



Position Paper

Education Sector Development in Kenya

Introduction

Provision of quality and high-level education to citizens is one of the core mandates of any government around the world. In Kenya, this mandate is split between national and county governments. According to the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, the national level government is tasked with policy formulation for the education sector, in addition to taking charge of primary, secondary and university educational centres. The county government on the other hand is tasked with functions of 'Pre-primary education (ECDE), village polytechnics, home craft centres, and childcare facilities' as per Article 9 of the Fourth Schedule.

Situation Analysis

In terms of population ratios, the Kenyan youth form a large majority of individuals who are seeking to gain meaningful education for their own good in terms of job acquisition or creation of employment opportunities. The options available for the youth in terms of continuing with their educational journey in the post-secondary institutions include Teacher Training Colleges, Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVETs) Institutions, Universities, and Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) options.

Buoyed by the roll-out of the Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, a rise in enrolment rates have been noted. Enrolment rates have continued to rise over the years in total across these institutions with numbers increasing from slightly over 2 million in 2015 to almost 2.4 million in 2018. In the same vein, the number of teacher training colleges increased to 419 in 2018 from 268 in 2015; this is comprised of both public and private colleges. A huge increase in number of TVETs is also noted over the period, from 874 to 2,289 institutions, while the number of universities also increased from 53 in 2015 to 63 in 2018. Whereas these numbers are a positive addition to the sector, information pertaining to the number of facilities in each institution is seldom in the public limelight thus limiting planners in terms of the endeavour to improve facilities in the various educational institutions.

Among the issues to also consider in view of these institutions include availability of their boarding facilities, the number and spread of these institutions around the country, accessibility and affordability of these institutions as pertains to where they are set-up, as well as number of tutors in these institutions with requisite knowledge to impart knowledge to their students. On this note, the issue that has also led to the current change in curriculum was the mismatch in labour market requirement against the

knowledge of graduates from various levels, including technical colleges, teacher training colleges, and even universities. These have been fronted as some of the key issues that must be addressed if the education sector in the country is to achieve the goals set out in various pledges including Kenya's Economic Blueprint; Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals in their entirety.

Transition

Transition rates play a key role in continuity in the education sector. The current government policy for the education sector has made the transition from primary to secondary school mandatory. This has had a rollover effect in terms of transition numbers for those who complete their secondary school education, and wish to move up the education ladder. Assuming a large percentage does so, this will mean that additional institutions to cater for post-secondary education have to be put in place in anticipation of this increment.

In order to ensure a smooth transition to the various institutions, there is need to revise their existence wholesomely; in terms of the number of institutions, their spread, facilities existing therein, the number of tutors/lecturers therein, as well as facilitation to enable continued learning in these institutions.

According to data obtained from KNBS, the number of teacher training colleges increased from 268 in 2015, to 419 in 2018. In the same vein, enrolment also witnessed increased enrolment numbers; from a total of 24,789 to 24,389 trainees over the same period. While noting the availability of data as pertains to numbers, there is need to avail information on the capacity of each of these institutions to ascertain whether they are being under-utilised or over-utilised, and then propose options for optimal use of the facilities, or indeed if there is need to make provision for additional facilities.

Further to the foregoing, some reports have shown that the training and knowledge being imparted in many tertiary institutions have become obsolete thus need for an overhaul. Also, the use of outdated pedagogical tools and methodologies must be phased out should be replaced by cutting-edge technological methodologies (Tømte, 2013).

According to data obtained from KNBS, the number of teacher training institutions increased from 268 in 2015, to 419 in 2018. While noting the availability of data as pertains to numbers, there is need to avail information on the capacity of each of these institutions to ascertain whether they are being underutilised or over-utilised. Other challenges are hinged on the capacity of tutors, and skills of graduates from these institutions.

TVETs are comprised of Public and Private Vocational Training Centres, Public and Private Technical and Vocational Colleges, and national Polytechnics. The number of TVET institutions increased over the period from 874 in 2015 to 1,300 in 2018. Notably, the current TVET curriculum is not flexible to support the technological changes in the market, meaning that large and diverse client bases are seldom attended to, adequately. In this view therefore, curriculum change that conforms to labour and market needs should be undertaken.

University education has also witnessed proliferation of university satellite campuses across the country which is blamed for the deterioration in the quality of graduates. In addition, some of the issues that continue to bedevil university education include limited availability of facilities – especially accommodation within university campuses, as well as the number of qualified professors to undertake lectures, among others. Other issues that universities have to deal with include non-alignment of university programmes and curriculum to the current needs of the labour market, lack of clear and laid down rules that guide and regulate the interaction between industry and the universities especially in view of labour market needs, hinged on current and future technological advancements. Also, access to loan facilities by students has also been noted as a hindrance to the youth, as the institution grapples with low loan recovery rates.

Policy Environment

The overarching policy document is the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, which is the supreme policy document for all sectors in the country. Other policy documents that touch on the various aspects of the education sector include; Vision 2030, Basic Education Act, 2013, Reforming Education and Training for Sustainable Development in Kenya, Science, Technology and Innovation No.28 of 2013, National Education Sector Plan, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act No 29 of 2013, and, The Universities Act No. 42 of 2012.

These policy documents propose a raft of measures that should be instituted in order to ensure a favourable environment within the education sector. For instance, Vision 2030, Kenya's economic blueprint under the social pillar notes that reforming the education sector is key to the attainment of the goals envisioned in the blueprint. In the same vein, the TVET Act 2013 proposes changes to the curriculum to make it more labour market oriented, thereby ensuring graduates are able to adapt to the requirements of the labour market.

Recommendations

- 1. Increase funding to the education sector:** This is in order to address the inadequate number of tertiary institutions as well as dilapidated and the ones which are deemed obsolete. It is important that TVET authorities should utilize audit of the allocation and spending to the various educational institutions in terms of priorities and results to inform areas for prioritization and increased funding at both national and county levels (Re-training, facilities, equipment, new institutions, etc). reallocation.
- 2. Revise the education curricula to suit the labour market demands:** To address the problem of skills mismatch with the labour market, the business community needs to be closely engaged with educational and training institutions. For Instance, industrialists can sit in as members of the board of educational and training institutions so as to provide input into the curricular for students to learn skills needed by the industries.
- 3. Internship Opportunities:** Create linkage between the educational and or training institutions to the labour market through making changes in the TIVET policy to factor tax incentives that encourages private partnerships for internships/apprenticeships. Care should be taken not to

make internship and industrial attachments as avenues of cheap labour but development of critical skills of the youth.

4. There is need to change the attitude and perception of the society and the youth about the informal sector popularly known as “Jua Kali sector”. The negative attitude and perception about the sector discourages many youths from venturing into it, as they do not want to be viewed as failures in life – a notion that needs to be dispelled going forward.
5. Policy implementation is paramount if the goals envisioned in the education sector in both short and long-run are to be achieved. It is important that plans that have been put in place are followed through with implementation to the latter.

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