

## **Implementation of the New Curriculum (2-6-3-3-3) In Kenya**

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**Abstract:** Education system in Kenya started in 1728. In 1967, EAC adopted 7-4-2-3 education system. EAC collapsed in the year 1977 but Kenya Government continued with the education system but changed the name of the examinations. The post-independence 7-4-2-3 system was replaced in 1985 by the 8-4-4 system, a curriculum that was thought to encourage innovation and self-reliance. This curriculum underwent several changes with abandonment of some subjects and syllabus modification to reduce workload. 34 years later, the government of Kenya saw the need to change education system, and formed the Douglas Odhiambo task force, which was mandated to propose the best model of addressing shortcomings of 8-4-4 system. The ministry of education also developed a policy statement on December 2015 that paved way to the 2-6-3-3-3 curriculum (Curriculum Reform Policy, December 2015). The new curriculum has been adopted in pre-primary school and has been rolled out in January 2019. This paper examines the position of implementation of the new education curriculum in Kenya following a series of implementation plans, piloting and the challenges drawn from the previous education system.

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### **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CBC</b>	: Competency Based Curriculum
<b>CPE</b>	: Certificate of Primary Education
<b>ECDE</b>	: Early Childhood Development Education
<b>ICT</b>	: Information and Communication Technology
<b>KCE</b>	: Kenya Certificate of Education
<b>KCPE</b>	: Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
<b>KCSE</b>	: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>KICD</b>	: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
<b>KIE</b>	: Kenya Institute of Education
<b>KNUT</b>	: Kenya National Union of Teachers
<b>KSG</b>	: Kenya School of Government
<b>SLDP</b>	: Strategic Leadership Development Programme
<b>TSC</b>	: Teachers Service Commission
<b>TIG</b>	: Transition Infrastructure Grants

## **I. Introduction**

### **1.1 History of Kenyan Education.**

Education system in Kenya started in 1728 with the production of the Swahili manuscript ‘UtendiwaTambuka’. Missionaries at Rabai in Mombasa established the earliest mission school in 1846. Afterwards several schools were started in several parts of the country. Elementary education before independence was based on the colonial system.

In 1967, EAC adopted 7-4-2-3 education system. EAC collapsed in the year 1977 but Kenya Government continued with the education system but changed the name of the examinations. The post-independence 7-4-2-3 system was replaced in 1985 by the 8-4-4 system, a curriculum that was thought to encourage innovation and self-reliance. This curriculum underwent several changes with abandonment of some subjects and syllabus modification to reduce workload. The remaining East African countries; Uganda and Tanzania have maintained the 7-4-2-3 systems.

### **1.2 The Kenyan education system**

The launch of the vision 2030 and the New Constitution in 2010 brought a need for an education curriculum that will develop learners to acquire skills necessary to attain the new socio-economic agenda. (Daniel Sifuna, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2016).

The new curriculum, which is aimed at reforming the system of education for the first time in 34 years, will see changes all the way from pre-school to high school. The new system is meant to offer new skills to the students so as to address the needs of a developing economy and propel it to heights of industrialization through fostering innovation and invention. It is also expected to produce critical thinkers, change makers, creators, entrepreneurs and generally problem solvers.

Frequent unrest in secondary schools also brought the need for an education system that will avoid over-reliance on national examinations, but instead rate students using continuous assessment tests. The 8-4-4 system was also thought to be expensive and burdensome.

The government saw the need to change the current system, and formed the Douglas Odhiambo task force, which was mandated to propose the best model of addressing shortcomings of 8-4-4 system. Then there was the ministry of education policy statement of December 2015 that paved way to the 2-6-3-3-3 curriculum (Curriculum Reform Policy, December 2015). The new curriculum has been adopted in pre-primary school and is scheduled to be rolled out in January 2019, when the current grade 3 pupils enter grade 4.

The curriculum entails learners spending Two (2) years in pre-primary, which are Pre Primary 1 and pre-primary 2 then primary grades 1-6. After upper primary 6 the pupils are expected to join lower secondary which is grade 7-9 thereafter to join upper secondary school which is grade 10-12 and at least 3 years in tertiary institutions.

A pilot project was undertaken in 470 schools (5 pre-primary and 5 primary schools per county (Ouma Wanzala, Daily Nation July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018). Developing learning materials and training teachers for grade 1-4 is ongoing, while training and materials for grade 7-9 and 10-12 will take place in 2019.

The process of the new curriculum implementation seems inappropriate in terms of the order in which the various interventions are being done. There is minimal and late involvement of the stakeholders, and the hurried speed of implementation which gives a view that it is a government project, with minimal consideration of the final outcome.

The workload to pupils and teachers is likely to be enormous considering the number of subjects taught, i.e. 9 subjects for lower primary, 11 for upper primary, and 12 core subjects plus 1 or 2 optional for lower secondary. The selection of career path in senior school is favorable as it enables the learner to choose a career path that is desirable, avoiding unnecessary time wastage with subjects that may not be of value in the future. Presence of vocational courses is also a great idea towards reducing unemployment.

### **1.3 Background Information**

The education sector was prompted to institute the overhaul in curriculum upon realization that the existing education system which is the 8-4-4 system was releasing the graduates to the market who were not well equipped with adequate knowledge for the job market since they are not flexible and learners are not able to adapt to the emerging market challenges.

In 1985, the then President Daniel Arap Moi, introduced the 8-4-4 system of education, which adopted Eight years of primary education, Four years of secondary education and Four years at the university. Introduction of this system, CPE became KCPE, while KCE became KCSE. The system was meant to be guided by the guiding philosophy of "self-reliance according to Daniel Sifuna, August 14, 2016.

However, in 2008 the K.I.E (now KICD) evaluation report about the 8-4-4 system was produced. The report was not providing the graduates with practical skills as it was more of academic more so the candidates were putting more emphasis on passing examinations. It was not providing flexible pathways which could identify and nurture learner's aptitudes, interests and the talents which would prepare learners for the job market and career growth. The inflexibility played a major role in increasing the number of school drop-outs even among academically talented graduates who would have excelled in other fields.

A taskforce appointed by the education minister in 2012 came up with a plan to reform education and training with a view of coming up with empowered human capital who would spur the education and economic growth.

The 2012 plan was aimed at improving the learner's capability, intellectually and emotionally with focus on teaching and learning concrete skills. It also aims at creating an assessment system to cater for the continuous evaluation of learners while introducing and teaching national values such as cohesion and integration.

This put emphasis on science, technology and innovation, with development technical capability on skills in order to meet Kenya's demand for skilled labour as per Douglas Odhiambo Task force Report of 2012.

To address the shortcomings of the 8-4-4 system, the government came up with a three tier approach to education, focusing on foundational skills of literacy and numeracy.

Tier one is pre-unit Primary and lower primary school grades one to four which will offer skills in general education, while grades 5-6 will centre on academic subjects such as languages, sciences and art.

Tier two will cover grades 7-12 and offer subjects that are relevant to some generalized learning areas with an aim of allowing learners to explore their interests, abilities and strengths.

Tier three is the combination of senior school and tertiary institutions trainings which will offer specialized and targeted competencies that are geared to prepare learners either for college, vocational training or university.

By the end of tier three, graduates are believed to be equipped with the needed relevant skills needed for self-reliance, entrepreneurship and joining the labor market. University education will last 3 years, while college, vocational and technical training Institutions would last for 2 years. (Daniel Sifuna, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2016).

#### 1.4 Goal of the new curriculum

To equip the learner with the necessary skills for self-reliance, nurture talent, promote innovation and equip graduates to meet the challenges and the emerging issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and preparation for world market devoid of exam pressure.

## II. Justification

### 2.1 The new curriculum

The new curriculum is a welcome initiative as it is a progressive system with a focus on essential requirements on skills geared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. This curriculum is set to improve the economy of the country. It would also ease the academic pressures (examination) off the learner's shoulders who were obsessed with high academic grades achieved through long hours of content cramming in both internal and external examinations.

The previous system paid no attention to struggling learners especially those with challenges of adolescence. However, it is hoped that the new system would guide them on how to cope up with the learner's stage in life on how to deal with other changes as they grow chronologically. This would make it possible for the truancy and indiscipline cases that could easily be flushed out of school and the affected learner would be given the required attention and or a second chance.

The learners would get an opportunity to be children, through the framework released as learners would learn at their own pace and not be transformed into pawns in education system of mean score as stated in new curriculum vision:

*'To enable every Kenyan to become an engaged, empowered and ethical citizen. This will be achieved by providing every Kenyan learner with world class standards in the skills and knowledge that they deserve and which they need to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.'* (Benta Abuya, April 3 2017)

It is worth noting, in light of the vision; the former system did not care whether the learners had skills and knowledge at different levels but only emphasized on good performance on passing with good grades in written examinations.

The new curriculum therefore, would eliminate summative evaluation. This means that learners would be assessed on their competencies i.e. their capability to apply the acquired skills and knowledge to perform relevant tasks trained on, thus determining their individual strengths.

This is an exposure in life skills from Pre-primary which would make the learners acquire the necessary skills for navigation of life's challenges at an early age as they progressed through their education.

In general, the inflexibility of the 8-4-4 system, and the realization that the country was not producing school leavers ready for the world of market, justified the reason for the overhaul.

The framework of the new curriculum seems geared towards the improvement of the country's economy and the provision of answers to various problems of the society such as: environmental, political, social-economic (unemployment), poverty and sustainable development. This would preserve the country's education by attracting local and global markets as well as attracting local and international learners through exchange and programmes. (Benta Abuya, April 3 2017)

### 2.2 The rationale for the 2-6-3-3-3 system

- a) The learners are to acquire skills and that will enable them to meet regional and International educational and job market in line with the human resource aspirations of Vision 2030.
- b) Early identification of Talents in individual learner and nurturing them so as at the end of the junior secondary phase they are flexible thus allows the learners to pursue their talents on their areas of interest and specialization.
- c) Introduction of CATS to measure the learner's skills, knowledge and competences which will result into a formative assessment process. The credits at the end of every level/phase will be accumulated. This is different from the current system where learners either pass and continue to the next level or fail and exit the system.

- d) The Government intends to meet attainment of 100% transition rate in all the educational levels especially from primary to secondary. This will introduce automatic progression to the junior secondary phase based on the acquisition of core skills and competences (literacy, numeracy and communication skills).

### **III. Situational Analysis**

#### **3.1 The Education system 2-6-3-3-3 Review**

In view of the gaps within the 8-4-4 system that have already been highlighted, formulation and subsequent implementation of skills and innovation oriented curriculum was long overdue. However, it is important to note that change doesn't happen without a fair share of problems. Whether the right steps towards implementation of the new curriculum are being followed or not is a subject for discussion.

#### **3.2 Stakeholder involvement and sensitization**

There was no adequate stakeholder and proper public participation undertaken geared towards the successful implementation of the system. According to needs assessment survey through the Douglas Odhiambo taskforce and 2005-2010 it is said that the National Assessment Centre "uwezo Kenya", high level stakeholders from the ministry of education, the KICD, local experts were actively involved in curriculum design. These stakeholders carried out consultative clustered County meetings; workshop and they co-opted local and international experts. The task force is said to have a leeway to consult, and coordinate with relevant stakeholders and agencies for instance the county and sub county ministry officials as well as the departmental staff, members of the community including the civil society, union, parents etc in order to access the needed information through documentation and studies relevant documents to enable them execute their mandate which in actual sense the involvement was not effective as this taskforce might have dwelt on selected few areas of the country.

However, we have noted that although the curriculum is set to be rolled out in January 2019, a partial stakeholder's involvement seem to slowing down the momentum. The government did not infuse all the stakeholders to enable the implementation of this system. The minimal involvement of parents, teachers, religious leaders, insurance companies and learners could cause problems such as resistance, sabotage or indifference towards the overhaul (Business Daily January 5<sup>th</sup> 2018). The teachers who are the implementers' do not own the program and are only ordered around on what to do after being left out in the curriculum design programmes. The parents are more concerned about education policies for their children and how the new curriculum would affect them. (Mugambi Mutegi, Business Daily, June 29, 2017. It was therefore a tall order to understand and implement the new curriculum within the mentioned confines (National Education Conference, Kenya April 15 – 19, 2018), as most of the field officers in both Ministry of Education and TSC were not professionally involved. There was also no research to show that the competency- based curriculum is superior to the outcome-based curriculum.

#### **3.3 Piloting**

A total of 470 schools country were adopted for phase one of the piloting process between May and August 2018. These schools were clustered into rural, urban, Private and Special needs education institutions. Each county selected a total of 10 schools to spearhead this system (Anthony Njagi, Daily Nation April 17 2017). Some teachers from these schools were also trained and the outcome of the training exercise will be used to revise and fine-tune the curriculum before full roll out in January 2019.

The results of the pilot were released by the KICD. These will be used not only to fine-tune the curriculum but also to assess its viability. Phase two of the piloting process is underway and other phases will follow to its full achievement.

However, the curriculum had already been implemented albeit in bits in pre-primary, grades one, two and three. This was in the areas of numeracy and literacy, through PRIEDE and TUSOME programmes.

The centres meant to be used for testing whether the system would work were not used to provide guidance. The current situation eliminates the viability and the appropriateness of the system and will make it difficult if the system is adjunct or is found to be non-viable (Imende Benjamin, Nyaundi L, Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 2018).

The piloting process was embraced without due regard to the initial processes of curriculum development, as ought to have been done. The recommended process of curriculum development is as outlined below:

1. Policy Decision: Also known as found stage, relies on consideration of policy statement from Ministry of Education.
2. Needs Assessment: Involves the investigation and collection of data to establish a needs gap. It also outlines the objectives showing what could be achieved through the school curriculum and what the learner should achieve.

3. Conceptualization and policy formulation: Involves collating the needs assessment and policy decisions into a report to be presented to the course panel for discussion and possible approval.
4. Formulation of curriculum design: This calls for all curriculum specialists to meet to generate content from which the subject syllabus is developed. This crucial stage raises the relevant learning areas and standards.
5. Development of syllabus: Brings together subject specialists who develop teaching and learning materials.
6. Orientation and training: This is aimed at acquiring skills, knowledge and positive attitude. Training has been pegged on the high numbers thereby making training haphazard.
7. The last step is piloting which involves the use of curriculum and support materials in selected schools and colleges. This is where viability, effectiveness and appropriateness of the curriculum is tested and would call for its revision, improvement or shelving the whole idea based on the information gathered.

The above stages of curriculum development were either left out or minimally done thereby making it difficult to realize the expected benefits of the new system.

### **3.4 Curriculum content:**

The Ministry of Education launched the Basic Education Curriculum Framework, which has been developed to actualize the curriculum reforms to provide comprehensive conceptualization of basic education. This Framework outlines the vision for the curriculum reforms, including: the over-reaching mission, the pillars of the reforms, the organization of basic education, general learning outcomes, core competencies to be achieved, approaches to the curriculum to be adopted in the Framework, learning areas, appropriate pedagogical practices, resources that are required, necessary policies that will facilitate the implementation, assessment among other critical issues that will contribute to the success of the reforms. A total of 9 subjects are supposed to be covered in lower primary and upper primary pupils are expected to cover upto 11 subjects while junior school learners are expected to cover up to 13 subjects.

The current teacher shortage in schools especially the public schools estimated to be at least 4 teachers per school (Uwezo Kenya, 2005-2010) will make it difficult to cope with the work load. The new curriculum is student centered which also requires the teacher to give special time and attention to the individual learner. The ministry needed to hire more teachers, and train them on the new curriculum before implementation (Kenya report, 17th April 2017).

This curriculum has completely new learning areas, and the teachers were not trained in the methodological approaches on these areas such as: environmental studies, hygiene and nutrition, art and craft and music (Julius O. Jwan KICD).

### **3.5 Teacher training**

Teacher training and education need to make use of mixed teaching and learning approaches which can be achieved by frequent training programmes in order to be conversant with the anticipated changes. Through this, they would be able to impart relevant skills and competencies among the learners effectively. (Report on needs assessment for school curriculum in Kenya, KICD 2016).

The teacher training institutions have infused the methodologies of the new curriculum on the trainees who are yet to exit with a view of imparting the necessary knowledge and skills for the world of market.

There is therefore need to prepare a competitive teacher and a functional individual who goes beyond the traditional role of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes. This has been partially achieved through teacher training during the school holidays. So far a proportion of teachers have been trained to implement pre-primary and primary grades one to three curriculum. The government has also tried to incorporate various topical issues discussed in the new system into the teacher training curriculum.

The current teaching fraternity is still fixated on the 8-4-4 mindset. This calls for enormous effort in training, hiring and sensitizing them on the new curriculum.

### **3.6 Textbooks and learning materials**

The ministry of education, through the KICD has designed the Curriculum framework necessary for implementation. Due to public private partnership, private publishers have been mandated to print textbooks, with KICD printing the teaching/learning materials. The government distributed free tablets to most of the public primary schools last year, which is a great step towards enhancing digital literacy (Digital Learning Programme, DLP).

Despite the above efforts, some challenges and concerns have been noted. For instance, the ministry distributed few books, which some stakeholders e.g KNUT refer to as poor quality, with some containing more than one subject. The introduction of new subjects such as home science, agriculture, creative arts, and physical education calls for new materials, which needed to be availed at the time of implementation. The books so far availed focused on numeracy and literacy while other learning areas were not catered for. As at the time of writing this position paper (October 2018) there were no text books /reference books for grade four, set to be

launched in January 2019. The public and the relevant stakeholders are however relying on the pronouncement by the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Education Dr. Amina Mohammed that everything will be achieved before January 2019, though no circular regarding the same has been issued from the MOE headquarters.

ICT which has a more practical than theoretic approach is not available in some public and private schools.

### **3.7 Transition**

The government through the ministry of education has undertaken an induction of teachers at all levels on the new curriculum through Primary Education Development Programmes supported by the World Bank and Research Triangle Institute to train teachers in the field on methodological approaches used in teaching Numeracy and literacy in grades one to three respectively.

Despite the above efforts, transition from one level of education to another is likely to pose a challenge. It is however inevitable that the new curriculum has taken root, there may be a challenge in orienting the minds of the learners from the 8-4-4 to the 2-6-3-3-3 system. This is especially because most of the pupils did not get a robust formation in ECDE. They have the 8-4-4 system as the base of their learning standards.

### **3.8 Private school involvement**

Private schools play a key role in providing quality education to supplement the government efforts in ensuring universal access to basic and higher level education. The government has tried to involve private schools in the piloting process by nominating them alongside other schools.

Though the efforts have been made, private school involvement has been suboptimal. Most private schools thrive in the anarchy of the 8-4-4 system which is more exam oriented and thus make them find business in passing of examinations.

The implementers ought to have involved the private schools in every step to keep them encouraged.

### **3.9 Marginalized areas**

The government through the Transition Infrastructure Grants (TIG) has developed infrastructure in some marginalized schools. This is geared towards the 100% transition to the next level. These schools have had constructions of tuition blocks, toilets, and laboratories.

As much as the government tries to effect the 100% transition, these constructions are not achievable within the set timelines.

### **3.10 Corruption**

The government has disbursed over 300 billion over the last 14 years towards school development in an effort to prepare for the implementation process.

Measures to deal with corruption in schools have been put in place e.g. inviting the Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate and come up with recommendations in some affected schools. This can be evidenced by handing over of a report on Disbursement and Utilization of Free Primary Education (FPE) which gave out recommendations on how to safeguard government funds. (Augustine Odour, 25th May 2016.).

The government has also undertaken to supply textbooks directly to schools as a way of eliminating corruption (reducing middlemen).

However, due to rampant corruption in the country, there is fear that funds allocated to the system may be embezzled. There is also a likelihood of parents bribing teachers to award more marks during continuous assessment tests. (Ouma W, July 22 2018).

## **IV. Recommendations**

- The Ministry should come up with a sessional paper to the legislature with a view of prosecuting the system for acceptance and approval.
- Public participation and proper civic education should be carried to the devolved units which must be conducted smoothly by the ministry officials under the coordination of the provincial administration and the civil society.
- All stake holders should be involved in planning and implementation of the new curriculum, including teachers, parents, learners and private schools. This will help in changing the mindset in accepting the new curriculum.
- The proper process of curriculum development should be followed i.e. needs assessment of the new system, policy formulation, conceptualization, formulation of curriculum design, development of the syllabus, orientation, Induction and training of the stakeholders and finally piloting of the system in selected schools.
- The ministry through KICD should develop and design the curriculum to be used by the Teachers Training College and subject it to Public Participation.

- Good school structures need to be constructed in all marginalized areas, teachers deployed and facilities supplied to these schools.
- Materials to be used in supporting the curriculum availed in time such as teacher's guides, handbooks, manuals and course books should be developed and availed in time.
- Measures should be put in place to monitor usage of funds and within the education sector.
- Monitoring and evaluation measures should be put in place to assess the effectiveness of the new curriculum and make any necessary adjustments.
- The ministry needs to hire more teachers and train new ones on the new curriculum right from the Teachers Training Colleges as new units.
- The implementation process should be withheld and enough research done on the viability of the new curriculum.

## **V. Conclusion**

The change from the 34 year old 8-4-4 curriculum to the new 2-6-3-3-3 system is a government project which is ambitious and done in a hurried manner. This will be achieved by the government allocating the required resources and processes. A proper financial investment is critical, because overhauling a curriculum is an expensive venture.

The government therefore should shelve the implementation and review the two systems in an open mind with all the stakeholders for instance the education stakeholders – Teachers, Union leadership, Legislature, Parents and the civil society.

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