

## **My first 60 days in office: Prof. Ong'ondo**

His arrival was received with mixed signals; given that he was a familiar face within the walls of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). As a consultant who at times engaged in the Institute's activities, Prof Charles Ochieng' Ong'ondo was not a stranger to many employees. But, the other side of the coin is that the employees were quite apprehensive because unlike before, they were interacting with him as the head of the Institute.

The Associate Professor in English Language Teacher Education was appointed on September 25, this year as the Director of KICD, the institution that is well known for developing curricula and curriculum support materials for all levels of education except university.

As expected of a new appointee, the Chief Executive Officer started off with a meeting with the management on October 5, before cascading the sessions to Directorates and various Departments in what was widely viewed as a deliberate effort to appreciate what happens in the Institute. During the sessions and as he settled down, he has been emphasising the value of Teamwork in pursuit of the organizational goals.

He is on a mission to deliver on 'ORDER', an acronym that stands for Organization, Responsibility, Detail, Excellence and Right or Righteousness. Prof Ong'ondo explains that everyone must be organized in what they do, to deliver quality results. Employees have a responsibility to do specific tasks in the right manner and must be keen to details, to portray the Institute as the centre of excellence in curriculum matters.

"Let us all be committed in doing the right thing at all times," Prof Ong'ondo says. He adds that every staff has a duty to show high level of responsibility while setting their eyes on the ball, which is the Institute's mandate.

The director has been instrumental in rallying staff to appreciate each other saying each of the staff has an important role to play in propelling the Institute to the next level. He underscores the importance of projecting the right image to internal and external stakeholders. "Just be well mannered. Your first impression matters a lot in life. What you display as you interact with someone is what you are." "Be gentle. Good to yourself and others. When you are good to others you will be at peace with yourself," the Director says adding that it is always rewarding for staff

to be accurate in what they do, to enhance quality. “Uphold accuracy as you aim to exceed expectations. You can spoil the party with a little more salt.”

Prof Ong’ondo has spearheaded a number of activities, aimed at achieving the mandate of the Institute. On the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), which is currently in grade four, he has been involved in the review of diploma teacher education curriculum, and has held a meeting with publishers where he stressed on quality and high level of integrity in book production. Curriculum designs for Grade 7-9 are at various stages of development. State of the art machines were also commissioned that will fast track the final stages of production of curriculum support materials.

The Director has initiated training for various cadres of staff including security and registry departments besides, facilitating the rollout of a new medical scheme, following the expiry of the Institute’s contract with NHIF. A new academic committee was also constituted and inducted on the mandate of the Institute to ensure they comply with international standards of service delivery.

Employees are upbeat that the director will transform the Institute and improve their welfare, especially on remuneration and promotions.