Age for Grade: Examining the Effect of School Entry Age on Learner Achievement among Primary School Pupils in East Africa

Education Evidence for Action (EE4A 2017)
Theme: Quality of Learning

Tuesday 5th – 7th December, 2017

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Background Information & Context

Background Information: Twaweza - “we can make it happen” in Swahili.
The Questions;

• Are our children enrolling and learning at the right age across East Africa?

• Does age affect learner achievement at any level of grade?
Justification of the study - Why Age For Grade?
Age For Grade

School entry age
Age at which a child optimally achieves competences once enrolled in school

• Kenya – Start pre-school at 4 years
• Uganda – Start pre-school at 3 years
• Tanzania – Start pre-school at 5 years
Policy on **Age for Grade?**

Basic Education Act 2013...Article 33

“... for the purpose of admission to a basic education institution, the age of a child shall be determined on the basis of the birth certificate ... or at the attainment of the school going age of **four years** on the basis of such other document, as may be prescribed under regulations”
Entry age of learners to school - a big factor!

Influences learner achievement in:

Cognitive Development

The child's development in terms of information processing, conceptual resources, perceptual skill, language learning and other aspects of brain development
Entry age of learners to school - a big factor!

Influences learner achievement in:

- Cognitive Development
- Social Development
Entry age of learners to school - a big factor!

*Influences learner achievement in – how?

- Cognitive Development
- Social Development
- Classrooms Interactions
Policy Gap - Age for Grade

- Operationalizing the law – Involve Stakeholders
  - Parents
  - Teachers

- Other regulations? – Traditional, Peers, Lifestyle
  - Overage
  - Underage
  - Placement

- Enforcement – How?

Remember, Law is Indiscriminative
METHODOLOGY

Beyond the Basics Assessment

• Uwezo Beyond Basics Assessment - conducted by Uwezo in 2016;
• Assessed Grade 4 and 5 using Grade 4 level tests
• How does children’s learning progress beyond Grade 2 level?
• Aspects beyond literacy and numeracy assessed included,
  i.  Self expression (through written work),
  ii. Critical thinking and
  iii. Problem solving
Beyond the Basics Assessment

Tests developed by Country test specific specialists from KICD, KNEC, TSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO OF DISTRICTS</th>
<th>TZ-10</th>
<th>KE-10</th>
<th>UG-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO OF SCHOOLS</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TARGET GRADES</td>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN ASSESSED</td>
<td>7,532</td>
<td>7,154</td>
<td>6,981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The assessment was school based and was administered both orally and by use of pen and paper”
Findings

Under/Over-age Schooling in East Africa:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Under Age</th>
<th>Right Age</th>
<th>Over Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Findings

### Under/Over-age Schooling in Kenya (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Under Age</th>
<th>Right Age</th>
<th>Over Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age – grade learning Outcome - Literacy

Learning Outcomes for English (%)

- Spelling
- Vocabulary
- Writing
- Reading
- Comprehension_1
- Comprehension_2
- Comprehension_3

- Under age
- Right Age
- Over age

- 87% Spelling
- 76% Vocabulary
- 60% Writing
- 40% Reading
- 66% Comprehension_1
- 62% Comprehension_2
- 72% Comprehension_3
- 36% Over age
Age – grade learning Outcome - Numeracy

Learning Outcomes in Math %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under age</th>
<th>Right Age</th>
<th>Over age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing No.</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtraction</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiplication</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word question</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday math</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy Implications

Policy to redefine two aspects of quality at different levels of grade;

Aspect 1:
The entry age and behaviour of pupils;
  - Delayed schooling (Parents, Local leaders) with Proper Justification
  - Underage admission – Schools – Adherence to the laws and regulations
Policy Implications Contd’

Policy to redefine two aspects of quality at different levels of grade;

Aspect 2:
The learning competencies to be attained or achieved at specific level(s) by age

• Aligning the competencies to not only grade, but also age (??) – New 2-6-6-3 Education Curriculum framework
Thank You