

## Brief Overview of the Education Sector in Kenya and the targeted interviewees

Education is highly rated in Kenya. In 2017, Kenya's education system was rated as the strongest on the African continent by the World Economic Forum, while the World Bank ranked Kenya as the top African country for education outcomes (1st out of 43 mainland countries) in 2018. The **education system in Kenya** comprises three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Primary education is compulsory and (almost) free for all children aged 6-13 years and is aimed at equipping students with basic education. Secondary education is not compulsory, though there is an expectation that qualifying students will proceed to the next level.

Since 1985, Kenya has been operating the 8-4-4 curriculum system, that comprises 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, and 4 years of university education. The 8-4-4 system was meant to promote self-reliability and productivity by orienting the youth towards self-employability, but the system was deemed too burdensome, teacher focused and very examination oriented. **In 2017, the government launched the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC)**, to replace the 8-4-4 system, by 2027. The two systems are thus running concurrently.

The new CBC system comprises three distinct categories: early year education (pre-primary and lower primary education), middle school (upper primary and lower secondary), and senior school, after which the student can choose to continue with a university education or advance in entrepreneurial activities according to the skills acquired. The aim of the CBC system is to offer students a learner-focused, competence-based environment and localized decision-making capabilities, and a greater depth of study as opposed to the 8-4-4 system.

An external examination determines transition from one educational level to the next. The Kenya National Examination Council is the national agency mandated to prepare, monitor, oversee and register students for the exams. These exams include The Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) for the 8-4-4 system as well as early year exam and middle school assessment for the new CBC system.

**Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** is highly rated in Kenya, especially because of the large number of youth, majority of them unemployed. The Government of Kenya estimates that around 35.7 million Kenyans (75.1%) are below 35 years, and 32.73 million (68.9%) live in rural areas, with unemployment rate at 39%<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, data from the Kenya National Bureau of

---

<sup>1</sup> Government of Kenya (through the Presidential Policy and Strategy Unit (PASU) and Mastercard Foundation Young Africa Works in Kenya, Catalysing Job Creation for Youth Through Entrepreneurship in Kenya, 2020

Statistics (KNBS) shows that more than 4 million youth eligible<sup>2</sup> for work have no jobs, with 1.3 million graduates entering the work force annually to compete for about 800,000 formal and informal jobs that the economy creates annually.<sup>3</sup> While in the past technical education was frequently seen as a placement option for learners who could not attain university entry grades; and vocational education being for those unable to access college education and possible dropouts, since 2000 the government has renewed the focus and amplified the role of TVET. Among the efforts government has put in place is establishing and equipping of more training centres across the country, reduction of school fees in technical and vocational institutions, giving scholarships and bursaries and giving students in these institutions access to Higher Education Loans (HELB).

The TVET system comprises 12 National Polytechnics, 1,161 (896 private and 265 public) Technical and Vocational Colleges; 1047 (89 private and 958 public) Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and 1 Technical Trainer College. All the TVET bodies are under the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority, TVETA. Under the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), there are 5 NITA centres. TVETA has registered about 45,500 TVET trainers. Kenya is in the process of developing TVET centres in every constituency and has currently developed 230, out of a possible 290. The number of people enrolled in public TVET institutions has more than doubled over the last 15 years, from approximately 167, 000 to around 430.000 as at end of 2020.

Overall education sector oversight (including TVET) falls under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. For industrial training, the Ministry of Labour is the main body. Under these two Ministries, the following Institutions and laws regulate the sector:

- The Industrial Training Act (2011) provides for the coordination and regulation of industrial training and under which NITA falls
- the TVET Act (2013) provides for regulation and coordination of TVET. Under it falls TVETA and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC), mandated to design and development of Curricula for the training institutions' examination, assessment and competence certification.
- The Kenya National Qualification Framework Act (2014), which provides for the establishment of an accreditation system on qualifications. Under this falls Kenya National Qualification Authority (KNQA), whose mandate is to help coordinate and harmonize education, training, assessment and quality assurance of all qualifications awarded in the country, with the view to improving quality and international comparability.
- the Science, Technology and Innovation Act (2013) provides for regulation of the science, technology and innovation sector.
- the University Act (2012) provides for regulation and coordination of university education.
- At the private sector level, there is the Kenya Association of Technical Training and Kenya National Association of Private Colleges

---

<sup>2</sup> Term used by GoK to refer to those over 18 but under 35 years who should be in employment but have no jobs

<sup>3</sup> ibid

**TVET Teacher Training Development** is one of the most important requirements for strengthening TVET and specifically the roll-out of Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) in Kenya. The quality of TVET trainers needs strengthening as many trainers have inadequate skills, which include low academic qualifications in subject area as well as teaching qualification, limited industry experience and limited experience with CBET and other cross-cutting skills such as digitalization, and inclusion. This challenge is exacerbated by the high number of new TVET trainers in the system.

**The Kenya Technical Trainers College (KTTC)**, which is in transition to become the Kenya School of TVET, is a government institution under Ministry of Education, Directorate of TVET. Established in 1978, it is the key institution for training of technically skilled personnel, to not only teach in technical institutions, but, also for employment in all sectors of the economy. KTTC derives its authority from the Education Act Cap 211 (revised in 1980) and Legal Notice NO 242 of 1978, which mandates it to train technical teachers for technical institutions in the country. KTTC's mandate is also supported the TVET Act of 2013, which requires that all TVET teachers undergo Continuous Professional Development (CPD) every 3 years.

There are various projects supporting KTTC, the main one being with GIZ, which is focused on Enhancing Competency-Based education and training. Under the forthcoming Finland-Kenya Country Programme (2021-2024) project for youth jobs and skills impact area, it is planned that KTTC will receive support. Based on the scoping Mission of the Finland project, the proposed intervention, to be delivered in partnership with GIZ, is expected to include digitization of vocational training and teacher training and further education and through that support KTTC on the design and implementation of CPD.

**The Kabete National Polytechnic.** Until 2016, the Polytechnic was a Technical Training Institute and amongst the oldest in Kenya. The Polytechnic is mandated to train Trade Test, Artisan, Certificate and Diploma programs such as Carpentry and Joinery, Electrical and Electronics, Civil Engineering and Business Courses for the standard eight and form four leavers of the 8-4-4 system of Education. It is one of the few ISO 9001:2015 Certified colleges and the first TVET institution to export engineering spare parts made in the college to the international market.

The government of Kenya recognises the need to provide **quality education to all children including those with special needs and disabilities**. Several policy documents indicate this commitment, including but not limited to the Kenyan Constitution (2010), the Basic Education Act (2013), the Children Act (2001) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) (2006), which Kenya is a signatory of. The Kenya National Housing and Population Census (2009) approximated that about 3.46% of the Kenya population have some form of disability, but current estimation puts the number at 15% of the population, which translates into over 6.6 million Kenyans including children and youth who might have a disability.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education, 2018. National Survey on Children with Disabilities and Special Needs in Education

Primary responsibility to promote and protect equalisation of opportunities and realisation of human rights for PWDs rests with the **National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD)**, a state corporation established in 2004 by an Act of Parliament and the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 14 of 2003. Among others, the NCPWD operates a National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities (NDFPWD), facilitates disability mainstreaming programmes in both public and private sector. With regard to education, NCPWD runs an education assistance programme that aims to improve PWDs enrolment, retention and completion of education cycle for the eventual engagement in decent and gainful employment. The Council provides support to PWDs from Primary, Secondary, Colleges, Vocational Training Schools and University. NCPWD covers up to 75% of course fees, the applicant is expected to cover 25%. If a person is in formal employment they are required to cover 50% of fees and the Fund covers up to 50%. In exceptional circumstances the Fund may pay 100% of fees but the applicant will be asked to provide additional evidence of extreme poverty. The Council also has an education scholarship which aims at ensuring transition and retention of learners.

A National Survey on Children with Disabilities and Special Needs in Education noted enrolment of trainees with disabilities in technical training form less than 4% of the total students' population, with the worst enrolment being in National polytechnics. In addition, the study noted that special needs training institutions which were established to specifically provide technical education to persons with disabilities enrol between 30-76% of trainees without disabilities. The bulk of trainees with disabilities in technical education are found at vocational training centres, with about 87% of trainees with disabilities in technical institutions pursuing craft certificate level courses. It was also found that there is significant gender parity in enrolment, 56% and 44% female trainees with disabilities. Majority of technical institutions are poorly resourced to accommodate trainees with disabilities, but about 19% have found ways to make training of students with disabilities feasible, through among others providing physical assistance to especially blind students through provision of sighted guides, while others provide guidance and counselling.

With regard to teacher for students with special needs and disability, the **Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE)** – a semi-autonomous government agency of the Ministry of Education, is the main body. Established in 1986, KISE's functions including to conduct teacher training courses for teachers in various fields of education of children with special needs and disabilities; conduct in-service courses for personnel working in all fields of special needs education; prepare and conduct correspondence courses for personnel in the field of special needs education and run educational and psychological assessment centre for the training of teachers of children with special needs education, among others. The assessment centre, which is the only one of its kind in the East and Central Africa Region (according to KISE), began its operation in 2019. The Centre among others undertakes functional assessment of children with special needs and disabilities for proper educational placement and develops appropriate technology for learners with special needs, among others. KISE's training programmes includes Diploma and Certificate programmes and short courses. Special needs coverage include autism, emotional & behaviour difficulties, hearing impairment, deafblind, intellectual disabilities, gifted and talented, visual impairment, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and inclusive education.

**the Association Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK)** – an NGO / social enterprise that works with physically disabled persons through, among others, provision of rehabilitative services, provision of appropriate wheelchairs and assistive technology, economical empowerment, and advocating for the rights of persons with disability. It is one of the oldest organisations supporting PWD in Kenya, having been established in 1958. Among the services products APDK offers is assistive devices like wheelchairs, which they produce in their own workshops. APDK also produces furniture and handicrafts as part of its empowerment programs, as well as assistive technology (orthopedic aids). APDK has had previous engagement with Finnish companies.