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Voluntary Educational Practices of Caregivers in Pre-primary Education in Malawi

Summary

Research Objective

The objective of this study is to analyze the spontaneous educational practices of caregivers in pre-primary education in Malawi. In Malawi, there is no formal training for caregivers, and it is common for them to receive a two-week training from the government or aid organizations. Currently, about 47.3% of caregivers have received such training. Additionally, caregivers at the free Community-Based Childcare Centers (CBCCs) typically work as unpaid volunteers.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Nkhata Bay district, located in northern Malawi. The subjects were 17 caregivers and 29 community members from five CBCCs. The study involved activity observations at each CBCC, semi-structured interviews with caregivers, and focus group discussions with community members. The research was carried out in September 2022, May 2023, and December 2023.

Findings

Educational practices varied across the CBCCs. Overall, there was a focus on school readiness, with teacher-led activities that emphasized memorizing calendars, alphabets, numbers, and names of body parts. The government-issued curriculum was not observed in any of the CBCCs studied, but some CBCCs had guidebooks for caregivers. This is because many CBCCs were established before the government's curriculum and caregiver guidebooks were issued, and government intervention has only occurred in recent years.

In facilities A, B, and C, about half of the caregivers had received training and conducted activities based on their training and personal ideas. Facility A operated with a structured timetable similar to primary education. Facility B relied on the caregivers' knowledge for their activities. Facility C had caregivers who created and followed activity plans. In contrast, all caregivers in facilities D and E underwent a two-week training provided by donors and conducted activities based on the materials obtained from the training. While some caregivers had received training, many were engaged in activities based on their spontaneous efforts.