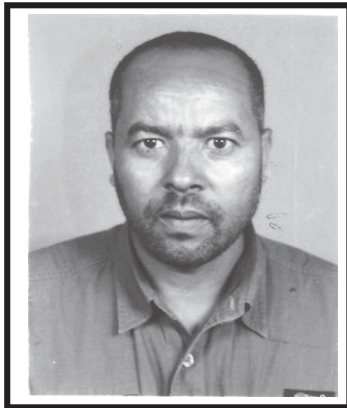


## Needs Assessment on Linkage/Cluster Schools of KCTE

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### I. Introduction

School clusters are schools which will be established based on geographical site, student population, transportation services and other facilities which are available in the area.

The main purposes of establishing cluster schools are:

- to develop cooperative work among the schools;
- to work by sharing man power & material resources
- to provide intensive & persistent short term trainings for primary school teachers;
- to solve their common problems; and
- to share experiences

Based on the above purposes, schools can be clustered in three ways.

#### 1. Urban schools cluster

Urban schools have a great

number of teachers and students which may present problems. Hence 2 - 3 schools may be encompassed in one cluster.

2. Rural schools cluster. If a great number of schools is found in a populated rural area, 3 - 5 nearby schools may be organized under one cluster. However, the distance between each member school and the cluster center should not exceed 2 hours walk.

3. Remote rural schools cluster. In a less populated area where there is no transportation service, and a few schools are constructed which are far apart, 2 - 3 schools that can be reached within 2 hours walk from the cluster centre may be organized under one cluster. However, if there is a school that can not be reached within 2 hours walk from the cluster centre, (very far to cluster centre), another mechanism should be designed to strengthen the system of enhancing education and providing special help to that particular school.

#### Selection of Cluster Center School

The school which is selected to be a cluster centre at the primary level should fulfill the following:

- It should be a full cycle primary school.
- It should have supporting administrative staff.
- It should be well organized and furnished.
- It should have efficient and qualified teachers.
- It should be managed by a trained principal / director
- It should have enough classrooms and administrative rooms including rooms for a library and resource center.

It would also be preferable if it is located centrally to the other member schools; clustered.

#### Clustered Schools Coordinating Committee

This committee manages the clustered schools, and should consist of the following members:

- Cluster supervisor will be a chair person.
- Principals of all member schools will be members.
- Alternative basic education unit representatives will be members

Heads of the schools' pedagogical resource centers will serve as a secretary and member of the cluster centers.

Duties and responsibilities of

the committee members and official bodies have been shown on the educational hierarchy in written form.

Source: (Addis Ababa Education Bureau, Educational directive of cluster schools written in Amharic 2001 E.C).

Concerning cluster (linkage) schools Kotebe College of Teacher Education is working cooperatively with 13 linkage schools with the help of USAID project. Thus, it is essential to conduct needs assessment to provide trainings in order to increase the competency of cluster school teachers. Therefore the major purpose of conducting this needs assessment is to identify task deficiencies created in the linkage school teachers & to develop their capacity based on their needs.

## II. Related Literature on Needs Assessment

Needs assessment or diagnosis of needs is the collection of data about the school system; the nature of the learners; the teachers; the society (the community); the legal and administrative activities and parallel system-national and international (Hawes; 1979 Pratt D. 1980)

According to the above authors' illustrations ought are gaps between what it is and what to be. Needs assessment is a diagnostic process that relies on data collection, collaboration and negotiation to identify and understand gaps in learning and carrying out performance and to determine future

actions.

Examples of actions that could be implemented as the result of needs assessment include:

- Offering improved incentives
- Providing better information
- Engaging the appropriate people
- Enhancing the work design
- Supplying essential tools or technology

### Implementing training or learning program

As cited by Lemma Setegn, Burton & Merrill (1987) suggest that:

A need assessment entails to identify deficiencies in people's performance. Hence it is essential to perform task analysis. During task analysis it needs to list the deficiencies to meet in order of priority. A deficiency in trainee's performance can be identified by asking the following questions.

What must trainees be able to do?

- What can they already do?

- Is there a gap between what trainees can do and what they cannot do?

What are the areas of needs assessment?

There are different areas of needs assessment. Some common areas include:

- a. Analysis about the school system
- b. Analysis about the learners
- c. Analysis about the teachers
- d. Analysis about the society
- e. Analysis about parallel

learning systems.

A) Analysis about the school system focuses on collection of data and interpretation about

- Basic demographic and statistical information
- School numbers & their distribution enrollment and flow through the system such as ages, class size, staff information, financial allocation, sources etc.
- Legal and administrative information. The analysis deals with the current legal provision and requirements, policies & practices with respect to school building, equipment, supply, time allocation, progression in grades, etc.

• Current curriculum practice: the data to be collected and analyzed include the origins, the languages in use, time tables actually followed, program covered, subjects taught, etc.

B) Analysis about the learner's information

- Social & cultural back grounds
- Languages & perception
- Visual perception of children in relation to materials used.
- Cognitive development
- Interests and aspirations of learners
- Physical & psychomotor developments

C) Analysis about the teachers: It includes

- Teacher's education & training
- Interests and aspirations
- Relations between teachers, and between teachers and the community.

D) Analysis about the society / the community the assessment focuses on:

- Resources for learning
- Values & attitudes
- Needs & goals

E) Analysis about parallel learning systems: This is analysis that focuses on:

- National and international issues
- Other learning systems parallel to the formal school system.
- Parallel programs in similar national contexts such as research plans, material production, descriptions of programs, evaluation of data originating from other similar countries

F) Analysis of external factors: Analysis is made on external factors giving emphasis to:

- National and/or regional directives and policy statements.
- The expectations of local community and the parents.
- The expectations of the employers & trade unions.

### III. Design and Strategies

3.1 The main objectives of the needs assessment are:

- 1) to identify the academic

task deficiencies created in the school.

2) to elicit the crucial problems of teachers in the teaching-learning process.

3) to know the training needs of teachers in terms of their priority.

4) to provide short term trainings based on the needs of teachers.

#### 3.2 Guide questions:

1. Is there a gap between what teachers can do and what they can not do?

2. What are the major problems of teachers in the teaching-learning process?

3. How can these problems be solved?

4. What are the major needs of teachers that help them to improve their capacity of teaching?

#### 3.3 Data collecting instruments:

Data collecting instrument were questionnaire & focus group discussion.

#### 3.4 Data collecting procedures

Both open-ended & close ended questions were prepared and filled by 65 first cycle primary school teachers of all 13 linkage schools and 77 mathematics and 105 science teachers of 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle (grades 5-8) in all 13 linkage/cluster schools.

In general 65 first cycle and 182 second cycle primary school teachers filled the questionnaire.

The technique of selecting the respondents was as follows.

In each linkage school in the first cycle 5 teachers were selected randomly and in the second cycle all mathematics & science teachers selected to fill the questionnaire.

For the focus group discussion 2 teachers from the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, 3 teachers from the second cycle, & 2 school administrators were selected from each linkage school.

### IV. Data Organization, Interpretation and Analysis

Data obtained through questionnaire filled by 1<sup>st</sup> cycle linkage school teachers. Responses to 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> questions:

Q1. Did you take any short term trainings?

From 65 1<sup>st</sup> cycle teachers respondents' 45 teachers (69.23%) answered that they did not take any short term trainings. Most of them identified their needs in sequence as follows:

1. How to teach children to read & write English & Amharic alphabets within the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the academic year.

2. How to teach children to identify & write numbers from 1 up to 100 within one semester of the academic year.

3. Active learning methods.

4. How to prepare & use locally available resource (TALULAR).

5. Formative continuous assessment

Responses to the 3<sup>rd</sup> question:

The materials they need to be developed and provided for them after the trainings, are all the above mentioned techniques or strategies listed from 1-5.

Responses to the 4<sup>th</sup> question:

If you have a need different from the above mentioned: Please specify?

Most of the teachers commonly identified to take trainings on: How to teach English language using locally available resources.

2) Data obtained through questionnaire filled by 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle linkage school teachers (77 mathematics and 105 science teachers)

Q1. Did you take any short term tracings?

From the respondents 65 mathematics teachers (84.42%) and 90 science teachers (85.71) answered that they did not take any short term trainings.

Q2. The teachers responded their needs as follows: mathematics teachers' needs of trainings in sequence are:

1. How to make students be interested in mathematics.
2. How to prepare mathematics teaching aids & use.
3. How to manage the classroom disciplinary problems.
4. Mathematics handout for grades (5-8) that comprises methods of teaching for each content.
5. Active learning
6. Formative continuous

assessment and

7. Action research.

Science teachers' needs of trainings in sequence are:

1. How to make experiments using locally available resources in the laboratory
2. Science kit trainings
3. Written guide lines for doing experiments in the laboratory should be provided after training.
4. Active learning
5. Action research
6. How to manage classroom disciplinary problems and
7. Formative continuous assessment.

Q3. The materials they need to be developed and provided for them after the trainings are all the above mentioned techniques and strategies listed from 1-6 had been suggested.

3. Data Obtained through Focus Group Discussion

The guide questions for focus group discussion were:

- 1) Is there a gap between what teachers can do and what they can not do? If yes list them?
- 2) What are the major problems of teachers in the teaching-learning process?
  - A) list these problems
  - B) How can these problems

be solved.

3. What are the major needs of teachers that help them to improve their capacity?

The group members were 7 in each linkage school. The members composed of 2 teachers from 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, 3 teachers from second cycle and 2 school administrators.

In the 13 linkage schools the responses of 91 teachers from their discussion were as follows:

1) Concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> guide question in most of 10 linkage schools, the group members responded that:

- Some mathematics & science teachers have problems on subject matter knowledge.
- Most of the teachers do not use teaching aids and have problems of applying active learning method.
- Some teachers lack preparation i.e., reading different books, lesson planning, teaching aids, rehearsing in the laboratory, etc.

2) What are the major problems of teachers in the teaching learning process?

The focus group discussion members identified the following as major problems of linkage school teachers:

- Shortage of instructional materials i.e., chemicals, reference books, Mathematics instruments, Language teaching materials, maps, globes etc.



• Student's disciplinary problems.

• Teachers' reading rooms.

Too much preparation & being over loaded (self-contained teachers).

The focus group discussion members suggested the following solutions for the above mentioned problems:

• Instructional materials can be alleviated by the continuous effort of the school administration & parents.

• Teachers with the cooperation of parent-teacher committee & the school administration can solve the disciplinary problems of the students

• The school administration can coordinate teachers & stakeholders to establish teachers' reading rooms & equip with books & furniture.

Concerning self-contained teachers, it is advisable to assign assistant teachers.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> guide question was what should be the major needs of teachers that help them to improve their capacity?

The major training needs of teachers suggested by the focus group discussion members are:

1. Strengthening teachers' knowledge of the subject matter through short-term trainings related to the content they teach in a particular grade level.

2. Active learning methods

3. Preparation & usage of teaching aids.

4. Doing experiments in the laboratory for science subjects including written guide lines which will be used for the experiment.

5. Classroom management.

6. Action research.

7. Formative continuous assessment.

8. Lesson planning & implementation.

### Concluding Remarks

Needs Assessment is a diagnostic process that relies on data collection, collaboration and negotiation to identify and understand gaps in learning and performance and to determine future actions.

Concerning cluster or linkage schools Kotebe College of Teacher Education is working cooperatively with 13 linkage schools with the help of USAID project. Thus, it is essential to conduct needs assessment to provide short term trainings in order to increase the competency of cluster school teachers.

The main purpose of conducting this needs assessment is to identify task deficiencies created in the linkage schools so that their teachers are able to develop their capacity based on their needs.

The basic guide questions designed to conduct the needs assessment are:

1. Is there a gap between what teachers can do and what they can not do

2. What are the major

problems of teachers in the teaching-learning process?

3. How can these problems be solved?

4. What are the main needs of teachers that help them to improve their capacity of teaching?

The instruments used to collect data were questionnaire & focus group discussion.

Based on the data collected, the major problems of teachers in the teaching-learning process are:

• Some mathematics and science teachers have problems or subject matter knowledge

• Most of the teachers do not use teaching aids and have problems of applying active learning method.

• Some teachers lack preparation, i.e. reading different books, lesson planning, teaching aids, etc.

• Shortage of instructional materials, i.e. chemicals, reference books, mathematical instruments, language teaching materials, maps, globes, etc.

• Students disciplinary problems

• Teachers' reading rooms

• Self-contained teachers are required to prepare for all subjects

For the above mentioned problems teachers suggested the following solutions.

- Shortage of instructional materials can be allocated by the continuous effort of the school administration and parents.
- Teachers with the cooperation of Parent-Teacher committee and the school administration can solve the disciplinary problems of the students
- The school administration can coordinate stakeholders, teachers, parents etc, to establish teachers' reading rooms & equip them with books and furniture.
- Teachers should give more time for preparation in addition to teaching and co-curricular activities.
- Self- contained teachers should work cooperatively and actively with their assistants in order to facilitate their activities

Based on the needs assessment the major needs identified by the linkage school teachers are the following

**The needs of 1<sup>st</sup> cycle teachers are as follows:**

1. How to teach children to read and write English and Amharic Alphabets within the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the academic year.

2. How to teach children to identify and write numbers form 1-100 within one semester of the academic year.
3. Active learning methods
4. How to prepare and use locally available resources (TALULAR)
5. Formative continuous assessment.

**The needs of 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle teachers are as follows:**

- How to make students be interested in mathematics
- How to prepare and use locally available resources
- How to manage class room disciplinary problems
- Mathematics handouts for grades ( 5-8) that comprise methods of teaching for each content and grade
- Active learning
- Formative continuous assessment
- Action Research

**Second cycle science teacher's needs of trainings are: -**

- How to make experiments using locally available resources in the laboratory.
- Science kit trainings
- Written guidelines for doing experiments in the

laboratory should be provided after training

- Active learning
- Action Research
- How to manage class room disciplinary problems
- Formative continuous assessment.

From the above concluding remarks I suggest that the above mentioned needs of teachers from linkage schools should be considered by the USAID project and the trainings should be arranged within a short period of time based on their priority.

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*One should guard against preaching to young people success in the customary form as the main aim in life. The most important motive for work in school and in life is pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community.*

**Albert Einstein** (1879 - 1955)