

Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE)  
Teachers Training Workshop

**THEME:**  
**PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE**  
To Deliver Kenya's Competency Based Curriculum

**BACKGROUND**

In 2012, amid growing concerns about shocking rates of youth unemployment, and perceptions of a 'skills shortage' the task force charged with examining the realignment of the educational sector to the Kenyan Vision 2030 and Constitution 2010, produced a report pointing to the need for significant changes to the curriculum. This was followed in 2015 by Session Paper number 2 – Reforming Education and Training in Kenya – which recommended the introduction of a competency-based curriculum. A view endorsed in 2016 by the Kenyan Institute for Curriculum Development' (KICD) and thus, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was adopted by Kenya, promising:

- ✓ Learners will obtain the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values that they will be applying positively in their daily life.
- ✓ CBC will nurture every learner to his/her full potential depending on their level of giftedness arising from their inborn and/or environmental exposure.
- ✓ CBC will develop a more wholesome citizen who will work towards introducing positive change to their private lives as well as that of their community

Moreover, these changes to the curriculum seek to address other problems such as children with disabilities and those living in urban informal settlements in Kenya being the most marginalized and excluded groups of children, who often remain invisible to the mainstream population and relevant officials. More profoundly, issues of disability and special needs are set about with cultural presumptions, fears and beliefs that often keep such children marginalized and excluded; often not attending school or in separate classes in special schools or special units attached to mainstream schools.

**The Competency Based Curriculum**

A Competency Based Curriculum is learner-centered and dynamic, reacting to the changing needs of learners, teachers and society. The underlying principle is that learning activities and environments are chosen so that learners can acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to situations they encounter in everyday life. Designed around a multi-disciplinary set of competencies, a competency based curricular shifts focus to the complex outcomes of a learning process (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes to be applied by learners) and away from what learners is expected to learn about in terms of traditionally-defined subject content.

In Kenya the new curriculum starts at the pre-primary level when children are aged about 4 years and ends at grade 12 when they are about 18 years old. Its inquiry-based learning approach and the development of soft-skills such as critical thinking, creativity and imagination, and problem-solving are anticipated to help bridge the skills gap, thought to be causing high levels of unemployment. This new way of learning and teaching is totally different from Kenya's other

education systems including 8-4-4 and its precursor, 7-4-2-3 since the latter two were examination oriented and assumed that all pupils must pass exams to succeed in life.

### **The Problem**

The introduction of a CBC is a very real opportunity to develop a truly inclusive educational system that improves outcomes for all children but there are a series of obstacles for inclusive education and the successful roll-out of the CBC in Kenya today. KICD asserts that these include:

- ✓ Lack of teachers trained / skilled in delivering a CBC (in all areas) but specifically in the field of special needs and inclusion;
- ✓ Lack of CBC learning and teaching resources.
- ✓ a lack of high quality systematically structured training material/resources for teaching teachers how to promote inclusive practice;
- ✓ Whilst NGO's and organizations such as UNICEF point to other limiting factors such as:
- ✓ Lack of societal awareness around issues of disability and special needs;
- ✓ Inadequate state provision for children and young people with special needs and disability;
- ✓ Limited engagement with families/parents/communities around education and inclusion of children with special needs and disabilities;
- ✓ Few opportunities for young people with special needs and disabilities to be actively engaged strategically or operationally in educational processes.

There is common agreement that 'training' is an urgent requirement, if the CBC is to be rolled out effectively and meet its promise of inclusive, dynamic, learner-centred education. This is where we believe we can help by offering several training opportunities of teachers in early years of learning and primary school. We intent to start with a two-day training workshop in Nairobi and Mombasa for a cluster of teachers in early years who are unfamiliar with how to implement inclusive pedagogy in a CBC framework so that they have the experience and confidence in mentoring/training others about implementing inclusive pedagogy in a CBC framework .

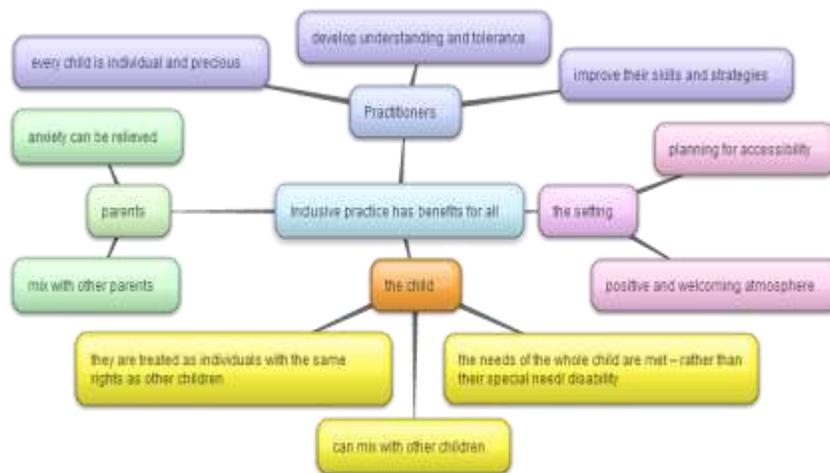
Dr Hollinshead as a lead trainer, having been involved in these types of projects elsewhere in the world, believes in promoting local ownership of all events and materials via a 'train the trainers' approach and is keen to work with the extensive pool of experts that exists to ensure that any training is culturally relevant and reflects global best practice, and not simply the imposition of a particular set of western values with little awareness of real-life classroom operations in Kenya. Thus, she hopes to identify and work with a local expert advisory group which will comprise as a minimum, representatives from Stadi za Maisha Educational Trust, relevant Ministry of Education directorates / agencies, Kenyatta University, and head teachers. We believe that this 'train the trainer' model will ensure the long -term sustainability of any training. We are proposing to provide systematic training and resources for practitioners which facilitates a better understand of the potential for a CBC to provide transformative, sustainable, appropriate, effective and quality-assured pedagogically inclusive education for all children and young people in Kenya.



- ✓ Models of disability.
- ✓ Practical tasks
- ✓ Barriers to inclusion

## Day 2 - Session Theme - Policy & Practice of Learning & Teaching in a CBC: becoming an inclusive professional

- ✓ Learning & Teaching strategies for inclusion
- ✓ Planning and observing children – individual learning profiles ( ILP)
- ✓ Inclusive Assessment – diagnostic, formative and summative
- ✓ Reflective practitioners.
- ✓ Voices of Parents & Children
- ✓ Developing a community of practice and review – role of technology



The focus for Early Years teachers will be on developing their knowledge and understanding of Identifying and supporting children’s developmental needs in Early Years classrooms; where early identification of need becomes routine and leads to appropriate interventions to maximise a child’s potential for successful outcomes. High-quality inclusive early years practice is responsive to individual children and differentiates and personalizes provision to meet the needs of all children. It draws on practitioners’ knowledge about children’s learning and development, is differentiated for individual children and uses a range of pedagogic approaches. Early years practice, within a CBC, must be based around several principles:

- Every child is unique, and constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn through positive relationships;
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- Children develop and learn in different ways, and at different rates

- Topics will include : inclusive pedagogy and practice, planning, observing and assessing children; early identification/intervention, speech, language and communication, learning difficulties (eg dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia), understanding challenging behaviour, strategies for including neuro-diverse children in the classroom (eg autism); augmented communication, language rich classroom, assessment for inclusion; including children how have hearing and visual impairment; Universal Design for Learning (UDL) ; Individual Learning Profiles (ILP) etc