



Educate Teachers Educate Children

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Key messages

1. Availability of adequate and qualified teachers leads to improved learner academic performance.
2. Qualified and experienced teachers create a safe and supportive learning environment that supports students' mental and emotional health
3. Capable and skilled teachers prepare learners for life beyond the classroom.

What's the issue?

Teachers play a critical role in the education system. As a result, teacher costs take up 58 per cent of public expenditure on education in Kenya. Despite this investment, learner performance in numeracy and literacy remains below average with wide variability registered across counties. Low learner performance hinders a country's economic growth and limits opportunities for higher education or employment, leading to a cycle of poverty and inequality. The availability and quality of the teaching force are therefore important in the achievement of learner outcomes. Sustainable development goal 4 (c) envisages countries increase the supply of qualified teachers by 2030. For this to happen, the government also need to recruit and distribute qualified teachers across the counties.



<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke> Picture by James Omoro

In 2003, the Government of Kenya implemented the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policy to ensure all children attend primary school resulting in sustained gross enrollment rates above 90 per cent. The high enrollment did not match with teacher increment thus compromising the performance of learners. The situation has worsened due to the implementation of the 100 per cent transition policy. Kenya is in the period of curriculum transition from the 8-4-4 system to a competency-based curriculum. Changing the school structure calls for reskilling of teachers for effective delivery of the curriculum.

Why is it important?

In Kenya, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the education sector. Improving the quality of education and academic outcomes can be achieved by providing teachers with training on current teaching practices and best methods that align with the new curriculum reforms. As the population expands, the demand for teachers is escalating rapidly. Therefore, educating teachers is vital to meet this demand and ensure that students have access to quality education.

Policy options

One of the significant challenges with the rollout of CBC is the insufficient training of teachers to implement the new curriculum effectively. Unless the government invest in pedagogy training, the educational outcome will not be met. Learner performance remains below par despite government interventions such as teacher performance appraisal development programs. Contrary to conventional knowledge, a teacher's level of qualification does not matter. In fact, a teacher with a Diploma certificate has a favorable influence on learner performance at the primary level of education. This is despite the higher levels demanding more resources in terms of cost and training period.

Interactions between gender and teacher training qualification level found that students taught by female teachers perform better than those taught by male teachers at early grade. Due to their nurturing nature, female teachers tend to understand the mental and emotional needs of learners.

Teaching methods gained through experience combined with mastery of content through training influence learner performance. Effective teaching methods enhance better understanding and information retention for learners, whereas a teacher's mastery of content ensures that learners receive accurate and comprehensive instruction. This cements the importance for teachers to continually improve their teaching skills and deepen their understanding of the content they teach.

What should policy makers do?

To improve learner academic performance: The quality of pre-service and in-service training for teachers needs to be assessed and tailored towards content and pedagogical in-service training. Well-trained teachers have a greater ability to effectively convey subject matter to their students, leading to improved academic outcomes.

For enhanced student well-being: Government needs to recruit more female teachers, especially for lower levels of primary education. Teachers who are trained to promote positive behavior and social-emotional learning can help create a safe and supportive learning environment that supports students' mental and emotional health.

To better prepare learners for life beyond the classroom: Reskilling of teachers is intended to enhance their capacity to deliver the new curriculum. Newly employed teachers should have the required pedagogical skills and be offered problem induction training programs.

Overall, investing in early-grade education has a positive impact on children's academic, social, and economic outcomes, both in the short and long term.

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