REGIONAL EDUCATION LEARNING INITIATIVE

# Study on the Status of Secondary Education in Kenya

Abridged version

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**List of Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| **ACRC** | Africa Charter on the Rights of the Child |
| **APHRC** | African Population and Health Research Center |
| **ASAL** | Arid and Semi-arid Land |
| **ASCA** | American School Counselor Association |
| **BOM** | Boards of Management |
| **CATs** | Continuous Assessment Tests |
| **CBC** | Competency Based Curriculum |
| **CRC** | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| **CRPD** | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| **CSE** | Comprehensive Sexuality Education |
| **CSL** | Community Service Learning |
| **EFA** | Education for All |
| **FDSE** | Free Day Secondary Education |
| **GER** | Gross Enrolment Rate |
| **ICFGE** | International Commission on Financing Global Education |
| **ICFGE** | The International Commission on Financing Global Education |
| **IMF** | International Monetary Fund |
| **KCBC** | Kenya Competence Based Curriculum |
| **KCPE** | Kenya Certificate of Primary Education |
| **KCSE** | Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education |
| **KICD** | Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development |
| **KNBS** | Kenya National Bureau of Standards |
| **KNEC** | Kenya National Examinations Council |
| **KNUT** | Kenya National Union of Teachers |
| **KSSHA** | Kenya Secondary School Heads Association |
| **LSE** | Life Skills Education |
| **LCPSS** | Low cost private secondary schools |
| **LWD** | Learners with Disability |
| **MDG** | Millennium Development Goals |
| **MLA** | Monitoring Learner Achievement |
| **MOE** | Ministry of Education |
| **NCRC** | National Crime Research Centre |

| | |
|---|---|
| **NER** | Net Enrollment Rate |
| **NESP** | National Education Sector Plan |
| **NGOs** | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| **OECD** | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| **PCIs** | Pertinent and Contemporary Issues |
| **PCR** | Pupil Completion Rate |
| **PSIPSE** | Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education |
| **PSTR** | Primary to Secondary Transition Rate |
| **PTA** | Parents Teachers Association |
| **RELI** | Regional Education Learning Initiative |
| **SEE** | Social Education and Ethics |
| **SID** | Society for International Development |
| **SIG** | Special Interest Group |
| **SNE** | Special Needs Education |
| **STEM** | Science Technical Engineering and Mathematics |
| **STR** | Student-Teacher Ratio |
| **TSC** | Teachers Service Commission |
| **UNCRC** | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| **UNESCO** | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| **UNICEF** | United Nations Children's Fund |
| **USAID** | United States Agency for International Development |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

This report is based on a study that was conducted mainly through a review of policy documents and research studies, and enriched with information from a stakeholder's forum and validation during the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) regional conference. The study examined the status of secondary education in Kenya, and focused on the following areas of concern: education outcomes, curriculum reforms, equity, school discipline, the examination system, and the status of research conducted on secondary school education in Kenya

### Background

RELI is a platform that endeavors to empower its members to become effective, influential organizations. The four objectives of RELI are - better coordination and alignment, improved learning outcomes, policy influence, and thematic principles of good practice. It is a member-driven initiative, which brings together education stakeholders for purposes of collective action around common issues in education. During the RELI Kenya country convening in October 2018, the secondary education special interest group (SIG) met and deliberated on issues related to secondary education, to understand both the status of and developments in the sector, as well as to explore the opportunities that RELI could offer to further the discourse around issues in secondary education. Of particular interest to the group was to determine the kind of contribution that RELI could make in the crucial yet often neglected secondary education space. From the discussion, the group came to the realization that many questions relating to secondary education in Kenya remained unanswered and information was scattered. The key question that emerged from the group discourse was: What exactly is the status of secondary education in Kenya?

### Purpose and objectives

The overall objective of this study was to document evidence on the status of secondary education in Kenya in order to determine what RELI could do to make a meaningful and impactful entry into the secondary education sector. The specific objectives of the study were to: i) Examine the systemic educational outcomes at the secondary school level of education; ii) Determine the quality of secondary education; iii) Identify factors affecting equitable educational participation in secondary schooling and examine effectiveness of government strategies to promote equity and inclusion; iv) Explore the implications of the curricular

changes on equity and life skills education at the secondary school level; v) Assess the provision of values and life skills education in secondary schools in order to determine how these can be better imparted and instilled to sustain secondary school students at the next level of training and work vi) Explore the key factors affecting discipline in secondary schools and vi) evaluate the status of research on secondary education in Kenya

## Methodology

Data was obtained from a desk review of government policy documents and relevant research studies on secondary education in Kenya. These were supplemented by feedback from stakeholders. The scope of the desk review included RELI documents, government reports and policy documents, and relevant research reports on secondary education in Kenya. The study adopted Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) approach that provides a five-stage methodological framework useful for conducting this type of review. The five stages are (a) Identification of the research questions to be addressed; (b) identification of studies relevant to the research question; (c) selection of studies to include in the review; (d) charting of information and data within the included studies; and (e) collating, summarizing and reporting results of the review.

## Summary of Findings

The findings are summarized in line with the key questions that guided the research.

***1. Educational Outcomes and quality of secondary education***

The key findings in relation to educational outcomes were as follows:

- The Free Day Secondary School Education (FDSE) program has resulted in increased enrolment, but has also led to overcrowding and overstretched facilities in most schools.
- The Primary Completion Rate and Primary to Secondary Transition Rate have been on the increase, but many children are still not attending secondary education, and not all complete secondary schooling.
- Enrolment by girls in secondary schools has improved since introduction of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE).
- There are several factors affecting quality of education, including; overcrowding in schools, high pupil to teacher ratio, inadequate number of quality assurance officers, inequitable regional/school distribution of teachers, inadequate or lack of infrastructure such as libraries and laboratories and poor teaching methods.

***2. Curriculum Reforms***

- Implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) is likely to perpetuate existing inequalities among schools; CBC requires numerous facilities, which are lacking in most secondary schools.
- Many parents lack information on life skills education (LSE) and on their role in the CBC.
- To instill values that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training/work, there is need for a methodological shift from didactic teaching, to teaching that focusses on cultivating moral and social discernment.
- Most teachers need more information and training to empower them to teach LSE effectively, and to manage the parental involvement and engagement component of the LSE and Community Service Learning (CSL) programs.
- Structures that can provide linkages between schools and industry are lacking.

***3. Equity***

- Even with FDSE, inequalities persist. The national statistics on access obscure the big regional variations.
- Hidden costs of secondary education lead to exclusion of poor students.
- Due to inequalities, FDSE has mostly benefited the already advantaged groups such as boys, the well to do, and those in urban areas, while the traditionally disadvantaged groups have enjoyed smaller gains.
- Despite the major achievements that Kenya has made in expanding educational opportunities, girls continue to have less access to educational opportunities.
- The six major categories of drivers of inequality affecting secondary education in Kenya are, socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, the gender factor, the disability factor, regional/geographical factors, and inadequate government financial resources .
- Government funds to support the FDSE are colossal, but still inadequate.
- There is suboptimal level of inclusion in secondary schools.

***4. School Discipline***

The following emerged as the major drivers of indiscipline in schools:

- Inadequate guidance and counseling.
- Lack of parental involvement in students' discipline.
- Unmet needs of learners.
- Intransigence and dictatorial styles on the part of administrators and teachers.
- Drug abuse in schools and peer pressure.
- Academic pressure and fear of examinations.
- Irresponsive school administration and hostile conditions in school

- Poor communication between students and school administration.

Some of the manifestations of indiscipline result from perceived dissatisfaction with the existing conditions in schools and point to negligence, incompetence, and indifference by concerned authorities.

***5. Examinations***

- The KCSE examination has become ineffective in measuring learning because it rewards rote learning and drilling for specific purposes of passing exams.
- Cheating in examinations has negatively impacted the effectiveness of KCSE.
- The KCSE concentrates on academics and less on practical skills and application of knowledge. It also does not promote the nurturing of talents.
- The KCSE examination fails to take into account formative assessments that could more accurately assess achievement over time

***6. Status of Existing Research on Secondary School Education***

There is a considerable amount of research conducted in Kenya on the various educational attainment and quality indicators, inequality in secondary education, status of resourcing in secondary schools, indiscipline in secondary schools, and on the examination system. However, there is a dearth in research on the implications of the curriculum reforms for the secondary level and on inclusion in secondary schools. There is also need for research on the following: preparedness of secondary school level for the curriculum reforms; the exact effect that the latest increase in FDSE funding has had on attainment and on quality of education; the reasons for persistence of large scale indiscipline in schools despite the many recommendations to address the issue; the content validity of the KCSE examination; and on the extent to which performance at KCSE serves as a predictor of success in life.

## Conclusions

- Kenya scores fairly on the various indicators of educational attainment at the secondary school level of education, and this is largely attributable to government subsidies and political good will. However, Kenya is struggling to strike a good balance between quality and quantity.
- The level of preparedness by secondary schools for the competency-based curriculum is low and could lead to poor implementation when the time comes.
- Most teachers require training in content and appropriate pedagogy for LSE.
- Despite the gains made because of the FDSE program, socioeconomic, gender, regional, and among-school inequalities persist.

- Government funding towards secondary education, though colossal, is still inadequate to cover the cost of schooling at this level.
- Disability among learners is still a major cause of exclusion in schools.
- The KCSE examination has become ineffective in measuring learning because it rewards rote learning and drilling for the specific purpose of passing exams.

## Recommendations

RELI and its partners should consider establishing programs for the following:

- Capacity building for teachers on the strategies for managing large classes and to be able to handle talent identification and development.
- Training parents on their involvement in the LSE program.
- Supporting teenage mothers to re-enter and to settle in schools after delivery.
- Sensitizing schools on how they can adapt inclusive practices.
- Supporting families of children with disabilities to offer better environment for their education and development.

With regard to discipline, there is an opportunity to provide in-service training for teachers to update their skills on guidance, counseling, and student discipline management in schools as well as to establish peer-counselling groups among students.

With regard to examinations, RELI and other players in the education sector should consider establishing programs to;

- ❖ Expose teachers to the several systems for evaluating students' abilities such as observations, journaling, teamwork and group work.
- ❖ Develop effective strategies for assessing the acquisition of values and attitudes by students

# CHAPTER ONE

## Overview

This report is based on a study that was conducted mainly through a review of policy documents and research studies, and enriched with information from a stakeholder's forum and validation during the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) conference. The study examined the status of secondary education in Kenya, and focused on the following areas of concern: systemic education outcomes, curriculum reforms, equity, school discipline, the examination system, and the status of research conducted on secondary school education in Kenya. Based on the findings, recommendations are made for consideration, first by RELI, then other non-state players with interest in the secondary education. The recommendations are particularly focused on possible areas of intervention, and should therefore be seen in the context of possible points of entry for intervention in the secondary education space.

## 1.1 Introduction

The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) is a platform that endeavors to empower its members to become effective, influential organizations. The four objectives of RELI are better coordination and alignment, improved learning outcomes, policy influence, and thematic principles of good practice. It is a member-driven initiative through which education stakeholders are brought together for purposes of collective action around common issues in education. RELI member organizations' work covers Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. RELI has four thematic groups: Equity and inclusion, Leaner centered teaching (LCT), values, and life skills, and accountability (in Tanzania).

## 1.2 Background

### *1.2.1 The Secondary Education Special Interest Group*

The secondary education special interest group (SIG) met in October 2018 and deliberated on issues related to secondary education, both to understand the status of and developments in the subsector, as well as to explore the opportunities for RELI to further the discourse around issues in Secondary education. Of particular interest to the group

was to determine the kind of contribution that RELI could make in the crucial yet often neglected secondary education space. Numerous issues, among them inadequate facilities and funding, the flawed capitation model, inequalities in teacher distribution, and the anxieties and uncertainties occasioned by the new curriculum, were raised and subjected to penetrating discourse. From the discussion, the group came to the realization that many questions relating to secondary education in Kenya remained unanswered. The key question that emerged from the group discourse was: *What exactly is the status of secondary education in Kenya?*

### *1.2.2. Secondary School Education in Kenya*

In Kenya, secondary education takes four years to complete under the 8-4-4 system of education, which is preceded by 8 years of primary school, and followed by 4 years of university education (8–4–4). At the end of primary and secondary school respectively, learners sit for end-of-cycle national examinations (Kithinji, 2016). The 8-4-4 system of education had a noble vision with vocational education as its cornerstone. It was anticipated that it would equip secondary school students with the necessary skills to seek employment in the non-formal sector that had more opportunities than the white-collar sector. Unfortunately, within a few years, due to inadequate funds and poor implementation, the practical, technical, and vocational component of secondary curriculum was watered down. Only a few well-equipped secondary schools were able to continue offering the technical and vocational subjects as optional, but the bulk of poorer schools lack the teachers, workshops or resources to be able to offer such subjects (Milligan, 2017). This resulted, among other things, in the curriculum de-emphasizing the practical component and becoming too academic, and the subjects that offered practical skills were relegated to the status of non-examinable subjects (MoEST, 2012). The task force on realignment of education to the constitution (Republic of Kenya, 2012a), further observes that with time, secondary schools began to place too much emphasis on examinations and unhealthy competition emerged. The task force therefore recommended reforms that would introduce a system of continuous Competency Assessment Tests that will contribute to the overall performance of learners and the introduction of vocational and technical education early in junior secondary school to encourage attaining dual qualification (i.e. academic and industry). Noting that the existing objective-based curriculum provided limited flexibility for the teacher and learners, it also recommended that learners should be empowered to acquire competences and skills that will enable them to meet the human resource aspirations

of Kenya's Vision 2030. This was to be done through offering subject pathways to allow for choice by learners to pursue areas of special interest.

The Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 on "Reforming Education and Training Sectors in Kenya", similarly noted that secondary school graduates had limited skills and abilities to join the world of work, trade or middle and tertiary level education and training . It therefore recommended a competency-based curriculum that would enable learners to graduate with competencies that empower them with technical and entrepreneurial skills, and enable them to exploit their talents to the full (MoEST, 2012). This is reiterated by the 'Report on Needs Assessment for Secondary Level Curriculum in Kenya' (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2016) which found that the existing 8-4-4 curriculum lacked pathways to direct learners at the secondary school level, which made them unable to make informed choices as they decide on career paths.

These concerns and recommendations set the stage for the introduction of the Kenya Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), with a 2-6-3-3-3 structure (representing number of years spent at pre-primary, primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, and university respectively). The CBC was rolled out at the early years stage up to grade three in 2019. The incremental implementation means that the rollout at the secondary school level will start in the year 2023. According to the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development, 2017) learners at lower secondary will be exposed to a broad-based curriculum to enable them to explore their own abilities, personality, and potential. This will act as a basis for selecting subjects according to career paths of interest at the senior school. Learners at senior school will have an opportunity to join one of three pathways: Arts and Sports; Social Sciences; or Science Technical Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Senior schools will have to assess the availability of requisite infrastructure then make sound decisions on which pathway(s) to offer (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2019).

In Kenya, the public secondary schools are the majority, and unlike the private, receive government funding and state-paid teachers. The quality of education in private secondary schools varies significantly; the high cost private schools are very well equipped, but the majority of private schools lack equipment, facilities and qualified teachers (Oketch & Somerset, 2010). These low cost secondary schools however, serve the poor and marginalized students who have limited options (Zulu et. al., 2017).

With the introduction of Free Day secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008, the government paid for the tuition fee in public secondary schools, which led to an exponential increase in enrolment (Republic of Kenya, 2015a). The number of secondary schools, both public and private, has also grown tremendously in the recent past (Republic of Kenya, 2014a). Thus, the FDSE policy has had a positive impact on the number of children enrolling in school. However, as observed by several researchers (Kipeen, P. et al, 2015; Asena, et al, 2016; Getange et al, 2014; Murunga, 2010; Omae et al, 2017 ), the celebrated increase in enrolment has at the same time, compromised quality standards because they were not accompanied by a proportionate increase in related learning materials and resources.

## 1.3 Rationale for the study

There has been a lot of public concern and conversation about issues facing the secondary education sector, but much of this information is scattered. As noted by Nicolai et al, 2014) the low levels of education data in Kenya are particularly apparent at the secondary level. During the RELI Kenya country convening, the secondary education SIG noted that there were numerous issues and concerns affecting secondary education in the country, which needed to be explored systematically. It was also felt that compared to primary education, secondary education had received less attention in research and policy discourse. To understand how RELI could contribute meaningfully to this subsector, it was found necessary to conduct research on the status of secondary education the country. The secondary education SIG thus arrived at one conclusion--there was urgent need to establish a reliable knowledge base on the status of secondary education through research. It was anticipated that the outcome of this research would enable RELI to make better-informed decisions for initiating targeted interventions in the secondary education sector. There was therefore, need to collect solid and consolidated empirical evidence on the status of secondary education in Kenya.

## 1.4 Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to document evidence on the status of secondary education in Kenya in order to determine what RELI could do to make a meaningful and impactful entry into the secondary education sector. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the systemic educational outcomes at the secondary school level of education

2. Determine the quality of secondary education (pupil to teacher ratio, qualification of teachers, availability of teaching/learning materials, and assessment).
3. Identify factors affecting equitable educational participation in secondary schooling (enrollment, completion, transition, dropout, distance to school, and school places) and examine effectiveness of government strategies to promote equity and inclusion.
4. Explore the implications of the curricular changes on equity and life skills education at the secondary school level.
5. Assess the provision of values and life skills education in secondary schools in order to determine how these can be better imparted and instilled to sustain secondary school students at the next level of training and work.
6. Explore the key factors affecting discipline in secondary schools.
7. Determine the status of research on secondary education in Kenya

The intended outcome of the study was to provide information that will assist RELI in generating ideas and sustainable concepts to support secondary education. This will therefore provide a basis for RELI's entry into the secondary education space.

## 1.5 Key Questions to Guide Analysis

The collection of data was guided by six key questions and reflections that were collaboratively developed by RELI members (see annex 1)

# CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Introduction

Data was obtained from a desk review of government policy documents and relevant research studies on secondary education in Kenya. These were supplemented by feedback from stakeholders in Kenya and from the validation session during the RELI regional convening in Entebbe.

### *2.1.1 Desk review*

The scope of the desk review included RELI documents, government reports and policy documents, and relevant research reports on secondary education in Kenya.

***Methodology for the desk review***

The study adopted Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) approach that provides a methodological framework useful for conducting this type of review. Christened the 'York framework', it provided the five basic stages that were followed for this review. The five stages are *(a)* Identification of the research questions to be addressed; *(b)* identification of studies relevant to the research question; *(c)* selection of studies to include in the review; *(d)* charting of information and data within the included studies; and *(e)* collating, summarizing and reporting results of the review. In addition, there was consultation with RELI members to make sure comprehensive inclusion of all relevant material, which is in keeping with the optional sixth stage proposed in the framework.

***i) Identification of questions to guide research***

The key questions to guide the research were developed in consultation with the RELI Kenya team to ensure a satisfactory breadth of coverage.

***ii) Selection of studies to include in the review***

**Search strategy:** Several literature sources, such as electronic databases, reference lists of relevant literature, key journals, and publications from websites of relevant organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF, and government policy documents were searched. The scoping review was approached in multiple steps, first beginning with electronic literature databases. Once relevant material had been selected from these sources, relevant organization websites (e.g. UNESCO, UNICEF, and APHRC) and URLs were searched to increase capture of relevant material.

The search strategy for electronic databases was developed from the research questions that formed the basis for generating the key words to guide the search. A qualified university librarian was consulted to assist in identifying the relevant keywords and advise on the databases that were most likely to produce the type of studies sought for this study. The following electronic databases were identified and used for the search: ERIC, SAGE, Emerald, AJOL, JSTOR, CREATE, EBSCO.

***Electronic literature database searching:*** To conduct the electronic database search, a list of terms pertinent to secondary education in Kenya was used. These included terms such as secondary education in Kenya, KCSE, secondary education outcomes in Kenya, Kenya curriculum reforms, inclusion in basic education, resourcing in secondary education in Kenya, discipline in secondary schools in Kenya and life skills education in Kenya . These

terms were then also combined to generate keywords that were used to search both peer-reviewed and grey literature and from the electronic databases

***Website searching:*** A search for relevant websites was conducted and a list of relevant websites to search compiled. These included UNESCO, World Bank, APHRC, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and Kenya Ministry of Education Websites. These were searched in a systemic manner, taking advantage of the research and/or publication links in websites where available to access organizations' reports, research papers, and/or publications. For websites without a link to a central repository, all links were checked for relevant materials scattered thorough out the site.

Abstracts of the articles identified in the electronic database search were read and inclusion/exclusion criteria applied in the abstract screening tool. For inclusion in the review, the abstracts had to indicate that the articles contain systematic research or reviews on the areas covered by the questions guiding this research. Peer-reviewed articles, research reports, published theses, and policy analyses, if they met the inclusion criteria, were considered. Obvious commentaries, editorials, unpublished academic theses, and non-systematic reviews were excluded from the review. To avoid capturing outdated literature, the search was limited to works published between the years 2000 and 2019, but with a focus on those published from year 2009 onwards, except in cases where it was necessary to capture older information of historical significance.

**Other literature sources:** Other important sources of literature included government policy documents and relevant documents from RELI partners. Generally, a two-part study selection process was employed. First, titles were reviewed to establish eligibility based on the defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The second step of the selection process focused on the abstracts using the eligibility criteria to determine whether they met the acceptable level of rigor so that only abstracts that demonstrated evidence of a systematic approach were included.

### *iii. Charting of information and data within the included studies*

The charting process was multi-staged and entailed extracting information from individual articles. Descriptive characteristics such as general citation information, study locale, and key findings from the selected articles were included to create a detailed spreadsheet database. This database, which was organized thematically in line with the research questions, formed the basis for collating, summarizing, and reporting.

### *iv. Collating, summarizing, and reporting results of the review*

This represented the final stage of scoping and its purpose was to provide a structure to the literature collected so far. The numerous questions guiding the research provided for a broad scope of research, and thus a large volume of literature was unearthed from the searches. This final stage employed a narrative synthesis where findings were organized into specific categories based on guiding research questions of this study.

#### *2.1.2 Stakeholders' meeting/ consultation*

Stakeholder consultation was treated as an ongoing process that entailed interaction as necessary with RELI members. Initial contact with stakeholders in a single session at the beginning of the review process was made to seek guidance on research questions and areas of focus to ensure results reflected broad interest. The meeting provided an opportunity to collect information from members representing the key stakeholders. The feedback received during this meeting, helped to identify additional sources of information for the study, refine the methodology, align the research questions to the objectives of the study, and review research questions for clarity.

Additional feedback was received from the SIG (attended by members from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania) at the regional convening held in Entebbe. This served as a validation meeting where feedback was sought on the draft study report. Comments, which mostly revolved around curriculum reforms, were utilized to enrich the report.

# CHAPTER THREE: STUDY FINDINGS

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Findings are presented in six broad subsections in line with the questions that guided the study.

## 3.2 Educational outcomes

The first objective of the study was to examine the status of systemic education outcomes and quality of education at secondary school level in Kenya. The two questions that guided the research were:

i) What is the status of various educational attainment indicators such as completion, transition, and dropout?
ii) What is the status of quality indicators such absenteeism, pupil teacher ratio, qualification of teachers, availability of teaching/learning materials, repetition, assessment?

According to UNESCO, education outcome indicators measure how effectively education policies and strategies were implemented. They may also be used to evaluate the extent of access to educational services and the degree of satisfaction with the services received. Examples of outcome indicators include intake rates, enrolment ratios, completion rates, and Gender parity Index (UNESCO. Systematic Monitoring of Education for All (http://www5.unescobkk.org/education/efatraining/module-a3/3-types-of-indicators/)

### *3.2.1 Status of educational attainment indicators*

To improve the primary to secondary school transition rate, the FDSE program was introduced in the year 2008. Secondary school enrolment rose from 1.18 million students in 2007 (639, 393 boys and 540, 874 girls) to 1,328, 964 (735,680 boys and 593, 284 girls) in 2008 (Ministry of Education, 2012a).The total enrolment stood at 2,942,700 in 2018 (Republic of Kenya, 2019a). The secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) also increased considerably from 54.3% in 2013 to 69.0 % in 2017 while the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) rose from 38.5% to 51.1% during this period (Republic of Kenya, 2019a). As shown in Figure 1, the secondary school GER increased by 1.8 percentage points to 70.3 per cent in 2018, while the NER for secondary school increased by 2.1 percentage points to 53.2 per cent during the same period.

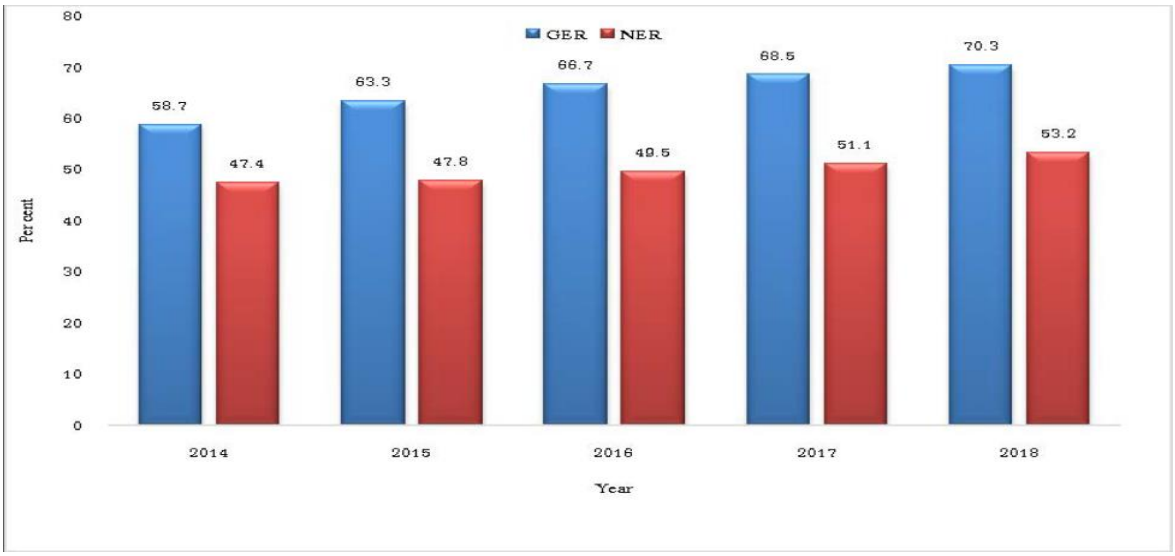



**Figure 1:** Secondary GER and NER in Kenya between 2014 and 2018 (**Source:** *Economic Survey 2019)*

To accommodate the growing number of pupils seeking admission in secondary schools, the number of secondary schools increased from 8,034 in 2013 to 10,655 in 2017 (Republic of Kenya,2019a). The number of students registering for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education has also been on the increase since the introduction of the FDSE. Table 1 shows that between 2014 and 2018, the number of registered candidates rose from 880,486 to 1,060,710.

**Table 1. Number of registered KCSE candidates**

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Males** | 443,258 | 467,904 | 473684 | 498775 | 529215 |
| **Females** | 437228 | 459885 | 478706 | 494,943 | 531,495 |
| **Total** | **880,486** | **927,789** | **952,390** | **993,718** | **1,060,710** |

***Source: Economic Survey, 2019***

The phenomenal increase in primary school enrolment that followed the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003, had slowly led to growth in the number of pupils completing primary education, many of whom however unable to transit to secondary schools owing to the high cost of secondary education. For example, in 2005, the transition rate from primary to secondary was 56% (boys 57.2%, girls 54.7%), but it began to rise after the introduction of FDSE and stood at 72% in 2010 (Republic of Kenya &

UNESCO, 2012) and was 83% in 2018 (Republic of Kenya, 2019b). Clearly, many of the pupils dropped out after the KCPE. Figure 2 shows the Pupil Completion Rate (PCR) at class eight and the Primary to Secondary Transition Rate (PSTR) from 2014 to 2018. Between 2014 and 2018, the PCR and PSTR increased from 79.3% and 76.1% to 84.2 per cent and 83.3 per cent respectively (Republic of Kenya, 2019b).

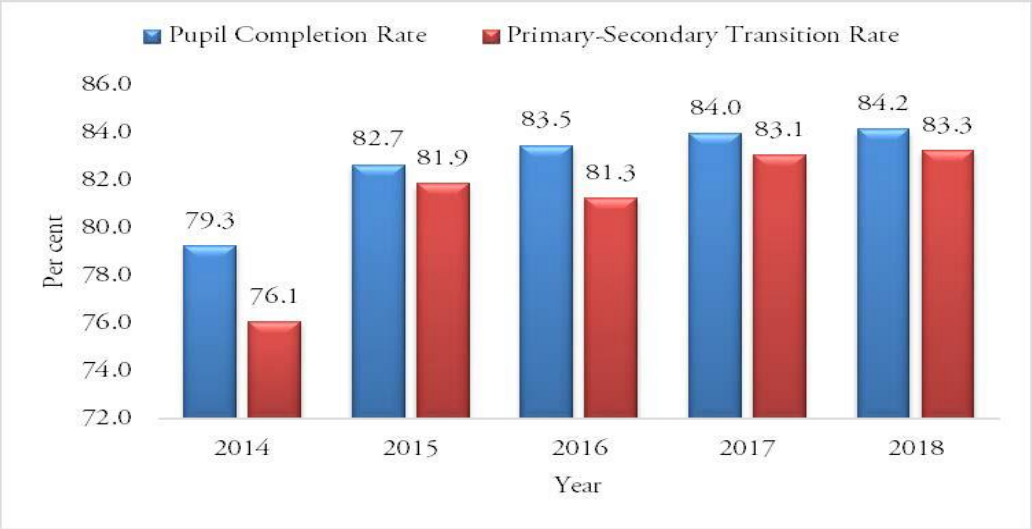



**Figure 2. Pupil Completion Rate (PCR) and Primary to Secondary Transition Rate (PSTR), 2014 – 2018 (*Source: Economic Survey, 2019}***

At the time of introduction of FDSE in 2008, transition rates from primary to secondary increased marginally from 59.6 % in 2007 to 64.1 % in 2008, and further to 72% in 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2012b). The increase has therefore been steady, but was more substantial two years after the introduction of FDSE.

Still, according to the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 (Republic of Kenya, 2019a), close to 50% of secondary school age children are still out of school, and not all students who enroll in secondary school complete the cycle. For example, the survival rate at Form 4 for all students stood at 86.4 percent in 2018 (Republic of Kenya, 2019). Even though completion rates have increased significantly since introduction of FDSE regional, disparities are evident (Orodho, 2015). According to Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 (Republic of Kenya, 2019a ), secondary completion in Central and Nairobi is 3 times more than in North Eastern and Coast regions. In 2008 when FDSE was introduced, the secondary completion rate in North Eastern Kenya was 32% compared to 81% and 92% in Central and Nairobi Provinces respectively and by 2014, the completion rate for Northeastern and Coast Regions had only reached 29 and 38 respectively(UNESCO,2014).

From an analysis of the statistics, two important observations emerge. Firstly, whereas the national statistics reveal an increase in secondary school Gross and Net Enrolment Rates since the introduction of secondary education subsidies, they obscure regional inequalities in participation across the country. Studies have revealed that there are major social-economic, and regional disparities; higher enrolment are found in districts located in the non-ASAL regions, and poor families are unable to meet the top up cost of secondary education leading to drop out (Ohba, 2009; Ndulu & Moronge, 2015; Mutegi, Muriithi & Wanjala, 2017), less girls than boys enrolling (Republic of Kenya, 2015a) and a huge unmet demand for secondary school places in especially urban slums (Orodho, 2015).

According to the Task Force on the Re-Alignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2012a), there was a high dropout rate at the secondary level of education due to diverse factors, including, the range of user charges being levied, teenage pregnancies, child labor levels, and cultural practices such as circumcision that impact negatively on school attendance. Available statistics also reveal the existence of repeaters in secondary education. Table 2 below shows the repetition rates by gender in the various classes nationally as at year 2014.

**Table 2. Secondary repetition rates (%) by Class in Kenya (2014)**

| | Form 1 | Form 2 | Form 3 | Form 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Boys** | 0.7 | 1.1 | 2.7 | 4.1 |
| **Girls** | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.9 | 2.2 |
| | **0.6** | **1,2** | **2,3** | **3.2** |

***Source: Republic of Kenya (2014a).***

### *3.2.2 Quality of education*

Several indicators of quality were examined, including academic achievement, pupil/teacher ratio, quality of teachers, infrastructure, and equipment, quality assurance, learning conditions, and teaching methods. According to the National Education Sector Plan 2013-2018, educational attainment at secondary level is low with most of candidates failing to achieve the minimum grades necessary for admission to University and other middle level colleges. In Kenya, a minimum grade C+ is required for university admission, whereas C- is the minimum required for middle level colleges (Republic of Kenya, 2015a). The Economic Survey, 2019 shows that of the 653,787 candidates who sat the KCSE

examination of 2018, only 32%, scored grade C- and above (Republic of Kenya, 2019b). Still, the number of candidates who scored the minimum university entry score of C+ (C plus) and above rose increased by 29.8 percent in 2018 from the previous year. *(*Republic of Kenya, 2019b). However, the number of students scoring the lowest grade (E) has increased in the recent past as shown in table 3.

**Table 3. Number of candidates who scored an E grade in KCSE**

| *2014* | *2015* | *2016* | *2017* | *2018* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5,636** | 5,350 | 33,399 | 35,536 | 30,854 |

***Source: Economic Survey, 2019***

According to the *Economic Survey, 2019*, there was an improvement in the national mean score by 0.54 percentage points to 52.70 per cent in 2018, though the performance in mathematics declined by 8.01 percentage points to 43.13 per cent in 2018 (Republic of Kenya, 2019a). The Monitoring Learner Achievement (MLA) report for 2018 (MOE,2018) revealed 79.2% of Form 2 students had not attained the minimum competency levels in Mathematics, while 37% demonstrated low acquisition of literacy skills, especially in writing and reading comprehension. This implies under-achievement at the secondary level of education.

Thus, whereas the academic achievement at KCSE has improved in the recent past, overall, there has been poor academic achievement by candidates at this level. Studies on performance at secondary school level have shown that many schools do not have enough science laboratories and lack libraries (Ngari & Wakiaga, 2018), there is insufficient in-service training leading to poor teaching methods (KNUT, 2015; Adan & Orodho, 2014) and serious teacher shortages persist, especially in ASAL regions (Orodho & Njeru, 2003; Murunga, 2010; Asena, et al., 2016, Wamalwa et al., 2018). Similarly, the Task Force on the Re-Alignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2012a) raised several quality concerns such as high pupil/teacher ratio, inadequate infrastructure and equipment, inadequate quality assurance officers, inequitable regional/school distribution of teachers, theoretical (chalk and board) teaching even in science subjects and teacher absenteeism (MoE, 2018). These point to compromised quality of education.

## 3.3 Implications of the Curriculum Reforms

The study, guided by the second Key research question, explored the implications of the ongoing curriculum reforms.

### *3.3.1 Will the new curriculum cause more marginalization and aggravate the equity concerns in the country?*

According to the CBC, each senior school shall decide which of the pathways from among i) Arts and Sports Science ii) Social Sciences and iii) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to offer based on the availability of required infrastructure (Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development, 2017). Considering that the former national and provincial schools have always had better facilities and more staff, they will have better capacity to offer a greater variety of pathways and tracks**.** This is likely to perpetuate or even aggravate the inequalities that have historically existed among schools and regions of the country.

The newly introduced curriculum places a lot of emphasis on talent development, which calls for low student-teacher ratio that can enable teachers to spot and nurture talent. In addition, the 2-6-6-3 system requires basic science labs, music instruments, drama theatres, outdoor and indoor sports, and numerous other facilities to support talent and skills development. Given that the government has been unable to upgrade physical facilities such as workshops and laboratories and to employ enough teachers, secondary schools that are poorly resourced are likely to lag behind.

### *3.3.2 Involving secondary school parents in life skills programs*

#### *3.3.2.1 How can we involve secondary school parents in life skills programs?*

The Kenya competence-based curriculum (CBC) emphasizes the importance of parental engagement in the teaching and learning process, especially in LSE, as they play a critical role in providing an environment that is conducive to learning (UNESCO, 2017). Kaviti (2018) notes many parents are unaware of the paradigm shift in Kenya's education system that requires them to contribute in identifying and nurturing their children's talents, and in supporting the LSE programs. The first steps towards the successful involvement of parents are to familiarize them on the new curriculum, establish harmonious, collaborative partnerships between them and teachers, and to train teachers on new skills for communicating with parents. Gallego (2014) asserts that parents may not know how to

best support their children's learning, and schools often fail to set clear strategies for parental involvement.

Among the most often discussed models of parental involvement is Joyce Epstein's model( 1980) that informs school administrators on how parents can be involved with their child's learning at home, within the school and community (Epstein et al., 2011; Oostdam & Hooge, 2013). The model has six underlying foundational components for parental involvement, as shown in figure 3. Each component in the model acknowledges the importance of a particular type of parent involvement, and is recognition of the variety of activities that parents may undertake to support their children's learning.

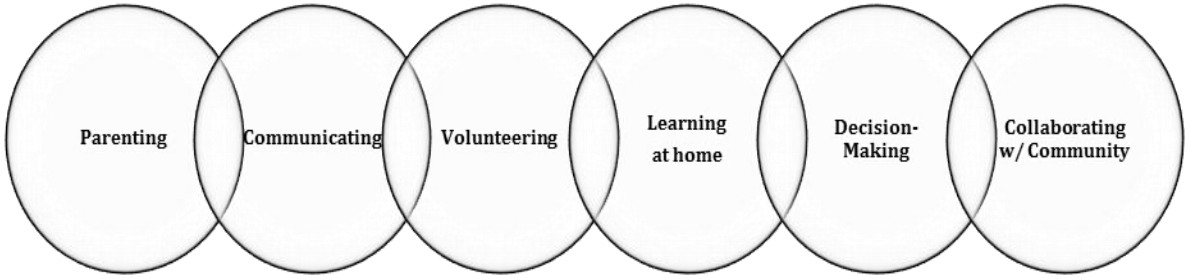



**Figure 3:Epstein Model (2011)**.

**Parenting:** The first type of involvement is to help all families to understand how to build a conducive home environment for optimal learning of life skills and values.
**Communicating:** The second level of involvement is designing effective forms of school to home and home to school communication, a two-way communication forum.
**Volunteering:** This entails parents volunteering their skills and talents to participate in school activities such as career talks, motivational talks, and life skills seminars.
**Learning at home**: This entails providing information and ideas to families on how to assist students with homework and other curriculum-related activities.
**Shared decision-making**: This entails including parents from different backgrounds as representatives on school committees or structures, such as a life skills committee
**Collaboration with community:** This entails identifying and using resources (human, economic, material, or social) from the community that can help to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning, e.g using local businesses to develop student work skills.

### *3.3.3. How do we instill values that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training/work?*

The crisis in social and moral values is an indication that the teaching of moral education and ethics has not been effective. Reference to some commissions of inquiry that delved into the subject of values and ethics helps to shed light on the issue. The *Report of The Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond* of 1988 (Kamunge Commission) recommended shifting the teaching approach in schools towards cooperative effort to nurture the values of cooperation and mutual responsibility instead of relying on the stiff competition (Republic of Kenya, 1988). The Koech Report of 1999 (Republic of Kenya, 1999) observed that Social Education and Ethics(SEE) had failed to produce the expected results in society, and blamed poor teaching methods, the lack of role models, poor parenting practices, and emphasis on passing examinations for the moral lacuna in Kenyan schools and society.

Therefore, to be able to effectively instill values that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training or work requires an approach that focusses on three dimensions, viz pedagogy, content, and organization of the experiences. Wamahiu (2017) proposes that teaching methods need to rely less on fear-based and moralistic messages, and that students should engage in a variety of activities designed to make them aware of how values apply to everyday life and in the world of work. Studies have shown that the methodology of teaching values in LSE in Kenya's secondary schools tends to be didactic, where learners are instructed on what to think and believe, and in a unidirectional fashion (Githui, Njoka & Mwenje, 2017; Chenge & Syomwene, 2016; Lagat, 2016). This encourages passive learning and memorization of content for examinations. There is need adopt teaching methodology that employs active learner involvement to stimulate and effectively nurture the relevant virtues (Wamahiu, 2017), as well as employ diverse methodology. Bhave (2016) proposes several techniques such as discussion, role-play, drama, songs, debates, and storytelling to provide experiential learning. Effective teaching of values should also focus on cultivating moral and social discernment so that students can function independently and develop an open-minded, sustained contemplation of the values. Deep ethical inquiry fosters moral intelligence in students more effectively.

With regard to the second dimension, the content of the LSE and values program should be aligned to post-secondary school training and the world of work. Lastly, schools should

exploit all the different media through which values could be transmitted such as school rules and policies, classroom environment, clubs, co- curricular and extra-curricular activities, school assembly, pastoral instruction program, guidance and counselling programs, students' leadership structures and school traditions and events. In addition, schools, through their character, should promote positive values by having an inclusive setting, maintaining positive communication and relationships with students, ensuring that teachers model the desirable attitudes and embracing cultural diversity. This approach to reinforcing values helps to instill values that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training or work.

### *3.3.4 Imparting skills that can sustain secondary school students at the next level*

Nicolai, and Prizzon, & Hine (2014) assert that an important way to strengthen school-to-work transitions is to pay greater attention to providing high quality and relevant education, as well as providing active links to the labor market. This means that to provide high quality life skills education, the delivery and nature of content as well as its alignment to industry should be carefully considered.

Firstly, employing interactive and participatory teaching and learning methods, in addition to infusing experiential and activity-centered pedagogy will enhance effectiveness of the LSE program in schools. UNICEF (2010) notes that relying on a wide range of activities and methods helps to develop life skills that are closely related to self-expression, promotion of emotional intelligence, empathy, cooperation, interpersonal communication, constructive argument, negotiation, and problem solving

Considering that the topics in the LSE curriculum are adaptable to many different contexts (Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development, 2017), schools need to work out a mechanism for bringing together the teachers of different subjects to think through the possibilities of integrating and imparting life skills via the different subjects and activities in the school. Such a whole-school approach to the teaching of life skills is likely to strengthen the learning and internalization of life skills for life after school. In the 2-6-6-3 system of education, teachers will be required to teach life skills within the context of the different pathways such that learners can apply the life skills to practical work. This approach will enable learners to relate life skills to practical work situations, and to appreciate their relevance to the real world. Finally, there is need to exercise flexibility

such that teachers update and align the curriculum to reflect evolving societal requirements as well as individual learning needs to focus on developing relevant skills.

### *3.3.5 How do we empower teachers to teach life skills within the changing environment occasioned by the curricular reforms?*

To effectively teach life skills within the changing environment occasioned by the curricular reforms, teachers will first need to be empowered to enable learners to explore their own abilities, personality, and potential (Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development, 2017). The empowerment of teachers could be understood at three levels; capacity building for teaching and mastery of content, preparation for engagement with the others, provision of resources needed to implement the curriculum. This entails doing the following:

- Training teachers in the theory and content of life skills education, and in the appropriate pedagogy for effective delivery of this curriculum. Most teachers of LSE in Kenya have not received any training in the subject (Abobo & Orodho, 2014; Githui, et al, 2017; Simiyu, Kirwok, Thinguri, 2017; UNICEF, 2012) hence serious shortage of teachers of LSE in schools (Githui, et al., 2017) .
- Empowering teachers on suitable strategies for parental involvement and engagement in the implementation of the LSE and CSL programs
- Initiating structures to provide links between teachers and industry, so that the former keep abreast with the realities of the job market.
- Providing resources for teaching LSE because a major challenge facing the teaching of SEE in secondary schools has been the inadequacy of resources (Githui, 2017; Chenge & Syomwene, 2016; Simiyu et al. 2017).

## 3.4. Equity

The key measures employed by the Kenya government to enhance access and equity in secondary education are the FDSE program, infrastructure improvement grants and bursaries. These have been implemented with positive results, albeit with challenges.

### *3.4.1 What inequalities in secondary schools persist in spite of government funding?*

Muganda et al (2016) observe that the despite the achievements of FDSE program, inequalities still persist. The inequalities that persist in spite of government funding, could be divided into 5 categories; socioeconomic inequalities, inequalities based on disability, gender inequality, and regional inequalities and among-school inequalities.

***i. Socioeconomic inequalities***

Even with the FDSE policy, students still have to pay for school uniforms, boarding fees, (Ndiku et al, 2013) and other hidden costs such as PTA fund, motivational fees, transportation fees and development fees that create challenges for poor parents, leading to dropouts (Ndulu & Moronge, 2015; Ndiku & Muhavi, 2015; Ohba, 2009). The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 also reports that inadequate and dilapidated infrastructure, distance from schools, insecurity; and inadequate provision for learners with special needs and disabilities have impacted quality and access negatively,, especially for the poor (Republic of Kenya, 2019a). Nicolai et al. (2014) adds that due to inequalities, gains made through FDSE have mostly benefited the already advantaged groups such as boys, the wealthy, and those in urban areas, while the traditionally disadvantaged groups have enjoyed smaller gains.

**ii. Disability**

In Kenya, disabled children are now increasingly being integrated with normal children in the same schools whenever their respective disabilities permit. Still, children with disability have faced challenges that lead to their exclusion (Odongo, 2018: Ireri, et al. 2019). Brent et al. (2015) found that lack of transportation services and mobility equipment, inadequate government funding, inadequate access to basic information about disabilities, difficulty in accessing schools, negative attitudes toward disabilities, inadequate and outdated learning materials, and a lack of qualified SNE teachers have had a negative effect on the enrolment of children with disabilities in schools. The National Education Sector Plan expresses the need to establish enrolment, retention and transition rates for SNE learners (Republic of Kenya, 2015a). This has not been implemented, yet it would provide useful data for planning and implementation.

**iii. Gender inequality**

In Kenya, educational opportunities for girls in secondary education have been lower than those for boys, partly because of the traditional perceptions that consigned women to the domestic sphere. Ombati (2013) observes that despite the major achievements in expanding educational opportunities, girls continue to have less access to educational opportunities due to various barriers including teenage pregnancy, early marriages, lack of fees, and lack of encouragement at home. According to Marco (2016), although data

for girls' enrolment, completion, and attendance at national level has been improving steadily, poorer girls in the ASAL continue to have lower enrolment and completion rates, and even lower learning outcomes than boys. What's more, Nicolai (2014) points out that many girls fall in more than one marginalized group, such as girls in rural or ASAL areas; these tend to be the most disadvantaged. Even though Kenya has put in place a re-admission to school policy for girls who fall pregnant, studies show that a significant population of teenage mothers fail to take advantage of the policy ( Republic of Kenya, 2014; Macharia & Kessio, 2015; Population Council, 2019). Kiptanui, Kindiki, & Lelan (2015) posit that sometimes balancing between school and family is difficult for teenage mothers, hence leading to dropout.

The literature thus reveals that girls are less likely to finish secondary school and even for those who finish, fewer girls than boys qualify for admission to university. Fewer female role models in schools, and the fact that the society tends to invest more in the education of boys also exacerbate the unequal access to education. However there is a greater increase in number of girls than boys enrolling in secondary schools since the introduction of FDSE but this masks the gender disparities in enrolment that still exist in favor of boys, especially in ASALs. In addition, a greater percentage of boys enrolls in and completes secondary education as compared to girls (Equal Measures 2030 and FEMNET, 2018).

**iv. Regional inequalities**

Disaggregating data regionally reveals existence of inequalities in primary to secondary transition rates. For example, the gap between the top and bottom performing counties, which was 26 percentage points in 2006, increased to 45 percentage points in 2011, four years after the introduction of FDSE. In the 2018 KCSE examination, three counties produced more than half of the candidates who scored straight As, while 21 counties, mostly comprising those from the ASAL areas did not have any candidate scoring grade A (Advance–Africa, 2018).

The Education for All 2014 national review noted that the impressive national statistics on access after introduction of FDSE obscured the regional variations such as in urban/rural areas, the ASALs, conflict-affected and the marginalized communities (Republic of Kenya, 2014). This is echoed by the *Economic Survey, 2019* (RoK, 2019) which explains that schools in the marginalized parts of the country are widely scattered and prone to insecurity, which hampers access for many students.

**v. Among- school inequalities**

Lewin, Wasanga, Wanderi, & Somerset (2011) assert that the superior quality of education offered in national and extra county schools, which have traditionally been better staffed and equipped than the county and low cost private secondary schools (LCPSS), places their students at an advantage. A graduate from a National school is 100 times more likely to get a government-sponsored place at a public university than a county school graduate. Ohba (2012) also notes that the LCPSS, do not benefit from the FDSE subsidies by the government, yet, they host very needy students. Thus, the FDSE has widened the gap between the public and LCPSS

### *3.4.2 What are the key drivers of inequality affecting the secondary school level of education?*

UNICEF (2015) observes that Kenya is among the most unequal countries in the sub-region and has many deprived people who live below the poverty line. The marginalization of individuals and groups further drives the vicious poverty cycle, with serious implications for educational inequality. Socio economic inequalities are connected to regional inequalities and to gender inequalities. The studies conducted reveal six major categories of drivers of inequality affecting secondary education in Kenya, viz. socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, the gender factor, disability factor and regional/geographical factors, and inadequate government financial resources .

### *3.4.3 What is the status of resourcing to schools?*

The government spends Ksh.32 billion to support the FDSE and since 2018, allocates Kshs. 22,244 per learner in all public secondary schools in Kenya. For the special needs students, the government, starting in 2019, and enhanced capitation to Kshs. 57,974 per child. Parents have an obligation to top up KShs. 10,790 to cater for boarding, equipment, and stores (Republic of Kenya, 2019b). Despite the increase in per capita allocation over time, head teachers have complained that the money still does not fully meet the needs of schools (KSSHA, 2019). These concerns are confirmed by the Economic Survey, 2019 which reports that inadequate learning and teaching resources, and inadequate and inequitable distribution of teaching staff hamper provision of secondary education in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2019b). The persistent teacher shortage has been aggravated by the opening of new schools and the government's 2018 policy on 100 per cent transition from Primary to Secondary school (Education News, 2018). The number of Quality Assurance and

Standards Officers has also been inadequate. However, it is notable that the government spent Kshs. 7.5billion in 2018 on the printing and supply of books for the core subjects (Republic of Kenya, 2019b), which has improved the student to textbook ratio significantly.

### *3.4.4 How is inclusion implemented in secondary schools and how effective has this been?*

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) affirms the right to education for every person and goes further to commit the state to take measures including affirmative action to ensure persons with disabilities access relevant education and training. As per policy, inclusive education is provided free of charge in public secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2008)**.** Kenya has also ratified various international instruments that safeguard the rights of people with disabilities. Thus, the country has a supportive legal framework to support inclusive education. Odongo (2018) however found that there seems to be inadequate mechanism for ensuring and overseeing that students with disabilities have equal access to secondary education. Despite the policy (Republic of Kenya, 2012b), requiring all secondary schools to adopt and design programs that implement inclusive education, Ireri (2019) found that disability among learners is still a major cause of exclusion in schools. According to the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 (Republic of Kenya, 2019) some of the challenges in the provision of secondary education are the inadequate and dilapidated infrastructure and distance from schools. These affect the children with disability more gravely than they affect the other students.

Ireri et al. (2019) and Ruteere et al. (2015) found that most teachers had not received training in special needs education, most resource rooms did not have modified furniture for learners with physical disabilities, and most schools did not have modified toilets, neither had they modified their staircases into ramps. Other studies have also shown the poor level of inclusion in secondary schools characterized by inadequate critical teaching and learning resources, outdated learning materials, inadequate funding ,and lack of mobility equipment and services (Akinyi, et al. ,2015; Brent et al, 2015; Odeny, 2015). Owing to the challenges, Odongo (2018) found that children with disabilities remain underrepresented in the Kenyan education system. Mwoma (2017) observes that there are some special unit classes within regular schools for the visually, mentally, physically and auditory impairments. However, the education system does not adequately cater for other special needs and handicaps such as the gifted and talented children, and those with emotional and behavioral disorders.

The picture that emerges is that children with disabilities continue to struggle to access secondary education because the policy framework designed to protect and promote their rights is not backed by mandatory laws on services and rights in schools. The government has however, delivered on its commitment in the National Education Sector Plan (Republic of Kenya, 2015a) to increase capitation grants to meet the needs of LWD.

## 3.5 Indiscipline in secondary schools

### *3.5.1 What are the policies, programs, and guidelines on school discipline?*

Government policy on discipline is expressed in the Basic Education Regulations, Legislative Supplement No. 2I, Legal notice number 39, 2015 (Republic of Kenya, 2015b). These regulations provide the policy on school discipline as follows: 'Every institution of basic education shall develop school rules, which shall be subjected to public participation and approved by the Board of Management of the school '. That every school is required to keep a register of undisciplined learners and the head teacher may suspend a student from school if they persist in indiscipline, or if the act of indiscipline is likely to threaten the safety of other learners in the institution. The regulations also prescribe the mechanisms for appeal against suspension and prohibit the withdrawal of the registration of a candidate from a national examination as a form of punishment (Republic of Kenya, 2015b)

In 2001, the government of Kenya banned the use of corporal punishment in schools on realizing it was being misused and was causing injuries among students. The ban was however, not welcomed by some teachers who felt that their power to instill discipline was watered down (Kaguamba & Muola, 2010). Ngwiri (2003) reports that even after the ban, caning stopped in many schools but other forms of punishment such as kicking, pinching, slapping, and kneeling continued to be used. With the ban on corporal punishment, schools now rely on guidance and counselling programs and student leadership structures (Kiprop, Bomett, Kipruto & Jelimo,2015) which have had mixed success, due to challenges such as lack of trained teachers (Kiprop et al,2017).

### *3.5.2. Causes and drivers of indiscipline*

Cases of serious indiscipline and violent disturbances in secondary schools have existed for many years in Kenya, leading the government to create several commissions and taskforces to investigate the phenomena. The numerous commissions set up in response

to indiscipline are testimony to the gravity of the matter in Kenya's secondary schools. Some of the main task forces set up to investigate indiscipline include;

- The Report on Causes, Effects, and Remedies of Indiscipline in Secondary Schools in Central Province, also called the Macharia Report (Republic of Kenya, 2000),
- The Report of the Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools of 2001, also known as the Wangai Report of 2001(Republic of Kenya, 2001),
- The David Koech Special Commission (2008) that was established to investigate the causes of school unrest and violence.

Based on analysis of the causes of indiscipline identified from the taskforces, the following emerge as major drivers of indiscipline in schools:

- Inadequate guidance and counseling;
- little involvement of students in co-curricular activities;
- inadequate parental involvement in students' discipline;
- Unmet needs of learners, poor living conditions in schools and harsh school rules;
- Intransigence and dictatorial styles on the part of administrators and teachers;
- Drug abuse in schools;
- Communication breakdown;
- Peer pressure;
- Environmental factors such as societal moral decay , poor role models in society, and negative influence from the social and mass media;
- Academic pressure and fear of examinations;
- Loss of respect for authority.

Despite the many findings and recommendations of the task forces, the phenomenon of unrest and violence in Kenya's secondary schools has endured. Kenya National Union of Teachers {KNUT} in a study on the needs of teachers in public schools also found that there was a dire need for capacity building on management of student discipline and behavior (Kenya National Union of Teachers, 2015). Teachers therefore require in-service training on guidance counseling and student discipline management, as they seem to be grappling with how to manage discipline among students. Their lack of capacity could be a contributing factor in the escalating cases of indiscipline.

### *3.5.3 How far is indiscipline a result of attitudes, perceived injustices, or dissatisfaction with the existing education?*

An analysis of the causes of indiscipline reveals that some of the manifestations of indiscipline result from perceived injustices or dissatisfaction with the existing conditions in schools such as failure to engage students or to involve them in decisions affecting

them (Kiprop, Nandeke, &,Chumba 2017; Murage ,2017; Onditi, 2018) . Several causes of unrest identified by the commissions such as inadequate quantity or quality of food, unethical conduct by some teachers, dictatorial school administrative styles, lack of recreation facilities, communication breakdown, an overloaded curriculum, ineffective school guidance and counseling service, hostile living conditions, and poor parenting are beyond the students control. Responsive school management should be able to provide mechanisms to address many of these concerns.

## 3.6 Examination system

The fifth main research question sought to determine the effectiveness of the KCSE and to propose what could be improved in the exams systems in line with the CBC.

### *3.6.1 How effective are exams at the end of secondary education?*

At the end of secondary school, students sit for the KCSE examination, which covers content that has been learnt over the four-year period. This subjects candidates to the pressure of revising four years of content in several subjects. The major weaknesses in this examination are as follows:

- The KCSE examination has promoted unhealthy competition among schools. To enjoy the publicity that comes with high ranking in KCSE results, many schools resort to holiday tuition and remedial teaching to raise the mean score, and in the process, expose teachers and students to stress and burnout (Mugi & Mwangi, 2018; Sichambo, Maragia & Simiyu, 2012). National Crime Research Centre (2014) also found that those who score low grades are condemned as failures and have few options for advancement after secondary schooling. This leads to high levels of anxiety during the KCSE examination.
- There is no evidence that the KCSE tests students' level of self-reliance and skills attained for the world of work in line with the philosophy of the 8-4-4 system. Thus, the examination is not in tune with the objectives of the 8-4-4 system.
- A pass grade at KCSE in vocational education does translate into an advantage in finding a job in a related industry. Good performance in KCSE is therefore not perceived as an indicator of competence in the industrial subjects.
- There has been tendency by teachers to concentrate on drilling students on how to answer questions in the KCSE examination. Students have also focused more on memorization than comprehension (Amutabi, 2003; Milligan, 2017). Consequently,

the KCSE examination has become ineffective in measuring learning and instead rewards rote learning and drilling for passing exams.

- The KCSE examination has been fraught with the serious challenge of massive cheating (Adow, Alio & Thinguri, 2015). The exam is therefore flawed to the extent that it fails to challenge candidates to think and apply knowledge; candidates without proper comprehension of content can still excel.

### *3.6.2 What can be improved in the exams system in line with the new curriculum?*

- NCRC (2014) asserts that a paradigm shift in assessment methods should be all-inclusive and taking into account diverse learner abilities in academic and non-academic performance areas. The examination system should employ several systems for evaluating students' abilities such as journaling and teamwork.
- As argued by Republic of Kenya (2012a) the one-off summative assessment at the end of the secondary school does not accurately measure learners 'abilities.
- The KCSE does not focus on assessing actual practical skills that have been acquired throughout the learning period in secondary school. Milligan (2017) however explains that at inception, continuous assessment of practical work was done and this was more in tune with the CBC and should be reintroduced.

## 3. 7 Status of Existing Research on Secondary School Education

The purpose of the sixth objective of the study was to summarize the current state of research activity on secondary school education in Kenya, by extent and by nature. The analysis was organized around the main themes represented by the broad questions that guided this study. For each of the broad questions that guided the study, the following two questions were asked: *What is the status of existing research on secondary school education? What gaps exist in the research conducted on secondary education?* A comprehensive search strategy was used to retrieve all available and eligible published systematic research and surveys in the literature as described in the methodology.

### *3.7.1. Education outcomes*

Several published studies have been conducted on the various systemic education outcomes and quality indicators. The search revealed eighteen published research studies on outcomes such as transition, enrolment, retention, and completion.

#### *3.7.1.1 Educational attainment*

The research has revealed that there has been an increase in enrolment, retention, transition from primary to secondary, number of secondary schools, number of registered candidates, and number of enrolled girls since the introduction of FDSE though, gender, socioeconomic and regional inequalities that still exist . In addition, the available research has shown that the supply of secondary school places has not increased sufficiently to accommodate the increased enrolment and to ensure participation by all.

***Research Gaps:***

- There is little research on what really makes a ``good'' secondary school in Kenya. What is it that is done in the 'good' schools that sets them apart from the rest?
- There is a gap in information on how children who could not afford their first choice schools end up performing in lower-tier schools. Does the lower quality of education associated with these 'second-rate' schools significantly affect their performance? How much value addition is made by the different categories of schools?

#### *3.7.1.2 Education Quality Outcomes*

The second part of the question guiding the research was: *What is the status of quality indicators such absenteeism, pupil- teacher ratio, qualification of teachers, and availability of teaching/learning materials, repetition, and assessment?*

There are several studies on that have been conducted on academic achievement, pupil/teacher ratio, teacher adequacy, quality of teachers, infrastructure and equipment, quality assurance, learning conditions, and teaching methods at secondary school, and all which found suboptimal levels of quality.

***Research Gaps:*** There is inadequate research on:

- The causes of the dramatic drop in performance at KCSE and the extent to which it could be linked to the Ministry of Education efforts to curb the examinations cheating menace.
- The root causes of the poor levels of competency in certain subjects.
- Up to date statistics on the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism and the dynamics around it. For example, what is the relationship between teacher absenteeism and teacher/student performance?

### *3.7.2 Curriculum Reforms*

In the present study, the search did not yield any studies on the preparedness of the secondary school level for the curriculum reforms. However, the search generated ten studies on provision of life skills education in Kenya, which revealed the weaknesses and challenges that faced teaching of SEE before it was phased out and replaced by LSE

**Gaps in research:** Considering that the roll out of the CBC will reach the Junior Secondary level in the next few years, there is need for research to explore;

- How to instill values and impart skills that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training/work?
- How quality and relevance of secondary education can be promoted through active links to the labor market; the CBC that is designed to prepare secondary school graduates for direct entry into the world of work.
- Factors that contribute to successful implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and how it can take advantage of the whole school environment.
- Good practices in LSE in Kenyan schools and on the impact of LSE

### *3.7.3 Equity*

The fourth broad area of concern for the present study encompassed the issues of inequalities, resourcing, and inclusion.

#### *3.7.3.1 What are the key drivers of inequality within the Basic Education system and what inequalities among secondary schools persist as a result of or in spite of government funding.*

Numerous studies have been conducted on the subject of inequality at the secondary school level of education. The search for relevant studies generated 43 publications on drivers of inequality and the inequalities that exist among secondary schools. The studies conducted reveal six major categories of drivers of inequality affecting secondary education in Kenya, viz, socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, the gender factor, disability factor, regional factors, and inadequate government financial resources.

#### *3.7.3.2 What is the status on resourcing schools?*

Several studies have been conducted on the status of resourcing in secondary schools. The search generated seven published research reports and articles that revealed that indeed, the government spends a colossal amount of money on secondary education but the funds are still inadequate in supporting schools to meet all their needs.

**Gaps in research:** There seems to be no empirical evidence on the following;

- The effect that the latest increase in funding made in 2018 has had on retention and completion rates, and on quality of education. Has the increased funding led to visible transformations within the schools?
- The exact extent to which quality of education has been affected by FDSE and on the best interventions that may be implemented to reverse this negative trend.

#### *3.7.3.3 How is inclusion implemented in secondary schools and how effective has it been?*

Few studies have been conducted on inclusion in secondary schools. The literature search generated eight research studies that revealed the country has a supportive legal framework for inclusive education (IE), but many barriers still make it difficult for learners with disability to thrive or even just stay on in mainstream schools.

**Gaps in Research:** There is a dearth in research on;

- The coping mechanisms employed by schools and by learners with disabilities, in light of the poor capacity for effective inclusion.
- Perspectives of learners with disabilities on their needs and aspirations
- Accurate data on retention, transition, and dropout rates of LWD in secondary school.
- The effects, if any, of inclusion on normal learners in inclusive classes

### *3.7.4 Indiscipline in Schools*

There exist many commission reports and other research studies that serve as a rich source of information on indiscipline in secondary schools, and which provide insights into causes of indiscipline and recommendations to address the problem. These reports mainly focus on mass indiscipline that has led to the many cases of unrest in schools, rather than on individual indiscipline within the school environment. The search in the present study generated 16 published research studies and 5 government reports on indiscipline in secondary schools that detail the nature, extent, and causes of indiscipline and subsequent widespread unrest in schools.

***Gaps in Research:*** There is a gap in research on the following:

- The reasons why indiscipline persists on a large scale despite the many recommendations proposed to address the issue;
- The individual indiscipline among students and how to effectively manage this kind of indiscipline in schools. More focus has been on mass indiscipline.

### *3.7.5 Examination System*

Numerous research studies have been conducted on the secondary school examination in Kenya. The search generated 14 relevant published studies whose findings focus on exam-related issues such as the preparation for examinations, the cheating menace, the high stakes nature of examinations, the exam-oriented curriculum, and rote learning. The studies point to weaknesses in the examination system

**Gaps in research:** There is a shortage of research studies on;

- The value addition in learner outcomes by the different types of schools; is the consistent high performance in KCSE by some schools attributable only to the entry behavior at form one,
- Why many pupils perform well in KCSE but poorly when they get to KCSE,
- The content validity of the KCSE examination to assess the extent to which it measures what it ought to measure,
- The extent to which performance at KCSE serves as a predictor of success in future academic ventures and in employment opportunities.

# CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 4. I INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, conclusions arising from the findings of the study are made, followed by recommendations to guide RELI as well its partners and other players in the secondary education sector on possible areas of intervention. Recommendations should therefore be seen in the context of possible points of entry into the secondary education space.

## 4.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are presented in line with research questions that guided the study.

### *4.2.1 Education outcomes*

Kenya scores fairly on the various indicators of educational attainment at the secondary school level of education. The positive gains made in enrolment, completion, transition, and dropout rates over the last decade are largely attributable to government subsidies and political good will. Still, many children are still out of school.

However, Kenya is struggling to strike a good balance between quality and quantity.

### *4.2.2 Curriculum Reforms*

- Secondary schools' state of preparedness for the competency-based curriculum is low and could lead to poor implementation when the time comes.
- The existing among-school and regional disparities in education are likely to persist even with the curricular reforms unless the government puts in place corrective action and especially targeted affirmative action.
- To effectively instill values that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training or work ,an approach that integrates moral values into the teaching and learning process, employs dynamic pedagogy, and organizes experiences in the school in such a way that an enduring value culture is created is required.
- The present teaching of life skills is rather theoretical and academic and lacks interactive and participatory teaching and learning methods. There is need to infuse experiential and activity-centered pedagogy
- Most teachers of LSE require training in content and appropriate pedagogy.
- The level of parental involvement and engagement anticipated in the revised curriculum is intricate and calls for proficient handling. Teachers therefore need to be empowered to manage this critical component of the LSE and CSL programs. Numerous unexplored avenues for parental engagement exist.

- The empowerment of teachers for LSE and CSL needs to be approached in three dimensions; capacity building for content and teaching, preparation for engagement with the others and provision of resources needed to effectively implement the curriculum.

### *4.2.3 Equity*

- Despite the gains made because of the free day secondary education (FDSE) program, socioeconomic, gender, regional, and among-school inequalities persist
- The gains made through FDSE have mostly benefited the already advantaged groups such as boys, the wealthy, and those in urban areas, while the traditionally disadvantaged groups enjoy smaller gains.
- Government funding towards secondary education, though colossal, is still inadequate to cover the cost of schooling at this level. More money is required for improvement of facilities and equipment in schools, and to hire additional teachers.
- Disability among learners is still a major cause of exclusion in schools. Despite the existence of a legal framework to support inclusive education, the level of inclusion in secondary schools is not satisfactory.

### *4.2.4 School Discipline*

- The official government policy and guidelines on discipline is broad in nature and does not comprehensively outline specific actions and options for all transgressions committed by students. This has opened a loophole for some schools to come up with draconian or unfair rules.
- The identified drivers of indiscipline point to neglect or apathy by some school administrators.

### *4.3.5. Examination system*

- The KCSE examination has become ineffective in measuring learning because it rewards rote learning and drilling for the specific purpose of passing exams.
- There is also need for a paradigm shift in assessment towards methods take into account diverse learner abilities in academic and non-academic performance, as well continuous assessments spread throughout the secondary school cycle

### *4.3.6 Status of Research on Secondary School Education*

Plenty of research has been conducted on secondary education in Kenya. However, some gaps in research exist and there is an urgent need to conduct research to inform the groundwork that needs to start in preparation for the implementation of the competency-based curriculum at the secondary level of education.

## 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for consideration, first by RELI, then its partners and other non-state players with interest in the secondary education. The recommendations are specifically focused on possible areas of intervention, and should therefore be seen in the context of possible points of entry into the secondary education space.

### *4.3.1 Recommendations on Educational outcomes*

Teachers should be supported on strategies for managing large classes, and exposed to in-service training programs on dynamic teaching methodologies. There is an opportunity for players such as RELI to facilitate the establishment and coordination of such teacher support programs.

### *4.3.2 Recommendations related to implications of curriculum reforms*

- Teachers should be supported by players within the sector such as RELI to handle talent identification and development
- The members of RELI should think through an intervention that provides training and support on LSE to community-based mentors who in turn can take up the role of sharing information with parents in the community.
- Players in the education sector such as RELI have an opportunity to take up the role of training parents on their involvement in the LSE program. RELI also needs to lead the policy dialogue on parental involvement in life skills education
- There is need for capacity building to enlighten teachers on interactive and participatory teaching methodology, and how to infuse experiential and activity-centered pedagogy in LSE
- RELI should consider studying and documenting best practices used in schools for skills development and values education to facilitate learning
- There is need to consider establishing intra school and inter school mechanisms for coordinating teachers of different subjects to think through the possibilities of integrating and imparting life skills via the different subjects and activities.
- There is an opportunity for civil society groups and NGOs to initiate capacity building programs for teachers to prepare them for meaningful engagement with others (parents, community, and other organizations) as demanded by CBC.
- NGOs and other players in education such as RELI need to initiate capacity-building activity among teachers for creating more personalized learning environments that facilitate students to nurture their passions.

### *4.3.3 Recommendations related to equity*

RELI and its partners should consider the following:

- Establishing a program that targets teenage mothers to provide them with the support they require to re-enter and to settle in schools after delivery. RELI should also consider establishing initiatives that provide role modelling for secondary school girls, especially those who live in difficult circumstances.
- Supporting poor schools that lack trained teachers through teacher capacity building programs, and for students, mentorship and life skills programs.
- Providing support for teachers, to give them basic understanding of inclusion and how different schools can adapt inclusive practices that respond to their context.
- Supporting families of children with disabilities to enable them to offer better environment for their education and development. RELI could facilitate the establishment of parent groups and provide mentors to give support to parents.

### *4.3.4 Recommendations related to School Discipline*

- There is an opportunity to provide in-service training for teachers to update their skills on guidance counseling and student discipline management in schools. Teachers can also be facilitated to form networks that allow them to engage in conversations about guidance and counselling strategies that work
- There is an opportunity for program intervention to establish (or strengthen where they exist) peer-counselling groups among students.

### *4.3.5 Recommendations related to Examinations*

There is need to;

- Expose teachers to the several systems for evaluating students' abilities such as observations, journaling, teamwork and group work.
- Develop effective strategies for assessing the acquisition of values and attitudes by students. RELI needs to initiate structured dialogue to address this.

## 4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Many gaps in research on secondary education in Kenya were identified in this study. The following however, are the research gaps that could be filled by RELI, its partners and players operating in the secondary education space.

### *4.4.1 Education outcomes*

Research should be conducted to;

- Generate a comprehensive understanding of what really makes a ``good'' secondary school in Kenya. What is it that is done in the 'good' schools that sets them apart from the rest? How can good practices be transferred to other schools?
- Examine the exact causes of the dramatic drop in KCSE performance.

### *4.4.2 Curriculum Reforms*

Considering that the roll out of the CBC will reach the Junior Secondary level in the next few years, there is need for more empirical research to explore the following;

- The learning and outcome gaps that may have resulted from implementation of the CBC before some primary schools were ready. Interventions can then be emplaced to address the gaps,
- How quality and relevance of secondary education can be promoted through active links to the labor market,
- The actual impact that LSE has had among learners.

### *4.4.3 Equity*

Research should be conducted on the following;

- The exact effect that the latest increase in FDSE funding has had on retention and completion rates, and on quality of education,
- The coping mechanisms employed by schools and by learners with disabilities in mainstream schools, in light of the poor capacity for inclusion. Which of these strategies could be transferred to other schools?
- The viability of establishing a model for extending FDSE support to Low Cost Private Secondary Schools.

### *4.4.4 Indiscipline in Schools*

There is a dearth of research on the individual indiscipline among students and how to effectively manage this kind of discipline.The greaterfocus has been on mass indiscipline affecting secondary schools. What approaches have worked and what are the best practices for promoting individual students' discipline at school?

### *4.4.5 Examination System*

There is need to conduct research on the following;

- The content validity of the KCSE examination to provide empirical data for assessing the effectiveness of the KCSE examination.

- An assessment of the extent to which KCSE measures the achievement of life skills and values and to provide insights into how the exams can be enriched to measure level of value and life skills acquisition.

## 4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, Kenya scores fairly well on the various indicators of educational attainment at the secondary school level of education, with positive gains having been made in enrolment, completion, transition, and dropout during the decade. Still, many children are out of school and this calls for a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond government subsidies. It is also evident that the gains made have at the same time contributed to challenges in the provision of secondary education. It would be prudent for the government to urgently address these challenges so that they do not affect the curricular reforms that will be the rolled at the secondary school level in the next few years. In addition, the state of preparedness by secondary schools for the CBC is still low and could hamper the implementation process when the time comes. Many of the challenges and issues facing secondary education in the country require policy responses that are informed by systematic research. There is an urgent need for example, to conduct research to inform preparation for the implementation of the competency-based curriculum at the secondary level of education.

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## ANNEX 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONS THAT GUIDED THE STUDY

| Theme | Key questions that guided analysis |
|---|---|
| **1. Systemic educational outcomes and quality of education** | •What is the status of various educational attainment indicators such as completion, transition, and dropout?<br>•What is the status of quality indicators such as absenteeism, pupil to teacher ratio, qualification of teachers, availability of teaching/learning materials, repetition? |
| **2. Curriculum Reforms** | •Will the new curriculum cause more marginalization and aggravate the equity concerns in the country among secondary school learners?<br>•How can we involve secondary school parents in life skills programs?<br>•How do we instill values that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training/work?<br>•How do we impart skills that can sustain secondary school students at the next level of training/work?<br>•How do we empower teachers to teach life skills within the changing environment occasioned by the curricular reforms? |
| **3. Equity** | •What are the key drivers of inequality within the basic education system?<br>•What inequalities among secondary schools persist as a result of or in spite of government funding?<br>•What is the status on resourcing schools: distribution of teachers in secondary schools, teaching and learning resources, etc.?<br>•How is inclusion implemented in secondary education and how effective has this been? |
| **4. School Discipline** | •What are the policies, programs, and guidelines on school discipline?<br>•Are there any observable drivers of indiscipline in schools? How far is it a result of attitudes, perceived injustices, or dissatisfaction with the existing education? |
| **5. Examination system** | •How effective are exams at the end of secondary education?<br>•What can be improved in the exams systems in line with the new curriculum? |
| **6. Research on Secondary School Education** | • What is the status of existing research on secondary school education?<br>• What gaps exist in the research conducted on secondary education? |