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Preparedness of the Secondary School Christian Religious Education (CRE) Teachers in Provision and integration of HIV/AIDS Education in Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to establish challenges in the teaching and learning of Christian that affect the provision of HIV/AIDS in Kenya. The objective of this study was to establish the preparedness of CRE Teachers in provision and integration HIV/AIDS education in Kenya. The research question was: to what extent are CRE teachers prepared (in terms of training in provision of HIV/AIDS Education. The study used descriptive design survey. Data was collected using questionnaire. This was a quantitative study. Stratified random sampling was used to select the schools while simple random sampling was used to select the teachers who participated in the study. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that the CRE teachers were not well prepared in provision and integration of HIV/AIDS to learners. The study recommended that CRE teachers should be in serviced on how to teach HIV/AIDS education in the subject. This paper presents findings on the preparedness of secondary school CRE teachers (in terms training) in providing HIV/AIDS education to the learners in Bungoma County, Kenya.

Keywords: Preparedness, Teachers, Integration, Provision, Christian Religious Education

Introduction

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is one of the most devastating scourges in the world today (Bwanali, 2008; Kunhiyop, 2008; Winkler and Bodenstein, 2005; Nwaigbo, 2004). It affects people of all races, sex and age. According to World Health Organization (WHO), AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death worldwide and the leading cause of death in Sub-Saharan Africa (Chepkwony, 2004 in AFER). Of all regions of the world, Sub-Saharan Africa is the worst hit in terms of HIV/AIDS. Though HIV/AIDS occurs in all the continents, 70% of the cases occur in Sub-Saharan Africa (Willis, 2002; Murundu, 2006; Granich and Mermin, 2001; Kamaara, 2004).

Education is one of the sectors that can be used in combating HIV/AIDS. Provision of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS education can help reduce HIV infection among people. The spread and impact of HIV and AIDS is cause for global concern because it mainly afflicts young and productive populations in whom the African continent hopes to invest its future. In many of the African countries South of Sahara, 50 per cent of all new infections with HIV are found among young people below the age 25 (Winkler and Bodenstein, 2005). This clearly indicates

that the HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and education in African countries should target young people.

According to Kunhiyop (2008), there is great ignorance when it comes to HIV/AIDS because some people deny the reality of the disease and continue with lifestyles that contribute to its spread. To win the war against this disease, we need to mobilize an army of educators to teach church members, citizens, children and students about this disease and combat many myths that surround it. Education is the most humane and moral way to combat ignorance, prejudice, fear and promiscuous behavior. According to Kunhiyop (2008), the education programme must provide accurate basic information about HIV/AIDS presented in a way that encourages people to discuss their beliefs about this disease and how it is spread. Such discussion demonstrates respect for those being taught and provides the educator with an opportunity to address their specific concerns. The programme must include information about how to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS. Emphasizing on the importance of teachers in the provision of HIV/AIDS education Winkler and Bodenstein (2005) stated the following:

Teachers have the potential to influence and inculcate the values and virtues of self control, assertiveness and other life skills that young people need to enable them to cope with the challenges of the pandemic. In addition, teachers can facilitate the cascading and uptake of proven interventions. For example, they can encourage abstinence and help children to make informed choices (Winkler and Bodenstein, 2005: vi).

According to the CRE handbook (KIE 2006) HIV/AIDS education has been integrated in the CRE syllabus. But with alarming statistics on HIV/AIDS among the youth, it is not clear whether or not CRE as a subject is providing effective HIV/AIDS education to the learners.

In Kenya it is estimated that 600 people die of AIDS daily. The government of Kenya in recognition of the magnitude of the problem declared AIDS a national disaster on November 25th 1999 (Murundu, 2006). Having declared the disease a national disaster, the government set up the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) to co-ordinate the fight against the disease. Mwololo (2009) in the Daily Nation of March 11th 2009 reported that 1.4 million adults in Kenya are infected with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency virus). From these alarming statistics on HIV infection in Kenya (Mwololo, 2009), the country needs to formulate new strategies to reduce the rate of new HIV infections. In the absence of a cure of HIV/AIDS, the single and effective strategy of controlling the spread of the killer virus is through positive behavioral change. Museveni (2006) commented that sensitization is the key in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and must be done in a way that reaches the people in their peculiar situations. Kamaara, (2005), concurs by saying that, in the absence of a cure for HIV/AIDS, behavioral change holds an absolute key to combating the scourge. Behavioural change can only be achieved through effective HIV/AIDS education. One of the objectives of CRE in secondary school is to provide moral and sex education for behavioural change. According to the CRE teachers' handbook (KIE, 2006) HIV/AIDS education has been integrated in the syllabus but the question is to what extent does the subject provide effective HIV/AIDS education?

The war against HIV/AIDS can have a positive impact if we arm the vulnerable group of youths with vital information. According to Wanjama et al (2006), adolescent sexuality remains the most challenging phenomenon the world is facing today, especially in Africa. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive and accurate education on sexuality as a mainstay for holistic growth. Further in the era of HIV/AIDS, it is critical to educate the youth and give them

accurate information on sex and sexuality. The empowerment of the youth through education and communication for behavior development and change has been identified as one of the most viable methods of curbing the spread of HIV infection (KIE, 1997). The youth need to acquire the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to avoid being infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The youth can also act as change agents in their respective communities by supporting the uninfected, infected as well as those affected by HIV/AIDS.

The government of Kenya introduced HIV/AIDS education in the year 2000 as a separate subject and through this strategy HIV/AIDS was taught as a separate subject on the timetable. This went on up to 2002 when the national curriculum was reviewed and HIV/AIDS aspects were infused and integrated into various subjects. CRE is one of the subjects which were to integrate HIV/AIDS education. In 2002 the Kenya secondary school CRE curriculum was revised and rationalized so that emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS pandemic, drug abuse and morality could be included in the syllabus (KIE, 2002). What is taught in secondary schools in Kenya today is based on this revised and rationalized curriculum. But with alarming statistics on HIV/AIDS infections among young people in secondary schools (KIE 2003; TREDS, 2005), what remains unclear is whether or not the CRE curriculum in secondary schools is geared towards achieving effective HIV/AIDS awareness among the learners.

According to the secondary schools' CRE Teachers' Handbook (KIE, 2006), HIV/AIDS as an emerging issue has been addressed in the CRE syllabus under the topic Human Sexuality. But the question is to what extent does CRE as a subject provide HIV/AIDS education to secondary school students? It is against this background that this study sets out to establish the Preparedness of CRE teachers in provision of effective HIV/AIDS education to learners in secondary schools in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

In Kenya it is estimated that 600 people die of AIDS daily. The government of Kenya in recognition of the magnitude of the problem declared AIDS a National Disaster on November 25th 1999 (Murundu, 2006). Having declared the disease a national disaster the government set up the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) to co-ordinate the fight against the disease. Mwololo (2009) reported that 1.4. Million adults in Kenya are infected with HIV. According to Otieno and Akinyi (2008), reports from centre for the study of Adolescents indicated that in Kenya, 33% of secondary students had unprotected sex while 8 out of 10 people in Kenya have sex before age 20 which heightens the risk of contracting HIV. A research by Wepukhulu (2009) established that pre-marital sex is prevalent (36%) among the youth in secondary schools in the larger Bungoma district. The study also established that premarital sex had negative impact on academic performance and could be among the factors contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS among the youth.

Christian Religious Education (CRE) is one of the subjects in the secondary school curriculum in Kenya entrusted with the responsibility of teaching and instilling in learners moral values (KIE, 2000). In 2002 the CRE curriculum was revised so that emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS could be properly included in the Syllabus (KIE, 2002). Despite all this efforts, HIV/AIDS infection is still high among secondary schools students in Kenya (TREDS, 2005, KIE 2003). According to Musamas (2007); Nwaigbo (2004), one preventive measure of HIV/AIDS among the youth is providing moral education. But with the alarming statistics on HIV infections and

premarital sex in Kenya, many questions remain unanswered for example; are CRE teachers prepared (in terms of training) to provide HIV/AIDS education to the learners.

A research by Omolo (2012) on implementation of HIV/AIDS education in Kisumu county revealed that HIV/AIDS education is not given the kind of emphasis it deserved by the government and learning institutions. This research indicated that there were challenges in the subjects bestowed with the responsibility of teaching and integrating HIV/AIDS education and CRE is one of them. This study therefore sought to establish how prepared CRE teachers are in provision of HIV/AIDS to learners in secondary schools in Kenya.

Teacher Preparation in Provision of HIV/AIDS Education

The teacher preparation component of any curriculum implementation is vital. The teacher is an essential tool in implementation of education change (Okech and Asiachi, 1992). Kocchar (1991) shares similar views when he says that efficient teaching in Social Studies depends upon the competence and professional advancement of the teacher. He should be well equipped both in the area of content and methodology. This study therefore set out to establish the extent to which the CRE teachers have been prepared (in terms of training) to teach issues to do with HIV/AIDS.

Teachers have the potential to influence and inculcate the values and virtues of self-control, assertiveness and other life skills that young people need to enable them cope with the challenges of the pandemic. In addition, teachers can facilitate the cascading and uptake of proven interventions (Winkler and Bodenstein, 2005). This means teachers need to be prepared to give information on HIV/AIDS to learners. Winkler and Bodenstein emphasized the importance of the preparedness of the teachers in the following terms:

It is critical for teachers to be thoroughly equipped with knowledge about HIV and AIDS, to be aware of all the issues around the disease and be adequately empowered to teach the subject in many different circumstances (Winkler and Bodenstein, 2005:v).

Since the intergration of HIV/AIDS Education into the CRE syllabus, it is not clear whether or not the CRE teacher has been thoroughly equipped with knowledge about HIV and AIDS and how to teach it to the learners. This is the concern of the study.

According to Kafu (2010) teacher preparation is usually of two types, pre-service and in-service models. Pre-service is a kind of teacher training programme organized and conducted for people with no experience in the teaching profession while in-service education programme is the form of training designed for serving teachers who may not be trained and qualified in teaching and if they are, it is intended to equip them with new competencies for promotion or otherwise (Kafu, 2010). Generally the competencies school teachers are provided or equipped with during the course of teacher training sessions are based on the existing school curriculum, demands of the society, level of sophistication in the society and the political philosophy of the country. Kafu (2010) emphasized the importance of the teachers' preparedness in providing effective instruction in the following terms:

If school teachers have to present instruction efficiently and effectively, including instructional development they must be properly prepared (Kafu, 2010:158)

Given the importance of HIV/AIDS education one of the concerns of this study was to establish whether or not CRE teachers have been in-serviced on how to teach HIV/AIDS within the CRE curriculum.

Staff development or in-service education represents a direct link between curriculum development and classroom delivery (Wiles, 2005). Without a knowledgeable committed teacher who holds skills needed to implement the curriculum, all planning is an academic exercise. According to TREDs (2005) parents have a significant role in communicating reproductive health issues to their children. However, some cultural practices prevent most of them from communicating these issues including HIV/AIDS information. This creates a knowledge gap that is filled by teachers, friends, the churches and relatives as they grow. What remains unclear is whether or not the CRE teacher has been adequately prepared to teach and integrate HIV/AIDS issues in the CRE syllabus. This is one of the concerns of this study.

Fullan (1982) recognizes the importance of in-service courses and seminars for teachers during the implementation of a programme when he says: 'No matter how willing and ready teachers are to implement the innovation, it is when they have started to put it in practice that they begin to experience anxiety and doubt'. Since the HIV/AIDS education was integrated in the CRE syllabus in 2002 it is not clear whether or not the CRE teachers have been prepared in terms of in-service courses and seminars to teach HIV/AIDS education. This study therefore investigated the extent to which the CRE teacher is prepared to teach HIV/AIDS education in secondary schools in Kenya.

Studies done by Walaba (1998) on the teaching and learning of CRE in schools and colleges established that most CRE teachers attended seminars and conferences. On the other hand Kiniale's research (2000) indicated that CRE teachers rarely attended seminars and recommended that there is need to organise in-service courses for CRE teachers in order to boost their morale and improve their teaching skills. This study set out to establish the extent to which the secondary school CRE teacher has been prepared in terms of seminars and in-service courses to teach on HIV/AIDS education.

Research by Kinanga (2009) found that most teachers prefer to discuss about HIV/AIDS on its own and not during Kiswahili lessons. It was also discovered that Kiswahili teachers in Kisii Central district are not adequately prepared to handle HIV/AIDS issues. The case for CRE as a subject remains unclear and is the concern of this study. This study therefore investigated the preparedness of CRE teachers in provision and integration of HIV/AIDS education.

Study by Mulinge (2009) on the role of Kenyan public universities in communicating information on HIV and AIDS to surrounding local communities indicated that lack of full information on how to pass messages on HIV and AIDS prevention was seen to be a barrier which had hindered communication of information on HIV and AIDS prevention measures to communities. This study sets out to establish whether the same case is true for CRE in secondary schools in Bungoma. One of the objectives of this study is to establish whether or not the CRE teachers have been prepared and have adequate information to pass on to learners on HIV/AIDS.

According to Sachiyo (2010) indicated that teachers were a major source of information on HIV/AIDS. But the question is; are the teachers especially CRE teacher's adequately prepared to teach HIV/AIDS education in secondary schools in Kenya. According to TREDs (2005) teachers who are the main avenues of communication should be trained in relevant skills and knowledge: guidance and counseling and life skills to enable them implement these activities in schools. Since 2002 the HIV/AIDS education was integrated in the CRE syllabus but what

remains unclear is whether or not the CRE teachers have since been trained to handle HIV/AIDS education. This study investigated that.

It is interesting that Wepukhulu (2009) found out that in Bungoma sub-County in absence of parents, teachers could take up the responsibility of educating the youth on HIV/AIDS and sexuality. But for HIV/AIDS education to be effective the teachers need to be prepared to teach it. One of the concerns of this study is to establish if CRE teachers are adequately prepared to teach HIV/AIDS education.

Similarly, Mulinge (2009) indicated that lack of training was a barrier that had been hindering smooth communication since some people assume that their audience understands them because they have been hearing about HIV/AIDS. The situation for Christian Religion Education as far as training is concerned is unknown and it is the concern of this study. According to research by TREDs (2005) one of the factors that make young people vulnerable to HIV infection is limited availability of trained teachers and resource materials to enhance AIDS education. It is not clear whether or not CRE teachers have been trained to handle issues to do with HIV/AIDS. This is the concern of this study.

Research by Omolo (2012) on implementation of HIV/AIDS education in public secondary schools in Kisumu county established that only 30% of teachers interviewed had the training on HIV/AIDS aspects-12% through pre-service and 18% through in-service. The study also found out that refusal and communication skills whose mastery by the learners greatly contributes towards HIV/AIDS prevention are hardly taught in most schools. The study attributes all this to inadequate training on HIV/AIDS among the teachers. Omolo (2012) study was on general HIV/AIDS education but this study looked at the preparedness of the CRE teachers in providing HIV/AIDS education to the learners. The preparedness of the CRE teachers is unknown and therefore the concern of this study.

The need to intensify AIDS education in schools has become more urgent with the increasing demands placed on teachers as Universal Primary Education (UPE) takes root and more children enroll in schools. Many parents spend less and less time with their children, and do not give the necessary guidance to impart skills that would enable their children to protect themselves from infection. This clearly indicates that teachers need to be prepared to provide HIV/AIDS education because they spend more time with the learners. Emphasizing on the preparedness of teachers in provision of HIV/AIDS, Winkler and Bodenstein (2005) said the following:

The capacity of teachers to teach about HIV and AIDS must be strengthened through the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in the teacher training curriculum: an infusion of the AIDS content in the in-service and other continuing education programmes for teachers; regular support, monitoring, supervision and the provision of relevant materials (Winkler and Bodenstein, 2005:1)

According to Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991), both individual teacher characteristics and collective or collegial factors play roles in determining curriculum implementation.

Methodology

This study used the descriptive survey design to investigate the preparedness (in terms of training) of secondary school CRE teachers in provision of HIV/AIDS Education to learners in secondary schools in Kenya. Public secondary schools which offer CRE as a subject in Bungoma County were 161 and were all targeted for in this study. The target population was all form

four CRE teachers who have taught the subject from form one to form four in secondary schools in Bungoma County. The population from which the sample for this study was drawn consisted of 161 public secondary schools within Bungoma County. Stratified random sampling was done to select 62 schools that were selected for the study. Therefore the 62 Schools that participated in the study were selected using stratified random sampling from a total population of 161 public registered secondary schools in Bungoma County. The 161 public secondary schools in Bungoma County were first stratified into boys, girls and mixed schools representing the various categories of public secondary schools in Kenya. Then a simple random sampling was used to select approximately 30% of each category. This led to the selection of 62 secondary schools of which 12 were boys schools, 11 were girls' schools and 39 mixed schools. Then simple random sampling procedure was used to select 102 CRE teachers who participated in the study.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis

The data collection instrument for the study was questionnaires administered to 102 CRE teachers from the 62 selected schools. Descriptive statistical approaches were used to analyse data from the questionnaires.

Findings

The study discovered that a good number of CRE teachers in secondary schools in Kenya have not been prepared (in terms of training) on how to provide and integrate HIV/AIDS education in the CRE curriculum. The study found that half of the CRE teachers (50%) had never attended a seminar/ workshop on HIV/AIDS education.

The study found that although more than half of the CRE teachers (61.8%) showed that they were effective when teaching CRE, but a majority of the teachers were not well prepared to integrate HIV/AIDS education in the CRE curriculum. When asked on the number of courses learnt on HIV/AIDS while in college, 14% of the teachers reported that they had never learnt any course on HIV/AIDS while at university/ college, while 14% reported to have learnt two courses on HIV/AIDS, while a majority, 72% reported that they had learnt only one course on HIV/AIDS education at college level.

When it comes to the number of seminars/ workshops attended specifically on HIV/AIDS, the study discovered that half of the CRE teachers, (50%) had never attended a seminar/ workshop specifically on HIV/AIDS since they had left college yet many of the teachers had taught the subject for more than ten years. Therefore this study discovered that one of the challenges in the teaching of CRE that affect its provision of HIV/AIDS education to learners is the low level of preparedness of the CRE teachers in terms of training and in service courses. This challenge makes the CRE teacher not be able to integrate HIV/AIDS education properly in the CRE curriculum.

Conclusions

Basing on the findings of the study the following conclusions were made:

The secondary school CRE teachers are not well prepared to provide and integrate the HIV/AIDS education into the CRE curriculum. This is because many of them have not been in-serviced on how to provide and integrate the new content in the CRE curriculum. This is a challenge.

Recommendations

Consequently the study recommended that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should organize for in- service courses or seminars for secondary school CRE teachers so that they can be taught how to provide and integrate HIV/AIDS education in the CRE curriculum. This will enable the teachers to be well prepared to teach HIV/AIDS education well for the benefit of the learners. In addition, universities and other institutions which train CRE teachers should offer them three or more courses on HIV/AIDS so that they can be adequately trained to teach the same at secondary school level.

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