



## Kenya Education Overview

### Key Indicators

**6.7%** - Public spending on education, % of GDP, World Bank Data (2010)

**93%** - Literacy rate, youth (15-24), EFA Global Monitoring Report (2010)

**92.9%; 110%** - Net and gross enrollment rates, UNDP Kenya (2011)

### Key Policies and Public Programs

**Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework for Education (2000):** a signatory with the six goals to meet all the learning needs of children, youth and adults by 2015.

**Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE)** - National Early Childhood Development Policy Framework, 2006; "In realization that an effective ECD programme enhances a country's social economic growth and political stability, the Government...recommended the development of a comprehensive ECD policy framework and service standard guidelines." National Early Childhood Development Policy Framework (2006)

**Kenya Vision 2030 (2008):** The overall goal is to provide a globally competitive quality education, training and research for development to reduce illiteracy, improve the transition rate from primary to secondary schools, and raise the quality and relevance of education.

**Constitution of Kenya (2010):** The constitution has provided for free and compulsory basic education at primary level.

**TVET (2012)** - Technical And Vocational Education And Training (TVET) (2012) Policy: Government to provide, promote and co-ordinate TVET and to assure quality, inclusiveness and relevance. Technical And Vocational Education And Training (TVET) (2012) Policy

Since independence, Kenya has prioritised education as a national goal. Kenya subscribed to international declarations of the need to develop education and enhance children's well-being, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Education for All (EFA) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) alongside national policies and programs. Despite significant progress, challenges remain in achieving quality education for all.

### Role of Government and Education Expenditure

Kenya follows an 8-4-4 system of education, with 8 years at primary school, 4 years secondary and 4 years tertiary. The majority of schools are public however private schools serve a significant proportion of children. Like most sub-Saharan African countries, a high proportion – 42%<sup>1</sup> - of Kenya's population are under 15. Thus despite Kenya devoting 21% of its recurrent budget to the education sector<sup>2</sup>, and government spending on education for 2012/2013 increasing by 9%,<sup>3</sup> the Kenyan government faces significant challenges in delivering quality education for all.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank Data. Online. Available from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS> [accessed 20th May 2014]

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO (2012). Kenya EFA Profile. Online. Available from <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Dakar/pdf/KenyaEFAprofileoct2012.pdf> [accessed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014]

<sup>3</sup> Government spending on education for 2012/2013 was Kshs 233.1 billion, a 9% increase on the previous fiscal year. [Budget Statement For the Fiscal Year 2012/2013](#), Republic of Kenya, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014

In 2003 the new National Rainbow Coalition government honoured their campaign and implemented Free Primary Education (FPE), which saw primary enrolment increase by 1.2 million. Whilst this contributed towards achieving MDG 2: Universal Primary Education, it also led to severe overcrowding in public primary schools, which in turn affected the quality of education provided.

Today Kenya continues to prioritise education as a development strategy. Vision 2030 contains a coherent education development policy, which is further strengthened by signatories in global declarations. Following promulgation of the constitution in 2010, education was devolved to the county level where service delivery is managed and funded, in particular in ECD and TVET. The Ministry of Education at the national level is involved in budgetary allocation, setting of policy, supervision and regulation as well as provision of primary, secondary and university education. Specific government targets include realizing Universal Primary Education (UPE) and EFA, achieving transition rate of 70% from primary to secondary, promoting equity and quality in primary and secondary, improving infrastructure and developing a national strategy for technical and vocational education and training.<sup>4</sup>

## Key Issues and Challenges

Whilst FPE significantly improved educational opportunities, 10 years on, the net enrolment rate (NER) remains static at 92%. Providing access and quality education to marginalised communities remains a barrier to achieving EFA, MDG and Vision 2030 goals, and to doing so in a cost effective way. Marginalized groups in non-formal settlements and arid and semi-arid regions face limited access, lower quality teaching as well as under-resourced learning environments. In some areas local culture still prohibits access to education for girls, in particular at secondary levels. Of note, increased enrollment has exacerbated the challenges around infrastructure and resources. Overcrowding is evident at primary and secondary level, with average pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 1:47<sup>5</sup>. Inadequate infrastructure, including substandard sanitary provision, and insufficient learning resources are prohibiting quality education for all learners.

The transition rate to secondary school has improved following FPE, however secondary school enrollment remains comparatively low at around 50%<sup>6</sup> of the net population. This is fuelled by dropout at primary level alongside insufficient finances to enroll children in secondary education. The global challenge of addressing both youth unemployment and the skills gap is prevalent in Kenya. Significant advocacy comes from teachers, pupils and education experts to update the current curriculum and deliver a learning program focused more on 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and less on rote learning and fact recalling exams. Whilst acknowledged in the new Constitution, so far this has been slow to come to fruition.

## Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes in Kenya give increased reason for government and stakeholders to focus on improving quality of learning. In the 2013 KCPE results more than 50% of pupils failed the examinations; reasons cited included large classes, poor quality teaching, and ineffective examination content. Similar concerns arise with secondary level exams; KCSE. Whilst the number of pupils taking these exams has increased, in particular number of girls, demonstrating improved access, pupils fail to demonstrate progress in learning with only 28% achieving a C+ or above, as required to enter university<sup>7</sup>.

Uwezo's annual 'Learning Assessment Studies' provide a standardized evaluation of learning in East Africa. The most recent study indicates Kenya compares favourably with other East African countries, however, only 14% of Standard 2 pupils can pass the basic literacy test, with 13% passing basic numeracy. Worryingly when the same test

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<sup>4</sup> [Vision and Mission](#), Ministry of Education Kenya, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014

[Education for All End Decade Assessment \(2001-2010\)](#), Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014

[Task Force On The Re-alignment Of The Education Sector To The Constitution Of Kenya 2010](#), Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014

[A Policy Framework for Education and Training](#), Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher education, Science & Technology, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Data. Online, Available from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.ENRL.TC.ZS> Accessed [20th May 2014]

<sup>6</sup> World Bank Data (2009) <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.NENR>

<sup>7</sup> PROF. JACOB KAIMENYI Cabinet Secretary MOEST KCSE examination speech, March 2014. Available online. <http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/files/2014/03/2013-KCSE-EXAMINATION-SPEECH-FOR-THE-CABINET-SECRETARY-MoEST.pdf> [Last accessed 20th May 2014]

was conducted with pupils in Standard 7, 8% did not pass the literacy and 15% failed the numeracy.<sup>8</sup> Of further interest the Uwezo study identified severe inequity amongst regions, with Nairobi and Central schools outperforming those in North Eastern, by around 50%. The low levels of learning have been consistent for at least the last three years of Uwezo studies, suggesting systemic change is required to improve quality in education.

## Overview of the non-state education sector in Kenya

Where government systems are struggling to reach, the gap is being met increasingly by the private sector. NGO's, philanthropic groups, faith-based organisations and increasingly social enterprises are contributing to the financing, delivery and support of education from early childhood development through to adult learning.

There has been a long history of post-independence foreign aid to education in Kenya, however it is fractious. Donors have verbalized concerns about transparency and corruption in the management of aid money and conversely there is criticism of foreign aid driven by the perception that it has not produced the desired results.<sup>9</sup> Philanthropic individuals and foundations contribute to the sector but often in small amounts, with other sectors such as health being more favorable. There has been a recent push for business engagement in education, especially in relation to the skills shortage. With international corporations holding offices and headquarters in Kenya this proves an optimistic approach to enhancing the financing and delivery of quality education. Social enterprises; a hybrid of for-profit and not-for-profits are emerging offering both sustainable and scalable education solutions.

The non-state sector is offering education innovations in the fields of girls' education, education technology, skills and governance. Interventions are prominent around the capital, Nairobi, as well as more marginalized areas of informal settlements and arid and semi-arid areas. In many instances, the non-state interventions seek to collaborate with government by working within government policy focus areas and pro-actively seeking to work alongside district education officers, incorporating innovations into their system and sharing results to inform policy. Many non-state innovators identify that scalable impact will only be achieved with the support of government. However this is not true for all innovations and several remain unregistered and experience friction with government.

Whilst government remain the majority provider of basic education, a number of private schools and international schools exist delivering education as an institution of choice to the elite. An Uwezo study in 2011 identified that private primary schools cater to approximately 15% of the primary school going population. Low cost private schools, named Complimentary Schools by the government have mushroomed in the last 10 years.<sup>10</sup> Remarkably, despite FPE, recent evidence from Nairobi slums shows increasing enrolment in Complimentary schools. In Kenya's largest slum, Kibera, Dixon & Tooley<sup>11</sup> identify a dominant private sector with 27,883 primary pupils and a staggering 130% growth in the period 2003 – 2007. Similarly in Korogocho, Kenya's 4th largest slum, almost half the primary school enrolment is in private schools.<sup>12</sup> Allowing for any FPE teething issues, research 5 years later shows pupil transfer continues to favour private schools. A controlled study in Korogocho and Viwandani identified more than three quarters of school transfers were pupils transferring from government to private schools<sup>13</sup>. Whilst Complimentary Schools clearly address the issue of access, the quality of learning remains controversial and further research is recognized as an urgent need.

Beyond basic education; in secondary and tertiary, the non-state sector has had a more established presence. Whilst government secondary schools are limited with selective admission, private schools have emerged to cater to those who do not have the grades or cannot afford entry into government schools. Similarly the number of non-state tertiary education institutions is increasing. FPE creates more primary school graduates and increased advocacy on the importance of education, especially amongst girls, serves to raise demand. However quality of learning in non-state

<sup>8</sup> Uwezo (2013) 'Are our Children Learning?'. Available from: <http://www.uwezo.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/2013-Annual-Report-Final-Web-version.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Colclough and Andrew Webb (2010) The Impact of Aid on Education Policy in Kenya Available from: [http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/publications/WP36-Kenya\\_aid\\_paper.pdf](http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/publications/WP36-Kenya_aid_paper.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Uwezo "Are Our Children Learning?" (2012) [http://www.uwezo.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/KE\\_2011\\_AnnualAssessmentReport.pdf](http://www.uwezo.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/KE_2011_AnnualAssessmentReport.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Dixon, P. and Tooley, J. (2012). A Case Study of Private Schools in Kibera. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 40(6) 690 - 706

<sup>12</sup> Oketch M, Mutisya M, Ngware M, Ezeh, A. (2010a). Why are there proportionately more poor pupils enrolled in non-state schools in urban Kenya in spite of FPE policy? *International Journal of Educational Development* 30 (2010), 23-32

<sup>13</sup> Oketch M, Mutisya M, Ngware M, Ezeh, A, Epari, C. (2010b). Free Primary education policy and pupil mobility in urban Kenya. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 49 (2010), 173-183

institutions varies significantly and there is need for more research on learning outcomes and quality levels of the non-state sector.

It is commonly understood that educational benefits spill over into social and economic realms for individuals and society as a whole, thus both public and private providers can be justified. What remains is a need to better understand the quality of provision by the non-state sector and the potential for scaling up education innovations in Kenya.