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### Training Needs by Head Teachers in the Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in Kenya's Primary Schools: A Study of Marakwet East Sub County

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*Training,  
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Curriculum.*

The head teachers in primary schools undertake leadership roles in ensuring that the goals of the school and curriculum are attained. Nevertheless, the extent to which head teachers undergo continuous training in light of the implementation of the new competency-based curriculum has not been adequately undertaken. The paper looks at the training needs of head teachers in the implementation of CBC in Kenya's primary schools with a focus on Marakwet West Sub County, Kenya. The study is anchored on descriptive research design and targeted Quality Assurance and Standard Officers and Headteachers of public primary schools. A sample size of 47 head teachers from all schools and 4 QASOs were selected as the sample for the study. Out of 47 targeted, only 37 responded to the questionnaire. Data was collected through questionnaires for head teachers and interview schedules for QASOs. Data analysis was done using qualitative (thematic content analysis) and quantitative (descriptive analysis using frequencies and percentages). The results of the paper are presented in tables, graphs, and narrations. It was found that the head teachers were not undertaking their responsibilities effectively to ensure CBC was properly implemented in their schools. Training programmes were found to be rare, and those provided by the Ministry of Education did little to enhance the implementation of CBC in public primary schools. The study suggests that there is a need for the Ministry of Education to conduct a needs analysis as the training required by head teachers in a particular region differs from another one. There is also a need for headteachers to work with the board of management in organising seminars and mentorship sessions with other schools as a way of enhancing their capacity towards the implementation of the CBC curriculum. The research can be utilised as a guide in the implementation of training programmes for head teachers in Kenya and other countries implementing competency-based curricula.

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## INTRODUCTION

Headteachers perform an important role in making sure that quality education is attained at the basic level in primary schools (Waruingi et al., 2022). The aspects of curriculum implementation in schools are mainly determined by the quality and competency of the school leader, who is the head teacher (Rowland, 2017). Headteachers influence curriculum implementation, teachers' work performance, the quality of the learning environment and student learning in schools (Manna, 2015). Chepkonga (2017) said that curriculum implementation is an area with which the head teacher has to be familiar to ensure success. In this situation, it is the head teachers' task to supervise the degree to which activities of parents, teachers and pupils are fulfilled to realise the demand for curriculum implementation by making them responsible and accountable for achieving curriculum objectives. These activities of leading and change management are at the level of head teacher.

Despite their responsibilities in ensuring the goals of education are attained, they need regular training and continuous professional development programmes to be abreast with the dynamics associated with education (Tingle et al., 2017). In the United States of America, many school heads did not have access to continuous professional development related to what was happening in their institutions then: evolving instructional methods, changing technology, curriculum change and changing demographics (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; School Leaders Network, 2014). Whereas it is expected that head teachers regularly engage in instructional leadership activities, teacher assessment and support and

coaching, Grissom et al. (2013) found out that most school heads spent much of their time doing administrative duties (management, discipline management, fundraising, budgeting and communication) with students and teachers. This delayed the curriculum implementation process, resulting in poor academic outcomes by students.

With the ever-increasing demand for schools to demonstrate the provision of quality education for their learners in the current century, they need head teachers who are transformative and ready to learn. Waruingi et al. (2022) said that this could only happen if head teachers receive the necessary training to steer the new curriculum implementation process successfully. Training of head teachers can be through in-service training, induction programmes, professional development, short courses, and networking (benchmarking) with other schools and institutions (Mathibe, 2007). These training programmes are expected to be tailored to ensure that they are integrated with education goals, they are guided by a clear long-term plan, they are mainly customised to primary school situations, and they should be ongoing with structures for follow-up for monitoring and learning (Rowland, 2017).

Education curriculum, teaching, and learning processes have to adapt to the changing demands of society (UNESCO, 2015). Many nations across the world have changed their education system to match the emerging needs of a dynamic society (IBE-UNESCO, 2015). One of the reforms is the adoption of Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) across many countries of the world. Kenya is in the process of implementing a competency-based curriculum in Kenya's education system.

Recent research studies have shown that there are implementation gaps that have been associated with poor preparation on the side of government, school management, and teachers (Akala, 2021). Despite the implementation of a competency-based curriculum (CBC) in Kenya's basic education sector, reports of poor implementation of the curriculum continue to be reported in research conducted across various parts of the country, including Marakwet East Sub County. For CBC to be fully realised, head teachers should be re-skilled and trained on CBC since they are the heartbeat of the implementation (Akala, 2021). May et al. (2012) state that headteacher's ability to provide leadership on a new curriculum depends on how well they understand their subject and how much they know about it, and this can only be accomplished if they are adequately trained. Waweru (2018) argued that with the CBC curriculum being implemented, headteachers should either be retrained or attend in-service courses. The CBC was implemented in Canada, Scotland, and Finland with success because of the rigorous training of principals and teachers to help them be adequately prepared (Saram & Susan, 2014). However, it is not known how head teachers of public primary schools in Marakwet East Sub County have received the training, considering that previous research has focused on teachers and left out administrators.

### Statement of the Problem

Schools in Marakwet East Sub County continue to post poor performance in KCPE examinations in addition to having high incidents of pupils being transferred from public to private schools where quality education is guaranteed. Statistics on enrolment of learners in Grade I appear to be low. Because of the change from the 8-4-4 system of education to CBC, the management of schools, supervision, teaching methods, assessment methods and learners' transition has significantly changed. So, in order for schools to be prepared to implement the CBC curriculum successfully, head teachers require in-service training to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies. The extent to which head teachers are aware of the responsibilities they are expected to undertake in

ensuring the implementation of the CBC curriculum remains unexplored. Research shows that head teachers in the previous curriculum (8-4-4) focused more on administrative duties and less on instructional tasks (Wekhuyi, 2014), and the CBC demands that head teachers provide instructional guidance to teachers on the implementation. They can only achieve this if they have received prior adequate and ongoing training. Therefore, this paper explores the training needs of head teachers in the implementation of a competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Marakwet West Sub County, Kenya.

### Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To determine the level of training that head teachers have undergone on the CBC curriculum
- To establish the training needs of head teachers on the CBC curriculum
- To suggest solutions to head teachers' training towards effective implementation of CBC curriculum.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Headteachers have a function in the provision of high-quality education in schools as they are the ones to ensure the required facilities and resources are in place for teachers to use the required teaching methods (Waruingi et al., 2022). The head teachers also work as promoters, advisers, supervisors, and coordinators of effective curriculum delivery processes by recognising the need for improved performance by students and syllabus completion. Research on school leadership indicates that the practices of school head teachers determine the learning environment and student performance (Fullan, 2015). Hence, ongoing professional development and training for head teachers is essential to improve curriculum implementation in schools (Faizuddin et al., 2022). Rowland (2017) indicated that head teachers perform a critical role in ensuring the goals of education are attained, as they are

powerful levers for change when provided with the required training and support.

Senol (2020) said that the role of head teachers has been undergoing many changes in the era of globalisation because of the various needs and expectations of the stakeholders in the education sector. These changes call for the need for training of head teachers to fulfil their functions effectively in schools. The author says that head teachers who are involved in CPD extend and update their knowledge and enhance their work performance through the application of knowledge and skills in the implementation of best curriculum practices in their institutions. However, research shows that there has been growing concern in the United States that very few head teachers receive high-quality professional development in-service training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). In some instances, the School Leaders Network (2014) survey found that head teachers tend to participate in training customised for teachers rather than for their own administrative and supervision needs. When they were involved in head teacher-oriented training, it was mainly centred on what was expected from the school inspectors and not on how they could be agents of change in the school (Rowland, 2017). In Indonesia, Faizuddin et al. (2022) found out that organising effective professional development programmes for school administrators was often more complex, and this affected effective curriculum implementation in schools. From these discussions, head teachers desperately require better and more on-the-job professional training to realise current demands, especially for competency-based curriculum implementation, a focus of this paper.

In Indonesia, Faizuddin et al. (2022) explored the challenges of management of in-service training for secondary school head teachers. The challenges that affected CPD programme management in schools included an unclear training syllabus, unprofessional recruitment of head teachers, almost zero follow-ups after training by tutors, technicality and workload, and resistance to change. In South Africa, Mathibe

(2007) reported that many school administrators do not achieve their objectives due to poor leadership and management practices that they employ. Muiti (2020) sought to determine the influence of the training of headteachers on the implementation of the competence-based curriculum in Kiambu County public primary schools. The findings of the study revealed that programmed instruction and role modelling positively influence the implementation of the competence-based curriculum. The study concluded that the training practices, programmed instruction, and role modelling of public primary school headteachers positively influence the implementation of the competence-based curriculum.

Research by Mbui et al. (2021) analysed the influence of head teachers' in-service training on the implementation of free primary education curriculum in Kiambu County public primary schools. The research found that through the provision of head teachers training, head teachers would be role models in curriculum management, which would enhance the implementation of FPE in schools. Waruingi et al. (2022) assessed strategies used by head teachers in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in Kiambu County public primary schools. It was found that head teachers' management skills through functions that they undertook had a great impact on the implementation of CBC. Further, they recommended that the head teacher's management competencies needed to be improved through the provision of short training on management. The review of empirical literature has shown that much of the research on head teachers' training has been conducted in Kiambu County as opposed to Marakwet East Sub County, which is considered to be a hardship area in Kenya and where some schools are regularly closed during the academic calendar due to issues of insecurity along Kerio Valley.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study on principals' training needs on competency curriculum implementation was



informed by Human Capital theory, which was developed by Mincer (1958), Schultz (1961) and Becker (1962). According to this theory, investment in human capital could result in improved employee productivity. The investment is through support of professional development and training of employees to increase their skills and knowledge related to their different jobs. According to Schultz (1961), humans are nothing without knowledge and skills. According to Wekhuyi (2014), training employees improves workers' productivity as it imparts useful knowledge, skills and competencies. With respect to this study, the government of Kenya introduced a competency-based curriculum, which head teachers have been tasked to ensure is implemented effectively in their institutions. However, it has been found from previous studies that not much has been done to improve the capacity of head teachers through training to enable them to perform their duties; many of them only go for induction seminars and workshops and not actual training on their roles and responsibilities related to curriculum implementation. If the government needs to achieve successful implementation of CBC, head teachers should be encouraged and supported to attend in-service training as it would improve their capacities, and this will ensure the curriculum is effectively implemented. Therefore, this study employed human capital theory to examine the training needs of head teachers on competency-based curricula in public primary schools in Marakwet East Sub County.

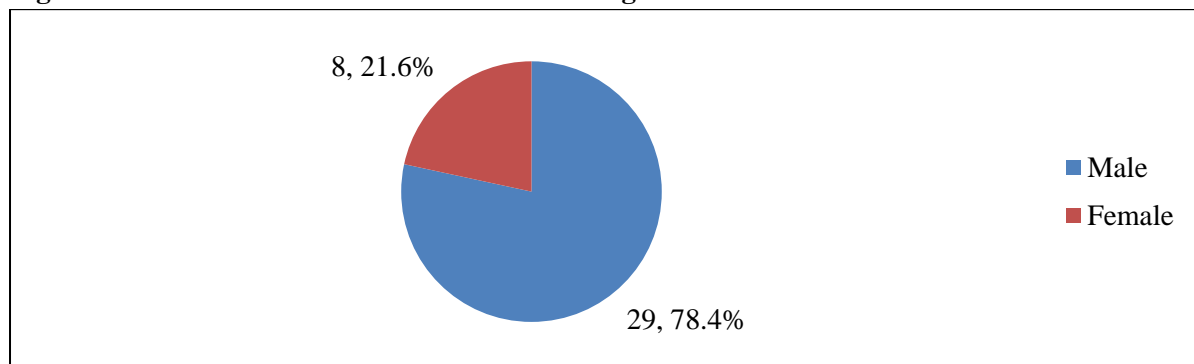
## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive survey was adopted in this study because it was suitable for the primary data collection about head teachers' training needs, and it offered a chance to make descriptive assertions about a large population (Gay et al., 2006). The study was carried out in Marakwet East Sub County of Elgeyo-Marakwet County in Kenya. It is located in the North Rift region bordering Baringo and West Pokot counties. The researcher chose to conduct this research in Marakwet East Sub County because no study of this kind had been carried out in this area with respect to the new CBC curriculum and head teachers' training. Furthermore, the Sub County is one of the worst hit by banditry activities, leading to the closure of many primary schools as parents and children run to safer areas, hence affecting education continuity. All 47 primary school headteachers and four quality assurance and standards officers formed the target population. Considering that the data was being collected from head teachers, all of them were included in the sample, together with 4 QASO officers. The data for head teachers was collected through a questionnaire, while an interview schedule was held for QASOs. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentages and through content analysis for qualitative data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the results and discussion of the research findings based on the objectives of the study. First, the demographic information of head teachers is presented, beginning with gender.

**Figure 1: Distribution of head teachers based on gender**

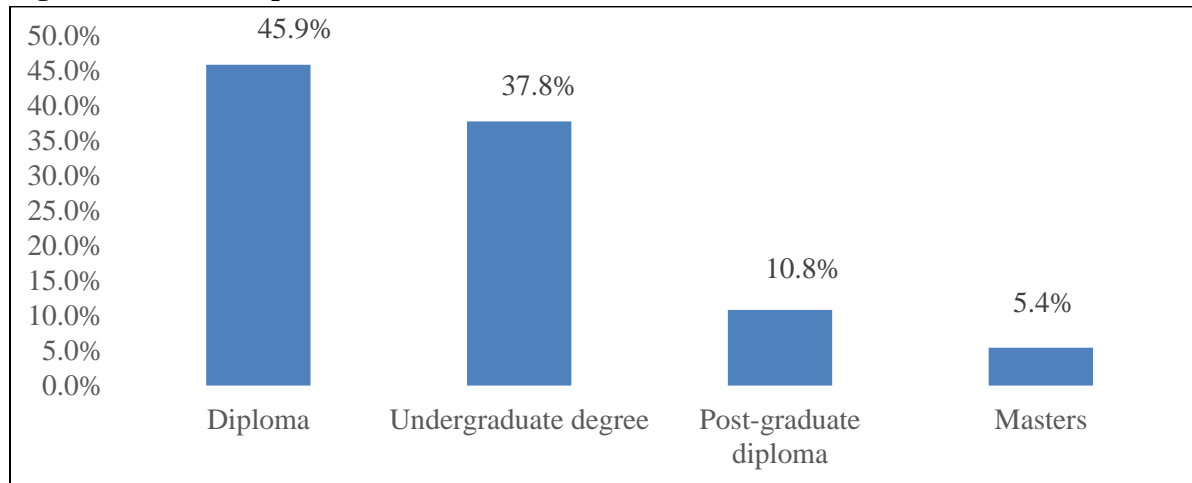


Results show that the majority (29, 78.4%) of head teachers from Marakwet East Sub County public primary schools are men compared to 8 (21.6%) who are female. Considering that the area is prone to insecurity, the QASOs explained that very few women take headship positions, and those who are already there normally seek

transfers to other safer areas. Of the QASOs working in the Sub County, more than 75.0% were male.

The result on the academic qualifications of head teachers is provided in *Figure 2*.

**Figure 2: Academic qualifications of head teachers**

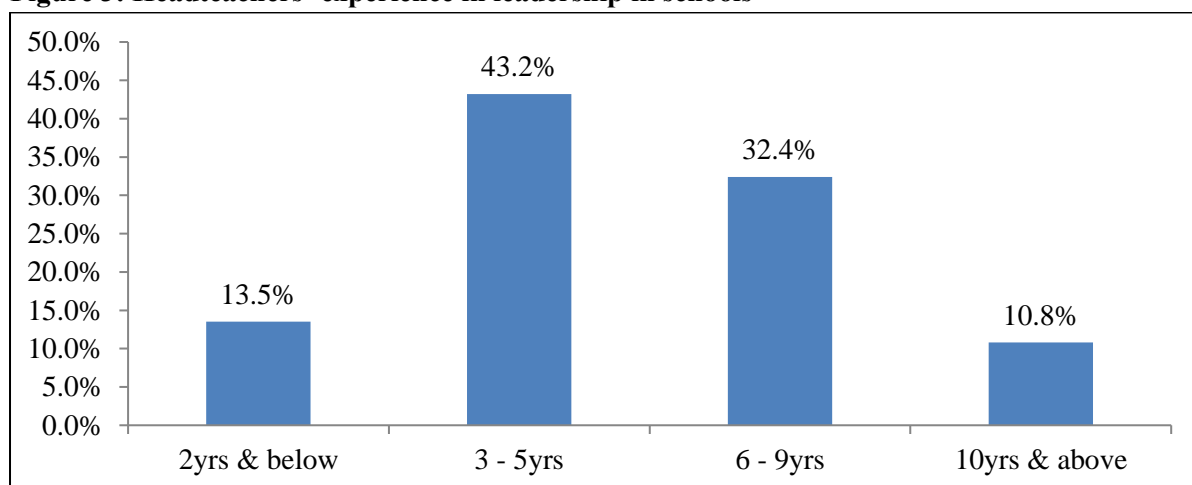


Results on the academic qualification show that 17 (45.9%) had a diploma, 14 (37.8%) had bachelor’s degrees, 4 (10.8%) had post-graduate diplomas in education and 2 (5.4%) had a master’s level of education. The above results suggest that all head teachers have met the minimum level of

qualifications to work as teachers and also operate as head teachers based on the TSC guidelines (diploma level).

When asked to indicate their work experience in headship, the results are provided in *Figure 3*.

**Figure 3: Headteachers’ experience in leadership in schools**



Findings show that 5 (13.5%) of head teachers had been in leadership positions for a period of fewer than two years, 16 (43.2%) have been in a period of 3-5 years, 12 (32.4%) have been leading schools for 6 – 9 years, and 4 (10.8%) said they have served as head teachers for a period

exceeding ten years. The results show that more than half of the head teachers have been in the position for a period of less than five years and, therefore, need training in order to ensure that the CBC curriculum is implemented effectively.

### Level of Training that Head Teachers Have Undergone on CBC Curriculum

The first objective sought to understand the frequency at which head teachers had undergone

training on CBC implementation from the time it was rolled out by the government. The results of the analysis are presented in *Table 1*.

**Table 1: Frequency of head teachers' attendance at training on CBC**

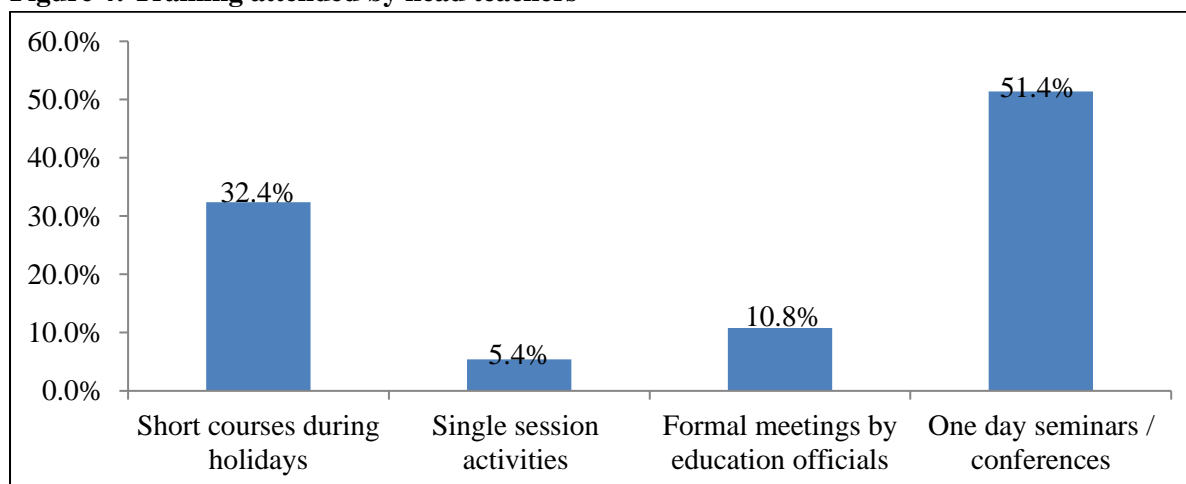
Frequency of attendance of training	Frequency	Per cent
More than 5 times	3	8.1
3 - 4 times	6	16.2
2 times	20	54.1
Only once	8	21.6
Total	37	100.0

Results show 20 (54.1%) of head teachers attended training on CBC twice since it was rolled out in 2018, 8 (21.6%) had attended once, 6 (16.2%) had attended 3 – 4 times while 3 (8.1%) had attended training for more than five times. It can be seen that very few head teachers have attended regular CBC training frequently. During the interview, the QASOs admitted that the training for head teachers is always combined

with those of teachers, and therefore, there has not been separate training customised for them since TSC expects that even head teachers are classroom teachers too, apart from undertaking management duties.

The head teachers were asked to indicate the kind of training that they attended, and the results are presented in *Figure 4*.

**Figure 4: Training attended by head teachers**



Results show that the training that head teachers underwent was the one that was conducted during school holidays after and before school opened (32.4%) involving short courses, 51.4% said that they attended one-day seminars/conferences on CBC during the course of the academic period, 10.8% mentioned that they were inducted and mentored on CBC training through formal meetings with specialists, while 5.4% said they undertook single sessions activities on CBC. The above results show that CBC training for head teachers constitutes one-day seminars and

conferences whereby not much can be covered, and this can be a challenge during implementation as the content covered is not enough. This information was corroborated by the QASO officials' interviews, who said that the majority of training for head teachers on CBC occurred during one-day seminars and conferences organised at Sub County and also County levels with the Ministry of Education officials. Those who attended short courses during the holiday period were admitted as teachers and not administrators.

### Establish the Training Needs of Head Teachers on CBC

The second objective of the study sought to establish the training needs of head teachers on CBC curriculum instruction. At first, head teachers were asked if a training needs assessment had ever been conducted to determine the kind of training that they would require, and all of them (100.0%) said that it had never been done. When asked as to whether a needs analysis was conducted, the QASO officials said that they only

organise and facilitate training based on the directions that they receive from the Ministry and do not go to individual schools to determine the training needs of head teachers. From their responses, it seems that the head teachers are provided with training not based on their needs but on what has been decided at the national level. Nevertheless, the head teachers were asked open-ended questions to suggest areas in which they required training to be undertaken for CBC. Their responses are summarised in *Table 2*.

**Table 2: Training Needs by head teachers on CBC implementation**

Training needs	Frequency	Percent
Instructional supervision skills	33	89.2
Digital literacy	28	75.7
Communication and collaboration skills	23	62.2
Managing educational change	22	59.5
Resource mobilisation and budgeting skills	15	40.5
Analytical and strategic planning skills	14	37.8
Problem-solving skills	13	35.1

Results show that most 33 (89.2%) of head teachers felt the need for instructional supervision skills training to be made a priority when planning for future training. Another 28 (75.7%) also said that head teachers should be provided with digital literacy training, 23 (62.2%) mentioned that they needed to be provided with training on communication, collaboration and relationship-building skills, while 22 (59.5%) said that they need training on how to manage educational change which is associated with CBC. From the results, it can be seen that head teachers have unique training needs that should be provided by MOE in order to ensure that CBC goals and

objectives are attained fully. The QASOs also said that there is a need for training to be customised to each individual or location since the needs of one school vary with the other.

### Suggests Solutions to Head Teachers Training Towards Effective Implementation of CBC Curriculum

The head teachers were also asked to propose suggestions that they felt, if applied, would enhance training needs for effective implementation of the CBC curriculum in public primary schools in Marakwet East Sub County. Their suggestions are provided in *Table 3*.

**Table 3: Head teachers' suggestions on improvement of training for CBC implementation**

Suggestions	f	%
Government to increase funding for separate head teacher training on CBC	35	94.6
Training needs assessment to be conducted before rolling out CPD	34	91.9
Conducting in-service training courses (not seminars) once a year	30	81.1
Monitoring and assessment of the impact of training offered to head teachers	18	48.6
Opening up training on CBC to involve other institutions like colleges and universities	14	37.8
Introduction of coaching and mentorship programmes to head teachers on CBC	10	27.0
In-service training is to be considered as one of the criteria for promotion	8	21.6

One of the suggestions that the head teachers made was that the government needs to set aside funds for head teachers training on CBC

implementation. This will ensure that it is separated from the funds for teacher training as their roles and responsibilities significantly vary.



Secondly, 34 (91.9%) of head teachers said that training needs assessment needs to be conducted first before rolling out any continuous professional development programme for CBC. Thirdly, 30 (81.1%) of head teachers said that in-service training courses should be conducted on a yearly basis for head teachers, while 18 (48.6%) said that there is a need for QASOs to continuously monitor schools to establish whether what was trained is being put into practice by head teachers among other suggestions provided in Table 3 above.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was conducted to determine the training needs of head teachers in public primary schools in Marakwet East Sub County, Kenya. It has been found that head teachers rarely attend training with respect to their position as school leaders. From the findings, it was found out that the training that head teachers undertook was the one that other teachers attended, and this had little impact on their leadership roles and responsibilities. The study has also found out that training needs assessment (TNA) is not conducted, and therefore, the training offered does not align with the unique needs of individual head teachers. This explains why head teachers reported poor performance of schools in Marakwet, as head teachers are not provided with the required knowledge and skills to enable them to implement CBC effectively in their schools. Based on these findings, the paper recommends that the government increase capitation grants on head teachers' training on CBC, training needs assessment to be done before any in-service training programme is rolled out, and school board of management set aside funds to support head teachers' attendance of seminars, workshops and benchmarking sessions on CBC and Ministry of education to ensure that in-service training courses for head teachers on CBC are conducted yearly basis.

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