



African Population and
Health Research Center



Ministry of Education



GENDER MAINSTREAMING PRACTICES IN BASIC EDUCATION & TEACHER TRAINING IN KENYA: STUDY SUMMARY

Background

The Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Education, in line with Sustainable Development goals 4 and 5, is committed to providing quality education and attaining gender parity at all levels of education. Specifically, SDG 4 focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all while SDG 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Therefore, the commitment by the Kenyan government to gender parity in education ensures that all barriers to gender equality are eliminated. This promise is also captured in the African Union Agenda 2063, which targets the attainment of full gender equality in all spheres of life by 2063.

To this end, Kenya has instituted various policy and legislative reforms which have been implemented as the Government seeks to promote access, equality, and equity in the education sector. These policies include the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy, which mandated the provision of free primary education to all children of school-going age; the Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) policy introduced in 2008 to make the costs of secondary education affordable; subsidies or capitation grants provided by the government to all secondary school students enrolled in public day schools to promote access, transition, and academic outcomes. These policy interventions have improved access to education, as seen through the improved Gross Enrollment Rates (GER). For instance, since the launch of the FPE policy in 2003, the GER has increased over the years to **104%** in **2018**. In 2020, the national GER for the pre-primary level stood at

111%. The GER for boys was slightly higher at 112, while that for girls was **111%**. Moreover, in 2020, at the primary level, the GER was **98%**, a drop from **100%** in 2019. At the secondary school level, the GER was **77%** in 2020, up from **71%** in 2019. Boys generally registered a higher GER of **79%** than their female counterparts whose GER stood at **75%**.



In addition to the policy interventions, the Kenyan government continues to promote access, equity, and inclusivity in education through initiatives that reduce disparities based on gender, disabilities, and location (rural and urban). One such policy intervention is the Education and Training Sector Gender Policy. Launched in 2015, the purpose of this policy was to promote gender equality in terms of access, equity, and equality in the education sector. The policy was also aimed at enhancing

the empowerment of boys and girls, men and women for effective participation and contribution to national development by all.

Despite these efforts, there are gaps in the promotion of gender equality in Kenya that are attributable to disparities in education and economic opportunities, representation, and adequate access to health. Therefore, when the policy window opened for the 2015 Education and Training Sector Gender Policy review, the Ministry of Education was keen on using empirical evidence for policy formulation. The Ministry of Education Kenya indicated that one key challenge in the implementation of the 2015 Education and Training Sector Gender policy was a lack of structured implementation and a monitoring and evaluation framework. Moreover, there was no evidence of what was working well and what was not, in the policy implementation.

It is in response to this that the Ministry of Education and African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) with the support of the Center for Global Development (CGD) co-designed a study in 2022, to provide policy-relevant evidence for action on mainstreaming gender issues during curriculum implementation in basic education in Kenya. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education was keen on using co-generated evidence in the review of the 2015 Education and Training Sector Gender Policy.

Study Objectives and Research Questions

The overall objective of this study was to provide policy-relevant evidence for action on mainstreaming gender issues during curriculum implementation in basic education in Kenya.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine how the teacher-training curriculum prepares teachers to implement gender-mainstreaming strategies (such as actual training skills and processes) within the basic education sector policies and guidelines.
2. Examine how gender mainstreaming is practiced inside the classroom during teaching and learning.
3. Assess the relationship between effective pedagogical practices that mainstream gender issues and students' school attendance, choice of subjects, and academic performance.
4. Evaluate the availability of institutional policies, practices, and guidelines that have been put in place to mainstream gender issues and the extent to which they influence gender mainstreaming in education.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does the teacher-training curriculum in Kenya respond to the basic education sector gender policies regarding gender mainstreaming in teaching and learning?
2. Does the gender policy in education (as viewed from the lens of teacher pedagogical strategies and practices inside the classroom) enhance

gender mainstreaming, and how do the observed strategies relate to students' (boys/girls) school attendance, choice/preferred subjects, and academic performance?

3. What strategies (policies, guidelines, and practices) have been put in place at institutional level to mainstream gender issues and to what extent do they promote gender mainstreaming in basic education?

Study Setting

Data for the present study was collected from 250 basic education institutions spread over 10 counties in Kenya with the highest rates of child poverty - above **60%** (KNBS, 2017). The KNBS (2017) indicates that child poverty relates to a child's multidimensional deprivation as a result of the inability to access one or more basic needs or services. Child poverty beyond **60%** indicates that children residing in these counties are more deprived and thus vulnerable. The counties were Busia, Garissa, Mandera, Marsabit, Tana River, Turkana, Samburu, Wajir, Nairobi, and West Pokot. Nairobi was selected even though the child poverty rate was estimated to be at **7%**, because of the presence of many urban informal settlements. Data was also collected from 7 purposefully sampled Diploma Teacher Training colleges in the following Counties; Kiambu, Kakamega, Mombasa, Garissa, Nyeri, and Machakos. Five of the teacher training colleges had training programs for early childhood development and primary education, while two focused on secondary education.

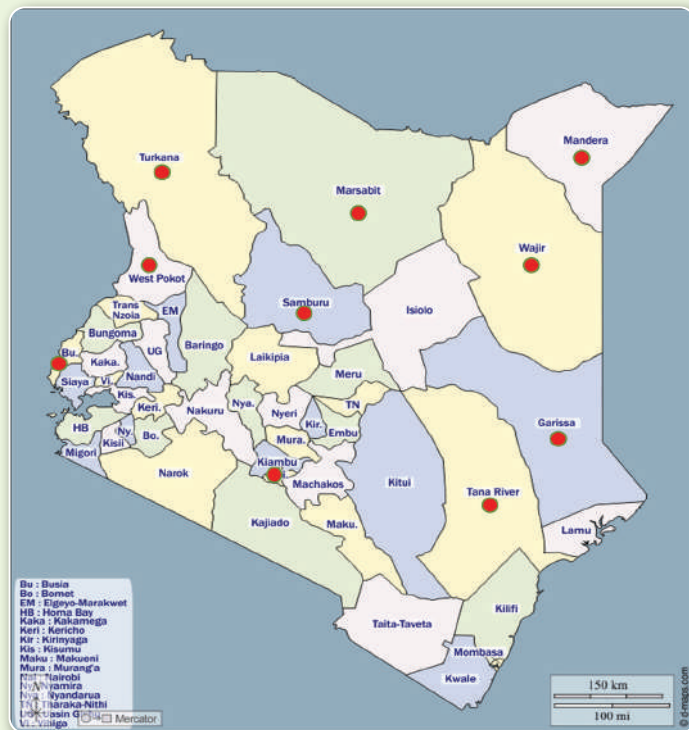


Figure 1: Map of Kenya showing the target study counties

Ethical Consideration

The study research and ethics approvals were sought from the APHRC scientific review committee, the Amref ethics and scientific review committee, and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Approval to access the target institutions was also provided by the Ministry of Education.

Data Collection

Before the start of fieldwork activities, a meeting of the County Directors of Education from each of the target counties was convened in Nairobi, where these key education stakeholders were briefed on the study and their role in supporting research activities as well as validation and dissemination activities. Data was collected from August to October 2022 by a team of 60 enumerators recruited from the target counties.

Study Participants

The study participants for the quantitative component included 250 institutional heads, 4662 learners in primary grade 6 and secondary school form two, 7 teacher trainers, and 166 teacher trainees. In addition, qualitative data included 10 focus group discussions with students in primary and secondary schools, 16 in-depth interviews with teachers in primary and secondary schools, 10 key informant interviews with curriculum support officers/quality assurance and standards officers, 7 in-depth interviews with teacher trainers, 7 focus group discussions with teachers trainees, 1 key informant interviews with a KICD official, and 1 key informant interview with Ministry of Education official. Further, the secondary data sources included the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) assessment data from 2017 to 2022, and diploma in teacher education curriculum (early childhood, primary, and secondary education).

County	Number of Schools	Response Rate (Schools)	Learners per County (n)	Response Rate (Learners)
Busia	26	104%	512	102%
Garissa	25	100%	444	89%
Mandera	25	100%	463	93%
Marsabit	25	100%	482	96%
Nairobi	25	100%	472	94%
Samburu	24	96%	463	93%
Tana River	25	100%	443	89%
Turkana	25	100%	452	90%
Wajir	24	96%	430	86%
West Pokot	26	104%	501	100%
Total	250	100%	4662	93%

The 250 target schools comprised 126 primary schools (102 public and 24 private) and 124 secondary schools (104 public and 20 private); **97.1%** of public primary schools were mixed-gender, whereas all private primary schools were mixed-gender. Similarly, at the secondary level, data were collected from **20.2%** of single-gender boys' schools, **24.0%** of single-gender girl schools, and **55.8%** of mixed-gender schools.



Key Study Findings

An examination of how the teacher-training curriculum prepares teacher trainees to respond to the basic education sector gender policy through gender mainstreaming in teaching and learning revealed that:

- Teacher trainees had a relatively good understanding of gender-equitable teaching and learning practices from an equity perspective. Most trainees agreed that encouraging equal participation, extending positive reinforcement to girls and boys, and maintaining eye contact while allowing both male and female students to speak without interruption are all important.
- There was limited understanding of the importance of gender-responsive lesson planning, support, and assistance for female students in STEM and gender-responsive classroom setup.
- A review of the curriculum indicated that gender mainstreaming was not built into the teacher training curriculum and, thus, was not taught as a topic of a stand-alone unit. The general knowledge and understanding demonstrated by the teacher trainees were mainly acquired from general courses, such as child development and psychology, inclusive education, and other private training.
- There was also a misalignment in the assessment framework used in the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), where teacher trainers assessed gender-inclusive teaching during teaching practicum assessment. In contrast, teacher trainees were unaware that it is an assessment component.

An examination of whether gender-responsive pedagogical practices are utilized in basic education classrooms revealed that:

- There were no significant gender differences in the teaching practices among pre-primary and primary school teachers. However, at the secondary level, there were gender differences in the teaching practices. For instance, teachers engaged boys more than girls during literacy and STEM classes.
- At the primary level, the main reasons for absenteeism for both boys and girls were domestic responsibilities, sickness, and lack of food. In contrast, at the secondary level, the main reasons were school fees, sickness, pregnancy and parenting challenges for girls, and paid work outside the home for boys.
- On optional subject selection at secondary school, more boys than girls opted to select physics and geography, whereas a higher proportion of girls intended to select Christian Religious Education/Islamic Religious Education.

An examination of the associations between gender-equitable teaching practices and academic outcomes revealed that:

- At both primary and secondary levels, the use of gender-equitable practices positively influenced learning outcomes in English and STEM subjects. The use of gender-equitable teaching practices was significantly associated with increased academic performance in English at the primary level and Biology, English, Mathematics, and Physics at the secondary level.
- The odds of school attendance increased if gender-equitable interactions and gender responsive classroom environments were utilized during instruction, and if the schools had a higher gender mainstreaming compliance score.
- Other factors that significantly influenced school attendance at primary and secondary levels included the availability of a school feeding program and library facilities.
- The odds of selecting Chemistry and Physics as optional subjects at the secondary level increased if the subject teacher was easily approachable and if the subject was considered applicable to the intended future career.

Lastly, the study examined the strategies (policies, practices, and guidelines) implemented at the institutional level to mainstream gender issues and to what extent such strategies promoted gender mainstreaming in basic education:

- More than **40%** of public and private primary and secondary schools did not have guidelines on sexual harassment and gender-based violence for teachers and students in the schools. In addition, majority of the schools that indicated they had the guidelines could not avail them to the research team.
- More than **98%** of the schools had separate toilet facilities for boys and girls; however, most schools did not have separate toilets for learners with special needs.
- At the pre-primary level, the teaching staff was predominantly female (**82%**), whereas the proportion of male teachers was more than that of the female teachers at the primary level (**54%**) and secondary level (**75%**).
- At the primary and secondary levels, most male teachers were allocated to teaching STEM subjects.
- Quality Assurance and Standards Officers addressed gender issues during school visits in **60%** of primary and **46.9%** of secondary institutions. However, the focus on gender issues during school visits by the Public Health Officers (PHO) was low in both primary (**36.6%**) and secondary (**22.1%**).
- The composition of the Board of Management (BOM) and the Parent Associations (PA) in private and public primary and secondary schools was predominantly male.

Conclusion

The study highlighted key gaps in teacher training, pedagogical practices at the basic education level, and institutional practices. At the teacher training level, there is a need for a review of the teacher education curriculum to be more gender-responsive. There is also a need for capacity building of pre-service and in-service teachers to be more gender-responsive in their pedagogical practices. Lastly, deliberate steps should be taken to ensure that all institutions at the basic education level and training are gender inclusive in their practices, guidelines, and programs.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the study team proposes policy recommendations and strategic interventions in line with each thematic area of the Education and Training Sector Gender Policy 2015.

Gender Inclusive Teacher Training:

1. Include engendered instructional approaches in the training modules in the Diploma Teacher Education Curriculum Guides.
2. Gender mainstreaming could be taught explicitly as a stand-alone unit or integrated into the teaching methodology in the learning areas.
3. Gender mainstreaming should also be a target of the assessment in the teacher training courses and practicum experience.
4. Provide capacity building for teacher trainers on gender mainstreaming in the curriculum.
5. Strengthen coaching, mentorship, and modelling of best practices in gender mainstreaming for training.
6. Allocation of financial resources to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all areas of teacher education.



Access:

1. To strengthen the nutritional support to schools to enhance school attendance, especially for learners in marginalized areas.
2. Expand the EduAfy medical scheme to cover primary schools to enhance school attendance.
3. Institutionalize targeted interventions to increase the enrolment and attendance for boys and girls based on regional disparities and student gender. For instance, have programs to reduce pregnancies at secondary school levels or programs to support pregnant and parenting adolescents.
4. Sensitize communities on the availability of resource centres and schools that support SNE and promote enrolment, retention, and transition of children with special needs.

5. Build the capacity of teachers and school administrators on the availability of educational assessment resource centres to refer learners with special needs for assessment and support.
6. Establish and equip educational assessment resource centres at county and sub-county levels to evaluate and identify learners with special needs.
7. Equip basic education institutions with facilities and trained teachers to support students with special needs.

Equity:

1. Enhance school management structures such as boards of management and parent associations that are gender inclusive – formation, representation, training, and discussions.

Quality Education:

1. Capacity building on gender-inclusive teaching practices in basic education for both in-service teachers and teacher trainees.
2. Strengthen quality assurance and monitoring for effective implementation of gender equity in education and training at the college and school levels.
3. Enhance supervisory mechanisms (head teachers, QASO, and CSOs) to ensure effective gender mainstreaming practices in the classroom.

Safety, Security, and Gender-Based Violence:

1. Require/mandate institutions of learning to have guidelines on safety, security, and gender-based violence accessible to students, teachers, and non-teaching staff.
2. Sensitize teachers, students, and non-teaching staff (including the board of management and parent associations) on the institutional guidelines.
3. Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for ensuring compliance e.g., on student diaries, posters, and seminars).
4. Gender inclusivity in regard to the provision of separate toilets for male and female learners and teachers should continue.
5. Training on gender-based violence and sexual harassment for teachers, Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO), and Curriculum Support Officers is needed to build their own capacity to handle the cases if they arise and build the capacity of other teachers, students, and colleagues.
6. Establish and implement standard operating procedures for reporting GBV and abuse in and out of school for learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff and legal redress for perpetrators of abuse and GBV.



Nurturing and Mentoring:

1. Deliberate efforts to encourage girls to pursue STEM subjects and careers at an early age through formal mentorship programs to encourage STEM careers and role modelling.
2. Encourage female teacher trainees to pursue STEM-related subjects and male teacher trainees to pursue humanities and languages.
3. Provide incentives and create an enabling environment for students, particularly females, to participate in research and STEM courses.
4. Provide incentives and create an enabling environment for students, particularly males, to pursue careers in the teaching profession in pre-primary and primary.
5. Disseminate gender-friendly information on STEM degree programs and innovation, careers, job creation, and employability to learning institutions.

Governance and Management:

1. TSC and relevant stakeholders should ensure equal representation of male and female teachers in school and in leadership positions.
2. Encourage and empower female teachers and parents to take up leadership positions in schools (administrative, HoD, BoM, and PA).
3. Continue to encourage equal representation of students in leadership positions.

