

Chapter 3

Early Childhood Investment for Future Economic Growth and Industrial Development in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood investment in young children 0-8 years is important. It offers a good start in life involving caring, nurturing, and safe environment to children who are the future hope of any society and nation. This chapter seeks to clarify the significance of investing quality early childhood education services for future industrial development and economic growth in Tanzania underpinned by economic growth perspectives. This chapter reports findings from an interpretive phenomenological design in three Teacher education and preschool settings in Tanzania with 10 tutors, 8 preschool teachers, and 8 parent participants. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews. Findings indicated that parents and community from the areas studied lack knowledge of benefits of early investment in education. The study recommends the need for effective future practice directed at improving human development in early years in Tanzania. To achieve these aims, government policy planners need to locate favorable teaching and learning environments.

INTRODUCTION

Education in every sense is one of the important factors of development. Education provides underpinning for development, the groundwork on which much of our economic and social wellbeing is built (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Ozturk, 2001). Industrial development is the main force behind economic growth facilitated by investment in education (Dickens, Sawhill, & Tebbs, 2006; Ozturk, 2001). Early investment in young children aged 0-8 years is important. It provides a good start in life involving caring, a nurturing, loving and safe environment to children who are the future expectation of any society

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-6471-4.ch003

and nation (Barnett, 1995; Biersteker, Ngaruiya, Sebatane, & Gudyanga, 2008; Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Nsamenang, 2008). Early investment in children's learning builds good educational foundation for children from the early stage. Through such foundational education young children gain knowledge and skills which enable them to improve the economic well-being of the nation's future industrial development (Barnett & Ackerman, 2006). Early investment in education has the potential for promoting children's creativity, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, learning dispositions as well as socio-emotional/behavioural development skills (Hyson, 2003; Melhuish & Petrogiannis, 2006).

The EFA Global Monitoring Report also shows that public investment in early childhood education consist of less than 10 percent of total public spending on education in many countries, and in some, even can be less than 5 percent (Naudeau, Kataoka, Valerio, Neuman, & Elder, 2011). Also, the report shows that in developing countries with at least 10 percent of public education expenditure devoted to ECE such as Bulgaria, Mexico, Costa Rica, Croatia, Hungary, Mongolia, Moldova, Slovenia and the like. Furthermore, the report comments that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had expenditure levels of less than 1 percent of the total public education budget. Gross enrollment rates in ECE settings follow regional public expenditure outlines; they are highest in the developed countries, on average 80 percent, and lowest in the developing world, on average 36 percent (Naudeau et al., 2011). Public and private investment in ECE need funds which can originate at different levels of government such as federal/central, state/provinces, municipalities, district/localities, and are usually mobilized from taxes, lotteries, toll roads, licensing, admission fees. Private sectors funding may be generated from, private enterprises, foundations, groups/NGOs and community. So quality investment in ECE for future economic growth and industrial development could still be problematic in some African countries due to lack of sustainable sources of funds. The choice of funding sources or specific modalities to allocate funds depends on a number of factors specific to the country and social context. For example, ECE policies in some countries include a legal privilege to free services, a public financing instruction, and may even have an earmarked source of income. Other countries make decisions on sources and allocation mechanisms on the basis of established state practices on financing social policy programs.

BENEFITS OF EARLY EDUCATION INVESTMENT

Children's participation in good quality early childhood education (ECE) has benefits for the child's learning and development at the time of attendance and through later life (Smith, Grima, Gaffney, & Powell, 2000; Sylva, Sammons, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2003). There is a growing appreciation which indicates that involvement in ECE from the two or three years before starting school, is advantageous for all children and particularly for children from low-income and disadvantaged groups (Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008; Smith et al., 2000).

Success or failure at this early stage of education lays the foundation for achievement or breakdown in school, which in turn leads to attainments or failure in post-school learning (Mitchell et al., 2008; Nsamenang, 2008). A study by Young and Mustard (2008) states that the early years from 0-6 years of age are the time for brain development; hence quality ECE programmes are a vital societal as well as personal imperative. Further, Young and Mustard (2008) stressed that a child's environment and experiences start in *utero* and not only affect brain development, but also mental health, physical, learning and behaviour for a life time. McCain and Mustard (1999) also support the argument that development of the brain in the early years of life, particularly the 0-3 year-olds, builds the foundation of competence

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