



# Kenya

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## Principles and general objectives of education

Education is a fundamental right which must be provided to every Kenyan, according to the following principles: political equality; national unity; social justice and human dignity; freedom of religion and conscience; freedom from ignorance and disease; equal opportunities for all citizens, irrespective of race, religion, sex or colour; equitable distribution of the national income; and the promotion and preservation of the cultural heritage.

The general goal is to prepare and equip citizens to function effectively in their environment and to be useful members of society. Education is therefore expected to:

- foster national unity based on adaptation of the rich cultural heritage of the people of the country;
- serve the needs of national development through production of skilled manpower, dissemination of knowledge and the inculcation of the right attitudes and relating attributes of learning to the real problems of society;
- prepare and equip the youth with the knowledge, skills and expertise necessary to enable them collectively and individually to play an effective role in the life of the nation and to enable them to engage in activities that enhance the quality of life, while ensuring that opportunities are provided for the full development of their individual talents and personality;
- promote social justice and morality by instilling the right attitudes necessary for training in social obligations, and responsibilities;
- foster, develop and communicate the rich and varied cultures of the country and foster positive attitudes and consciousness towards other nations.

The vision for education is to have “Quality Education and Training for Development”, translated into Kiswahili as “*Elimu Bora kwa Maendeleo*”. This makes the purpose of education and training focus on the development of an individual’s personality to enable her or him to fit into society as a productive and civil individual. Education and training, therefore, seeks to offer equal opportunities to all learners.

## Current educational priorities and concerns

Since 1990, the government has renewed its commitment to developing education. Priorities include: providing universal access to basic education, increasing retention and progression rates throughout the education system, improving the relevance and



quality of education, and responding to the demand for good governance and efficient management.

The provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the government's overall development strategy. Kenya's human resource is central to the country attaining its goal of industrial development and technological advancement. Universal access to basic education and training ensures equity for all children to enrol in schools including the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Education also plays a key role in the protection of democratic institutions and human rights through well-informed citizens. The government has thus introduced major reforms and innovations in education with a view to addressing these broad national goals.

Progress has been witnessed through the expansion of early childhood development (ECD), the reduction of adult illiteracy rates, the development of non-formal education, and the reduced number of untrained primary and ECD teachers. The government has also initiated programmes to strengthen partnerships among key education partners and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education. These programmes have focused on girls, health and nutrition, and capacity building for efficient school management, curriculum reviews, and policy-oriented educational research. However, despite these improvements, recent studies indicate that the education sector is facing many difficulties and constraints. There are several factors that have had severe impacts on education and which still pose major challenges to achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015.

The government has invested in ECD, enlisting the help of NGOs, donor agencies and the local communities. As a result of these efforts, the gross enrolment rate in ECD centres reached an average of 34% in 1998, with total enrolment increasing from 16,329 in 1990 to 23,977 in 1998.

Nonetheless, enrolment in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) remains extremely low in urban slums, as well as in districts in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL), which are sparsely populated by nomadic communities. Since the provision of ECCE is largely in the hands of a wide variety of private providers, the quality and relevance of learning also vary. The well-established pre-schools charge high fees, attract qualified teachers, have established facilities and possess adequate learning materials. But the rest of the ECCE institutions still do not have adequate facilities; most of their teachers are untrained and learning resources are in short supply. However, due to heavy investment in teacher education, 96.6% of primary education teachers had been trained by 1998.

Highlights of the new policy on ECD (1997) are: principle of partnership between the parents, communities, NGOs, donors, private sector and the government; provision of integrated services that meet the social, emotional, cognitive, health, nutrition and care needs of all children zero to eight years, especially those from disadvantaged groups; communities and family empowerment to meet the holistic needs of their children.

Out-of-school children are a matter of growing concern, and the provision of non-formal education has been strongly encouraged. To this aim, in 1995 the Ministry of Education established a Non-Formal Education Unit at its headquarters to facilitate



liaison with organizations and departments providing this kind of education. The Ministry of Education and the Department of Adult Education have participated in the implementation of pilot activities in nine districts of the country, with international financial assistance. As a result, over the past ten years there has been increased access and participation in the provision of education to out-of-school youth and children.

Early pregnancy has been one of the major causes of wastage in the education of girls and a policy adjustment is intended to deal with reality and to ensure that the girls are not unduly disadvantaged. Pregnant girls who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy will now be readmitted to continue their education if they make adequate arrangements for the care of their babies. In the interest of equity of access, the government plans to introduce a bursary programme directed at girls in especially difficult circumstances, in particular those at the upper primary level in the rural and slum areas.

The education system still faces many problems. Inadequate policy and legal frameworks and statements have negatively affected the development of quality basic education. Laws and regulations do not adequately address equity issues in education; the curricula are overloaded, inappropriate, and gender-insensitive. Education management is overly centralized, and the participation of parents and communities is minimal. Furthermore, the government has reduced its financing of basic education. Policies on education, to a large extent, are still elitist and promote rote learning.

The education sector faces management problems due to centralized bureaucratic structures, resulting in administrative rigidity and a lack of responsiveness to society's needs. There have been delays in decision-making, ineffectiveness in implementing recommendations, a lack of adequate resources and inadequate remuneration, leading to low morale and a lack of accountability at the district and school levels. Another problem lies in the fact that the sector lacks a sound and sustainable management information system.

The increased HIV & AIDS pandemic has had devastating effects on the education sector, which is losing many qualified human resources. Many teachers are also either infected or affected by HIV & AIDS, thus they are not able to be efficient and effective in their work. Many children have been affected by the disease because of the loss of their parents. Such orphans' participation in school becomes irregular and ineffective; they often end up dropping out of school.

Providing education for the hard to reach groups who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or in difficult circumstances—such as orphans, children involved in labour, street children, girls, children with special challenges, etc.—is another challenge that affects equity in education. To address this challenge the government has put up boarding primary schools in the Arid and Semi Arid areas; provided school feeding programmes in ASAL areas, urban slums and pockets of poverty. A multi-sectoral approach to addressing the education needs of the communities has also been adopted. Through the economic recovery plan, the government has embarked on measures to resuscitate the economy with a major focus on increasing the incomes of the poorest members of the society. It is hoped that this will help to uplift the people out of poverty and consequently make them afford basic necessities of life, including



basic education. The poverty reduction strategy is also aimed at reducing the incidents of child labour and ensures that parents do not have to send their young children to work at the expense of schooling.

The 1992 tribal clashes in the country and insecurity still provide major challenges to the achievement of EFA goals. Many households and children get displaced and the situation is exacerbated where children have lost their parents in such clashes. In many communities where cattle banditry and tribal clashes occur, children are in danger of being molested or raped in their way to and from school. In such instances, parents often choose to withdraw their children from school. For this reason, access to education has remained low in most parts of North Eastern and some districts in the Rift Valley and Coast provinces. Dropout rates are also high in these areas.

Externally instigated economic reforms have had negative impact on education. The 1980s period witnessed a decline in the economic growth and an increase in poverty levels in the country. In an effort to revert the worsening economic growth rate, the government with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank adopted structural adjustment programmes aimed at reducing government expenditure and introducing cost-sharing in the education and health sectors. In addition, the government decontrolled prices, removed import licensing and foreign exchange control, privatized public enterprises, introduced reforms on investment incentives and a more liberalized financial system.

The structural adjustment programmes—in particular cost sharing—have increased the cost of education to communities and parents. With the increased poverty levels, many parents and communities have not been able to meet the cost requirements for education. This has led to a decline in access to, and enrolment in, basic education, increased dropouts and repetition rates, and limited investment in education. It has also increased regional and gender disparities.

An increase in the debt burden has complicated the issue of education financing. It has been estimated that about 60% to 65% of GNP and 30-35% of exports, respectively, go to servicing the debt. The implication is that the government have very little resources for investment, especially in the social sector. The shortage of resources has affected the implementation of many programmes, which could have addressed major problems in education.

Inadequate public resources for education have made the government and its key partners to depend on bilateral and multilateral donors to support educational projects. However, one of the major drawbacks of donor-funded programmes/projects has been sustainability. Most programmes are often planned inadequately or hurriedly without in-built structures that can allow continuity. Furthermore, some externally funded projects are donor driven, and do not always address the basic problems facing the education sector. For example, many projects supported by international agencies and NGOs have failed to incorporate parents or communities as active participants, creating the problem of dependency and lack of community ownership and sustainability.



Goals and targets were clearly articulated for the period 1999-2005. These included an increase in enrolment and completion rates, especially for girls; Universal Primary Education achieved by 2005; enhancing the quality and relevance of basic education by providing some primary schools with grants; reducing the cost of examinations at the primary level; and reducing the pupil-teacher ratios by 50%.

There has been a priority shift towards basic education. It is now believed that in order to enhance development through effective participation by all citizens, it is imperative that all should receive at least basic education. More resources will therefore be devoted to the basic education level, at the expense of university education. The objective of this priority shift, as expressed in the Policy Framework Paper (1996–1998), is to reverse recent declines in primary and secondary enrolments and to raise the completion rates.

Another critical issue is the heavy under-representation of women among the student population at the university level. For example, during the 1991/1992 academic year, only 28% of the total students enrolled at public universities were female. In an effort to increase female participation at the university level, measures are being taken to ensure retention of girls in secondary schools and to address issues relating to the quality of their performance.

Since January 2003, when the new government came to power, major reforms to revamp the education sector are being implemented. The reforms cut across the major sub-sectors in education, that is, early childhood education, primary education (both formal and non-formal), secondary education, TIVET (Technical, Industrial, Vocational Entrepreneurship Training) and tertiary education. The reforms focus on decentralizing functions from national to institutional levels. The aim of the reforms is to bring services closer to the beneficiaries and to ensure that support reaches the child in the shortest time possible.

At the primary level, this involves dispatch of funds for instructional materials and other support services to the institutional level. Free primary education is also a key reform that aims at expanding access and this has led to an additional 1.5 million children enrolled in primary schools between January 2003 and June 2004.

At the secondary level, bursaries aimed at enhancing retention for bright and needy students and especially girls are disbursed by Bursary Constituency Committees for better targeting. The school management committees and boards of governors have been given more authority to make decisions that will contribute to the provision of quality education.

The government recognizes the need to create opportunities for post primary school graduates and children and youth who for some reason or another do not complete primary or secondary school or do not transit to higher levels of learning. Their education is terminal and yet they have not acquired meaningful skills for self-employment and have not attained the internationally acceptable age of 18 to qualify for employment. The government is therefore revitalizing the Youth Polytechnics and Technical Institutes so that they can offer market driven courses to cater for these groups of children.



To cater for education of the hard to reach groups, additional grants to support children with special needs and enrolled in a special school or special education units are provided. The policy of integration and inclusion is also being implemented so as to reach the majority of children with special needs estimated at 750,000 within the primary school going age population with only 26,000 enrolled (2004).

To adopt a pragmatic approach to education and training, reforms on the organization, structure and management of education are being implemented. The new structure proposes that due to the acknowledged importance of early childhood education, it should be made part of basic education. This means that basic education in Kenya will comprise of 2 years early childhood education for 4–5 year olds, primary education of 8 years for the 6–13, and secondary education of 4 years for the 14–17 year olds. Non-formal education will be supported to deliver quality education for those children who for one reason or another are not fit in the formal system. The structure will be supported by an organizational structure that provides for a highly decentralized system.

In November 2004, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology organized a National Conference on Education and Training, with the objective to build consensus on policies and strategies in education and training for improved performance in the education sector. It was the first time such a meeting—bringing together all the stakeholders in the education and training sector—had been held in Kenya; over 800 delegates participated.

The Sessional Paper No. 1 “A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research” (January 2005) will guide education for the next 20 years and provide policy guidelines that will ensure every Kenyan the right to inclusive and quality education and training that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans no matter his or her socio-economic status. This vision is guided by the understanding that quality education and training contributes significantly to economic growth, better employment opportunities and expansion of income generating opportunities. The following targets were outlined in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005:

- Attainment of universal primary education by 2005 and Education for All by 2015;
- Achievement of a transition rate of 70% from primary to secondary school level from the current rate of 47%, paying special attention to girls’ education by 2008;
- Enhancement of access, equity and quality in primary and secondary education through capacity building for 45,000 education managers by 2005;
- Construction/renovation of physical facilities/equipment in public learning institutions in disadvantaged areas, particularly in Arid and Semi-Arid lands (ASAL) and urban slums by 2008;
- Development of a national training strategy for TIVET in 2005, and ensuring that TIVET institutions are appropriately funded and equipped by 2008;



- Achievement of 50% improvement of levels of adult literacy by 2010;
- Expansion of public universities to have a capacity of at least 5,000 students each by 2015 and increase the proportion of all students studying science-related courses to 50%, with at least one third of these being women, by the year 2010.

In pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals, coupled with the task of delivering the policies set out in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) decided that the most effective mechanism to coordinate and successfully implement such a programme is through a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP). The overall aim of SWAP is to develop and secure funding for the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP), which will be the basis upon which the government, individuals, communities, the private sector, NGOs, and development partners will jointly support the education sector during the period 2005/06 to 2009/10.

KESSP is a five-year plan with investment programmes that are prioritized and costed. The areas attracting the highest levels of investment include: in-service training and teacher education, primary school infrastructure, instruction materials, capacity building, school health and nutrition, provision of education in the ASALS and urban slums, non-formal education, and cross-cutting issues such as HIV & AIDS, gender and guidance, and counselling. In essence, the focus is on pro-poor programmes whose aim is to enhance access, retention, quality and equity at all levels. KESSP has been developed to enable the government to provide “Quality Education and Training for Development” or “*Elimu Bora kwa Maendeleo*” as translated in Kiswahili.

## Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The following main documents constitute the legal framework of the country's education:

- The **Education Act** (1968, revised in 1980) assigned the responsibility for education to the Ministry of Education and instituted various organs for the organization and management of education at all levels.
- The **Board of Adult Education Act** (1966) established a Board which co-ordinates adult education activities.
- The **Teachers Service Commission Act** (1967) established a single employer and unified terms of service for teachers.
- The **National Council for Science and Technology Act** (1978) created a body to co-ordinate research in science and technology and to advise the government on relevant policy matters.



- The **National Examinations Council Act** (1980) established a body to administer national examinations.
- The **Literature Bureau Act** (1980) established a Bureau to print and publish books and other educational materials.
- The **Universities Act** (1985) created the Commission for Higher Education that regulates university education in Kenya.
- The **Sessional Paper No. 6** (1988) mapped out policy changes on education and work force training for the last decade of the 20th century and beyond.

The **Children's Act**, which was enacted by the Parliament and took effect from 1 April 2002, requires the government to undertake all the necessary steps to make available free basic education to every child. According to the Act, anyone who infringes on a child's right to primary education is guilty of an offence and punishable by a jail term of not more than twelve months or a maximum fine of 50,000 Kenya shillings (about US\$640 in 2002).

## **Administration and management of the education system**

The formal education system is managed by the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology** through a network that extends from the headquarters to the provinces (8), districts (10), divisions and zones. The Minister carries the political portfolio for education while the Permanent Secretary is the executive head and the accounting officer, assisted by the Director of Education, the Chief Inspector of Schools and a team of other senior officers.

There is a Provincial Director of Education for each of the eight administrative provinces, while District Education Officers take charge of educational administration at this level, supervising the division and zone officers.

Headteachers are appointed to be in charge of the day-to-day administration of their schools, assisted by the School Committees and Boards of Governors. Since the late 1970s, Parent-Teacher Associations have evolved to play a role in the management of educational institutions, assisting particularly by raising funds to construct physical facilities and to purchase needed equipment and materials.

The **Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services**, through the Department of Adult Education (established in 1979), promotes adult education and literacy programmes. The **Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development** (formerly the Ministry of Vocational Training) is responsible for technical education in the country and takes charge of various research institutions, national polytechnic schools, youth polytechnic schools, as well as technical teacher colleges.

The **Ministry of Health**, through the Medical Training Centre, provides training for paramedical personnel, while the **Ministry of Agriculture** trains agricultural extension workers.



The universities are parastatal organizations, each of them established by an Act of Parliament and administered by its own internal structures under the umbrella of a University Council. The Head of State is the Chancellor of all the public universities (currently five), and, in that capacity, he has appointed a Vice-Chancellor for each one. Higher education is regulated and co-ordinated by the **Commission for Higher Education**, responsible for the programming, planning, budgeting and funding of public universities, as well as for the accreditation of private universities and post-secondary institutions.

Pre-primary education is provided by local authorities, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private entrepreneurs (for which the services are paid). The **National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE)**, which is based at the Kenya Institute of Education, co-ordinates and facilitates the development and distribution of localized curriculum and support materials, in collaboration with the District Centres for Early Childhood Education. It also co-ordinates research in all aspects of early childhood education and development.

There are also various government structures providing support services to the education system. The **Kenya Institute of Education (KIE)** is the national curriculum development centre for all levels of education, except the university. Along with this, it co-ordinates the development of curriculum support materials, including basic textbooks, and carries out research and evaluation studies at all levels of education. It also provides assistance in the development of curricula for non-formal basic education and training.

The **Jomo Kenyatta Foundation** and the **Kenya Literature Bureau** are two publishing houses producing textbooks and other educational materials developed by KIE. They also publish works by individual authors for both specialized and general readership.

The **Inspectorate of Education** ensures the maintenance of acceptable educational standards through inspection and counselling of teachers on proper teaching methods. It organizes in-service training for teachers to keep them updated with new methodologies. The Chief Inspector is the Chairperson of the Academic Board of the KIE, and it is this Board that approves all curricula developed by the Institute.

The **Teachers Service Commission** is the employer of teachers for primary and secondary education, teacher training colleges, middle-level colleges and institutes. It ensures the maintenance of professional ethics and discipline in accordance with the established code of regulations.

The **Kenya Education Staff Institute**, based at Kenyatta University but operated by the Ministry of Education, provides management training through workshops and seminars aimed at improving performance and efficiency of educational personnel at various levels. Its training programme includes education management, financial management for education, legal matters affecting education, personnel management, guidance and counselling.

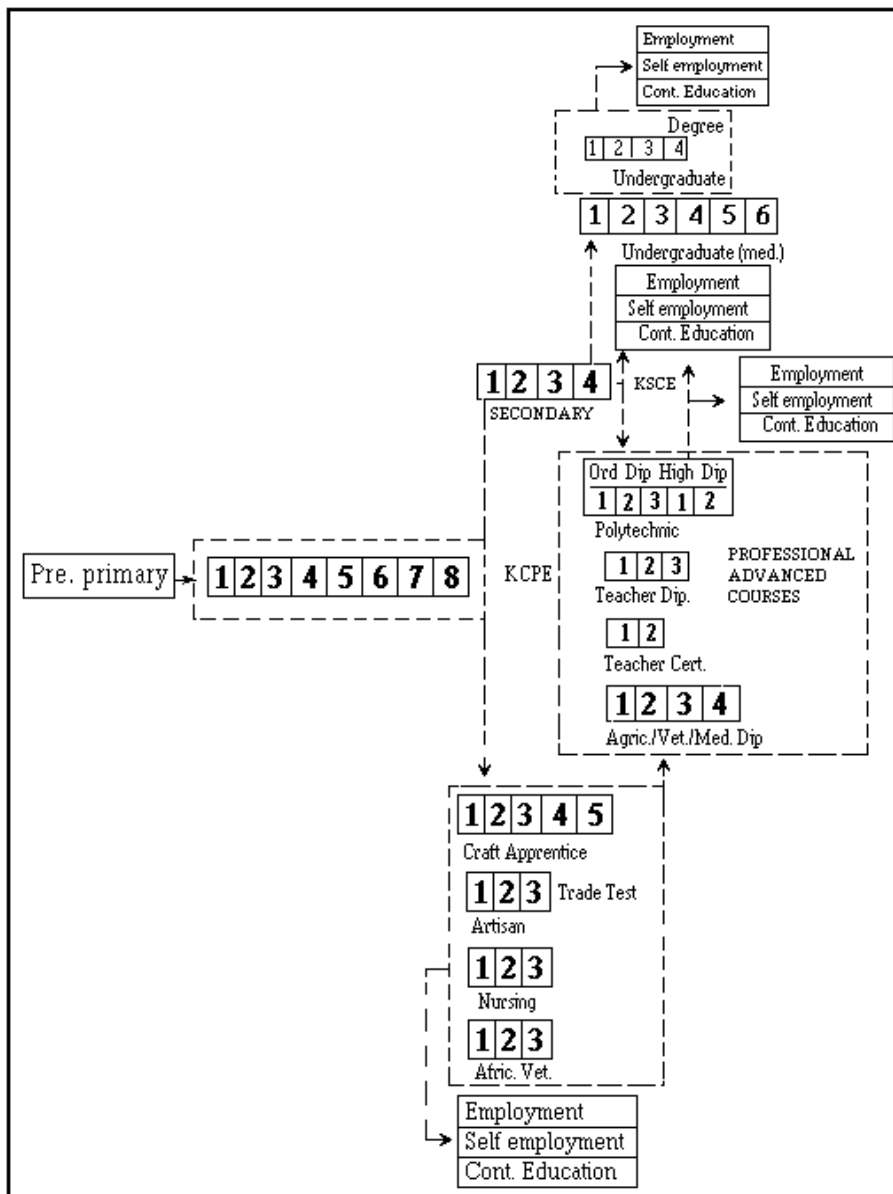


The provision of education at all levels is a partnership between the government, communities, the private sector and civil society (religious organization and non-governmental organizations). While the government has a clear sector approach, civil society often has a more indirect approach through community-based organizations.

## Structure and organization of the education system

The national education system has evolved over time, with major changes having been instituted in the 1980s. In 1984, the 7-4-2-3 structure and system was replaced with the 8-4-4 structure and system, which introduced a broad-based curriculum at every level. The 8-4-4 system was intended to make education more relevant to the world of work and thus produce skilled and high-level work force to meet the demands of the economy.

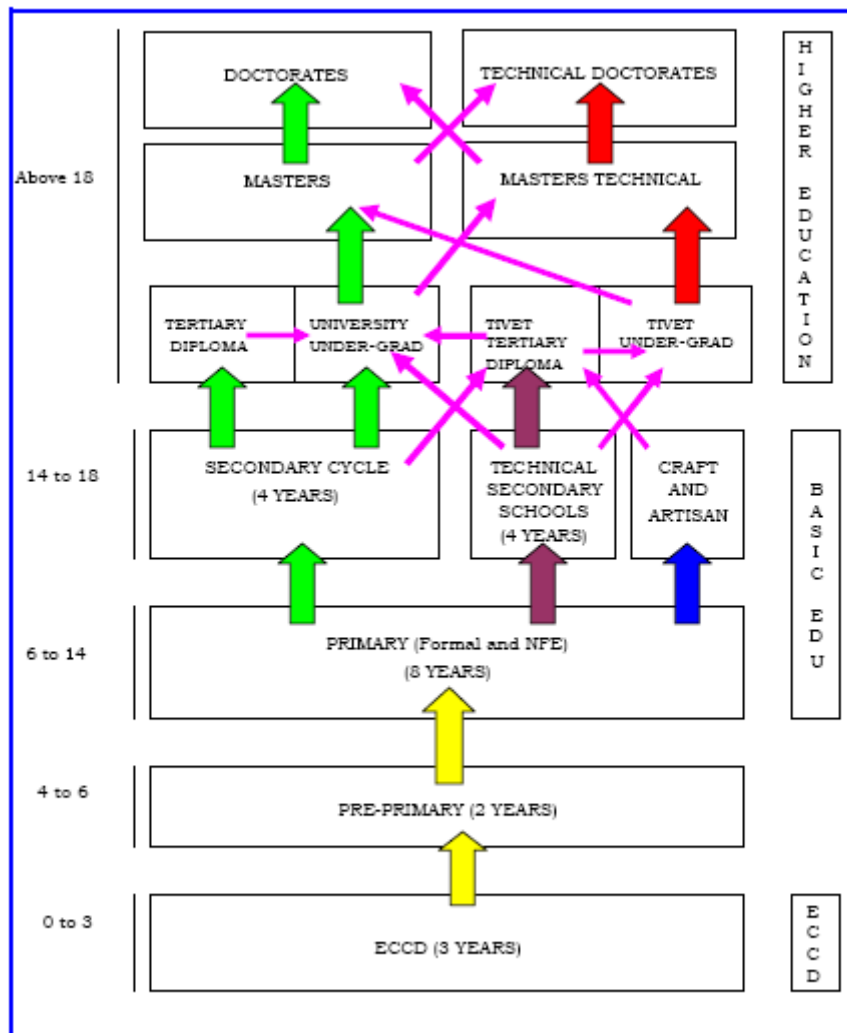
### Kenya: structure of the education system



The figure below shows the envisaged structure and organization of the education and training sector as articulated in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005.

### Kenya: proposed new structure of the education system

Figure 8: Structure and Organization of Education and Training



From the primary school cycle to higher levels, this structure is intended to offer learners equal opportunities to advance to the highest level of learning either through the academic or TIVET channels. The proposed structure also provides opportunities for entry and re-entry into either channel. An additional feature is that the education and training system is structured into basic and higher education and training. In the long term, basic education and training is proposed to be 14 years, comprising of pre-primary (2 years), primary/non-formal education (8 years), and secondary education and TIVET (4 years). Under this proposal, higher education will consist of undergraduate and postgraduate (masters and doctoral) programmes, as well as TIVET, diploma, undergraduate and post-graduate programmes.



## Pre-school education

Pre-primary education is provided for children 4–5 years old. Attendance is not compulsory. Children enter primary education at the age of 6.

## Primary education

Primary education is the first cycle of the national 8–4–4 system of education, introduced in 1986. It lasts eight years and caters for 6–13 year-old children. The course is divided into lower (Standards I-III), middle (Standards IV and V) and upper primary (Standards VI-VIII). The programme ensures the provision of practically-oriented education, while also catering to the needs of those who are continuing their education at the secondary level. At the end of the cycle (normally at age 14), pupils sit the highly competitive national Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination (KCPE).

## Secondary education

Secondary education lasts four years and caters for 14–17 year-old olds. It is organized into two stages of two years' duration each. At the end of the course (normally at age 19), students sit an examination administered by the Kenya National Examinations Council leading to the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). This examination is used for selection of students for universities courses or for training in other post-secondary institutions. In addition to the academic certificate, the school awards each student a leaving certificate reflecting observed abilities and character development.

Pupils are introduced to technical and business subjects beginning at the mid-primary level. Those who proceed to secondary schools will have a further opportunity to study any of the technical or business subject options for a further four years. In many cases, however, the course electives available to secondary school students are limited to the options being offered by the particular institution. A large proportion of post-school education and training is offered by private training institutions, potential employers through sponsorship by the private sector, or by the respective government ministries and departments.

Higher education covers university education, as well as post-secondary education and training provided by middle colleges such as national polytechnic schools, teacher-training colleges, institutes of technology and specialized institutions operated by some ministries. Since 1990, a minimum of four years of study is required for a university degree. There are five public universities with a number of institutes, schools and units that supplement their academic faculties and disciplines; some of them also have constituent colleges. National polytechnics offer certificate, diploma and higher diploma courses in various fields of technical training. Among the middle colleges, the Institutes of Technology mainly offer diploma and craft training programmes. Technical Training Institutes (TTIs) also offer training at both craft and diploma levels. These are generally the oldest technical and vocational institutions, some of which were founded as early as 1913. They have been transformed many times to taking on different roles and names, ranging from trade schools to secondary



technical schools. They were upgraded to TTIs in 1986, with the advent of the 8–4–4 system of education.

The school year consists of thirty-nine weeks, divided into three terms of thirteen weeks each.

## **The financing of education**

The development of public education in the country is financed mainly through the policy of cost-sharing between the Government, the parents and communities. This policy was established in 1988 as an education sector reform measure, with the aim of containing and sustaining education expenditures without raising the overall level of the government budget.

Essentially, the role of the Government is to provide for teachers' salaries, curriculum development, school inspection/supervision services, and bursaries/loans for secondary and university education. Parents provide for teaching/learning materials, textbooks, physical infrastructure at primary and secondary level, and the necessary indirect costs to education at large.

The main constraint in the implementation of the cost-sharing policy in public education has been the lack of sustained economic growth to absorb the short-term reform shocks. The level of poverty in the country has gone up to an extent where many people can no longer get access to basic education services, because they simply cannot cost-share. For example, it has been estimated that the number of primary school pupils in absolute need of textbooks increased from 1.7 million to 4.2 million, and that the number of secondary school students in absolute need of bursary assistance increased from 155,000 to 400,000.

The Kenya ICT Trust Fund was formed in February 2004 between the private sector and the public sector with the aim of spearheading the ICT initiatives in the Education sector. Membership of this partnership is open to the public sector (ministries and other government institutions), private sector (commercial and profit-making companies), development partners, civil society (non-government organizations, community-based organizations, etc.), academia and other educational institutions. Its objective is to facilitate public private partnerships to mobilize and provide information and communication technology resources to Kenyan public schools and community resource and learning centres.

In 2004, the government devoted 29.2% of its total expenditure on education; an amount representing 7.0% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Public expenditure per student was as a percentage of the GDP per capita was 24.7% for primary, 23.8% for secondary and 274.7% for tertiary education. In the 2003/2004 fiscal year, the government recurrent expenditure on education totalled 71,800.36 million Kenya shillings, with an additional 8,434.38 million Kenya shillings devoted to development expenditure, reaching a gross total expenditure of 80,234.74 million Kenya shillings.



## The educational process

The Ministry of Education is responsible for formulating the curriculum and overseeing its implementation. The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) develops the curricular support materials, and the Kenya National Examination Council is responsible for student assessment and curriculum evaluation. Furthermore, various stakeholders in education, such as teachers, religious organizations, learners, and parents, may voice their concern on the appropriateness of the curriculum.

Many factors play a role in motivating curriculum reforms. Some of these include: whether the curriculum objectives are clear, pertinent to the needs of society, achievable and realistic; whether the curriculum is overloaded; the scope and depth of the existing curriculum; areas of unnecessary overlap within and across subjects; availability, adequacy and appropriateness of the resources (physical and human) for effective curriculum implementation; emerging issues such as the HIV & AIDS pandemic, gender imbalance, environmental issues, drug prevention education, guidance and counselling.

Policy-makers take into account reports from the National Education Commission, popular opinion, and research results before making a decision. Once the decisions have been translated into policy, the KIE develops the curriculum accordingly. The main functions of KIE are to: (i) prepare syllabi for all levels of education except the University level; (ii) prepare teaching and evaluation materials; (iii) conduct in-service training courses and workshops for teachers; (iv) organize orientation programmes for education officers and inspectors; (v) transmit programmes through the mass media to support the curriculum; and (vi) prepare correspondence courses for students and teachers.

Three bodies at the KIE develop the curriculum: the subject panel, the course panel and the academic board. The subject panels are responsible for the translation of the national goals of education into educational programmes. The course panel develops courses, and is composed of experienced teachers, subject inspectors, college tutors, examination secretaries, representatives from Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and religious organizations. The academic board reviews the existing curricula. In some cases, panel members may need to consult with other members from a related subject where there is content overlap.

The Kenya National Examination Council measures pupil performance, evaluates textbooks, and assesses teachers' effectiveness. It also judges the quality of the curriculum.

In January 1985, the government launched the 8-4-4 curriculum, which emphasized vocational subjects. This system sought to make education more responsive to the needs of the nation and the learners, and to prepare the youth for self-employment, training in life skills and further education. Thus, the selection of content is based on national goals of education, specific objectives and the level of the learners.



Recent developments related to the curriculum have included: (i) a wide range of support materials for use at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level; (ii) the development of an integrated curriculum which considers the holistic approach in the provision of services; (iii) an Islamic Integrated Education Programme curriculum; (iv) a bridge curriculum to relate ECD to the lower primary curriculum; (v) a reduction in the number of subjects at the secondary school level and a reduction in content at the primary school level; (vi) increased relevance for the disadvantaged groups; (vii) new content for gender sensitivity in teacher education programmes; (ix) a newly developed curriculum and support materials for non-formal education; (x) curriculum materials on HIV/AIDS; and (xi) textbook provision in the core subjects. Teaching and learning methods have also changed. Previously, learning activities were centred on the teacher but now the focus is on learner participation with the teacher as a guide. These methods include story telling, news telling, role-play, discussion demonstration, project work/individual assignments among others.

From January 2003, a new curriculum was implemented with the aim of reducing the workload for both teachers and pupils. The curriculum reduced the numbers of examinable subjects from 5–7 at primary schools and 10 to 8 at the secondary school level.

### Pre-primary education

The objectives of the Early Childhood Education (ECD) programme as stated in the Master Plan of Education are:

- To improve the nutritional status of children and provide them with a secure physical and psychosocial setting;
- To develop the integrated nurturing of children's affective, cognitive, and physical attributes;
- To develop children's self confidence and free expression, spiritual and social values, and appreciation of other people's needs and views;
- To develop children's knowledge of physical and biological world.

In 1997, the government adopted a holistic approach to ECD services. The holistic approach comprises the nurture of the whole personality of the child, encompassing physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions. The provision of protection and adequate nutrition as well as the promotion of good health are recognised as constituting the foundation of proper growth and development of children.

The organization of the pre-primary education curriculum is in the form of activities rather than subjects. These activities are aimed at promoting the total development of the child (cognitive, social, physical, linguistic, moral, emotional and spiritual). The following activity areas are covered:

- language development;



- environment;
- number work;
- music and movement;
- art and craft;
- physical development;
- religious and moral education.

Religious and moral education was included in the curriculum at the beginning of 1991, as a result of a recommendation passed at a National Seminar attended by all religious organizations and institutions in the country. In addition to the above, general health, nutrition and childcare matters are part of the pre-school education package in the daily activities.

The pre-school curriculum is also designed to encourage and enable the use of local languages as medium of instruction. In the urban centres, where the major part of pre-school offer is concentrated, the practice is to use the language of common communication, which is Kiswahili or English.

The child is exposed to three hours of learning each day, divided into thirty minutes of lessons for various learning activities. The average number of children per class is between 25 and 30, but due to high demand in the urban centres, the class size could be as large as 40.

Evaluation of children's performance is through observation and listening. The pre-school teacher observes the children's characteristics and behaviour, and listens to their talk and play, both in class and in outdoor activities. In this process, the teacher is able to notice concepts that are beginning to form in the children (as expressed in their interests, abilities and achievements) and encourages their further development.

Pre-primary education is provided by local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private entrepreneurs (who charge fees). Eighty percent of Early Childhood Education (ECD) centres are established, owned and managed by local parents and communities. Other major sponsors of ECD services include religious organisations, women groups, local government authorities, welfare organisations, NGOs, and private entrepreneurs or companies/firms. The sponsors provide and maintain the physical facilities including land, play and learning materials and payment of the caregivers/teachers. Furthermore, there are large regional disparities. Participation is very unusual in the ASAL districts, urban squatter areas, and in areas of poverty in other districts.

The 1999 population census indicated that a total of 574,249 children were not enrolled in pre-primary schools and that a large proportion of children entering primary schools do not pass through pre-primary. Two main reasons attributed to this low enrolment were the minimal role played by the Government in providing ECD



services and lack of awareness among communities and parents regarding the importance of pre-school.

In 1995, of 29,251 pre-school teachers, 17,374 (59.4%) were reported as being untrained. In 1998, the gross enrolment rate was 34.9%. In 2001, it was 41.6%. In 2004, the gross enrolment rate was 53.4% and the net enrolment rate was 29.3%. The total number of pre-primary teachers was 70,058, of whom 87.3% were female and 70% were trained.

There has been a rapid total enrolment at Early Childhood, Development and Education (ECDE) level from 483,148 in 1982, to 1,187,883 in 1999, to 1,627,721 children in 2004.

## Primary education

Primary education is expected to provide learning opportunities for children in a co-ordinated programme and, *inter alia*, is expected to:

- lead to acquisition of literacy, numeracy and manipulative skills;
- develop ability for clear logical thought and critical judgement;
- develop self-expression, self-discipline, self-reliance and full utilization of a child's senses;
- lead to acquisition of a suitable basic foundation for the world of work in the context of the economic needs of the nation;
- enable the development of desirable social standards and attitudes;
- lead to development of constructive and adaptive attitudes to life based on moral and religious values and responsibility to the community and nation;
- lead to appreciation of one's and other people's cultural heritage;
- enable the child to grow towards maturity and self-fulfilment to become a useful and well-adjusted member of society.

The primary school curriculum is uniform throughout the country. Curriculum development is a participatory process. It involves participation by the Kenya Institute of Education's steering committee, individual subject panels for the various cycles and areas of education and training, and the Academic Board. The participants in these panels and the Board are drawn from relevant subject teachers and specialists from schools, colleges and universities, subject inspectors, representatives from Kenya National Examinations Council, curriculum specialists from the Institute, and the interested parties from government and non-governmental organizations.

This wide participation is expected to ensure that the curriculum content meets the needs of the national objectives of education, addresses itself to the needs of the

learner and interested bodies, and provides harmonization within individual subjects and at different levels of education and training.

The curriculum is arranged in various syllabi, detailing what should be taught and learnt in different classes. The weekly lesson timetable is as follows:

**Primary education: weekly lesson timetable**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	Lower			Middle		Upper		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
English	5	5	5	7	7	7	7	7
Kiswahili	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	5	5	5	7	7	7	7	7
Science	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Geography, history and civics	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4
Religious education	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Agriculture	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
Art and craft	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Home science	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1
Business education	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Mother tongue	5	5	5	–	–	–	–	–
Physical education	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3
Pastoral programme	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>

*Source:* Kenya. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2001b. Each teaching period lasts 30 minutes at the lower primary and 35 minutes at the middle and upper primary levels. One period of Physical education will be used for teaching/passing messages on HIV/AIDS. The total number of lessons per day should not be more than eight.

The average number of pupils in class is 40, though this may vary depending on demand and places available. The tendency is to have bigger classes, with as many as 45-50 pupils.

Criteria and assessment methods utilized for promoting children to the next grade, or for retaining them in the same grade, are not reported.

At the end of primary education, pupils sit a national terminal examination administered by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). Its primary objectives are to: rank candidates according to attainment of knowledge, skills and attitudes as specified in the various syllabi; improve the learning process in primary education by providing the schools with constant feedback on candidates' performance; and provide performance criteria for selecting pupils to secondary schools and to post-primary technical training institutions. From January 1991, the content in each examination subject was reduced.

In addition to the certificate that follows successful completion of the examination, pupils also receive a school-leaving certificate. This certificate is issued



by individual schools with the authority of the Director of Education and is based on the character development and achievements of the pupil in co-curricular activities.

Between 1963 and 1983, enrolment in primary education increased from 891,533 to 4.3 million. The Government of Kenya introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in January 2003, which resulted in a further increase in enrolment from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in formal public schools alone in 2004, representing an increase of 18%. Another 300,000 primary school-age children are enrolled in non-formal learning centres.

According to national statistics, the gross enrolment rate (GER) in primary education declined from 88.6% in 1989 to 84.1% in 1994. In 1998 the GER was 88.8%; and in 2001, it was 94%. The net enrolment rate in 1999 was 64% and in 2004 was 76%. These national rates tend to mask regional disparities. Some districts, especially in the arid areas, record participation rates below 30% and correspondingly high dropout rates.

In 1993, the national average for repetition and dropout rates was 15.4% and 5.4%, respectively (8.8% and 3.4%, respectively, in the largest urban centres). The declining participation rates and the wastage are attributed, to a large extent, to the Structural Adjustment programme, which has greatly eroded the economic capacity of most families, thus rendering them unable to meet the education costs of their children.

A survey conducted in 1994 revealed that less than 30% of pupils completing primary school have access to secondary education, and the trend in the recent years shows a further decline.

## Secondary education

Secondary education aims at:

- all-round mental, moral and spiritual development of the learner, and building a firm foundation for further education;
- enabling the learner to choose with confidence and cope with vocational education after school;
- acquisition of attitudes of national patriotism, self-respect, self-reliance, co-operation, adaptability, sense of purpose, integrity and self-discipline, respect and consideration of others, loyalty and service to society and to the world.

The curriculum, like that of primary education, is broad-based and vocationally oriented. The approved subjects for the first two years of secondary education are the following: English; Kiswahili; Mathematics; Biology/biological science; Physics; Chemistry; Geography; History and government; Religious education; An applied subject; A cultural subject or business education; Physical education; Social education and ethics.



Applied subjects include: woodwork; metal work; leather work; building construction; ceramics; power mechanics; motor mechanics; drawing and design; electricity; aviation technology; agriculture; home science.

Cultural and business subjects include: accounting; commerce; economics; typing with office practice; music; art and design; French, German, or Arabic language.

In the third and fourth years, students must study three compulsory or core subjects (English, Kiswahili and mathematics) and must take: at least two science subjects (biology/biological science, physics, chemistry or physical science); at least one social science subject (geography, history and government, religious education or social education and ethics); at least one applied subject; and at least one cultural subject.

English is the language of instruction in all secondary schools. Kiswahili is taught along with other subjects and may be used freely among students and teachers, especially in areas where it is the common medium of communication.

The average number of students per class is 40 and each teaching lesson takes 40 minutes. The average time allocation to each subject in a week is reported as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. of hours</b>
English	4.7
Kiswahili	4.0
Mathematics	4.7
Biology	3.3
Biological science	4.0
Physics	3.3
Chemistry	3.3
Physical science (geography, history and government, social education and ethics)	2.0
Applied/practical skills subjects	3.3
Cultural subjects, business education	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.3</b>

At the end of the secondary cycle, the students sit an examination administered by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) leading to the award of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. In 1991, the number of the examination subjects was reduced from ten to eight (three core subjects, two science subjects, one social science subject, one applied subject, and one cultural subject). The examination is



used for selection of students for university courses and for training in other post-secondary institutions.

Students are also evaluated throughout the course with continuous assessment to determine the progress each individual is making. In addition to the academic certificate from KNEC, the school issues each student a school-leaving certificate, which reflects observed abilities and character development.

Enrolment at the secondary level grew from 30,000 in 1963 to almost 500,000 in 1983, to over 700,000 in 2003, and now stands at over 850,000 with a corresponding increase of schools to 3,891 (2004) from 151 at independence. However, there has been a decline in secondary school enrolment over the last decade that has been caused by the following factors: high cost (the average annual unit cost for secondary education is 5 times higher than primary education) and poverty, with an estimated 30% dropout rate due to this factor alone. Other factors include: high cost of learning and teaching materials; school uniforms; transport and development levies; extra expenses for private tuition; unfriendly school environment; negative effects of HIV & AIDS pandemic; and rising repetition rates. In addition, the cost of secondary education in boarding schools is higher than day schools by more than 50%.

According to national statistics, in 1993 the dropout rate for male students was 15.1% (7.2% for female). The GER for secondary school was 30.6% in 2001, and the pupil-teacher ratio was 26.1:1. In 2004, the GER was 48% in all secondary programmes, and the pupil-teacher ratio was 32:1. The access rate to the university is approximately 7%.

### **Assessing learning achievement nationwide**

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education is awarded to all candidates who fulfil all the requirements for the examinations offered by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). The subjects are categorised into five groups:

- Group 1: English, Kiswahili, Mathematics
- Group 2: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences
- Group 3: History and Government, Geography, Christian Religious Education, Islamic Religious Education, Social Education and Ethics, Hindu Religious Education
- Group 4: Home Science, Art and Design, Agriculture, Woodwork, Metal Work, Building Construction, Power Mechanics, Electricity, Drawing and Design, Aviation Technology
- Group 5: French, German, Arabic, Music, Accounting, Commerce, Economics, Typewriting with Office Practice



The three subjects in Group 1 are compulsory. Candidates must sit for at least eight subjects selected from groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

## **Higher education**

University education plays a crucial role in national development. University education and training will, therefore, need to be demand-driven, of high quality, gender sensitive, technologically informed, research supported, democratically managed and globally marketable. The government's long-term policy is to provide a framework for a sustainable, competitive and autonomous national university system.

As mentioned, the Head of State is the Chancellor of all public universities. Below the Chancellor is a University Council, for each university, with a chairman and members appointed by the Chancellor. The Council handles all matters of the university with regard to finances, investment and appointment. Below the Council is the Senate, whose chairman is the Vice-Chancellor, and whose membership is comprised of: Principals of Colleges, Deans of Faculties, Chairmen of Departments and Directors of Institutes and the Registrar. Students are also represented. The Senate of each university is the final authority on academic matters. The day-to-day running of the university is in the hands of the Vice-Chancellor, assisted by one or more Deputies. Registrars look after academic matters, while the Dean of Students is responsible for the students' welfare.

The universities enjoy the freedom to decide what may be taught and who may teach. They are expected to exercise responsibility commensurate with that freedom. Each university sets and marks its own examinations. This internal system involves the lecturer who taught the course, the head of department, faculty board, academic board (in the case of constituent colleges) and the Senate. The head of department ensures the maintenance of high academic standards in his/her department.

Traditionally, every university invites external examiners to assess what has been marked by internal examiners. External examiners from outside the country enable a comparison of standards with universities elsewhere. In the face of financial constraints, it has been necessary to curtail the use of external examiners from other countries.

Owing to pressure for places, admissions to universities have not been based on planning according to the needs of the job market. Students have been admitted on the basis of their performance at the end of the secondary course, so long as they meet the minimum entry requirements, which are set from year to year by the Joint Admissions Board. However, admission into the professional scientific courses tends to be restricted by the high grades (both mean and individual subjects) required by the relevant faculties. The result has been the admission of a large number of students into the liberal arts courses.

An emerging trend is the involvement of a relevant industry in the development of curricula. The aim is to enable scholars to be in touch with the needs of industry or the professions concerned so that relevant training can be offered.



Higher education has been increasing since the establishment of the University of Nairobi in 1970, and has expanded rapidly over the past two decades; however, challenges to access and equity remain. These include: inadequate capacity to cater for the growing demand for more places in the universities; mismatch between skills acquired by university graduates and the demands of the industry; an imbalance between the number of students studying science and arts based courses; rigid admission criteria that excludes the possibilities for credit transfers amongst universities and for graduates from other post-secondary institutions; and gender and regional disparities in terms of admissions and in subjects and courses undertaken.

Currently, there are 6 public universities and 17 private universities. The total enrolment in public universities increased from 3,443 in 1970 to 48,436 in 2002/2003. In 2002, the total enrolment in private universities was 8,887, while the number of Kenyans attending foreign universities was 5,123. By 2004, the total number of those enrolled in public and private universities had increased to 108,407. Despite the expansion in enrolments, the transition rate from secondary level to university still remains low, at 12%. The gender parity, female students in public universities constitute 33% while at the private universities women constitute 50% and are mainly enrolled in arts-based courses.

With regard to post-secondary and vocational skills training, there are 4 national polytechnics, 17 technical training institutions, one technical teacher training college and 21 technical training institutes. In addition, there are 600 youth polytechnics throughout the country with only 350 receiving government assistance. The private sector operates close to 1,000 commercial colleges.

Overall, the management of Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET) institutions is spread over 10 ministries, which makes coordination of their activities and maintenance of training standards difficult. The supervision of these institutions is left to individual ministries and private sector that often lack the capacity to assure quality and high standards of training. The objective of TIVET is to provide and promote life-long education and training for self-reliance.

In 1994, the National Polytechnics enrolled a total of 8,892 students. For the same year, the Institutes of Technology had a combined enrolment of about 6,000/7,000 students who, unlike the National Polytechnics, are mostly accommodated within the institution; the teaching force was approximately 900. The total enrolment at the Technical Training Institutes (TTIs) varies between 8,000 and 12,000 students. In recent years, enrolment in many courses has tended to decline due to steep increases in tuition and boarding fees, thus affecting the majority of students who are boarders. There are about 1,000 teachers at the TTIs who are all employees of the Teachers' Service Commission.

Total enrolment in TIVET institutions overall has increased, standing at 79,000 in 2003. Female student enrolment constitutes 44% of the total but there exists serious gender disparities in terms of the overall enrolments in science and technical areas. The bulk of female students (52.4%) are enrolled in business studies compared to less than 5% registered in engineering courses.



## Special education

The population of people with disabilities in Kenya is estimated at 10% of the total population. About 25% of these are children of school-going age. Out of a total of 750,000, an estimated 90,000 have been identified and assessed. However, only 14,614 are enrolled in educational programmes for children with disabilities; while an equivalent number are integrated in regular schools. This implies that over 90% of children with handicaps are either at home or in regular schools with little or no specialized assistance. At the tertiary level, the enrolment level is low.

The special education programmes cater to the needs of children with various types of handicap. In 1995/1996, there were 251 programmes in operation, enrolling a total of 10,310 pupils. In addition, a total of 11,702 pupils with various disabilities were integrated into regular schools.

The programmes offer the national curriculum, with variations and adaptations to suit the special needs of the children. Rehabilitation programmes are provided for the disabled. Training in a variety of skills is offered in five institutions with the aim of making the children self-reliant in life. Artisan and craft courses are offered in masonry, carpentry, joinery, garment making, motor rewinding and home science.

Special schools and units continue to cater for special needs in the areas of hearing, visual, mental or physical challenges. This leaves out other areas of special needs such as gifted and talented, psychosocially different, autism, multiple handicapped, specific learning difficulties and communication disorders. Currently, there are 41 special primary schools for the hearing impaired, 10 for the visually impaired, 38 for the mentally handicapped, and 9 for the physically handicapped; and there is one special secondary school for the visually impaired.

Educational access and retention of children with diverse disabilities of different magnitude are still very low in the country. For instance, of 15,196 primary schools in Kenya in 1991, only 210 had special units for facilitating education of children with disabilities. One of the main constraints in the provision of basic education to children with special needs is lack of baseline data. There is a need to enhance mobilization and awareness programmes to eradicate taboos and beliefs associated with disabilities, develop and implement a flexible curriculum that is child-centred and make special education an all-inclusive education of children with disabilities into regular schools.

The government is currently implementing measures to improve the participation of children with special needs. Under the FPE, additional capitation grants are provided to physically challenged children enrolled in special education institutions and units attached to regular primary schools. Initial support has been provided to each public primary school to begin removing existing barriers that make the school environment unfriendly to physically challenged learners. Each special education unit has been given a grant to facilitate procurement of the necessary teaching/learning materials and equipment. In addition, the government continues to train primary school teachers in special education as well as sponsoring training at university level in order to improve the capacity.



The Special Education Division of the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) has been working to adapt school syllabi for learners with physical disabilities, visual impairments, and hearing impairments. The Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) trains teachers on special education at the diploma level using distance learning mode and residential learning mode. At the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), examinations are adapted for candidates with visual impairment. Since its inception in the 1940s, Special Education, like any other sector of education, is funded in partnership between the Government of Kenya, donor agencies, religious and non-governmental organization and individuals. Following the inter-Ministerial approach, MOEST also collaborates closely with the Ministries of Health, Home Affairs & National Heritage and Culture and Social Services on issues relating to children with special need.

## Private education

The private sector has participated in the provision of education in the country for many years. The legal basis of this participation is the Education Act, which vests in the Minister of Education the powers to keep a register of all unaided schools in the country.

Any organization or individual interested in establishing a school applies to the Minister. The applications are processed by the Ministerial Committee for Registration of Schools. Each application is carefully considered, including inspection of the proposed site and facilities by the professional staff of the Ministry of Education. The Minister will approve a request upon being advised by the Committee on the suitability of the proposed site, availability of adequate facilities, and whether other necessary arrangements have been made for the provision of education, in keeping with the requirements of the Education Act.

The school may be given *full* registration if the Minister is satisfied that all requirements are fulfilled, or he may give *provisional* registration for a period of up to eighteen months as the management prepares to fulfil the remaining requirements. The number of streams that may be approved will depend on available tuition and playground facilities.

Private education is managed by NGOs, mainly church organizations, and individual entrepreneurs. Foreign missions accredited to Kenya are also free to open private schools.

The operation of private schools and institutions must adhere to the Ministry of Education's regulations governing the management of education in the country. These include also the regulations laid down by other related bodies like the KNEC regarding the administration of both local and foreign examinations.

The curricula offered at pre-school level may be based on the programme of the National Centre for Early Childhood Education, or any other programme the Ministry may regard as acceptable. Primary and secondary schools offer the same curriculum as public schools. In 1995, there were 241 private secondary schools.



Private training institutes are mainly teacher-training colleges that offer the curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education.

All private universities in the country, except the United States International University (USIU), have been sponsored by religious organizations. Three of them have been granted a charter by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), the body that regulates and coordinates university and post-secondary education and training in the country. There are also nine private universities without a charter; they are affiliated to their parent universities overseas and do not, therefore, award their own degree. The CHE inspects and visits the institutions to ensure that they offer acceptable degree programmes. It also advises them on curriculum and procedures to follow in order to qualify for a charter. Private universities do not receive any grants from the State.

The total enrolment at private universities for the 1995/1996 academic year was 5,411 students.

## **Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure**

The cost-sharing policy remains in force in the supply of educational materials whereby parents buy books and necessary stationery for their children. As mentioned earlier, the recommended books for both primary and secondary education are authored by the Kenya Institute of Education and are published by the two publishing houses, Jomo Kenyatta Foundation and the Kenya Literature Bureau. There are also private publishers producing books for all levels of education. Most of the books used in higher education are imported, although some are produced by local publishers.

Cost-sharing has proved to be a great burden, especially to the poor. However, the Government has intervened by supplying textbooks in order to alleviate the problems of the poor in the arid and semi-arid lands and in the slum areas in some urban centres.

Equipment and infrastructure for primary and secondary education is also provided by parents and communities under the cost-sharing arrangement. Each school is expected to raise funds through its Parent-Teachers Association for the construction of classrooms, workshops and the purchase of furniture and other equipment. In addition, parents pay fees prescribed by individual schools. Boarding schools charge fees to maintain their services, and this pattern has increased considerably, since the Government no longer provides grants to the schools (although it continues to provide facilities for higher education where the costs would be prohibitive for parents). Where residential facilities are provided, the students have to pay for the services.

The provision of workshop and equipment for vocational education has been rather costly, and there has been an insufficient supply.

One of the factors constraining growth in secondary school enrolment is lack of adequate secondary schools to match that of primary schools. In 2003, there were 3,661 public secondary schools and 641 registered private secondary schools,



compared to 18,081 public primary schools and 1,674 private primary schools. This imbalance is expected to worsen following implementation of free primary education and the projected increase in demand for secondary education, which is more acute in urban areas, especially urban slums, where over 60% of the total urban population is concentrated.

## **Adult and non-formal education**

Non-Formal Education (NFE) is viewed as a complementary strategy to provide education and training to children, youth and adults who may have dropped out of school, or had not enrolled altogether. Non-formal education in the country is provided by a variety of agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) mostly in the form of extension services aimed at enhancing community development. There are many NGOs involved in community-based development programmes, which include the provision of non-formal education.

The goal of non-formal education centres and schools is to provide quality education and related services to all those who by choice or circumstances are outside the formal education system. The objectives of non-formal education are:

- To develop literacy, numeracy, creativity and communication skills;
- To enjoy learning and to develop desire to continue learning;
- To develop ability for critical thinking and logical judgement;
- To appreciate and respect the dignity of work;
- To develop desirable social standards, moral/ethical and religious values;
- To develop into self-disciplined, physically fit and healthy persons;
- To develop aesthetic values and capacity to appreciate own and other people's cultures;
- To develop awareness and appreciation of the environment;
- To develop awareness and appreciation of other nations and the international community;
- To develop respect and love for own country and the need for harmonious co-existence;
- To develop individual talents for the benefit of self and others;
- To promote social responsibility and make proper use of leisure time;
- To develop awareness and appreciation of the role of technology in national development.



Over the period 1990–2000, there has been increased access and participation in the provision of education to out-of-school youth and children. The Ministry of Education has created a section to handle non-formal education, and an NFE curriculum has been developed by the KIE (although it has yet to be finalized). There is encouragement for communities to be actively involved in the administration and management of NFE centres to improve governance and ensure greater participation and efficiency. Access and participation have been enhanced by an increase in the number of non-formal education centers, allowing children who may have dropped out of school have access to education. It is hoped that the NFE centers will be provided with supervision and inspection services in order to maintain standards. However, despite the fact that 1.5 million out-of-school children were absorbed in primary schools and NFE centres following the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE), an estimated 1.5 million children still remain out of the formal school system.

The literacy programme was started in 1979, and a Department of Adult Education was established to spearhead the national literacy campaign. There was considerable public enthusiasm when the programme was launched. However, this enthusiasm has waned over the years. Enrolment in literacy classes has had a downward trend, passing from 158,234 persons in 1988 (105,490 of whom were women) to 111,997 in 1995 (81,882 of whom were women).

The decline of the adult literacy programme (in 1979, enrolment reached a record of 415,074 persons) has been attributed to a variety of factors, including: insufficient linkages between literacy materials and functional needs of the learners; preponderance of untrained teachers; and inadequate supply of teaching/learning materials and of financial support.

The national literacy rate is now estimated to be about 65%, but the average rate for men is about 69%, while that for women is about 40%. There are considerable regional disparities; some districts still have literacy rates below 40%, while others have rates above 70%. Women are also the most affected group in those areas with low literacy rates.

Programmes for school dropouts in the context of non-formal education have been initiated mainly by NGOs. In recognition of NGOs' contributions to these and other community development initiatives, the Government in 1992 created an NGO co-ordination body. In addition, an intersectoral task force has been constituted to look into the problems of children in especially difficult circumstances and school dropouts, with a view to initiating appropriate intervention measures. The Government has in the meantime given assistance to some of the education and youth training projects, such as the Youth Polytechnics, which provide training opportunities for the young school leavers and dropouts, and were initially started by either communities or NGOs. There are about 600 Youth Polytechnics in the country, and the total number of those assisted by the Government increased from 360 in 1990 to 480 in 1995. A total of 30,000 trainees are enrolled under some 4,000 instructors.

In response to the needs of street and out-of-school children, whose numbers are increasing in the large urban centres, several NGOs, local communities in the slums and religious organizations have established institutions to provide basic



education and other welfare needs. The pioneer in this area is the Undugu Society of Kenya, whose basic education programme started in 1975. Although most of the normal schools tend to follow the normal primary school curriculum, the Undugu Society with the assistance of the Kenya Institute of Education prepared a unique basic education curriculum that compresses the entire eight-year primary education cycle into a three-year programme, which includes literacy and vocational training. The Undugu Society operates four non-formal schools situated in different slum locations in Nairobi. It is the aim of the Society to provide a model for an alternative form of education that can be applied in similar urban situations. At the moment, there are about 50 non-formal primary schools in Nairobi alone, with over 10,000 children enrolled and approximately 300 teachers. These schools have sprung up in almost similar circumstances to those that created the Undugu Basic Education Programme. They were started by the slum communities whose children were either never enrolled in the formal schools, or dropped out because of their inability to pay fees, buy uniforms or meet other mandatory requirements. The communities employ the teachers and supply the learning materials.

Similar initiatives have emerged in other parts of the country, with Quranic institutions (*Madrassas* and *Duksis*), mainly in the post-Jomtien period. They include the 40 madrassahs in Mombasa and 30 duksis in the North Eastern Province. Attempts are now being made to integrate these Islamic religious education services with the formal education at the levels of early childhood care and education and primary education.

However, while these initiatives indicate a widening of scope and provide an alternative chance to the disadvantaged children, the standard of education offered remains low. The teachers are not trained; learning resources are in short supply; the schools do not have official recognition and, therefore, at the moment they cannot benefit from professional advisory services of the Ministry of Education.

## Teaching staff

Since 1990, there has been heavy investment in teacher education. In recent years, enrolment has continued to grow, calling for an increase in the provision of physical facilities, equipment and teachers competent to deal with the demands of the new curriculum.

The Government has made every effort to meet the growing demand for teachers at all levels. The non-government bodies have continued to sponsor teacher training in private colleges. Since 1990, five new teachers colleges have become operational, including two private establishments. Faculties of Education have been established in all the public universities, which have embarked on an extensive staff development programme to satisfy their teaching work force requirements.

Teacher education programmes are planned to cater to all levels of education and training, including special education. Teacher education is expected to:

- develop communication skills;



- develop professional attitudes and values;
- equip the teacher with knowledge and skills to enable him/her to identify educational training needs and to develop strategies for effective training;
- enable teachers to adapt to the environment and society.

The teacher-training sub-sector expanded with an enrolment of 15,708 trainees in public colleges in 2001 up from 14,316 in 1999. There are 21 public and 8 private training colleges with a combined student intake of 18,816 students (2004). The enrolment of female students in both Primary Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and Diploma Colleges was 47.1% respectively and 43% in 2001. Employment upon graduation from the TTCs is not guaranteed, as the increase in trainees does not match the vacancies available in schools. Pre-service teacher training does not cater for an all-inclusive education with respect to special education, multi-grade, multi-shift, non-formal, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

An important percentage of pre-school teachers are untrained. Since pre-primary schools are run by parents and communities, private organizations or individual entrepreneurs, recruitment of teachers and the terms and conditions of service vary from one employer to another. However, the Government is trying to prepare a uniform salary structure in an attempt to improve the conditions of teaching staffs at this level.

Those teachers who are trained have followed courses of varying duration, approach, content and quality. In-service programmes are implemented by the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) and its District Centres (in 1995 there were 20 Centres). Two types of courses are implemented:

- a two year in-service course is offered to in-service teachers, at the end of which they receive the Pre-School Teacher Certificate issued by the Ministry of Education. The minimum requirement for this course is the certificate of primary education (KCPE) with at least 30 points. However, employers are raising their standards of recruitment to select those with better academic qualifications, and recent experience shows that there is an increasing number of secondary school leavers being recruited.
- short in-service courses lasting about five months are also offered, at the end of which the trainees obtain a certificate of attendance. In addition, there are shorter courses, often on weekends, aimed at proficiency development in various areas.

The curriculum includes the following subjects: child development; materials development; health and nutrition; classroom management and administration; parent/community involvement in pre-school education; methodology of teaching.

With regard to the workload, a ratio of 35 children per teacher is recommended for the 3-6-year-olds, and 25 for establishments catering to the 0-3-year-olds. This is not the actual situation in all schools; in the rural areas, where the



parents are not able to employ more teachers, the teacher-pupil ratio is generally higher.

An input of four and a half hours of contact daily (or 22.5 hours per week) is recommended by the Ministry of Education. The children depart at mid-day, but teachers remain in the afternoon to prepare learning and play materials.

Primary school teachers are recruited directly from the teacher-training colleges by the Teacher Service Commission (TSC). The year 1998 saw marked improvements in teacher training for the primary sector. The number of public colleges increased from 15 to 21 and the number of private colleges increased from six to eight. In 1996, public colleges enrolled a total of 16,461 students.

Primary school teachers are graded according to their academic qualifications ranging from P4 (the lowest grade, now abolished) to Diploma for public primary schools. Grade P4 and P3 teachers are primary school graduates.

The programme offered by the colleges covers two years of study for different grades of teachers from P3 to P1. The curriculum includes the following subjects:

- Professional studies;
- English;
- Kiswahili;
- Mathematics;
- Sciences;
- Christian religious education/Islamic studies;
- Physical and health education;
- Geography, history and civics;
- Arts and crafts;
- Music;
- Agriculture;
- Home science;
- Teaching practice.

The staffing policy at the primary level is one teacher per class and the national teacher-pupil ratio is about 1:30. There are however significant regional



differences: in areas with low enrolment where the ratio can come down to 1:18; while in areas with high enrolment it is not unusual to find a ratio of 1:50.

It is expected that the teachers should receive their first professional support from the head teachers of their respective schools. The inspectorate personnel support the teachers through supervisory visits. They also organize refresher courses, especially when new programmes are being introduced. The local-level Teacher Advisory Centres, staffed with the more experienced teachers, have served as valuable resource centres where teachers meet to update themselves on techniques to prepare teaching materials.

The terms and conditions of employment are set out in the Teachers' Code of Regulations issued by the TSC. There is no distinction in these regulations between male and female teachers, but women get 60 days paid maternity leave. The salary structure is based on that of the Professional Civil Service, but adjustments are made from time to time following industrial bargaining with the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT).

Until 1996, the promotion of primary school teachers was based on merit. Teachers who felt they needed promotion applied (through their head teachers and the local education administration) to the Chief Inspector of Schools, following which they would be inspected. If they were found meritorious, the inspectors would recommend their promotion. This procedure has now been replaced. For a teacher to move from one grade to another, he/she must pass a proficiency test administered by the inspectorate. As the old process was insufficiently rigorous to maintain high professional standards, this new approach has been applied in order to ensure that teachers keep themselves updated with knowledge and developments of their profession.

In 1995, 18,060 primary public school teachers were reported as untrained (9.9%). In 2004, there were 149,893 primary school teachers in Kenya, and the pupil-teacher ratio was 40:1.

Secondary school teachers are also recruited by the TSC. The majority are graduates from local universities. Others are diploma holders and, in a few cases, even P1 teachers are recruited by some small private schools. In 1996, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) course offered by the five public universities enrolled a total of 10,788 students, while total enrolment in the two Diploma Colleges was 1,371.

The B.Ed. programme offers education as a professional course, with any two teaching subjects. At the moment, the majority of the students are following the Arts based course, but with the new emphasis on Sciences, the situation is going to change. An in-service Post-Graduate Diploma Programme has also started, in order to reduce the number and eventually phase out untrained graduate teachers in secondary schools (in 1995, there were 8,041 untrained teachers in public secondary education, or 19.4%).

The staffing norm in public secondary schools is the curriculum-based establishment that takes into account the subjects taught and the teaching requirements. The teaching programme covers 45 periods of 40 minutes each per



week, and the teaching workload for an ordinary classroom teacher is 25 periods per week.

The terms and the working conditions are covered by the Teacher Code of Regulations, but there is a separate scheme of service for graduate teachers. Promotion is normally through competitive interviews to fill vacancies in higher grades. The inspectorate provides professional support through inspections and courses targeting teachers of specific subjects.

There are currently 76,709 secondary education teachers, 38% of whom are female.

Special education teachers are trained at the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE). The course caters to all types of disabilities. There are two main programmes: a two-year course for graduates from Primary Teacher Education which leads to the award of a professional diploma in Special Education; and an in-service course open to practicing teachers in different areas of special education.

All training in technical and vocational education is undertaken under the auspices of the Ministry of Vocational Training. The Kenya Technical Teachers Colleges, which formerly ran a four-year programme for industrial and business education teachers, now run pedagogical programmes for already qualified professionals in different trades. In addition to full-time courses, the Ministry offers skill proficiency courses mainly for Youth Polytechnics instructors.

The Department of Adult Education operates an in-service, model-training programme for the adult education and literacy teachers. This is a three-year course based on a curriculum prepared with the technical assistance of the Kenya Institute of Education. The course is conducted through distance learning by correspondence, radio and face-to-face sessions. At the end of the course, teachers sit a professional examination administered by the KNEC for the award of the Adult Education Teacher Certificate.

## **Educational research and information**

Educational research is carried out by scholars and teams in the local public universities. The main research institution is the Bureau of Educational Research at Kenyatta University. There have also been special surveys commissioned by the Government in certain areas where urgent information is needed to facilitate planning.

There are two important objectives of research and surveys in national education. First, as part of their function, universities have the duty to undertake research for the advancement of knowledge and to enhance their teaching capability. Second, research is done to address issues of concern, and to provide needed information to facilitate decision-making in the development and management of education.



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## **Web resources**

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: <http://www.education.go.ke> [In English. Last checked: October 2007.]

*For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>*