



Analysis of Secondary School Christian Religious Education (CRE) Syllabus and Recommended Textbooks in Provision of HIV/AIDS Education to Learners in Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to establish the effectiveness of the CRE syllabus and recommended secondary school CRE textbooks in Provision of HIV/AIDS education to learners in secondary schools in Kenya. The study used the documentary analysis approach in achieving its objective. The research instrument for this study was document analysis guide. The documents analysed included the secondary school CRE syllabus and recommended text books in Kenya. Data from the documents were qualitatively analysed. The study found that there were challenges in the teaching and learning of CRE in secondary schools that affected its provision and integration of HIV/AIDS education in its curriculum. Some of the challenges were: inadequate content on HIV/AIDS in the secondary school CRE recommended textbooks and inadequate organization of HIV/AIDS topics within the secondary school CRE syllabus. The study recommended that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should review the secondary school syllabus and organize the topics in such a way that HIV/AIDS issues are taught at all levels (Form 1-4). This study also recommended that the authors and publishers of secondary school CRE recommended textbooks to review them so that what is lacking on HIV/AIDS issues can be included in the revised editions. The study further recommended that the Ministry of Education should organize for provision of learning resources in secondary schools in Kenya. The study is significant because the recommendations made can be used to improve on provision and integration of HIV/AIDS education in the CRE curriculum in secondary schools in Kenya.*

Keywords: *Syllabus, Rrecommended textbook, Challenges, HIV/AIDS, CRE*

How to cite this work (APA):

Situma, J. (2024). Analysis of secondary school Christian Religious Education (CRE) syllabus and recommended textbooks in provision of HIV/AIDS education to learners in secondary schools in Kenya. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 8(4), 571 – 578. <https://doi.org/10.59765/bseu835kh>.

1. Introduction

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is one of the most devastating scourges in the world today (Zinyemba et al, 2020, Bwanali, 2008, Kunhiyop, 2008). Over the last three decades 35 million people have died of

AIDS. As a result, HIV/AIDS has brought about a significant reduction in human capital, especially in sub-saharan Africa (Zinyemba et al 2020). 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, Kamaara, 2004). There are

about 34 million children who are orphaned by AIDS in the continent and Africa remains the epicenter where the bulk of new HIV infections are found (World Council of Churches 2003 report). Kenya has a population of 1.4 million individuals living with HIV (Ministry of Health, 2023). According to Gabbidon et al (2020) Kenya has the twelfth largest HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world.

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 (Sarma & Oliveras 2013, Gabbidon et al 2020, Winkler and Bodenstein, 2005). This clearly indicates that the HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and education in African countries should target young people.

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. Results of studies by Sarma & Oliveras (2013) indicate school-based education HIV/AIDS education programmes can result in significant changes in knowledge and attitudes that affect sexual behavior of young people. This means that HIV/AIDS education should be enhanced among young people to reduce the high infections among them. 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. This study therefore analysed the CRE syllabus and recommended textbooks to establish the effectiveness of their content in provision of HIV/AIDS education.

In Kenya, it is estimated that there are 1.6 million people living with HIV/AIDS and 1.1 million children who are orphans due to AIDS (Young et al 2023, USAID 2013). More than six percent of the population is infected with HIV, but the epidemic has hit specific regions and vulnerable groups much more seriously (USAID/KENYA, 2013). In Kenya, youth ages 15-24 accounted for over half (51%) of the HIV incidence reported in 2015 (Gabbidon, Chenneville, & Adeli 2020)

One of the objectives of CRE in secondary school is to provide moral and sex education for behavioural change. It was not clear if CRE as a subject was doing this work

effectively. That is why this study analysed the CRE syllabus and recommended textbooks to establish the extent to which they provide HIV/AIDS education to the learners. The fight against AIDS calls for multi-sectoral approach. 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?

According to Wanjama, Muraya and Gichaga, (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 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. This study analysed the CRE syllabus and textbooks to establish how much they offer in terms of HIV/AIDS education.

The 8th national goal of education in Kenya states that Education should promote positive attitudes towards good health and environmental protection. In detail the objective states that education should inculcate in the youth the value for good health in order to avoid indulging in activities that would lead to physical or mental ill health (Republic of Kenya 2006:6). It is this 8th national goal of education in Kenya that provides a strong argument for HIV/AIDS prevention among youth in secondary schools in Kenya. This is because to partly achieve this goal of education, secondary school students need to be provided with information on HIV/AIDS so that they do not indulge in activities that can make them to be infected and have poor health. The main question here is, to what extent is this objective being achieved especially in relation to the HIV/AIDS pandemic? What is not clear is whether or not this goal of education is being achieved with regard to providing effective HIV/AIDS information to secondary schools in Kenya given that the levels of HIV/AIDS infection among young people in Kenya is high.

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. It is not clear whether or not CRE as a subject that deals with moral values is playing its important role of teaching and integrating HIV/AIDS.

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. This study analysed the CRE curriculum to establish the extent to which this has been achieved.

Christian Religious Education is one of the subjects in the secondary school curriculum in Kenya which has been entrusted with the responsibility of teaching and instilling in learners' moral values. Among the seven objectives of teaching CRE, the second objective states that, the subject is to make the learner use the acquired social, spiritual and moral insights to think critically and make appropriate moral decisions in a rapidly changing society (KNEC, 2005). Therefore, if CRE is taught effectively using appropriate resources and methods, it can help provide effective moral and HIV/AIDS education and awareness among young people in secondary schools who are at a risk of being infected. This study therefore analysed the CRE syllabus and four text books to establish their provision of HIV/AIDS education to learners in secondary in Kenya. 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?

1.1 Statement of the Problem

There were 1.4 million adolescents and adults aged 15 years and older estimated to be living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in Kenya in 2021 (Young Pw, Musingila, P et al 2023, MOH 2023). Kenya experiences high prevalence of HIV and youth are a vulnerable population needing targeted approaches for prevention and intervention (Gabbidon et al 2020). Kenya has made tremendous progress in the fight against HIV and AIDS with the prevalence of HIV estimated to have reduced by half over a decade. Nevertheless, the current trend of new infections reported among the adolescents and young people threatens to undermine such gains and possibly revert to the high prevalence that saw HIV and AIDS declared a national disaster in the country (NCPD, 2018). The trends in the new infections among young people can be attributed to limited knowledge on HIV and AIDS prevention interventions among other factors. 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). CRE as a subject has been entrusted with the responsibility of providing both HIV/AIDS and moral education for the prevention of HIV infection among young people in secondary schools in Kenya. But with the alarming statistics on HIV infections and premarital sex in Kenya, many questions remain unanswered for example, does CRE as a subject play its important role in the provision of effective HIV/AIDS and moral education for prevention of HIV infection among secondary school students? This is the concern of this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Syllabus in Relation to Provision of HIV/AIDS Education

Teaching documents are items that are normally developed and used in instruction to store and carry essential information (Kafu, 2010:7). They are intended to facilitate and enhance students learning as well as promote effective teaching. There are two categories of instructional documents namely, the official documents designed and developed by an agency/authority in-charge of development and provision of education in a country and the teacher-developed documents (Kafu, 2010). This study analysed the official documents used for teaching CRE in secondary school in Kenya to establish if they provide adequate information on HIV/AIDS. The documents analysed in this study were the secondary school CRE syllabus and the recommended textbooks for teaching CRE. These documents were analysed because teachers use them for teaching.

Teachers use a document called the syllabus to help them plan their lessons. A syllabus can be said to be a plan with subjects to be studied in a course by a particular group of people/learners (Abiero, 2009:6). This places the syllabus at a very important position of breaking down the curriculum for effective and efficient implementation (Abiero 2009). The extent to which the secondary school CRE syllabus provides HIV/AIDS education is not known and was the concern of this study. This study therefore sought to establish how relevant and adequate the CRE syllabus is in providing HIV/AIDS education to the learners. The study analysed the contents of the CRE syllabus to establish the loopholes it had as far as provision and integration of HIV/AIDS education was concerned.

The syllabus contains, first and foremost the national objectives. It also contains the objectives of the particular

subject which the teacher is expected to teach. It is therefore from the syllabus that the teacher is able to identify the topics which should be taught in a particular subject. HIV/AIDS aspects are taught in public secondary schools through infusion and integration into career subjects though not allocated any specific time in the curriculum (Nyarondia, Ongong'a & Omolo 2014).

According to findings by Nyarondia, Ongong'a & Omolo (2014) the level at which HIV/AIDS aspects are taught in Kenya is very low. Given the importance of the syllabus in curriculum implementation, this study sought to analyse the secondary school CRE syllabus and establish the extent to which it provides relevant and adequate information on HIV/AIDS education and at what levels this information is to be provided to learners.

The HIV/AIDS syllabus was introduced to promote behavior change and development that is appropriate to the youth stage of development and HIV/AIDS prevention and control (Kiringa, 2015). In 2002 the secondary school CRE syllabus in Kenya was revised so that HIV/AIDS education could be integrated (KIE, 2006). It is not known if the revised syllabus provides adequate and relevant information on HIV/AIDS to the learner, and this was therefore the concern of this study. This study analysed the contents of the whole secondary school CRE syllabus to establish if it had adequate and relevant information on HIV/AIDS. Preventive education is the most effective way of combating and controlling HIV/AIDS. According to Kiriwa (2004) education awareness should be comprehensive and focused on the understanding and meaning of HIV/AIDS, how it is acquired, transmitted, opportunistic diseases, voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) treatment and prevention of AIDS. This study sought to analyze and establish the extent to which the secondary school CRE syllabus and recommended textbooks provide this vital information on HIV / AIDS education.

The implementation of any school-based syllabus is greatly affected by the support that is provided within the programme (Kiringa, 2015). The success of syllabus implementation is when all the parties concerned are prepared to support and teach the syllabus as required (Kiringa 2015). It is not clear whether the CRE syllabus and recommended textbooks have included all facts concerning sex and HIV and this study sought to establish that by analyzing them.

A study by Sarma & Oliveras (2013) indicate that simply introducing HIV/AIDS topics into the curriculum is not sufficient to ensure that it is implemented. That is why this study analysed the CRE syllabus to establish the extent of HIV/AIDS content it has.

2.2 Textbooks in Relation to Provision of HIV/AIDS Education

A textbook can be defined as a standard book especially designed to communicate a specific body of knowledge to a specific group of audience (Nasibi, 2003). It is written for a particular subject at a particular level in schools or college. It is not clear whether the CRE recommended textbooks have adequate and relevant information on HIV/AIDS. This study therefore sought to analyze and establish the extent to which the recommended textbooks provided adequate and relevant information on HIV/AIDS to the teachers and learners. Because of the importance of the textbook to learners and teachers in curriculum implementation, this study sought to analyse the recommended CRE textbooks for secondary schools to establish the extent to which they provided adequate and relevant information on HIV/AIDS.

According to Callahan and Clark (2000), of all materials of instruction, the textbook has had the most influence on teaching content and method. For many teachers it has been the 'be all in all' of their instructional life. It is within this background that this study sought to establish the extent to which CRE secondary school textbooks are sufficient in providing adequate information on HIV/AIDS. Nasibi states that given the importance of HIV/AIDS information it is important that the developers of the school texts come up with good texts satisfying the following criteria:

- i) The relevance of the textbook to curriculum objectives of teaching or communicating HIV/AIDS messages.
- ii) Accuracy of information conveyed
- iii) Maximum content coverage as per syllabus, which is well explained and free from bias and controversy
- iv) Properly arranged information (Nasibi, 2003:132)

According to Nasibi, (2003) some textbooks provide sketchy information on important topics and this disadvantages readers who solely depend on them. It is within this background that this study analysed the CRE textbooks to establish the relevance and accuracy of the books in providing HIV/AIDS information.

Research by Omolo (2012) on implementation of HIV/AIDS programme in secondary schools in Kisumu County revealed that there is overdependence on the various class texts as teaching resources despite the fact that some of the texts have scanty information on HIV/AIDS infused in their topics. Basing on these facts this study therefore sought out to analyse the CRE recommended textbooks to establish how much information they had.

A study by Mbach et al (2016) on Intergration of HIV/AIDS in Bungoma county discovered that the components intergrated lacked specific topics and objectives for the infused areas were too minute, scattered and with no specific reference materials. The study also established that teachers did not have books with adequate information on HIV/AIDS.

A study by Kiringa (2015) indicate that one of the challeges in provision of HIV/AIDS education is selective teaching which only covers some topics and does not address sexual relationships, gender, condomns or drug use is common. That is why this study analysed CRE textbooks.

Research by Nyarondia, Ongong'a & Omolo (2014) found that the main learning resource used in teaching HIV/AIDS education are class texts of various carrier subjects. That is why this study analysed CRE textbooks to establish the adequacy in provision of the information.

3. Methodology

This study used document analysis approach to analyse the effectiveness of the secondary school CRE syllabus and four recommended CRE textbooks in provision of HIV/AIDS education to learners in secondary schools in Kenya. Documents are written records (McMillan, 2021). Content analysis is careful, detailed systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings (Berg 2008, schreier, 2017, Hesse-Biber, 2017). This approach involved the analysis of CRE teaching documents to establish the extent to which they provide adequate HIV/AIDS information to learners. The study analyzed the whole of the secondary school CRE syllabus and the four recommended secondary school CRE textbooks. The books analyzed cut across all publishing firms. This study was mainly qualitative data analysis research that used qualitative documents data collection (Creswell, & Creswell 2023). The textbooks that were analysed were as follows:

- i. God's People Pupils Book 1-4 by Oxford University Press
- ii. Secondary CRE Form 1-4 by KLB
- iii. Living the Promise Form 1-4 by Longhorn (K) Ltd
- iv. Love Thy Neighbour CRE Form 1-4 by Macmillan Publishers (Republic of Kenya, 2009)

Document Analysis guide prepared by the researcher was used to collect data from the secondary school CRE syllabus and four CRE recommended textbooks. The guide consisted of information on HIV/AID which the researcher checked its existence in the documents that were analysed.

Using the document analysis guide, the CRE syllabus and textbooks were qualitatively analysed according to topics or themes. The overall goal of qualitative data analysis and interpretation is to discover patterns, ideas, insights, explanations and understandings (McMillan, 2021)

The CRE syllabus was analysed from form one to form four to establish the extent to which the content was adequate in provision of HIV/AIDS education to learners. The recommended CRE textbooks were analysed to establish their adequacy and relevance in terms of provision of HIV/AIDS education to learners. Analysis from the documents were used to make conclusions on the challenges of CRE in provision and integration HIV/AIDS education in secondary schools in Kenya.

4. Results and Discussion

The summary of the findings and discussions were as follows:

4.1 Analysis of the Contents of the Kenya Secondary School CRE Syllabus

The study established that the secondary school CRE syllabus indicates that what HIV/AIDS is, how HIV/AIDS is spread and ways of transmitting, how to prevent the spread of HIV, responsible and irresponsible sexual behavior and negative effects of HIV/AIDS and life skills for healthy living are to be taught but at form four level. Moral values and living responsibly were to be taught at form one level.

The main challenge here is that several aspects of HIV/AIDS had not been indicated the level at which they would be taught in the syllabus. These are topics such as how a young person can avoid HIV infection, HIV statistics in Kenya, Africa and the world, importance of VCT, people living with HIV/AIDS, discordant couples, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. These findings are similar to those by Nyarondia et al (2014) who states that the level at which HIV/AIDS aspects are taught is low. Another challenge was that very little or none of the information on HIV/AIDS is taught at form one, two and three levels. HIV/AIDS education has mainly been concentrated at form four level, yet the subject is optional therefore the information benefits only a few students. At this level, HIV/AIDS education is also only taught as a subtopic and the information is not very adequate. These findings are similar to those of Kiringa (2015) who states that there is selective teaching which only covers some topics and does not cover several aspects.

4.2 Analysis of the Contents of the Kenya Secondary School Recommended CRE Textbooks

It was found that out of the four recommended CRE textbooks that were analyzed; none of them was found to be having completely adequate information on important issues of HIV/AIDS education. Many of the books had adequate information on a few areas but inadequate and no information on several themes or topics on HIV/AIDS. Even the most used textbook 'Secondary CRE' by KLB publishers (97.1% use by teachers) did not have adequate information on several topics and also had no information on other topics/themes on HIV/AIDS. These findings were similar to those by Mbach et al (2016) who established that the components of HIV/AIDS integrated lacked specific topics and objectives for the infused areas and were too minute, scattered and with no specific reference materials. Therefore, this study established that this is one of the challenges in the teaching and learning of CRE that affects its provision and integration of HIV/AIDS education. This is because both the teachers and learners use the CRE textbooks and therefore if the textbooks do not have enough information, then very little would be learnt by students on HIV/AIDS.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

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

1. The secondary school CRE syllabus was not very adequate in provision and integration of HIV/AIDS education because very little or no information is indicated to be taught at form one to form three level. The syllabus indicates that most of the information on HIV/AIDS is to be taught at form four level therefore benefiting only those who choose the subject.
2. The secondary school CRE recommended textbooks were not very adequate in provision and

integration of HIV/AIDS education because little or no information is given to CRE students at form one to three levels. Most of the information is taught at form four level and yet the subject is optional therefore the information benefits a few students. Some important topics on HIV/AIDS are lacking in the textbooks.

5.2 Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), which prepares the syllabus should review the secondary school CRE syllabus and make changes so that HIV/AIDS education, which has been intergrated within the CRE curriculum is equitably spread at all levels, from form one to form four. This will ensure that the CRE students at all levels benefit from obtaining information on HIV/AIDS unlike the present syllabus where much content on HIV/AIDS is taught at form four level. In addition, KICD should also review the contents of the CRE syllabus on HIV/AIDS and add aspects of HIV/AIDS education that are important but lacking in the present CRE syllabus as established by this study. These include aspects such as HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, importance of VCT, stigma and caring for PLWHA, discordant couples.
2. The authors and publishers of CRE recommended textbooks should review the books and add information on HIV/AIDS where it is lacking. These include areas such as: how a young person can avoid HIV/AIDS infection, relationship between drug abuse and HIV infection, importance of VCT and caring for PLWHA. This will go a long way in ensuring that learners of CRE are adequately taught on HIV/AIDS for their own benefit.

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