

Learning, Marginalization, and Improving the Quality of Education in Low-income Countries

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Second volume in the series
Learning at the Bottom of the Pyramid



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Daniel A. Wagner, Nathan M. Castillo and Suzanne Grant Lewis, *Learning, Marginalization, and Improving the Quality of Education in Low-income Countries*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0256>

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ISBN Paperback: 9781800642003

ISBN Hardback: 9781800642010

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800642027

ISBN Digital ebook (epub): 9781800642034

ISBN Digital ebook (mobi): 9781800642041

ISBN Digital ebook (XML): 9781800642058

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0256

Cover design by Anna Gatti.

14. Kenya

Education, Learning, and Policy-Framing for Children at the Bottom of the Pyramid

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Introduction

The year 2020 will likely be remembered for its global disruption of the education system. At the peak of the health pandemic caused by COVID-19, schools were closed in more than 190 countries, with 90 percent of the world's student population asked to remain at home (UNESCO, 2020a). Though schools closed, learning continued for children in wealthy nations and from high socioeconomic households across countries. Remote learning options, coupled with innovative e-learning solutions, sprung up or were expanded to facilitate learning, but its inequitable spread exacerbated the situation where the “haves have it, and have nots do not”. Already, many countries in the Global South face a learning crisis in which six of every 10 children are not learning (World Bank, 2020; UNESCO, 2017).

The theme of learning equity is topical in Kenya, and it is increasingly shaping educational decisions. For instance, with respect to returning to school after the COVID-19 school closure, the Ministry of Education declared that it would be informed by the character of the disease, and the current learning situation, which showed that 24.6 percent of school age children unfortunately remained outside of the e-learning fixes (KNBS, 2020). The Ministry hence decided to favour the learning circumstances of children excluded from the current e-fixes and declared

that formal curriculum coverage would continue from where it stopped after the March 2020 disruption. It is a decision that hinges on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) principle to prioritize those furthest behind.

In some ways, the effort to embrace the more vulnerable in society is not surprising. Analysis of key policy documents in independent Kenya affirm a consistent promotion of social justice, equity, and fairness. Indeed, the concepts of access, equity, quality, and relevance of education frame almost all educational-policy visioning, resulting in structural adjustments that have reshaped governance and funding streams and expanded the social safety nets. Many examples of repositioning services to reach rural and marginalized populations stand as illustrations. The Ministry of Education continues to receive one of the highest allotments of recurrent expenditure. In 2019, spending on education accounted for 5.4 percent of the Gross Development Product (Economic Survey, 2020, p. 243). An ambitious curriculum reform process is underway that seeks to provide every child with an education that enables them to thrive and reach their highest potential. It seems however, that many of these efforts have not become deeply entrenched or successful enough to ensure a more egalitarian Kenyan society. The special rapporteur (UNESCO, 2020b) observation of a “global lack of preparedness” to meet the education needs of the vulnerable and marginalized in society confirms that many countries, including Kenya, have to do more to ensure an inclusive and equitable education for each child.

Inequality in education is visible on many fronts, school types being one of them. The number of private schools has grown steadily since the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Schools (FDSE). Private primary schools, for instance, increased by 16 percent between 2012 and 2016, compared to a 12 percent growth in public primary schools during the same period (MoEST, 2016). This happened as parents sought for quality learning (usually measured through performance means in national end-of-cycle examinations). While exploring the dynamics of low-fee private schools in Kenya, Edwards et al. (2017) note that, though policies designed to regulate the operations of these schools exist, they do not operate as effectively as envisioned. The tensions and trade-offs have compromised on quality and equity. For learners facing socioeconomic disadvantages,

Alternative Providers of Basic Education and Training (APBET) have catered for them. While APBET institutions enhance access, they do not guarantee quality education.

Analysis framework

The inequitable distribution of learning opportunities has historical, sociocultural, and economic underpinnings. To date, administrative zones in Kenya's arid north continue to register poorer learning outcomes. Children with special needs and disabilities have yet to be fully served, and ethnic minorities still lag behind. The chances of not being in school for a girl with a disability—born in an arid district with an illiterate mother—are high. Using learning assessment data from ASER and Uwezo, Rose et al. (2016) estimate that such a child, even if in school, would experience a 20 percent deficit in learning outcomes. An equally important lens of inequality is the comparative wealth of a nation. Montoya (2018) is among those who point to the widening rift between countries, with most African countries retaining the bottom quintile. Such is the picture of exclusion, and indeed, the child considered to be at the bottom of the pyramid. A good understanding of exclusion demands unearthing these layers of vulnerability.¹

This chapter will primarily draw on a desk review of policy documents and related critiques. It will adopt a "4A" analytic framework, in which the four As include: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability (UNESCO, 2020b; Tomasevski, 2001). These authors suggest that:

- A) Availability addresses whether or not services exist, and whether they are sufficient in terms of quantity and type (such as schools, teachers);
- B) Accessibility includes physical accessibility (such as distance to school, safety) and financial accessibility (free schooling, school types);

1 Vulnerable groups include ethnic minorities, older persons, persons with disability, child- and woman-headed households, and vulnerable children (including those in arid districts, or facing cultural negative practices, like early marriage).

- C) Acceptability includes respect to the culture of all, including minority communities; and
- D) Adaptability suggests that all barriers have been removed to allow for full participation in education.

The questions to be posed, as informed by this 4A framework, would include: are inputs such as schools, teachers, materials, funding, and IT facilities available? Are these learning inputs and opportunities accessible to all learners regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, geographic location, or disability status? Are the education provisions deemed to have relevance and quality? Have issues related to the language of instruction been addressed? Finally, have adaptations been made to ensure that children with disabilities or in disadvantaged geographies can thrive within the system? Existing evidence will be used to examine the extent to which education systems have sought to be equitable in their provision, with a focus on basic education.

In order to assess the current policy-framing to see if the country will meet the SDG goals for education by 2030, the analysis will further be informed by the six policy issues identified by UNESCO (2019) meant to accelerate progress. These urge a shift away from the “availability” and “accessibility” domains identified above to focus on lifelong learning, relevance, and cooperation by going:

- A) Beyond averages, towards equality and inclusion;
- B) Beyond access, towards quality and learning;
- C) Beyond basics, towards content fit for sustainable development;
- D) Beyond schooling, towards lifelong education;
- E) Beyond education, towards cross-sector collaboration, and
- F) Beyond countries, towards regional and global collaboration.

These six policy issues, coupled with the 4As, provide a solid framework with which to analyze Kenya’s progress towards meeting its educational goals.

Policy-framing

Policy recommendations in Kenya have been crafted through a series of commissions on education and task forces, and thereafter formally adopted as official government policy through sessional papers. In this section, we shall attempt to see to what extent learning equity has permeated through policy articulation. Children at the bottom of the learning pyramid can be identified through their special circumstances, hence the review shall highlight sub-sector policies that seek to hasten education for excluded children, such as children with special needs, and children in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL).

Historical perspectives on education policy: 1960–1990s

Early educational policy direction was offered through the Kenya Education Report of 1964, popularly known as the Ominde commission. This commission was constituted against a backdrop of disproportionate educational opportunities across the races and regions, and tasked to envision a system of education for the newly independent state that would foster nationhood, identity, and unity. Critical of the colonial education system that was inaccessible to many, the Ominde report recommended that at least primary education ought to be free. This report sought to give preferential treatment to regions lagging behind, and recommended higher grant allocations, boarding schools, and mobile schools as strategies to expand access to schooling in the ASAL regions of Tana River, Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Isiolo, Marsabit, Narok, Kajiado, Turkana, Samburu, and West Pokot.

Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its application to planning in Kenya formally adopted the Ominde report to guide educational development in Kenya. Wary of the colonial legacy of unequal development, it asserted that: "Every effort will be made to ensure that equal opportunities are provided for people in less developed parts of the country" (GoK, 1965, p. 56). It announced that Universal Primary Education (UPE) would start in 1965 and be achieved by 1971. While the UPE goal remained elusive for several decades, the Ominde report fermented the "access quest" that has generally been abided to by subsequent political manifestos and governments. For instance, in 1971, a presidential decree abolished tuition fees in the ASAL districts—thus,

in part, implementing the recommendations suggested by the Ominde Commission and affirmed through Sessional Paper No. 10. In December 1973, another presidential decree outlawed fee payment for all children in Grades 1–4. The presidential decree of 1978 abolished school fees in all classes in primary school. It would take the Free Primary Education call of 2003 to assure free access to primary education for all grades, though even then, as the analysis will show, specific pockets of children remained excluded. Secondary schooling received special attention in the Report of the National Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976 (or Gachathi Report; GoK, 1976) which recommended government support for the self-help *Harambee* schools that had mushroomed to offer secondary education. These early policies showed an intent to expand access to basic education, with some differential treatment being attempted for children in remote and rural areas. However, early policies were rather silent about other adaptations needed to make learning accessible to all children, including those with special needs.

Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 embarked on a policy shift towards inclusion. It was grounded “African Socialism”, a term that some scholars deem a misnomer, while others like Ochola (2016) see it as the foundation of the concept of equity, as it stresses that policy should be directed with impartiality, fairness, and justice for socioeconomic development to spread divergently across communities. Munene and Ruto (2015, p. 139) observe that the 1965 policy directive sought to “combat educational inequalities through the provision of universal primary education”. The Ominde report viewed education as an equalizer, stating that “education must promote social equality”. Similarly, the Gachathi Report observed that “the fundamental purpose of national development is to effect social improvement of lives of the people as a whole”.

A slight departure is seen in the social-justice framing of the Kamunge report of 1988 that was subsequently adopted into policy through Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on education and training for the next decade and beyond. Introduced under the aegis of the World Bank’s Structural Adjustment Programs for African States, this policy sought to rationalize budgets and decrease public expenditure. This resulted in a cost-sharing policy that strained educational access, leading to pronounced exclusion of vulnerable groups including the urban poor,

rural communities, and ASAL peoples. Many have faulted this policy with a failure to acknowledge the community resourcing that had always existed, and gave impetus to the first wave of secondary-school expansion. Kenya, therefore, joined the rest of the world in Jomtien for the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) against a backdrop of strained access, despite always having the policy intent to achieve universal education for all children. Economic growth had reduced from an average of 6.6 percent in the 1970s to 4.2 percent in the 1980s to an average of 2.1 percent in 1990s (Nthia & Njeru, 2005). It was an era in which low-income households and the educational system suffered, exemplified by a high rate of dropouts, low transitions to secondary school and beyond, poor learning outcomes, and growing populations of schooled yet unemployed youths/citizens.

It is also during this period that presidential directives initiating special programs to boost secondary-education participation for vulnerable groups were started. The secondary-school education bursary fund of 1993/4 was established through a presidential announcement to cushion children from disadvantaged communities from the high cost of secondary education. The fund received allocation from the Ministry of Education, and was coordinated by the constituency bursary committee. Affirmative action was practiced, as a specific amount was reserved for children from ASAL. There were often allegations of favoritism in allocation, and a generally poor identification system diminished its reach to needy children. In a bid to consolidate the fund with other bursary and scholarship schemes, its management was handed over to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2013/14. The CDF Act (2015, p. 1963) stipulates that up to 35 percent of total allocated funds per financial year may be used to support education, bursaries, and assessments. In general, many constituencies prefer the practice of giving secondary-school merit scholarships, based on the performance rather than need of learners.

Recent education policy developments: The year 2000 onwards

Kenya is signatory to, and has drawn impetus from, a series of international declarations, such as:

- A) The 2000 Dakar Education for All declaration, that committed to “ensuring that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls, children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality”;
- B) The 2015 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 that commits to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The SDG centers on a moral impetus that “no goal will be considered met, unless met for all” which reaffirms the equity threshold that the state needs to aim for.

The spirit articulated in these declarations is evident in public policy in Kenya. There have been several economic, social, and government reforms meant to invigorate economic growth and improve social services. Given the stagnant growth witnessed during the previous decades, policy-based strategies to reduce poverty were introduced, including the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) 2003–2007, which harmonized previous economic plans and strategies in a bid to accelerate economic growth. This plan focused on economic recovery by developing sound macroeconomic policies; enhancing efficient public service delivery; reducing inequalities in access to productive resources, basic goods, and services; and designing policies that reduced the cost of doing business. The ERS proposed several targeted programs such as the social action fund, the ASAL program, the vulnerability program, and the slum upgrading and low-cost housing program (Nthia & Njeru, 2005). These would later shape the three pillars of the Vision 2030. The anecdotal view is that the low-income households were hard hit, perhaps implying that the policies were not “pro-poor”.

In education, planning was contained in Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on education, training, and research (GoK, 2005), which ushered in the Sector-Wide Approach to Planning (SWAP); this was instrumental in shaping the Kenya Education-Sector Support Program (KESSP) 2005–2010/11. KESSP is credited for two key movements that greatly influenced access to education. Its pooled funding approach allowed the Free Primary School scheme to be sustained. It is also during this period, in 2008, that Free Day Secondary schooling was introduced.

In addition, a series of sub-sector issue-focused policies that targeted excluded groups were developed, as illustrated below. Some of these policies have since been revised:

- A) 2007 Gender in Education Policy (Revised in 2015 to Education and Training Sector Gender Policy);
- B) 2009 Special Needs Education Policy (Revised in 2018 to Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disability);
- C) 2009 Policy Framework for Nomadic Education in Kenya (Revised 2015);
- D) 2009 Safety Standards Manual for Schools in Kenya: Schools as Safe Zones;
- E) 2009 National School Health Policy (MoE, 2009) (Revised in 2018 to Kenya National Health Policy);
- F) 2009 Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training.

Sessional Paper No. 10 of 2012 on Kenya Vision 2030 offers the long-term development blueprint created under the backdrop of the Economic Recovery Strategy. It has three pillars: economic, social, and political. The social pillar seeks to create just, cohesive, and social development in a clean and secure environment. Vision 2030 is very forward-thinking and, indeed, a perfect fit in terms of phrasing with the SDGs. It retains the call for special investment in ASAL, as well as other communities with high rates of poverty. It is cognizant that effort is needed to reach the unemployed youth, women, and vulnerable groups. All in all, Vision 2030 strategies to achieve equity have prioritized access, an emphasis that is retained in other sector-wide planning documents, such as the “Big Four Agenda” (Kenya Yearbook, 2019) that views access to education as a critical enabler to achieve the priority goals of food security, healthcare, manufacturing, and housing. The National Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018–2022 is based on access, equity, quality, and relevance of education as a means of achieving social development.

One of the more consistent Kenyan educational policy priorities has been to increase basic education for 8-to-12-year-olds, and this necessitated the implementation of several nationwide interventions that help needy populations participate in secondary schooling. Some examples are provided below:

- A) The presidential secondary-school bursary scheme started in the 2013/14 financial year. Administered by the Children's Department, this fund seeks to enhance secondary-school enrollment, attendance, and completion for orphaned and vulnerable children.
- B) The primary and secondary school examination fees waiver commenced in 2017 for all candidates. Some have observed that this waiver could have been targeted to reach those in need, allowing those who could afford to pay for the already subsidized fees to continue to do so.
- C) The sanitary towels program for schools was initiated in 2011 by the Ministry of Education. Since 2018, this program provides free sanitary towels to girls from disadvantaged backgrounds and is run by the State Department for Gender Affairs.
- D) The Elimu Scholarship was supported by the World-Bank-funded Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP). One component of the project provides scholarships for secondary education to students from needy families, and 9000 students benefited in 2019/20. The scholarship fund is managed by Equity Foundation, which runs the Wings to Fly scholarship program. Indeed, in the last decade, public-private partnerships offering scholarships and bursaries to expand participation in secondary education have grown. Some of the sought-out scholarship schemes by corporate firms targeting needy children include Equity Wings to Fly, Kenya Commercial Bank, Safaricom Foundation, and Kenya Tea Development Authority. There is a gradual and steady emergence of corporate social responsibility to boost public education participation.
- E) Since 2016, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has led a multi-agency effort known as "Inua Jamii" (Empower the Community) that operates a common operational platform offering cash transfers to orphaned and vulnerable children, older people, and people with severe disabilities. It also runs the hunger safety net program (only in the Turkana, Marsabit,

Mandera, and Wajir counties). This effort is part of the governments' national safety-net program aimed at uplifting the lives of "poor and vulnerable citizens", where deserving individuals/households receive KES 2000.

- F) The school meals program, initiated in 2009, provides meals to children from needy counties at school, to both enhance attendance and achievement, and also stimulate local agricultural production through the purchase of food from small farmers and local suppliers.
- G) The National Council for Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK) was established—a semi-autonomous agency—to steer efforts towards the attainment of education for all in nomadic communities.

The Basic Education Act provides for the establishment of private schools, in which Clause 5.1 states that any person requiring basic education may attend a private school. This sector has grown exponentially over the years, under a progressive regulatory framework by the government. The most rapid growth was witnessed between 1999 and 2006, when the number of private primary schools increased from 569 to 1,839, a growth attributed to the declaration of FPE in 2003. Enrollment in private secondary schools increased by 19 percent between 2015 and 2016. This increase is consistent with improved transition rates. The private sector continues to play a critical role in strengthening access to education in Kenya, even though it is seen as a cause of the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

A major education reform is currently underway that is progressively phasing out the 8–4–4 system, to be replaced by competency-based education and training. The impetus for the reforms is contained in the Odhiambo report (2012), *The Realignment of the Education Sector to Vision 2030 and the Constitution of Kenya*, whose recommendations were adopted into policy in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2015 on reforming education and training for Kenya. To ground the visioning of the reforms, the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (MoE, 2016) was developed. The National Curriculum Policy (2018) and the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 on reforming education and training for sustainable development in Kenya articulate the policy standpoints.

The mission of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is to “nurture the potential of every child”, and is grounded on seven guiding principles: opportunity, excellence, inclusion, diversity, differentiated curriculum and learning, parental empowerment, and engagement and community-service learning. These guiding principles need to be cushioned by issue-specific policies and accompanying plans to allow grounded visioning, planning, and monitoring. For example, while the CBC Framework is guided by the principle of promoting multiple languages, and even gives prominence to sign language, it is very likely that progress in language and education will be muted, as it draws its policy direction from the language policy in education policy last revised in 1976. A better approach would be to revise the language policy and develop costed strategies whose implementation can be monitored.

Discussion

Access to education is a basic human right, enshrined in the bill of rights of the Constitution of Kenya (2010). Article 2(6) of the Constitution of Kenya further states that: “Any treaty or convention ratified by Kenya shall form part of the law of Kenya”. Kenya is a signatory to several regional and international conventions and declarations such as The African Charter on the Human and Peoples Rights, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and The Convention on the Rights of the Child. These all express the right of each child to free and compulsory education. The national intent to offer equal opportunity to all as a right, and not a privilege, is domesticated and expressed in the following articles of the Constitution of Kenya 2010:

- 43 (1): Every person has the right to (f) education;
- 53 (1) Every child has a right to (b) free and compulsory basic education;
- 54 (1): A person with disability is entitled (b) to access educational institutions and facilities... that are integrated into society;
- 56: The state shall put in place affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalised groups (b) are provided special opportunities in education.

The imperatives communicated in the Constitution have been domesticated in the Education Act of 2013. The Education Act states that educational provision shall be guided by:

- the right of every child to free and compulsory basic education;
- equitable access for the youth to basic education and equal access to education or institutions;
- protection of every child against discrimination;
- advancement and protection of every child... to be instructed in a language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable;
- provision of adequate equipment, infrastructure, and resources that meet the needs of every child in basic education.

To compel the right to education, Section 30 of the Act provides a fine of KES 100,000 for anyone who does not take their child to school, and KES 5 million for anyone found culpable of child labor.

These legal instruments mainly stress access, and the associated inputs needed to actualize this access. The evidence at hand, when viewed in terms of averages, confirms satisfactory progress. Current government statistics as contained in the Economic Survey (KNBS, 2020, pp. 241–251) indicate that:

- A) There are a total of 89,331 learning institutions in basic education in Kenya, comprised of 46,530 pre-primary schools; 32,344 primary schools; 10,463 secondary school, and 2,191 technical and vocational education training centers. Pre-primary and TVET institutions registered a 10 percent increase from the previous year, while primary and secondary schools registered a lower number due to more stringent compliance measures being implemented.
- B) Primary-school enrollment between 2015 and 2019 consistently stood at slightly over 10 million, with near gender parity (5.1 million boys and 4.96 million girls), while secondary-school enrollment increased from 2.9 million in 2018 to 3.3 million learners in 2019, with gender parity having been achieved.

- C) Primary-school completion rates have witnessed a marginal increase from 82.7 percent in 2015 to 85.4 percent in 2019.
- D) Transition rates to secondary schooling have increased from 81.9 percent in 2015 to 85.5 percent in 2019. The 2020 drive for 100 percent transition had resulted in a rate of over 95 percent, but this progress was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- E) The Teachers Service Commission manages a teaching force of 218,760 teachers in public primary schools, of whom slightly more are female (114,076), and 105,234 teachers in secondary school (43,124 being female). All these teachers are trained. There is an estimated 30 percent teacher shortage, and any recruitment drive attracts hundreds of thousands of applications from qualified teachers.

Three critiques can be levelled against the current data on educational progress in key government documents. First, key statistical documents tend to provide national data that is often not disaggregated by lower administrative zones, or by regions and populations of policy interest to allow proper monitoring of policy issues. For instance, while the review affirms that policies have always intended to address the educational disadvantage in ASAL areas, data-reporting in national documents such as the Economic Survey—or integrated reports by the government such as the Kenya Yearbook (2019)—do not offer ASAL-specific data. Similarly, while policy documents have improved in their recognition that vulnerable communities must be reached, data capture fails to consistently report education participation against disability and socioeconomic status. UNESCO (2019) urges the necessity of going “beyond averages” to allow for a true assessment of whether each learner is truly being included. Such reporting would automatically lead to focus on the 15 percent of children who do not complete primary schooling and give clarity to the nature and type of interventions they need. Data is an important way to measure commitment.

Second, while the culture of annual reporting on all sectors, including education, in the Economic Surveys is appreciated, the data capture and monitoring has tended to focus on numbers closely related to “availability” and “access”. It is now time to move “beyond access”. The next frontier of reporting should therefore include learning-outcome

data from assessments, not just summative examinations. It should focus on adaptations that have been made to address the learning needs of children with disabilities, who at the moment are covered under blanket access numbers. Overall, reporting will need to address the more qualitative indicators related to learning.

Finally, the Ministry of Education should regularly capture and report on data based on a broader set of indicators. The last comprehensive data released by MoE is irregularly published. After the Basic Education Statistical Booklet of 2014, another set was released in 2016, and the latest in 2020. A more regular rhythm will enable its users to plan accordingly and articulating an open data policy and operationalizing an online data platform would help. These statistical booklets include data on learners with special needs and undertake cohort analysis, informing on internal efficiency of the system. Unfortunately, the MoE data are limited to access numbers. The National Assessment Centre for Monitoring Learning Achievement based at the Kenya National Examination Council can play a bigger role in undertaking and consolidating studies on learning outcomes, which currently show that learning outcomes remain low (PAL Network, 2020; Uwezo, 2014). There is a need to invest in research on policy issues that would result in more equitable learning opportunities. For example, analyses by Alcott and Rose (2016) show that private schooling does not narrow learning inequalities. These data support the resolve to expand public education for underserved populations, like the urban poor or children with special needs. Likewise, the PAL Network (2019) analysis of age by grade rates—which shows that children who are in incorrect grades for their age are likely to be learning less, and that their mothers also have educational needs—should inform policy actions.

It is agreed that good policy formulation needs to be accompanied with good data and strategies. Kinyanjui (2020; this volume) observes the current policy limitation to lie in the:

- lack of comprehensive data sets;
- lack of broad indicators that are continuously reported against;
- lack of baseline data prior to development of policies, which makes it difficult to determine the effectiveness of the policy;
- and

- lack of clear methodologies and criteria to determine which policy contributes to which change in the sector.

Conclusion

The education policy vision in Kenya has been one of promise, underscored by the belief that education will lead to a more equal society and better opportunities for all. Government policy initiatives have made commendable progress in fermenting this vision. Learning inputs are available, the number of learning institutions continues to increase to meet demand, and there is an oversupply of trained teachers. All of the ingredients needed for a functional education system are available. The issue that has arisen, however, is one of inequitable opportunity. This is where attention is needed as efforts move toward building a resilient system that works for all children, including those most marginalized.

The next frontier is to make education more acceptable and adaptable, as these considerations are at the heart of educational quality. Operationalizing the language policy, for example, will go a long way in bridging the gap between home and school for marginalized communities. Institutionalizing periodic assessments and enforcing a culture of data use for classroom decision-making will help these disadvantaged learners as well. Teachers must also be empowered to adjust the curriculum pace to match the level of their learners, which will ultimately result in improved learning for all.

Public participation has found its way into national decision-making, since the inauguration of the Kenyan constitution in 2010. There has been constant engagement with communities, so that, as much as possible, their diverse array of cultures and aspirations are catered to in the curriculum. However, the role of communities in augmenting certain aspects of the formal curriculum remains unclear. COVID-19 has led to notable incidences of parents and communities stepping up with alternative ways to ensure continued learning for their children. We must not lose the momentum when schools fully reopen. This has been a period to augment parental engagement as envisioned in the Competency-Based Curriculum, and lessons learnt should shape community involvement in improving learning going forward.

In an effort to improve on service delivery, specifically for those at the bottom of the Kenyan pyramid, there has been a recent proliferation of multi-sectoral programs uniting different government ministries. In the last decade, these programs have expanded, with new variations springing up during the COVID-19 period, in which vulnerable youths were identified and offered services and funds. There is still an unfinished agenda that continues to propel the education reforms currently being witnessed. A more outcome-driven approach to policy-making, with correct mechanisms to monitor progress, may support growth in education, especially for Kenya's most vulnerable populations.

In summary, two key observations emerge from this policy review. First, policy-making processes have generally matured in Kenya. There is a consistent focus on expanding access, and huge strides have been made in that regard. Another positive trend in the last decade has been the multi-sectoral approach to planning and execution. However, policies now must move from being input-driven to being outcome-based. They must shift from reporting only on access numbers to including data on learning outcomes. Finally, they must follow through on promoting and implementing sub-sector-specific policies, which allow further focus on needed areas and marginalized populations. The seven CBC principles would benefit from clear and specific policies, supported with a culture of data capture to monitor implementation.

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