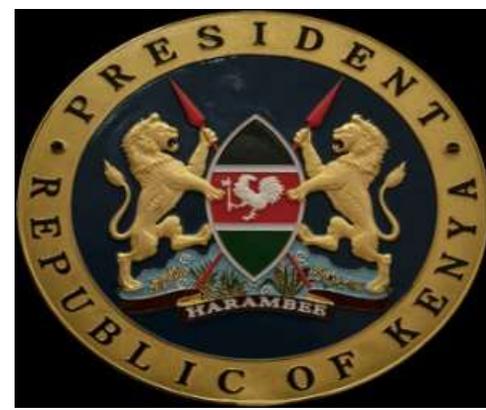




REGIONAL
EDUCATION
LEARNING
INITIATIVE



THE EXECUTIVE: KENYAN PRESIDENT LEGACY IN EDUCATION



RESEARCH DONE BY MZALENDO TRUST
FOR THE
REGIONAL LEARNING INITIATIVE
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Background Information

Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 provides that every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education while Article 55 (a) mandates the State to take up measures, including affirmative action programs that will ensure that the youth have access to relevant education and training. It's worth noting that Kenya is the 7th largest funder of Education in the world. The Education sector continues to be the largest recipient of government budget totalling over Ksh.300 billion annually. The government has made interventions at every level of education to increase access to quality education to Kenyans.

There are also provisions on access for youth to relevant education and training; access to employment; participation and representation of minorities and marginalized groups in governance and other spheres of life, special opportunities in educational and economic fields, and special opportunities for access to employment. The rights of minorities and marginalized groups to reasonable access to water, health services and infrastructure are also enshrined, as it is incumbent upon government to develop a culture of human rights, promote gender equality and equity and facilitate gender mainstreaming in national development.

The functions of Education and training are shared between the national and county governments as contained in Schedule 4 of the Constitution. The functions of the National Government are: education policy, standards, curriculum, examinations, granting of university charters, universities, tertiary educational institutions, institutions of research, higher learning, primary schools, special education, secondary schools, special education institutions and promotion of sports and sports education. The functions of the County Government in relation to education are: pre-primary education, village polytechnics, home-craft centres, farmers training centres and childcare facilities. In addition, Parliament, over the years has enacted a series of Acts on various dimensions of education whose objects and goals the Ministry is expected to implement to give effect to the Constitutional provisions pertaining to education and training of Kenyans.

Revitalization of TVETS

As a result of the unprecedented investment in the key infrastructure projects that drive investment, many manufacturing and value addition companies have started investing in Kenya. In response to the growing demand by these companies, the government has invested heavily in reviving the Technical Training Institutions to inject much needed and disappearing technical skills in the market.



From 41 TVETs in the country in 2013, the government has built 152 new technical training institutions with the ultimate aim of building at least 1 TVET per constituency. This has seen the training opportunities in TVETs increase to 145,405 and the number is growing as they get equipped. 32 TVETs are already equipped with the rest currently ongoing. 154 trainers in these institutions have been trained on use of new state of the art equipment from China.

An additional 514 trainers are currently being trained to have degrees and diplomas under AfDB. The TVET curriculum has also been reviewed to ensure that we develop skills relevant to our development agenda as a country. This will increase the proportion of skilled youth transitioning from secondary schools and employment for our youth.

Education Infrastructure Support

With the objective of increasing access to basic education by improving the transition rate of learners from primary to secondary level, the Government has funded the upgrade of facilities in secondary schools so as to accommodate more students in an enabling learning environment. Specifically, the Government has given two select schools in each county Ksh. 25 million that has been used to expand existing infrastructure to National school standards.



Some of the projects undertaken include addition of more classrooms, building of new laboratories, dormitories, dining/multi purpose halls, among other initiatives. This has seen the enrolment to national schools rise from a low of 4,600 a few years ago to 24,795 in 103 schools in 2016.

Education Development Programmes in 2021

Global Partnership for Education: Kenya and UK to Co-host Global Education Financing Conference

Kenya and the United Kingdom will co-host a two-day conference on global partnership for education financing dubbed **#RaiseYourHand** on 28th to 29th July 2021, President Uhuru Kenyatta announced. Global Partnership for Education (GPE) will be investing in the world's most powerful asset, its youth. Kenya is proud to co-host the GPE Financing Conference with the United Kingdom **#FundEducation** now and give every child a chance of a great future!

The President said that the aim of the education financing conference is to raise \$5 billion to ensure that all children, particularly those in developing countries, have equitable access to quality education. He invited African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government to join the effort and commit to protect education budgets in their respective countries.

"You will all agree with me that our children received the harshest brunt of the (COVID-19) pandemic; the lockdowns resulted in significant loss of income of the caregivers. We need to show up and hold our governments accountable in setting aside the adequate resources to ensure that all children, both girls and boys and those in vulnerable situations, can go back to school and complete their studies," President Kenyatta said.

The President spoke on 6th February 2021 at State House, Nairobi, at the start of the two-day virtual 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) whose theme is "**Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want**".

The Kenyan Head of State expressed the need for African Governments to invest more aggressively in improving education access and quality, including the area of teaching and learning technologies, to bridge the education divide. "Our children, are the future of this continent and we, as leaders, must guarantee a better tomorrow for them. We, as leaders today, must preserve and protect their wellbeing," the President told the summit during which President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa handed over the AU chairmanship to President Félix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). President Kenyatta also emphasized the need to not slacken in the fight against malaria even as the continent tackles the COVID-19 pandemic.

State Department to Oversight Competence Based Curriculum (CBC)

On 9th February 2021, President Uhuru Kenyatta unveiled a new state department to oversee the ongoing implementation of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). The new State Department for Implementation of Curriculum Reforms within the Ministry of Education is tasked with the roll out of the new education system, including the recommendations of the Taskforce whose report the President launched on Tuesday, 9th February 2021.

The Taskforce made several recommendations and consulted widely including through 11 sector-based pre-conferences. This was important because it underscored President's commitment to adhere to the tenets of public participation, as envisioned in the Kenyan Constitution.

The Head of State announced the changes on when he presided over the unveiling of the Taskforce's report dubbed '**Enhancing Access, Relevance and Quality for Effective Curriculum Reforms Implementation**'. The Head of State, who recalled Kenya's curriculum reforms over the decades, said CBC will make Kenya's education system responsive to the demands of the modern world and rallied Kenyans to back the process. "We are at a tipping-point in our education system. The old must give way to the new. The summons of our times requires us to re-imagine how we have educated our children. It requires us to be bold, and not rigid. It calls us to imagine a system that creates responsible citizens as opposed to subjects; a system that celebrates the creative potential of all our children as opposed to one that leaves them with labels of failure if they do not pass exams; and a system that brings



about freedom as opposed to conformity. This is the promise of the Competency Based Curriculum,” the President said.

Besides equipping Kenyan children with the competencies needed to excel in the 21st century, the Head of State said CBC will empower Kenyans to be better citizens. “On citizenship, we have a crisis of competence and our education system must give us a response. Youth violence and pessimism are partly a result of low civic competence amongst citizens and this is because we have not taught our children the values of citizen participation from an early age. This is why youth pessimism and blind activism are on the rise,” President Kenyatta said.

The President applauded the Taskforce led by Professor Fatuma Chege for its report saying its recommendations will help lessen the rigidity in the current education system by introducing the ‘leading to learn’ principle. “The purpose of the new system of ‘Learning to Learn’ is to allow our children to explore, innovate and unshackle their minds from the old and rigid moulds of learning. This way they will be able to exploit their imagination, creativity, solve problems, use critical thinking, apply digital literacy, and feel a sense of civic duty as citizens,” he said.

Education CS. Prof George Magoha, his Principal Secretary Dr Belio Kipsang, Teachers Service Commission CEO Nancy Macharia and Murang’a Governor Mwangi Wairia who is also the Chairperson of the Education Committee at the Council Governors also spoke at the event attended by a cross-section of education sector stakeholders.

President’s 4-Day Working Tour of Central Kenya Region

President Uhuru Kenyatta arrived at Sagana State Lodge in Nyeri County on Friday 29th January 2021, to start his 4-day working tour of Central Kenya Region. During his visit, the Head of State launched several completed National Government development projects and inspect ongoing Programmes. The Head of State also held meetings with the Leadership and Residents of the Region to discuss national programmes among Curriculum Reforms.

On Education Matters, the President thanked all Parents who managed to take their children back to School at the beginning of the Year despite the disruptions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. As the Children settle in school after a long period of absence, the Head of State assured all Parents that the Government is committed to ensuring that learning continues uninterrupted throughout the Country. For Children, who regrettably fell pregnant during the long break, the President issued instructions to the Ministry of Education to devise a mechanism for re-integrating them back into the School System. The President noted with great concern of increasing cases of arson in Schools across the country and reminded the perpetrators of the Serious Crimes that the National Police Service, working with the Ministry of Education, are under his firm instruction to deal decisively with anyone found culpable.

Education Cabinet Secretary Professor George Magoha directed school administrators and principals not to admit students expelled from other schools over indiscipline cases.



School Bus Donations

On 14th January 2021, the 46-seater bus was handed over to Nyamira Senator Okongo Omogeni at State House, Nairobi at a brief ceremony attended by Governors Amos Kimwoni Nyaribo (Nyamira) and James Ongwae (Kisii) as well as Interior CS Dr Fred Matiang’i among other Gusii leaders.

Resumption of Learning

President Uhuru Kenyatta intervened on 4th January 2021 to ensure secondary schools get Ksh14.6 billion after the full resumption of learning.

Education CS George Magoha had 3rd January revealed that [the money was set to be released at a later date](#) as the Ministry had prioritised the Ksh4 billion meant for primary schools.



The CS asked school heads to make sure that the money is used for the right purposes. The education sector is the [biggest beneficiary of the Ksh929.5 Billion two-year stimulus plan](#), as more money will go towards

reforming primary, secondary and university education. Ksh28.8 Billion was committed to constructing additional classrooms and repairing existing ones to expand learning space in the next two years.

President’s National Address

On 12th December 2020, President Uhuru Kenyatta delivered his national address during the 57th Jamhuri Day celebrations at the Nyayo National Stadium in Nairobi County.

The President restated the Government’s plan to resume learning in all classes effective 4th January 2021. President Uhuru Kenyatta assured Kenyans that learning at all levels would resume on January 4th 2021.

The President, who spoke at Nyayo National Stadium when he led the country in marking the year 2020 Jamhuri Day, asked parents and guardians to facilitate their children to resume learning when schools reopen.

“In that regard, and in line with the policy of the Government on **universal and compulsory basic education** for all children of up to 18 years, all parents and guardians are required to



facilitate their children to resume learning in January 2021,” said the President, To ensure compliance with the directive and guarantee that no child would be left behind, President Kenyatta ordered the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, through chiefs and their assistants, to ensure that all children report back to school in January.

At the same time, the Head of State instructed the Ministry of Education to re-issue and publicize the Education Policy on School Re-Entry to facilitate the re-admission

of all learners who may not be able to report back due to pregnancy. On containment of Covid-19 in schools, the President said the Ministries of Education and Health had developed specific protocols and guidelines to facilitate the re-opening of all learning institutions.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is responsible for national policies and programmes that help Kenyans access quality and affordable, school education, post-school, higher education and academic research. The Ministry of Education derives its mandate from Chapter Four of the Constitution of Kenya. Articles 43, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, and 59 have provisions on children’s right to free and compulsory basic education, including quality services, and to access education institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society, to the extent compatible with the interests of the person. This includes the use of Sign language, Braille or other appropriate means of communication, and access to materials and devices to overcome constraints arising from the person’s disability.

Under the Executive Order No. 2/2013 on the Organisation of the Government of the Republic of Kenya, the Ministry is responsible for Education Policy Management; Management of Continuing Education; Administration of Early Childhood Education, education; Standards and Norms; Management of Education Standards; Management of National Examinations and Certification; Curriculum Development; Quality Assurance in Education; Primary and Secondary Education Institutions Management; Teacher Education and Management; School Administration and Programmes; Registration of Basic Education and Training Institutions; Special Needs Education Management; Representation of Kenya in UNESCO; Adult Education Management; University Education Policy Management; University education; Public Universities and Tertiary Institutions; Science technology innovation policy; Management of Technical Training Institutes including Youth Polytechnics; Management of Institutes of Science and Technology; Management of National Polytechnics; National Council for Sciences and Technology. The Ministry has established an elaborate network through its established departments, and sector institutions, to effectively deliver on its mandate.

Primary and Secondary Education Exam System in Primary Schools

"At Grade 6, a learner will sit for a summative assessment that will cater for 40 whereas the rest (60%) will be from the continuous assessments," Prof Chege stated.

She added that joining Grade 7 (junior secondary) would not be based on a one-off national examination. The assessments would inform the transition from primary to junior secondary schools, hence addressing concerns about the criteria for admissions to the next level of learning. "The process is as important as the results, hence we received submissions from Kenyans, conducted interviews, focused group discussions and reviewed literature among others ways of obtaining data," she explained. With the proposed system, [continuous assessment in primary schools](#) would be cumulatively compiled through annual reports. "The focus will be on the continuous assessment that will capture diverse capabilities and competencies of learners to inform placement and transitions," she added. The [Competency-Based Curriculum \(CBC\)](#) taskforce also proposed the scrapping of boarding in secondary schools under the new 2-6-3-3-3 education system



Number of Learners Scheduled on Classes After Resumption of School

On February 8th 2021, Education Cabinet Secretary George Magoha announced that 15 million learners had reported back to school since the resumption of in-person learning on January 4th 2021.

Magoha said the virus containment measures put in schools were effective, adding that the ministry would continue to ensure that schools remain safe for learners. While noting that maintaining social distance has remained a challenge, Magoha lauded teachers who devise ways to create extra spaces for learners. Magoha expressed confidence that candidates would pass their examinations.,



The CS also announced the ministry plans to distribute free face masks to vulnerable learners and those in informal settlements, even as he urged parents to continue providing their children with face masks as they have become part of the school uniform. He said 7.5 million face masks were availed by the Ministry of Health to support the needy and most vulnerable students including those from low-income backgrounds. Magoha said

schools with a higher enrolment rate, those in informal settlements, special schools and schools located in pockets of poverty will be given priority.

Remedy for students' unrest

On 5th February 2021, The Ministry of Education directed administrators of boarding schools to convene meetings to discuss security amid a worrying trend of fires at the institutions. Basic education Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang directed that the school board discussions be communicated to respective County Education Boards. A number of schools have reported cases of suspected arson since the institutions resumed in-person classes on January 4 after a nine-month break. Schools had been closed as part of efforts to curb spread of the pandemic.

Education Cabinet Secretary George Magoha banned the use of bottles hand sanitisers in school saying some students were using their contents to start fires. The CS ordered head teachers to conduct headcount of students in boarding schools before bed-time to arrest rising arson cases. This comes amid a push by Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) for abolition of boarding schools as part of measures to tame the vice. The Ministry called for deployment of more teachers on duty and security around dormitories and classes when students are not using them.



Scrapping of boarding schools

The proposal to do away with boarding schools was largely informed by the increasing cases of fire outbreaks and students' unrest - - The team led by Kenyatta University Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Administration Fatuma Chege also recommended scrapping of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams. Parents could in the near future be compelled to adopt to staying around with their children after an education task force proposed scrapping of boarding in secondary school.

According to the task force, boarding facilities should only be reserved for a few institutions that will admit learners pursue various career pathways in senior secondary schools in line with the new curriculum.

On Scrapping KCPE, the team led by Kenyatta University Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Administration Fatuma Chege also recommended scrapping of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams. Under the newly introduced 2-6-3-3-3 education system, children are supposed to sit for the national test at the end of the sixth year. However, the taskforce proposed that the first national examination be done at the end of junior secondary level which should then be used to place learners in different fields of interest in the seniorsecondary school. The team recommended the second exam should be held at the end of the senior secondary education (grade 12) whose results would be used to place learners in universities and colleges. The above proposals were made by the committee to smoothen the transition of learners from primary to secondary school. The 2-6-3-3-3 education system implies that learners will spend two years in pre-primary education, six in primary, three in junior secondary, three in senior secondary school and another three in university.

School Infrastructures

The Ministry of Education plans to disburse Sh5,000 per student in the 2020-21 financial year to develop schools. Basic Education Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang said the money will be disbursed under the maintenance and improvement fund and the economic stimulus programme. In a notice published on 14th January 2021, Kipsang said the government has so far released Sh2,000 for each learner for the month of January and that there are 15 million learners in primary and secondary schools. The PS said the scope of projects to be undertaken was expanded to cover construction and repair of classrooms, labs, sanitation facilities, dormitories and dining halls. This is in addition to procurement of chairs, desks and laboratory stools.

Kipsang said the approval levels should remain as indicated in the circular Ref. MOE.HQS/36/36 implemented on February 12, 2020. "Category one required schools that receive funding of up to Sh5 million to seek approval from the office of the county director of education. "Schools under category two that will receive funding of between Sh5 million to Sh10 million will seek approval from the office of the regional coordinator of education. "Category three is for schools that receive funding of above Sh10 million and are required to



seek approval from the ministry headquarters," he said. Kipsang said approval for continuing/extension of projects should be subject to provision and submission of Public Works structural engineers report. The report entailed the viability of the existing project, coupled with its funding history. "The purpose is to ensure all projects started are completed as fast as possible," he said.

He also added that co-funding of projects between the Ministry and any other donors will take place. "But each of the partners will fund and supervise a complete phase of the project, which will also be audited by the funding agency to ensure no commingling of funds," Kipsang said. He added that there shall be a complete assessment of the status of a stalled project and reasons for its stalling unravelled by the public works before any takeover. "Failure to apply for approval or undertake a project that has not been approved will result in severe sanctions, including a refund of the amount spent," Kipsang said.

University Education

HELB Allocation to Students

On 7th February 2021, The National Treasury and other education stakeholders agreed [to increase issuances to the Higher Education Loans Board \(HELB\) to support more students instead of increasing university fees](#). The National Assembly Education Committee chairperson Florence Mutua said the [previous fees increment policy](#), "underscored the harsh economic times and noted that this may not allow for any fee increment at the moment. Everything we did was to avoid a situation where we increase the fees." The National Assembly Education Committee was in a meeting with Ministry of Education officials, the National Treasury and other education agencies in Mombasa on Friday, 5 February 2021.

The discussions were establishing sustainable financing of higher education, policies on placement of government sponsored students in private universities and endorsement and supervision of academic programmes in universities. "[Any fees review](#) should take into consideration the performance of the economy at that time, given the effects of the Covid-19 on the economy," read the resolution. The stakeholders also agreed that the ministry and the

Treasury as well as individual universities should establish resource mobilisation strategies that included a guide to aid universities on borrowing.

The Ministry of Education and the University Funding Board (UFB) were also given the role of ensuring that both public and private universities were funded equally. Other than that, a cabinet memo was to be prepared to give waivers to universities on statutory payments to Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) as relates to Pay As You Earn (PAYE), in an effort to consider the weak financial standing of universities. "We had extensive discussions on the implication of these measures with a view to giving our universities a new lifeline, enable them to provide quality education and lessen the burden for students," Mutua said.

Further methods of appealing for funds for universities were provision of conditional grants to help clear outstanding debts such as pension, SACCO deductions and future NHIF payments and outsourcing of non-core functions.

Proposals to Save Universities

Speaking in Mombasa, the National Assembly Committee chair Busia Woman Representative, Hon. Florence Mutua, said that the university sector needs sustainable financing, proper policy on placement of government-sponsored students in private universities, proper accreditation and supervision of academic programmes in universities. Kenya Association of Private Universities chair Mumo Kisau said they are in support of the proposed measures to aid the ailing university education.

University education stakeholders and MPs came up with proposals that they hope will solve problems facing higher education in the country. Among the proposals include increased funding of research science and technology and innovation and implementation of the National Research Priorities Framework.

The National Assembly Committee on Education and Research said that they have received concerns over the funding of public universities. Speaking in Mombasa, the committee chair Busia woman representative Florence Mutua, said the university sector needs sustainable financing, proper policy on placement of government-sponsored students in private universities, proper accreditation and supervision of academic programmes in universities. The MPs said allocation to the HELB should be increased to support more students in universities instead of increasing university fees.

"Any fees review must take into consideration the performance of the economy at that time given the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy," Mutua said. Public and private universities are sinking in money problems and considered raising university fees, much to the distress of Kenyans.

The government owes universities at least Sh1.6 billion in funding to the students, which is in arrears from as far back as the 2018/2019 fiscal year. Mutua said there is a proposal for the Education Ministry and National Treasury to prepare a memo to waive statutory payments to KRA owned by universities. "The National Treasury, National Assembly and Ministry of Education should immediately explore ways to provide conditional grants to support universities to clear outstanding debts such as a pension, SACCO deductions and any future NHIF deductions," Mutua said. The MPs proposed that individual universities explore outsourcing of non-core functions like hostels, security and catering services. The meeting also proposed that the National Treasury to provide funds in the 2021/2022 fiscal year for the Collective Bargaining Agreement 2013-2017 of Sh2.2 billion.

"The Ministry of Education should introduce a five-year moratorium on the establishment of new universities, colleges, campuses as well as explore the possibility of merging non-viable campuses, rationalization of programmes and institutions to create centres of excellence,"

Mutua said. University Education PS Simon Nabukwesi said the higher education sector in the country needs stability to be competitive in the global market.

“We are happy that the political leaders are thinking of find solutions to the problems that affect the standards in our universities,” Nabukwesi said. The meeting was the fifth and last between the university stakeholders and MPs. He said the decision by MPs to bolster research in universities to guide policy decision that will assist the economic development of the country is noble and encouraging. “It is my wish that we get the goodwill and support so that the reforms which are proposed are implemented in full,” the PS said.

Kenya Association of Private Universities chair Mumo Kisau said they are in support of the proposed measures to aid the ailing university education. “We look forward to the implementation,” he said. The Vice-Chancellor of Scott Christian University in Machakos Mumo Kisau said placing students in private universities by the government has been a welcome move. “Our only plea and this has been taken into consideration, is that they need to be supported adequately. We are looking forward to having the balance that has accrued of Sh4.2 billion to be given at least this year,” Kisau said.



Public Universities Vice-Chancellors Committee chair Geoffrey Muluvi endorsed the recommendations by the stakeholders and urged the government to consider them to make Kenyan universities competitive again in the global market.

Gender and Education

Sanitary Pads to Needy Girls

On January 26th 2021, M-PESA Foundation announced plans to distribute 3 months’ supply of sanitary towels to over 180,000 needy girls across the country. This new initiative is in partnership with the Ministry of Education. The Foundation committed Ksh. 21 million to procure and distribute the pads, which were flagged off by CS of Education Prof. George Magoha.

“Access to sanitary towels remains a critical challenge for many girls across the country and the ministry remains determined to ensure that no school going girl is left out of class due to lack of pads. We welcome the continued partnership with M-PESA Foundation which we started in 2019 when we distributed sanitary pads to over 800,000 girls”, said Professor Magoha.

The sanitary towel distribution drive is part of M-PESA Foundation’s Ksh. 44 million menstrual hygiene programs launched in December 2020, as part of Safaricom’s 20th anniversary celebrations. The program also includes providing another 30,000 teenage girls in Murang’a, Siaya and Kilifi Counties with sexual and reproductive health education in order to reduce teen pregnancies and improve menstrual care.

“Many girls are not able to access menstrual hygiene products with statistics indicating that 65 per cent of women and girls in Kenya cannot afford them while 42 per cent of school-going girls have never used sanitary pads. That is why as a Foundation we came up with this menstrual health program to support girls’ education and ensure that they live in dignity,” said Les Baille, Executive Director, M-PESA Foundation.

Statistics indicate that girls miss out 13 learning days in a term when they miss four days a month because of their periods. Additionally, a report by Procter & Gamble (P&G) indicates that 42 per cent of Kenyan schoolgirls have never used sanitary pads, and instead use alternatives such as rags, blankets, pieces of mattress, tissue paper and cotton wool putting their health and hygiene at risk. The project also aims to create awareness among 10,000 adolescent boys on menstruation, sexual reproductive health and life skills and enable 57



community-based mentors to support the adolescents. In October 2019, the M-PESA Foundation provided 850,000 girls in class 8 and form 4 with 3 months’ sanitary pads at a cost of Ksh. 281 million.

Boost for Kids Living with Disabilities in Schools

On February 5, 2021, Machakos County had said that 862 public and 252 private primary schools with a total population of 332,089 pupils and 7,947 teachers, hundreds of learners, some with disabilities, would benefit from an improved learning environment courtesy of a project supported by LG Electronics in partnership with non-profit Habitat for Humanity Kenya (HFH Kenya). The initiative aims to improve learning infrastructure, water, sanitation, and hygiene for 225 hearing-impaired children at the Machakos School for the Deaf and 400 Early Childhood Development (ECD) learners at Kyumbi Primary School.

Machakos County Deputy Governor Eng. Francis Maliti presided over the laying of the stone for a new library at Machakos School for the Deaf and also launched the construction of latrines, renovation of bathrooms and installation of a borehole water plumbing system. The Deputy Governor hailed the project as noble and timely as it will help improve learning outcomes for hearing-impaired children besides promoting healthy living by providing access to clean and safe water.

"On behalf of the county government of Machakos, I wish to thank LG and Habitat for Humanity for this transformative project that will go a long way in addressing the challenges facing learners in the two schools. The county government is committed to working with partners to improve the education infrastructure in Machakos," said Eng. Maliti. The Deputy Governor was accompanied by LG Electronics Managing Director for East and Central Africa, Kenya, Sa Nyoung Kim, and Habitat for Humanity National Director, Ruth Odera.

Machakos School for the Deaf is the only school in the county catering for children with hearing impairment. It was established in 1986 by the Kenya Society for Deaf Children with the assistance of SHIF from Sweden as a mixed boarding school. Mr. Kim pledged the company's commitment to supporting the school as it will ensure children with disabilities and from underprivileged communities access education in a conducive and safe learning environment. "As a responsible business, we believe in increasing social value by investing in underprivileged communities. This project is also important to us since it is aligned with the international sustainable development goal number 4 on promoting inclusive and equitable education," said Mr. Kim.

On her part, Ms. Odera also reiterated the significance of the project especially with the advent of COVID-19. "COVID-19 has raised the dire need for safe, resilient, and healthy communities [including schools]. At Habitat for Humanity Kenya, we are glad to contribute towards meeting this need in Machakos County through quality and spacious structural buildings and improved access to water and sanitation for the school community," said Ms. Odera. In December, LG in collaboration with HFH Kenya embarked on the construction of two new ECD classrooms, a kitchen block, and latrines at Kyumbi Primary School in Mavoko Constituency. The school's facilities were overstretched by the growing student population. Some classrooms were dilapidated and lacked windows. Sanitation facilities were inadequate but will now be increased to comply with the Ministry of Education ratio of 1:25, but more importantly, ensure privacy especially for girls. The school will also benefit from a new kitchen to support its feeding program.

The Kenya Basic Education Act (2013) recommends that the school environment and facilities should accommodate the various categories of learners with special needs. This is however a challenge due to inadequate infrastructure. Many students with disabilities in Kenya are not enrolled in school, a violation of their rights. Machakos County has 862 public and 252 private primary schools with a total population of 332,089 pupils and 7,947 teachers.

Religion and Education

Chaplains in Schools

On January 26th 2021, Ministry of Education officials and representatives of religious organisations met to draft a policy document that will see chaplains deployed in schools.

The document that was expected to be out in two weeks would be adopted by the government to inform the conduct of chaplains, who will be posted to primary and secondary schools in a bid to stem students' unrest and unruly behaviour.

All religious organisations were represented in the two-day meeting at Kabarak University. Present were senior Ministry of Education staff and representatives of Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), National Council of Churches of Kenya, National Association of Christian Chaplains and the Pentecostal churches, among other faith-based institutions.

Stephen Munguti, the national coordinator of chaplains in all learning institutions said the members were collecting and analysing data that would form part of the document. "We are getting data from all schools and also analysing practices of chaplains in various faith-based schools with a view of harmonising the same for a common document to be used by all schools," he said

Munguti, who is also the chaplain for the Commission of Education and religious education at KCCB said a standardized document will be developed to guide all chaplains' roles and conduct. "We presently have uncoordinated roles of chaplains across all schools. The finer details of conduct, functions, and responsibilities to be performed by the spiritual leaders would be



clearly spelt out in the new policy document," said Munguti.

This will be the second attempt by the government to deploy chaplains in schools. A similar plan to recruit chaplains to check hooliganism and student unrest was proposed in 2017 by then Education Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i. The unrest drew the ire of President Uhuru Kenyatta who ordered a crackdown on absentee teachers and called for a stronger partnership between the church and schools. In the initial plan, the

church committed to training teachers to provide pastoral care and religious education.

The idea was dropped due to budgetary constraints and lack of proper policy to guide the conduct of the chaplains. The ministry had proposed that the chaplains would also double up as teachers. Munguti said the overall aim is to have chaplains provide psycho-social spiritual support for learners

Kenyan Catholic leaders Rresponse to Covid-19 Pandemic in Schools

Some Catholic church leaders in Kenya are proposing church spaces as possible classrooms to replace "classrooms" for children outdoors, under trees. Most Kenyan schools fully opened to in-person learning on Jan. 4th 2021 after nearly nine months of closure because of the pandemic, despite some fears about the safety of the nearly 15 million children enrolled in classwork nationwide. Schools are facing a slew of new challenges, including too-small classrooms to keep students sufficiently separated, ensuring students wear face masks, a lack of water and shortages of soap for hand-washing. Ministry of Education officials, however, urged innovation to ensure that learning resumes. That has led some teachers, who have promoted tree planting to better school environments and mitigate climate change, to teach classes in the shade of trees.

"I think it is a temporary measure. The ministry is not condemning the children to learn under trees forever," Father Henry Ndune, education secretary at the Archdiocese of Mombasa, told Catholic News Service soon after schools reopened. "It is not the first-time classes are being held under trees. In the humble beginning of Kenya's education, early missionaries taught under them." Father Ndune said conducting classes under the trees that offer protection from the sun is preferable to extending children's stay at home with no access to learning.

By Jan. 27, the number of coronavirus cases in Kenya had surpassed 100,000, with 1,750 deaths in a country of 52.6 million. Public health officials have tallied 36 teacher deaths, while another 145 continued to seek treatment for symptoms of the coronavirus. It is unclear how many school children overall have contracted COVID-19 and how many have died. "We cannot

allow the children to continue staying at home. ... We have to cover the time lost," Father Ndune said.

Kenya's school closures have been one of the longest in Africa. It is the last country to reopen schools in East Africa. Because of the prolonged closure, the World Health Organization and UNICEF in 2020 warned of the increased risk of teen pregnancies, poor nutrition and permanent school dropout for children in poorer countries.

A national survey by the Kenya Health Information Systems discovered that more than 150,000 girls ages 10-19 had become pregnant from January to May in 2020. Even so, as images of classes under trees emerged, a debate triggered in the country whether the Ministry of Education was ready for the full opening. "It is not ideal. The children cannot be learning under trees at a time like this. What happens in bad weather?" asked Apostle of Jesus Father Joachim Omollo Ouko, in the Archdiocese of Kisumu. "I think a lot needed to be done. They could have opened the schools step by step and when there are enough classrooms."

Kenya's Catholic bishops recently joined other church leaders in calling on the government to ensure that schools are ready and safe for children to learn without being exposed to the virus. "It is worth noting that public schools were already crowded before the pandemic struck, and this is expected to worsen following closure of many private schools," said Bishop John Oballa Owaa of Ngong in a joint statement with the National Council of Churches of Kenya.



"Where necessary, the Ministry of Education can engage religious institutions to avail facilities to be used to achieve social distancing," Bishop Oballa said. Father Ndune said in remote areas where

classes in churches do not interrupt Mass or do not profane sacred space, churches can be turned into classrooms. "We have, in the past, been challenged to host people inside churches during emergencies. The people have slept next to the tabernacle," he said. "I would not mind bringing in two classes in a church of 1,000, if they do not profane the place or obstruct Mass. This is appropriate in remote parishes where there is a chapel, but not the basilicas."

The National Council of Churches of Kenya has called for greater investment in education infrastructure, including the delivery of desks the government procured in 2020 and the construction of more classrooms. "We call upon school administrators to allow learners whose lives were disrupted during the pandemic, especially girls who got pregnant or were dragged into early marriages, to resume learning," the Rev. Chris Kinyanjui, the council's general secretary, said.

Challenges Facing Education

Extremist Groups leading to Education crisis in Northern Kenya

Most children from the pastoralist communities lack Education opportunity. Insufficient infrastructure for education has been a challenge to easy access to education for children in the marginalised areas. It is not unusual to see more than 100 children sitting on the floor while attending class. Sometimes two or three classes are combined under one roof. During lessons, the classroom in some of these schools resembles the Tower of Babel. The challenge of inadequate classrooms and other necessities is historical, but lately, issues of insecurity and violent extremism have denied children their right to education. The education challenges in the Northern parts of Kenya are getting worse by the day.

According to the latest Kenya National Bureau of Statistics survey, the number of children who have not yet reported back to school or have not yet enrolled in the ASAL region is more than 1.2 million. This is alarming. It means close to a third of the children are missing school. The largest proportion of these children are in the three counties of the northeast, 250 schools have not yet reopened since January due to a lack of teachers. In the last few years, the security situation in Northern Kenya has deteriorated, forcing the Teachers Service Commission to withdraw teachers. Having more than 1.2 million against a population of 5.9 million in this region as per the 2019 census implies the level of literacy, which currently stands at less than 50 per cent, will get worse.

Education is crucial to reduce poverty and develop the human capital of the country. The ministry has also contributed to the low enrolment by demanding new pupils must have birth certificates. This has further hindered children, particularly in far-flung areas, because many of them are not able to acquire this crucial document. In many cases, even the parents themselves might not have it. According to the National Council for Nomadic Education, the North-Eastern part of Kenya has a shortage of more than 3000 teachers. This gap was created when most non-local teachers fled the region due to insecurity. Unfortunately, the government seems to have caved in to the demands of the Al Shabaab terrorist group.

Extremist groups objectives are meant to disrupt and make it difficult for educational institutions to operate normally. Once the schools remain closed, they easily move on and select another target like police stations and government installations. The best solution to this challenge would have been for the government to stay put and ensure the terror group does not succeed in its objectives. A long-term solution is to train as many local teachers so in the event of insecurity, they can continue teaching and fill the gaps in the absence of the non-local teachers. Technology can also make it easier for children to be taught remotely. There are currently many products in the market for such lessons. The government needs to quickly adopt the use of technology so that this kind of disruption can be avoided. The continued stoppage of learning activities has long term ramifications. Children who have never been to school can easily be manipulated by and recruited in to violent extremist groups.

The low levels of literacy and poverty are fertile grounds for the radicalisation of the youth. This cycle of violence is likely to continue if urgent remedial action is not taken. It is also about time we demystify the thinking that the national government operations must be uniform across the country. Invoking the Intergovernmental Relations Act, the national government can transfer education to the counties. Even more important, transfer some aspects of security functions so that local solutions can be found for this perennial conflict.

Government Covid-19 Interventions in Education

KEMSA's Distribution of Face Masks to learners in informal settlements

The Kenya Medical Supplies Authority commenced the distribution of re-usable face masks to needy school going children in primary and secondary schools. Mwiki Primary School in Nairobi County was the first beneficiary. The school is one of the learning institutions with the highest student population in the country. It received 4,320 pieces of face masks to cater for the 3,991 children enrolled in the institution.

KEMSA acting CEO Edward Njoroge said 637,407 face masks will be distributed to schools in Nairobi and its environs. This is due to the high prevalence of Covid-19 reported within the region.

Nairobi County will receive 34,641 masks for children below six years, 57,723 for those aged between 6-12 years and 48,648 for 13 years and above. Murang'a County will get 39,869 for children below 6 years, 43,980 for children aged between 6-12 years and 84,003 for 13 years and above. Kiambu County 90,600 for children below 6 years, 60,914 for 6-12 years and 96,469 for 13 years and above. Kajiado county, which is also within the Nairobi Metropolitan



area, will receive 50,936 masks for children below 6 years, 6,670 for children aged between 6-12 years and 22,954 for 13 years and above. Njoroge said the Authority is working closely with Kenya National Chamber of Commerce to ensure timely distribution of the rest of the face masks to the targeted schools.

"We have received a distribution plan from the Ministry of Health for the rest of the Counties and we will play our role of ensuring that the

commodities are distributed promptly to the last mile based on stock availability," he reassured. The CEO stated that the Authority will be accountable in sharing information with the Ministry on the stock status as distribution progresses. "We remain to be the Logistics provider of choice fully committed to improve the quality of health care for all Kenyans, he stressed.

While launching the distribution program, Education CS George Magoha said the distribution of reusable face masks will be done to learners in schools with high enrolment, schools in informal settlements and special schools. Magoha said the Education Ministry had promised to supply free washable face masks to schools nationwide to boost Covid-19 prevention. "The government is committed to providing quality and equitable education at the same time safeguarding every child's right to education, health and safety," he reiterated. He was joined by Health CAS Mercy Mwangangi, among other senior officials from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. Mwiki Primary School Principal Joseph Kamau expressed his gratitude to Ministry of Education and KEMSA through the MoH for the positive gesture of selecting the school to run the launch program. "Even as you launch the program countrywide, I feel

privileged that you have chosen our school and I want to pray that KEMSA becomes greater to allow us have a working relationship even in the future,” Kamau said.

Distribution of Face Masks to Pre-Primary Learners

On 8th February 2021 The Ministry of Education on announced a plan to distribute 7.5 million face masks to schools with 3 million masks ring-fenced for pre-primary learners in informal settlements. Learners in Grade 4 to Grade 8 and secondary students will receive 2.25 million masks, the Ministry of Education said. The 7.5 million face masks were unveiled by the Ministry of Health to support needy and most vulnerable students including those from low-income backgrounds.

Education Cabinet Secretary George Magoha said that the schools with a higher enrolment rate, those in informal settlements, special schools and schools located in pockets of poverty will be given priority. “The distribution will be cascaded to the regional and county levels. We have tasked the field officers to utilize the outlined criteria to select schools to benefit from the masks, which will be distributed as we receive them from the Ministry of Health,” the CS said during a tour of Mwiki Primary School in Nairobi.

Magoha said sustained efforts have been put in place to ensure that learners are safe in schools, and lauded stakeholders who have been providing masks and sanitation booths to learning institutions. He urged parents to provide their children with masks, noting that they have now become part of the school uniform. Magoha reported 15 million learners had reported back to school since the resumption of in-person learning on January 4, following a prolonged break triggered by the outbreak of the coronavirus in March 2020.

Annexure References

[The Constitution of Kenya 2010](#)

[Executive Office of the President-The Presidency](#): President of Kenya Website

[The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology](#)