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**Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for  
sustainable development in Africa: How to design and  
implement an effective response by education and training  
systems**

### **Sub-theme 1**

**Common core skills for lifelong  
learning and sustainable  
development in Africa**

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## **A Case Study of Learning Materials Used to Deliver Knowledge and Skills– or Competency–Based Curricula (in Tanzania)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Working Document**

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# 1. ABSTRACT

The extent to which skills or the competency-based ethos of the curriculum are communicated in the books and learning materials used to deliver it in year 4 and 7 of schooling in Tanzania was the major theme of this study. Officials from MoEVT, TIE, NECTA, Kisarawe, Kinondoni, Moshi Municipal and Moshi Rural districts as well as teachers were involved in this study. Documentary review, focus group discussions, classroom observations and photographs from visited schools were used to collect data from schools.

The findings revealed that the curriculum has been changed from content-based to competency-based although there are mismatches between the design and its implementation. Most of the books do not convey the competence ethos of the curriculum. The implementation of the competency-based curriculum in the classroom was difficult as many schools lacked space, facilities and equipment while teachers received little or no trainings on the new curriculum. Monitoring by inspectors was rarely done due to inadequate funds and some inspectors not commanding respect of some classroom teachers. In-school supervision by heads of schools and heads of departments was weak. As NECTA rarely evaluated what was going on in the classrooms before setting the PSLE, it was difficult to match exams with what students had learnt and how they had learnt it. Exams ought to test what students have done and learnt it in school.

The analysis and discussion of the research findings revealed that during the colonial era the curriculum was competence/skills-based, as it emphasized the step-by-step learning of concepts, skills or tasks thoroughly first in the classroom before their practical application in the field. So when the curriculum was revised in 1967, it was like throwing out the baby with the bath water. The situation became worse in 1974 following the introduction of UPE where a number of militant political strategies, instead of systematic, scientific and strategic planning strategies were used. A new brand of Grade C/B teachers were trained in a rush and licensed to teach. So when CBC was reintroduced in 2005, this occurred without teachers with the requisite competencies. Teachers' guides and basic textbooks had not been developed, while learning environment in most schools was appalling. Therefore, one should not expect miracles in effective implementation of CBC in Tanzania primary schools before the important pre-conditions are met.