



# Value-based Education and Parental Empowerment & Engagement in ASAL and APBET schools in Kenya

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**Ministry of Education**



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## What is the issue?

The primary research question driving this inquiry was to ascertain the knowledge, attitudes, and practices necessary to support successful curriculum implementation in pre-primary and primary schools across Kenya. This complementary piece aims to contextualize the research work and its findings within the broader policy framework, encompassing the policy strategies and decision-making processes it aims to inform. Specifically, this piece is tailored to address parental engagement and empowerment, as well as value-based education, particularly in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) and informal settlement settings in Kenya.

The report from the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms (PWPER, 2023) highlights that Value-based Education (VbE), Community Service Learning (CSL), and Parental Empowerment and Engagement (PE&E) have yet to be fully actualized. Identified gaps include insufficient formal and informal learning provisions, the absence of structured counseling programs, and inadequate sensitization initiatives for parents and communities.

This policy brief is formulated as part of the formative research project titled "Transforming Schooling into Learning (TSIL)." Before the project's rollout, a formative study targeting 395 participants was conducted with the research objective of discerning key competence gaps among stakeholders of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), with a specific focus on parents, teachers, school leaders, and government education officers.

### ***Scale of the problem - Value based Education***

- ***The existing structured counseling programs and sensitization initiatives for parents and communities are inadequate.***
- ***The guidelines for Value-Based Education have not been fully implemented.***

## Background

In 2017, Kenya introduced a new Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) with a primary emphasis on fostering skills and competencies in learners rather than solely concentrating on academic content. This curriculum mandates teachers to undergo re-tooling and training to transition from teacher-centered to learner-centered methodologies. The findings presented here are derived from a formative study conducted by Dignitas in collaboration with the Kenya Education Management Institute, supported by a multi-agency Technical Working Group.



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## Understanding the problem of Value-based Education and Parental Empowerment & Engagement

The debate surrounding the definition and classification of values in education continues to spark discussions both locally and internationally, extending beyond Kenya. Value-based education is a topic of interest that is discussed with both distinction and similarity. Associated terms such as 21st-century skills, transferable and non-transferable skills, and social-emotional learning are often intertwined with discussions on value-based education. Nevertheless, "value-based education" remains an accepted term in policy circles. The most recent policy articulation on this matter was through the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms (PWPER) Report (2023), which dedicated a chapter to synthesizing public and expert recommendations on implementing value-based education. The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) directly references the seven competencies and values learners need to cultivate in the learning process, suggesting that the entire competency-based curriculum framework is centered around values and skills. Consequently, discussions on value-based education are now closely integrated into competency-based curriculum processes, including definitions, pedagogies, content, and assessment.

Value-based education is not a new concept in Kenya. It is now widely accepted that schools serve not only as spaces for academic learning but also as opportunities for modeling values. These broader learning environments enable learners to navigate current school demands as well as prepare for the challenges of adult life. Various methods and approaches have been adopted and

implemented to instill values in schools, including the adoption of value-based school mottos, integrating values into schools' rules and regulations, articulating explicit school values, and incorporating value-based content into subjects such as religious education and literature, among others (Wamahiu, 2017).

However, with the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), the significance of value-based education has become more prominent. While CBC has been progressively implemented across grade levels, there are significant gaps in understanding value-based education approaches among key stakeholders, including teachers, school leaders, education officials, and parents. Moreover, there is limited evidence regarding the knowledge levels, skill sets, and attitudes necessary to explain and support the practice of value-based education in schools. The challenge lies in defining indicators and methods for inculcating and assessing value-based education. It can be argued that the emerging body of evidence around competency-based curriculum also extends to include value-based education.

Several studies have highlighted gaps in implementing the competency-based curriculum, which could also be extrapolated to competency-based assessment. Studies conducted by Akala (2021), Odundo (2019), and Ogutu (2019) point to a convergence of behavioral factors associated with knowledge levels, skill sets, and attitudes as explanatory factors for the implementation of competency-based curriculum processes, including value-based education. The involvement of multiple stakeholders at

various levels, their interactions, and associated relationships are identified as crucial factors contributing to the success or failure of the competency-based curriculum. For instance, a study by Care et al. (2022) on life skills and values across East Africa revealed that less than 10% of adolescents possessed selected life skills such as collaboration, self-awareness, problem-solving, and respect. Regarding parental empowerment and engagement, the guidelines for PE&E have not been operationalized, and the roles of parents and communities remain poorly defined.



### ***Scale of the Problem - Parental Empowerment & Engagement***

- *Low literacy levels among parents affect the efficacy of parental empowerment and engagement programs.*
- *The operationalization of PE&E guidelines has not been adequately implemented.*
- *The roles of parents and communities have not been fully defined to provide holistic development for learners.*

## **About Transforming School into Learning and Formative Research**

Transforming Schooling into Learning is a two-year project aimed at enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to adopt practices that would improve the implementation of competency-based curriculum processes in informal and arid contexts, specifically in Kisumu and Isiolo counties. The project will be executed in schools across these two counties, collaborating with classroom teachers, heads of institutions, boards of management, parents, and education officials, including curriculum support officers and sub-county officials.

Prior to the project rollout, a formative study was conducted. Value-based education elements in the study were operationalized to encompass socio-emotional learning and resilience.

The formative study, conducted in 2023, utilized a mixed-methods approach and targeted three counties: Isiolo, Makueni, and Kisumu. The aim was to compare findings from schools in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL), rural communities, and schools in informal settlements. A total of 395 participants from 87 school communities were reached, comprising 253 teachers, 25 heads of institutions, 78 parents, and 13 education officials.

Data collection tools included survey questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guides, and observation checklists. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25 for quantitative data and NVivo version 10 for qualitative data.

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## Findings from the formative research

### *Key findings from TSIL*

- *The most commonly instilled skills among students are communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.*
- *Socio-emotional learning skills are primarily addressed by the guidance and counseling departments.*
- *Parents lack sufficient knowledge about the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and how to effectively support learners accordingly.*



Based on the study findings, the following observations have been extracted:

- The majority of teachers focus on instilling communication, collaboration, self-efficacy, and critical thinking competencies in learners. However, there is less emphasis on fostering digital literacy and citizenship skills.
- School leaders perceive socio-emotional learning (SEL) and resilience as aspects addressed primarily through guidance and counseling programs outside of classroom instruction rather than being integrated into teaching and learning activities.
- There is a clear correlation between the development of SEL skills and resilience outcomes in learners. However, sustaining SEL and resilience skills necessitates consistent reinforcement from adults across all levels of education.
- The data suggests that SEL and resilience are often regarded as external programs rather than being seamlessly integrated into classroom learning to shape values and enhance competencies.
- Parents face distinct challenges related to competence, including poor collaboration and communication skills, limited digital literacy, and low levels of literacy overall.
- Parents also lack adequate knowledge about the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and their role in supporting learners according to its requirements.

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## **Policy Implications from the formative study:**

- Integrating SEL into classroom instruction is vital for the success of CBC implementation and for realizing the vision of fostering positive learner personalities.
- Developing adult SEL competencies will enable them to effectively model and reinforce SEL skills in learners at all levels.
- A holistic approach that integrates SEL across classroom, school-wide, and community levels is crucial for achieving sustained outcomes.
- Tailoring parental empowerment and engagement programs to specific
- contexts is essential for promoting communication and collaboration among parents, teachers, and school management.

## **Based on the policy implications, this paper proposes the following six policy recommendations to the Ministry of Education/Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)**

- Curriculum standards and frameworks that integrate values across subjects and competencies. Values such as integrity, respect, and compassion can be seamlessly woven into learning objectives.
- Enhance the capacity of teachers to incorporate value-based methodologies. Implement a whole-school approach to VbE implementation.
- Strengthen quality assurance mechanisms to encompass parental engagement, socio-emotional learning, and resilience in schools.
- Recognize schools that exemplify ethical learning environments, community service programs, and value-driven cultures through recognition programs.
- Enhance parental engagement programs through training modules on parental engagement, socio-emotional learning, and resilience to align school and home environments.
- Foster multi-stakeholder collaborations at national and county levels to facilitate learning on how to realize the intentions of parental engagement, socio-emotional learning, and resilience.
- Launch public campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of parental engagement, socio-emotional learning, and resilience for holistic development and success.
- Strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations, religious centers, and media houses to ensure the sustainability of socio-emotional learning and resilience initiatives.

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## Conclusions

Integrating SEL across all learning ecosystems is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of CBC implementation and ensuring sustained outcomes in learners. A coordinated effort to develop competencies and monitor integration by all stakeholders is imperative. The policy recommendations emphasize systemic integration across curriculum, pedagogy, assessments, incentives, stakeholder capacity building, and synergies across school-community linkages. A concerted effort is essential for establishing value-based education. Monitoring and evaluation will provide insights into effectiveness and identify any gaps.

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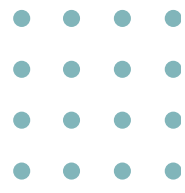
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