents to bring their children to school and to prepare them academically for primary education.

Planned Activities

Question 2: Are the planned activities of NEGST Nursery school appropriate?

The following were the expected activities in a pre-school as prescribed by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines: indoor free choice activity, group activity, play, feeding, routine, rest and others. Only one class had what could be called a semblance of free choice activity. However, time allocated for indoor free choice activity was found sufficient.

All the classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to play and time allocated for it. Only one of the three classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to category: other expected activities. All the classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to rest, feeding and time allocated for these activities. The planned activities in NEGST Nursery school seemed generally appropriate.

Relationship between Aims and Objectives and the Planned Activities

Question 3. How do the planned activities relate to the aims and objectives?

The perceived aims and objectives of NEGST Nursery school are: to develop the child morally, physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, academically for primary education and to motivate parents to bring their children to school.

The following were deduced as the planned activities of NEGST Nursery school, namely: indoor and outdoor play, unguided play, construction, singing, dancing, story telling, roll call, inspection, feeding, rest, music, art, craft, pre-language, pre-number and pre-science. The above perceived aims and objectives might not have specific ways in which they are met by the above planned activities. But they could be met in a general way through the above activities.

Relationship between Planned Activities and Teaching Methods

Question 4: Are the teaching methods appropriate for the planned activities?

As expected by K.I.E. pre-school guidelines, all the teachers in NEGST Nursery school adopted a secure, free and informal environment in their teaching. Play was a core teaching method from the researcher's

observation. Also the planned activities were integrated during teaching-learning process. Hence the NEGST Nursery school teaching methods are appropriate.

Classroom Organization

Question 5: Is the classroom organization appropriate for learners?

Two out of the three NEGST Nursery school classes met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines with reference to the number of pupils per class and room per child. However none of them had a chalkboard. This perhaps limited activities where the chalkboard could be used.

Teaching Materials

Question 6: Are the teaching materials appropriate?

The K.I.E. pre-school guidelines expected the following to be in most common use in a pre-school: toys, clay, paper, plasticine, paints,, chalkboard, charts and puppets. Of these, only paper met the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines. The others, such as paints and clay were not in common use. However those teaching materials such as crayons and cut-out-numbers that were stated by the teachers and confirmed to be in occasional use in NEGST Nursery school were appropriate for teaching in a pre-school.

Recommendations Based on the Findings

1. NEGST Nursery school did not have written aims and objectives.

This meant that the programme could only be evaluated on the basis of teachers' opinions. It would help a great deal for the NEGST Nursery to have formally stated aims and objectives which each of the teachers should be able to focus their efforts in meeting. This will also help the NEGST Nursery School Committee to make self-evaluation from time to time.

2. The time allocated for indoor free choice activity was used for unguided play because teachers might not have understood what indoor free choice activity entailed. NEGST Nursery School needs a clear understanding of the expectations in each category of planned activities. This will help to have the right activities for each category.

3. It was observed that the classroom for ages four to five had less than 1m² room per pupil. It is recommended that a bigger room be found where these children can learn comfortably.

4. None of the classes had a chalkboard. It is recommended that all the classes should have chalkboards 60 cm. from the floor as recommended by the K.I.E. pre-school guidelines.

5. NEGST Nursery School should make more use of the following teaching materials: toys, clay, paints, chalkboard and puppets. These materials are cheap and easily available in Kenya.

Recommendations for Further Study

In light of the study of the four areas, namely: aims and objectives, planned activities, teaching methods and facilities, it is evident that some of the vital factors that could have a direct effect on the above were not considered. These include: teacher's background in terms of their moral values, training and qualifications, finances as regards to physical structures and teaching materials, parental involvement on what goes on in the school; and how prepared the children are as they go to primary school. Consequently, a study needs to be done:

1. To ascertain NEGST Nursery School teachers' backgrounds, qualifications and how they may influence the planned activities and teaching methods.
2. To investigate parental participation and their attitudes toward the school.
3. To inquire into how prepared the children are as they go to primary school.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS TEACHERS AT THE NEGST NURSERY SCHOOL

Dear Teacher,

I would like to kindly request for your help in filling in this questionnaire. This questionnaire seeks information on your Nursery school programme.

Please, fill in the questionnaire as completely as possible. Put (x) by the appropriate response. **Read the instructions of EACH QUESTION very carefully.**

1. Which class do you teach?
(tick the appropriate ONE)

a/ Class 1 _____
b/ Class 2 _____
c/ Class 3 _____

2. About how many pupils are in your class?
(Tick the appropriate number)

a/ Less than 15 _____
b/ 15-20 _____
c/ 20-25 _____
d/ 25-30 _____
e/ More than 30 _____

3. Briefly list the aims and objectives of your Nursery

school.

- a/ _____
b/ _____
c/ _____
d/ _____
e/ _____

4. What are the planned activities in your class? (Check

ALL appropriate answers.)

- _____ Indoor free choice activity
_____ Group activity
_____ Routines (e.g. Roll calls, inspections, toileting etc.)
_____ Rest
_____ Feeding

_____ Play

_____ Others(specify) _____

5. Which ONE of the planned activities do you allocate most time? (Check ONE appropriate answer)

_____ Indoor free activity

_____ Group activity

_____ Routines (e.g. Roll calls, inspections, toileting etc.)

_____ Rest

_____ Feeding

_____ Play

_____ Others (specify) _____

6. What are the MOST common teaching materials/aids you use when teaching your class? (Indicate any four)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

APPENDIX 2

CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVING THE CLASS SESSIONS

CLASS OBSERVED _____			
DATES OBSERVED _____			
Area Of Observation Details	Observ ed	Not observed	Time allocated (Where applicable)
1.Free Choice Indoor activity			
1.Painting			
2.Counting			
3.Sorting			
4.Weaving			
5.Construction			
6.Tracing			
7.Modelling			
2.Group Activity			
1.Story Telling			
2.Rhymes			
3.Poems			
4.Singing			
5.Dancing			
3.Routines			
1.Roll call			
2.Inspection			
3.Toileting			
4. Rest			
1.Rest			
5.Feeding			
1.Feeding			
6. Play			
1.Indoor Play			
2.Outdoor Play			
7. Others			
1.Music			
2.Art			
3.Craft			
4.Language			

5.Pre-number			
6.Pre-science			
8.Teaching Environment			
1.Free			
2.Informal			
3.Secure			
9.Learning Centres			
1.Shop Corner			
2.Wood Work			
3.Construction			
4.Book Corner			
5.Dressing up Corner			
7.Home Corner			
8. Water Play			
10.Are the above learning centres (those listed in No.9) utilized			
11. Did the teacher use more than one teaching method?			
12.Teaching Materials			
1.Toys			
2.Clay			
3.Paper			
4.Plasticine			
5.Paints			
6.Chalkboard			
7.Charts			
8.Puppets			

Class physical structures

Area of observation	Observation
1.Room per pupil	
2.Chalkboard height from the floor	

APPENDIX 3
NEGST NURSERY SCHOOL TIME-TABLE

DAY	CLASS	7.30-8.20	8.20-8.30	8.30-9.00	9.00-9.40	9.45-10.30	10.30-11.00	11.00-11.30	11.30-12.00	12.00-12.45	12.45-2.00	2.00-4.00
M.	I	Indoor free choice activities	Toilet	Assembly	News period	Individual presentation Mathematics activities Environment activities	S	Singing games	B	Rhymes & poems	R	
	Language activities				Outdoor activities			Environmental activities				
	Group presentation				Singing games			Stories				
T	I	Indoor free choice activities	Indoor free choice activities	Assembly	Group presentation	N	Outdoor activities	R	Creative activities	L		
	Language activities				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					
	Group work				Singing games		Group presentation					
W	I	Indoor free choice activities	Toilet	Assembly	Group presentation	A	Singing games	E	Group presentation	U		
	Language activities				Outdoor activities		Environmental activities					
	Group presentation				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					
T	I	Indoor free choice activities	Indoor free choice activities	Assembly	Individual presentation	K	Singing games	A	Individual presentation	C		
	Language activities				Outdoor activities		Environmental activities					
	Group & individual work				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					
F	I	Indoor free choice activities	Toilet	Assembly	Individual work	S	Singing games	K	Stories	H		
	Language activities				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					
	Group presentation				Outdoor activities		Music					
F	II	Indoor free choice activities	Toilet	Assembly	Group presentation	S	Outdoor activities	K	Mathematics activities	M		
	Mathematics activities				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					
	Music				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					
F	III	Indoor free choice activities	Toilet	Assembly	Group presentation	S	Outdoor activities	K	Mathematics activities	E		
	Mathematics activities				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					
	Music				Outdoor activities		Mathematics activities					