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Enhancing young children's access to early childhood education and care settings in Tanzania

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This study explored the current situation of limited access of young children to early childhood education and care settings in Tanzania. The aim was to explore the views of stakeholders regarding the basis for this anomaly and what needs to be done to assuage the situation. A total of 28 people participated in the study: Six teachers, 12 children and four parents in one rural and one urban pre-school (local level) and six national government education officials. Data was generated through interviews, classroom observation, focus group discussion, documentary review and informal conversations. The findings showed that early childhood education and care in Tanzania is still unsatisfactory. Many children, the participants agreed, have no access to early childhood settings for various reasons including "lack of support from the government", "low socio-economic status of parents", "traditional norms and cultural values", "gender discrimination" and "lack of parents' awareness of the importance of early investment in education". The study discovered that all activities pertaining to early education were left to parents and communities who seemed unable to cope with its various demands. To improve the situation, it is recommended that there is need for a forging of partnership between the Government, parents and the community in such a venture; and that Government policy makers should set clear policies regarding how quality early childhood education and care can be equitably funded and conducted throughout the country.

Biography

Ignasia Mligo has recently completed her PhD from Waikato University, New Zealand in 2015 from the Faculty of Education. Her specialization is on theories of childhood development and learning. Currently, she is teaching childhood development courses in the Department of Psychology, University of Dodoma. She was also headed a Department of Curriculum and Teacher Education for 3 years before her PhD studies. Her area of interest is on early childhood education, policy and curriculum issues in relation to child development and learning. She is also amongst of the Reviewers of *Early Years: An International Research Journal*.

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