



# **Country mapping report: School leadership in Kenya**

*September 2024*

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## About VVOB and the African Centre for School Leadership

[The African Centre for School Leadership \(ACSL\)](#) is a coalition of partners in Africa committed to the promotion of effective school leadership by bringing together organisations that offer professional development services, research, and policy advice on effective school leadership. The ACSL coordinated by VVOB – *education for development*, the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), and Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA).

[VVOB – education for development](#) is an international non-profit organisation with over 40 years of experience in quality education. Through capacity development, VVOB provides support to ministries of education in Africa, Asia and South America to improve (initial) professional development of teachers and school leaders in early childhood, primary, general secondary, and technical and vocational education.

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## List of abbreviations

ACSL	African Centre for School Leadership
BoM	Boards of Management
CBC	Competence Based Curriculum
CDE	County Directors of Education
CEMASTEА	Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CQASO	County Quality Assurance Officers
CSO	County Staffing Officers
DHT	Deputy headteacher
HT	Headteacher
KEMI	Kenya Education Management Institute
KeSTEM	Kenya School of Teacher and Education Management
KeTTC	Kenya Teachers Training College
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
NESSP	National Education Sector Strategic Plan
PD	Professional Development
PTA	Parent Teacher Associations
SAGA	Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies
SC	Student Council
SCDE	Sub-County Directors for Education
ST	Senior Teachers
TPAD	Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TSC	Teacher Service Commission

TTC

Teachers Training College

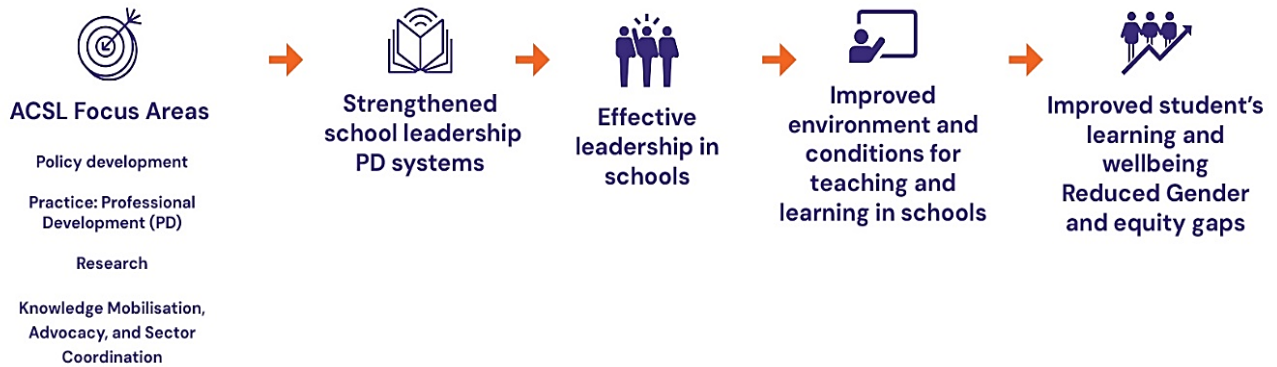
## 1. Introduction

The quality of school leadership plays a crucial role in understanding the current global learning crisis (Muralidharan & Singh, 2020). Despite many countries committing to providing inclusive and quality education under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4), progress towards achieving this goal by 2030 has been slow. According to UNESCO (2020), nearly two-thirds of 10-year-olds lack the ability to read or understand basic texts, underscoring the urgent need for swift and effective action to prevent the global learning crisis from becoming a lasting disaster for future generations. The World Bank (2018) identifies several key factors hindering educational progress, including unprepared students, poor teaching quality, and inadequate school leadership.

Leadership practices of school leaders significantly impact student achievement and are therefore a critical aspect of students' daily lives (Branch et al., 2012; Crawford, 2017). School leaders are tasked not only with overseeing day-to-day operations but also with selecting and supporting teachers, managing budgets, maintaining facilities, and cultivating positive relationships with the broader community (Grissom et al., 2021; Miller, 2013). A safe and supportive school environment is essential for students to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. School leaders who prioritise student wellbeing create a nurturing atmosphere where students feel valued, respected, and supported in their academic and personal growth. School leaders also have a positive impact on learning outcomes when they focus on developing, supporting, and evaluating the quality of teaching. By providing teachers with the necessary resources, training, and professional development opportunities, school leaders can enhance teaching practices and ultimately improve student learning. Furthermore, effective evaluation processes help identify areas for improvement and ensure that teachers are meeting the needs of their students. Investing in school leadership improvement yields significant returns, as leadership effects extend over the entire school. Successful school leaders have the capacity to bring out the best in the entire teaching staff, creating a collaborative and supportive environment where everyone is committed to continuous improvement. This, in turn, has a direct impact on student outcomes, as teachers who feel supported and valued are more likely to be engaged and effective in the classroom (Day et al., 2016).

To ignite and promote the potential of school leadership in improving educational quality in the continent, the African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) was initiated in 2021 as a catalyst for this essential transformation. As reflected in the Theory of Change (*Figure 1*), the Centre partners and collaborates with key stakeholders to build supportive school leadership systems to promote effective school leadership in schools in Africa. Effective school leadership support systems will help school leaders create positive instructional environments for teachers throughout their lifecycle in school. Improved school environments and improved conditions for teaching and learning in schools will, in turn, result in improved students' learning, wellbeing and reduced gender and equity gaps.

Figure 1: Theory of Change of the African Centre for School Leadership



To lay the foundations for the Centre, an exploratory scoping review of the empirical research on school leadership in Africa was carried out by Bush et al. (2022). The study offers insights on what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent, based on empirical research. The resulting working paper provided insights about key competencies and practices that are associated with effective school leadership, the features of effective and scalable Professional Development (PD) for school leaders as well as on how local, national, and regional policies promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices in Africa. Based on the findings, recommendations were made with regards to activities that the ACSL could undertake to promote school leadership.

To further strengthen the foundations of the African Centre for School Leadership, VVOB (2023) used the Delphi method to consult experts in the field and across Africa. The experts reached a consensus that effective school leadership should enhance student well-being and equity, reduce dropout rates, and improve overall education quality by elevating teacher quality and supporting their development, motivation, and retention. They agreed that successful school leaders must be able to set the school's direction, manage it as an organisation, and create a positive and safe learning environment. The experts also emphasised the need for more female school leaders in Africa to promote gender equality. They noted that in some African countries, hierarchical influences hinder distributed school leadership. They observed that teaching experience is often the primary requirement for school leadership advancement, and while there is limited evidence on the impact of PD, effective preparation and development of school leaders positively affect education quality. The experts agreed that PD should include various activities like peer observation, mentorship, work tasks, feedback systems, and on-the-job training, with a focus on gender-responsive and transformative pedagogy. They stressed the importance of close collaboration between PD providers and governments for sustainability. Finally, they highlighted the significance of national policies in raising awareness about leadership and the crucial role of district or regional leaders in shaping the educational landscape.

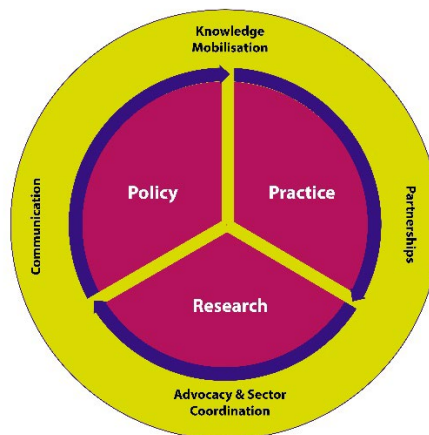
In line with UNESCO GEM Report (2023), the Centre promotes leadership at various levels in the education system includes educational leaders at decentralised levels of national education systems (middle tier) as

well as school leaders, both in-service as well as aspiring school leaders. Nevertheless, the partnerships and activities of the Centre focus on school leaders within schools, defined as school principals, headteachers, school heads, their deputies, or anyone who has the responsibility to drive the overall strategic direction and operations of a school, including instructional processes and systems.

Further through its activities, projects, and partnerships, the Centre, guided by recommendations from Bush et al. (2022) and experts in VVOB (2023), focused its efforts on three countries—Rwanda, Kenya, and Ghana—during its foundation phase. The Centre collaborates with partners and emphasises four focus areas (Figure 2):

- **Policy:** development or re-development (reform) of effective school leadership policies and guidelines.
- **Practice:** development and delivery of professional development programmes for school leaders.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Research:** research on the effectiveness and impact of school leadership and school leadership professional development. Indicators and tools for consistent monitoring and evaluation of professional development initiatives on school leadership.
- **Knowledge mobilisation, advocacy, communication, and sector coordination:** mobilisation and dissemination of evidence, insights, learning; advocacy on school leadership; coordination of partners and stakeholders involved in promoting school leadership.

Figure 2: Focus Areas of the ACSL



To ensure that support in each focus area is well-designed and aligned with country-specific needs, it was crucial to gain a comprehensive understanding of the status of school leadership and school leadership development in each country. A country mapping exercise was conducted to assess progress and practices in school leadership.

This report begins by detailing the methodology, which includes a description of the template used for information collection, the data collection process, and a discussion of limitations. It then presents the findings, organised around policy, practice, monitoring, evaluation, research, knowledge mobilisation,



advocacy, communication, and sector coordination, providing an overall picture of school leadership in the country. Finally, it concludes with a summary of findings and recommendations related to policy, professional development, gender mainstreaming, monitoring, evaluation, research, knowledge mobilisation, advocacy, communication, and sector coordination.

## 2. Methodology

The country mapping exercise was designed to collect information regarding the status of Kenya's school leadership support systems in terms of the following: School leadership policies and support systems, PD programmes, providers, content, delivery modalities, monitoring and evaluation, beneficiaries, etc. The data generated is instrumental for the Centre and partnering countries and institutions to identify good practices and areas for support. The mapping will be a starting point for the ACSL to collaborate with governments in building effective school leadership support systems. Overall, the mapping aims to reach the following objectives:

1. Map the progress of countries in school leadership and school leadership professional development (PD).
2. Undertake a review of policies and practices on school leadership and school leadership PD to identify successful practices, innovative approaches, and gaps.
3. Inform the development of a roadmap for the ACSL support on school leadership and school leadership PD. The roadmap will outline key action points to advance school leadership agenda in these countries, highlighting priority areas and countries where support is most needed.

In addition to these objectives, the practices collected from Kenya will be shared with other countries at pan—African level. In order to meet the objectives of the mapping exercise, a series of open-ended and few closed ended questions were compiled in a template.

### 2.1. Country mapping template

The country mapping template was developed by the ACSL team. To ensure that the information captured is comprehensive the template was also shared with WISE Agile Leaders of Learning Innovation Network (ALL IN) for review. The template is structured around the four focused areas of the Centre. For each focus area the template focused on the following:

#### 1. Policy development

The mapping template looks into the school leadership policies, standards, and guidelines in various countries. The section on policy included questions about the provision for school leadership in educational policies and strategies, professional standards of effective school leadership, existing policies supporting school leadership development, guidelines/frameworks on school leadership, and educational strategies/plans to support school leadership development. It also addresses the question of gender mainstreaming in school leadership, the structure of educational leadership from national to school level, the autonomy of school leaders, other leadership positions at the school level, and the promotion of school leadership approaches. Additionally, it seeks data on the percentage of female school leaders across different levels of education, support for school leadership from parents and the wider community,

and ongoing key educational policy developments or reviews, particularly those involving school leadership support.

## **2. Professional development (PD)**

The mapping template also focuses on gathering information about school leadership professional development (PD) offerings and support systems in various countries. The template includes questions about career pathways for school leaders, government agencies responsible for school leadership PD, their roles and responsibilities, integration of school leadership PD in government planning and budgeting, and gender mainstreaming in PD offerings. It also seeks details about other partners involved in PD programmes at national and/or regional levels, their areas of support, and comprehensive information about PD offerings implemented in each country, including content/focus, target group, reach, provider, delivery method, PD approach, accreditation, duration, and funding sources.

## **3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Research**

Considering Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and Research in the context of school leadership, the template looks into how school leadership in schools and PD offerings are monitored and evaluated, and how policies and strategies have influenced the implementation and impact of school leadership and development. Additionally, it seeks information on available research/studies on the impact of school leadership and development, with references where applicable.

## **4. Knowledge mobilisation, advocacy, communication, and sector coordination.**

The mapping template includes questions about how knowledge on school leadership and development is shared and disseminated, and how various partners involved in school leadership development are coordinated. It also looks into the existence of platforms for coordination of school leadership PD, such as technical working groups or taskforces.

## **2.2. Data collection process**

This template is designed to be completed by relevant representatives from ministries of education or other government implementing agencies, CPD providers, development partners, universities, etc. It is recommended that one person takes the lead in completing the template to facilitate follow-up by the ACSL team if there are any questions. However, it is important to fill out the template in consultation with other relevant partners supporting school leadership to ensure that the information provided is comprehensive and validated.

In Kenya, the template was encoded in Kobo for data collection. Kobo is an online survey tool that empowers users to create, distribute, and analyse surveys easily. The Kobo link was shared with the point of contact in each country, and they were asked to fill in the data in consultation with partners to validate the information provided. Based on the analysis and recommendations in this report, a co-creation session is expected to be organised at the country level to identify gaps to be addressed and opportunities

for collaboration with the ACSL to develop a roadmap to strengthen effective school leadership in the four countries.

### **2.3. Limitations**

The analysis of the findings captured in this report, are to be considered with the following limitations: The report focuses on information collected between 2023 and 2024 regarding school leadership policies, professional development, monitoring, evaluation and research, gender mainstreaming, knowledge mobilisation, advocacy, communication, and sector coordination. However, this data may not provide a comprehensive overview of the subject. The data was collected using a template, which may have limitations. The interpretation of the questions could vary depending on the context, and the inclusion of closed-ended questions may have restricted the ability to provide specific answers. Although the data was collected by multiple parties and validated at different level, there is a possibility that some information may have been overlooked or omitted.

### 3. Findings

This section is structured to provide a comprehensive summary of the data collected through the country mapping template on school leadership support systems in Kenya. It covers the following areas: school leadership policy, professional development, gender, and disability mainstreaming in school leadership, monitoring, evaluation, and research, as well as knowledge mobilisation, advocacy, communication, and sector coordination.

#### 3.1. Overview of School Leadership in Kenya

In Kenya, three main leadership approaches are promoted: Instructional, transformative, and distributive Leadership. Instructional leadership is identified by the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) as the standard leadership practice. Although there is no definition provided to give a framework to the term, the TSC Teacher Professional Development (TPD) outlines seven standards for instructional school leaders in Kenya, and school leaders are trained in each standard through a TPD programme offered through selected service providers. The seven standards include: 1) Promotes Professionalism; 2) Pedagogical content and understanding of Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) as well as its implementation; 3) Leads in environment that promotes assessment and reporting; 4) Building positive inclusive environment; 5) Promoting comprehensive school health and safety; 6) Leads in developing collaborative professional learning community; 7) Leads in financial literacy (Republic of Kenya, 2018).

Within school settings, the educational structure calls for a transformative leader who sets the school vision and mission, inspires enthusiasm, motivates staff and learners towards academic excellence. The structure also provides for distributed leadership, wherein a team comprising of the deputy headteacher (DHT), senior teachers (ST), and heads of subjects support the headteacher in managing administrative, teaching, and learning aspects. In terms of autonomy, school leaders are held accountable for management of schools, based on policies and strategies put in place by the Ministry of Education and the TSC. The actions they conduct are guided by the policies, guidelines, and government circulars in place. There is limited freedom to implement school-based policies if not aligned to national policies and priorities.

##### a. Structure of Educational Leadership

The structure of educational leadership is hierarchical, spanning national to sub-county levels.

At the national level, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is overseen by a Cabinet Secretary for Education, supported by three Principal Secretaries. The Director General, reporting to the PS for Basic Education, leads five directorates. Administrative, financial, and accounting divisions report to the Principal Secretaries. Several Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs) manage various aspects of education and training, also reporting to the principal secretary. The Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) is the Semi-Autonomous Government Agency with the mandate to strengthen the leadership and managerial capacity of various cadres of educational personnel.

At county level, County Directors of Education (CDE) coordinate education activities, while TSC County Directors manage teacher management. They are supported by County Staffing Officers (CSO) and County Quality Assurance Officers (CQASO). These officials represent the national government at the county level. Each county also has a Chief Executive for Education, under the County Governor, focusing on education matters. Similar positions exist at sub-county levels, with Sub-County Directors for Education (SCDE) and TSC Sub-County Directors overseeing education management, planning, registration, and monitoring.

At school level, Primary and secondary schools are overseen by Boards of Management (BoM) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), whereas middle-level colleges and TVET institutions are managed by Boards of Governors (BoGs). Within schools, leadership structures include the Board of Management, Headteacher (HT), Deputy Headteacher (DHT), Senior Teacher (ST), Panel Head, and Student Council (SC). The Headteacher, as the lead educator and accounting officer, is responsible for operational management, curriculum activities, staff, resources, and student well-being (Republic of Kenya, 2018).

At both school and external levels, leadership roles are interrelated and complementary. The roles within schools, such as BoM, HT, DHT, ST, and SC, complement each other for holistic school management. Similarly, leadership roles outside schools, like CDE, SCDE, CQASO, and CSO, support each other and supplement school leadership.

The BoM, as defined by The Basic Education Act, (2013), ensures conducive learning environments. It comprises representatives from various stakeholders, including PTA, County Education Board (CEB), school staff, sponsors, community, and special needs representatives. The Student Council consists of elected student leaders and class representatives advocating for student-related issues to the school leadership. Within schools, parents' associations are constituted for mobilisation of school fees and resources for their schools. In addition, teachers hold parents-teachers' meetings to bring together parents, learners, and their teachers to discuss learner academic progress. Some schools hold parents learning sessions inviting experts to discuss critical issues that affect learners.

Parental and community engagement in school leadership is outlined in (The Basic Education Act, 2013), Parental Empowerment and Engagement policy (2019), and the draft Community Service Learning (CSL) policy. These policies guide the involvement of parents and the community in supporting children's learning for improved outcomes, through parents' associations, parent-teacher meetings, and expert-led sessions on critical issues affecting learners. Though not directly targeted at school leadership, these policies provide valuable guidance to school leaders in managing parental engagement and community involvement.

### **3.2. Policy**

Kenya's education system is anchored in policies and legal frameworks that guarantee the right to free and compulsory basic education for all children. The Kenya Constitution mandates state agencies to ensure every school-age child is enrolled in school, aligning with global initiatives like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) to provide inclusive and quality education for all. Additionally,

legislation such as the Basic Education Act (2013) reinforces every child's right to quality education and establishes governance structures for educational institutions. Vision 2030 further sets ambitious targets to achieve universal access to education and a seamless transition from primary to secondary schooling, reflecting the country's commitment to educational advancement.

The Education and Training Policy of 2012 provides a legislative framework for implementing free basic education, learner retention and transition, inclusion, teacher training, and continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers. Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 outlines the framework for reforming education and training to promote sustainable development in Kenya, emphasizing inclusive, equitable, quality, and relevant education, training, and research that fosters lifelong learning opportunities for all.

There are a number of guidelines on school leadership and school leadership development. The TSC Teacher Professional Development (TPD) Guidelines outline the characteristics necessary for effective curriculum delivery and provide structures for TPD implementation, ensuring compliance with teaching standards. The Career Progression Guidelines (2018) by the TSC guide the teacher and school leaders' recruitment, retention, development, and promotion. Additionally, the Junior Secondary School Guidelines (2023) offer technical guidance for implementing Junior Secondary Schools (VVOB & Kenya Education and Management Institute, 2023).

On the strategic and planning side, the National Education Sector Strategic Plan (NESSP) 2018-2022 and NESSP 2023-2027 are comprehensive documents that outline policy priorities, programs, and strategies for the Ministry of Education over five-year periods. NESSP aims to enhance quality assurance and standards in curriculum delivery and governance. The Ministry of Education, through NESSP, acknowledges the need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education service delivery at all levels by providing relevant policies, guidelines, and frameworks. It mandates and equips its educational Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs) to deliver quality continuous professional development to teachers and school leaders through resource provision. Recognizing the pivotal role of capacity development in educational transformation, the Education Sector Medium-Term Plan for 2023-2027 emphasizes strengthening the capacity of both teaching and non-teaching staff. This strategic focus underscores the government's commitment to realizing the full potential of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to navigate evolving educational landscapes effectively.

Beyond these structural frameworks and guidelines there are ongoing educational policy developments and reviews. In 2022, a Presidential Taskforce was set up to review implementation challenges of the education reforms in Kenya, lead public participation and make recommendations. Subsequent report published in 2023 is adopted by government as the pathway to transform education, training, and research on effective implementation of the competency-based curriculum. Key highlights affecting policy developments and reviews recommended:

- Streamlining accountability structures for school leaders. Currently, school leaders are deployed by the TSC and are not accountable to MOE who is the owner and financier of schools. Proposed changes will see the MOE take accountability over school leadership.
- Amendments to the Basic Education Act (2013), to streamline appointments and trainings of boards of management of education institutions, streamlining in-service teacher training by moving the responsibility from the TSC to MoE; deployment, transfer, and promotion of headteachers be a shared responsibility between TSC and MOE, thereby recommending establishment of structures and mechanism to streamline instructional leadership and management of institutions.
- Development of a National Education Policy (Sessional Paper) to provide a framework for the current basic education reforms.
- Develop the Teacher Education and Training Bill to centralise teacher education and training and provide for the establishment of Kenya Teachers Training College (KeTTC) and Kenya School of Teacher and Education Management (KeSTEM). The school shall encompass the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA) and the three Teachers Training Colleges (TTCs) offering diploma in teacher education i.e. Kagumo TTC, Kibabi TTC and Lugari TTC. The KeTTC will be established to administer all Pre-service teacher training colleges (TTCs) as campuses. KeSTEM will have the mandate to coordinate all In-service programmes for institutional leaders and education officers. Additionally, KeSTEM will offer CPD for teachers utilising facilities of KeTTC.

### **3.3. Professional development**

#### **a. Career progression and preparation to school leadership**

The TSC provides career guidelines outlining the progression for teachers and school leaders, aiming to facilitate their recruitment, retention, development, training, and promotion to meet prescribed standards (Republic of Kenya, 2018). These guidelines establish three scales within each role, with advancement typically requiring a minimum of three years, resulting in an average span of 18 years for progression from an entry-level Deputy Principal to Chief Principal. It takes around 21 years for an entry-level teacher to ascend to Chief Principal. While the guidelines detail progression and promotion criteria, promotion is contingent upon the availability of vacant positions and does not allow for skipping levels.

The guidelines stress the importance of relevant PD for accessing a new level, although they don't specify which PD, as the options continue to expand. Depending on vacancies, the commission highlights relevant PD and validates diplomas accordingly. The TSC recommends two professional development pathways for school leaders: instructional and pedagogy leadership, offering flexibility for leaders to choose their preferred area without impacting career progression.

The Ministry of Education and the KEMI are the government agencies overseeing school leadership professional development. The Ministry of Education derives its authority from the Constitution of Kenya and is responsible for implementing constitutional provisions related to education and training. School leaders serve as the key policy implementors within educational institutions. The ministry conducts



dissemination trainings and continuous capacity-building initiatives to empower school leaders to effectively execute their responsibilities. KEMI, recognised as the Management Development Institute, plays a vital role as the capacity-building agency of the Ministry of Education. Mandated under Legal Notice No.19/2010 of the Education Act, KEMI is tasked with providing education management training, conducting research, and offering consultancy services.

**b. Integration of School Leadership Professional Development in national planning and budget**

Currently, planning, or budgeting mechanisms for school leadership professional development are not structured in Kenya. Opportunities for school leadership development are limited, with courses offered through KEMI and the Ministry of Education primarily focusing on managerial and administrative tasks rather than leadership skills enhancement. However, reforms are underway, and by 2026, the establishment of the KeSTEM school will streamline planning and budgeting processes for in-service CPD of school leaders.

**c. School leadership professional development provided.**

In Kenya there are four main professional development opportunities available for school leaders, addressing key aspects of school leadership and management.

*1) Implementing National Curriculum Reforms Through App-Based Learning for School Leaders in Secondary Education (INCREASE)*

The INCREASE Programme, jointly implemented by KEMI and VVOB over five years (2022-2026), aims to support the effective implementation of the competence-based curriculum in junior secondary schools. Through the ESL4JSS course, it provides pedagogical support to school leaders using a blend of in-person and online learning. Accredited by the TSC and funded by the Belgium Government through DGD, the programme targets 1,095 school leaders and lasts 1-3 months.

*2) TSC TPD programme*

The [TSC TPD Programme](#), aligned with the TSC Teaching Professional Standards, offers continuous professional development to school leaders and teachers. The topics include teacher professionalism, competency-based learning, pedagogy and inclusive education, assessment and reporting, comprehensive school health and safety, instructional leadership, and financial literacy. Administered by KEMI, it targets over 40,000 participants and spans a duration of one year. Self-funded by participants at Kes 6,000 per person, it focuses on enhancing instructional leadership skills.

*3) Board of management training*

This training programme, facilitated by KEMI, is mandatory for newly constituted boards of management in primary and secondary schools. It aims to familiarise participants with legal requirements and oversight responsibilities. Accredited by the TSC and funded through school capitation funds, the training lasts for three days and targets over 23,000 schools.

*4) Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management*

The [Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management](#), offered by KEMI, equips current and aspiring school leaders with effective leadership and management skills. The topics include teacher professionalism, competency-based learning, pedagogy and inclusive education, assessment and reporting, comprehensive school health and safety, instructional leadership, financial literacy, education law, policy and reforms, transforming education leadership, institutional resource leadership and management, effective leadership for child-friendly schools (CFS), leadership in ICT integration in education, leadership in curriculum delivery, leadership in science, technology and innovations, guidance and counselling for education institutions, and action research projects. With over 50,000 participants trained to date, the programme spans one year and is self-funded by participants at Kes 33,000 per person. Accredited by the TSC, it focuses on developing leadership capabilities within the education sector.

### 3.4. Gender mainstreaming

Gender at the level of policy is overall included in the Education and training sector gender policy (2015), Constitution of Kenya, Article 27(3-8) which adopts a wide perspective of equality that includes girls and boys, women, and men, rather than a focus on just girls and women, or at school leadership, focusing on all areas from equal access, retention, resources, infrastructure, curriculum and completion of girls, boys, men, and women across the education levels.

Although not specifically focusing on school leaders the following key mechanisms are mainstreamed:

- Availability of Gender Policy: A dedicated gender policy provides essential guidance on mainstreaming gender considerations and implementing best practices.
- Policy on Gender-Based Violence: Ensuring the existence of policies addressing gender-based violence within educational institutions.
- Designation of Gender Focal Points: The presence of designated gender focal points within the Ministry of Education and other government agencies ensures focused attention on gender-related issues.
- Sex-Disaggregated Data: The collection and utilisation of sex-disaggregated data allow for a nuanced understanding of gender dynamics within the education sector.
- Compliance with Constitutional Requirements: Adherence to the constitutional mandate of upholding the 2/3 gender rule in the appointment of positions within state education agencies and schools.
- Establishment of Rescue Centres: Providing safe havens for victims of gender-based violence within school premises.
- Investment in Training and Awareness: Investment in training programmes aimed at raising awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming principles among educational stakeholders.

Furthermore, at the level of PD within government-sponsored training programmes, deliberate efforts are made to ensure equal participation across genders and levels of ability. This is achieved through various modalities and mechanisms, including:

- Blended Trainings: Utilising a combination of in-person and online training formats to accommodate diverse learning needs and availability.
- Facilitation of Accommodation and Transport Refunds: Providing support for accommodation and transportation costs to ensure accessibility for all participants.
- Delocalised National Trainings: Organising training sessions in multiple locations to minimise the need for extensive travel, thus enhancing accessibility.
- Gender-Responsive Curriculums: Developing curricula that are sensitive to gender considerations and promote inclusivity.
- Encouragement of Participation for All: Actively encouraging and facilitating the participation of individuals from all genders and backgrounds in training initiatives.

### **3.5. Monitoring, evaluation, and research**

#### **a. Monitoring and Evaluation of School Leadership in Schools**

School leadership is monitored and evaluated through the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, implemented by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). TPAD assesses the quality of teaching and learning by incorporating self-reflection, peer assessment, and supervision. School leaders undergo supervision by CSO and QASO. Additionally, school leaders are also monitored and respond to their schools Board of Management which provide oversight over the running of the school. The Ministry of education introduced school-based audit to enhance accountability on the utilisation of resources in schools by anchoring oversight, risk management and controls.

#### **b. Monitoring and Evaluation of School Leadership Professional Development Offerings**

The TSC accredits programmes offered by education institutions and partners as a way of maintaining quality and monitoring PD offerings to teachers and school leaders. The Ministry of Education conducts national assessments, subject to funding availability, to evaluate the quality and impact of the professional development trainings it offers. Additionally, Stakeholders in the education sector incorporates monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for capacity building initiatives.

#### **c. Influence of Policies and Strategies on School Leadership Implementation and Impact**

School leaders are held accountable for managing schools based on policies and strategies set by the Ministry of Education and TSC. Their actions are guided by these policies, and there is limited freedom to implement school-based policies that are not aligned with national priorities.

#### **d. Availability of Research on the Impact of School Leadership and SL development**

National sector reports, such as those from the [Ministry of Education](#), touch on general learning outcomes without a specific focus on school leadership. Independent research available on platforms like [ResearchGate](#) and [academia.edu](#) provides insights into school leadership preparation and development in Kenya. Additionally, research conducted by doctoral and master's students, available on academic platforms, offers a more focused perspective on school leadership, although it may be limited in scope.

### 3.6. Sector coordination and dissemination.

#### a. Actors Involved in Professional Development and Educational Support:

- The World Bank plays a pivotal role by providing loans and grants to the Ministry of Education, thus supporting its strategic priorities.
- The Global Partnership for Education contributes significantly by offering grants aimed at financing national education priorities, with a particular emphasis on enhancing foundational numeracy and literacy levels.
- Diverse donors, including prominent entities like USAID, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Mastercard Foundation, among others, extend grants to fund specific programmes that align with and bolster government objectives.
- Other key partners, such as VVOB, Dignitas, the British Council, the Aga Khan Foundation, Aga Khan Academies, and Education Development Trust, among several others, actively engage in offering professional development opportunities for school leadership.

#### b. Dissemination Strategies:

Reports from the Ministry of Education, KEMI, TSC, and other governmental agencies and partners are publicly launched, with electronic versions available online for wider accessibility. Additionally, following the release of report findings, the Ministry of Education and its partners sometimes conduct information sessions through national media channels. Stakeholder engagement is further fostered through education partner working groups.

#### c. Existing Platforms for Coordination on School Leadership Professional Development:

Existing platforms for coordination on school leadership professional development in Kenya include:

- School leaders' associations, such as the Kenya Primary School Heads Association (KEPSHA) and the Kenya Secondary School Heads Association (KESSHA), operate at the primary and secondary levels, respectively.
- The Education Development Partners Coordination Group (EDCPG), though not specifically focused on school leadership, serves as a coordinating body for various education-related initiatives.
- Education Evidence for Action (EE4A), while not exclusively centred on school leadership, provides a platform for evidence-based decision-making in the education sector.

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

### 4.1. Policy

The Kenya's policy landscape is structured to ensure universal access to education and sustainable development. Education policies and legal frameworks, such as the Basic Education Act (2013) and the Education and Training Policy (2012), prioritize free and compulsory basic education, aligned with global objectives like SDG 4. While there's no specific policy for school leadership, guidelines exist for school leadership professional development and career progression. The NESSP outlines strategic priorities for the Ministry of Education, emphasizing quality assurance and continuous professional development. Ongoing policy developments aim to streamline accountability, improve in-service training, and establish a centralized teacher education system. Gender mainstreaming is evident through policies, gender-based violence prevention, designated focal points, sex-disaggregated data use, and compliance with constitutional gender equality requirements. To address these gaps, it is recommended to incorporate the following actions into the planned revision of the education policy and act:

- **Action 1: Include school leadership considerations in the national policies.** Incorporating school leadership considerations into national policies involves recognizing the crucial role of school leaders in the education system and outlining their responsibilities, qualifications, and expected competencies. This can be achieved by leveraging on the existing seven professional standards to setting clear expectations for school leadership accountability.
- **Action 2: Integrate gender mainstreaming strategies into school leadership policy, standards, and guidelines.** Gender mainstreaming in school leadership policies, standards, and guidelines involves incorporating strategies to promote gender equality and address gender disparities in educational leadership positions. This includes ensuring equal opportunities for men and women to access leadership roles, promoting inclusive and non-discriminatory recruitment and promotion practices, and fostering supportive environments that empower individuals of all genders to thrive as school leaders.

### 4.2. Professional development

The professional development of school leaders in Kenya is structured by the TSC through comprehensive career progression guidelines that ensure recruitment, retention, development, training, and promotion meet prescribed standards. Progression typically requires a minimum of three years per scale, with advancement contingent on vacant positions and mandatory relevant professional development. The Ministry of Education and KEMI oversee school leadership development, with KEMI providing crucial education management training. Although current planning and budgeting for school leadership development are unstructured, reforms aim to streamline these processes by 2026 with the establishment of the KeSTEM school. Key professional development opportunities include the INCREASE Programme, TSC TPD Programme, Board of Management training, and a Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management, each targeting specific aspects of leadership and management. These initiatives, accredited by the TSC and facilitated by KEMI, employ blended training formats and other

inclusive measures to ensure broad and equitable participation across genders and abilities. To further enhance professional development in school leadership, the following actions are recommended:

- **Action 3: Develop a structured CPD programme:** This action focuses on establishing a comprehensive Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme tailored specifically for school leaders. The programme should align with professional standards and concentrate on developing leadership capacity in areas critical for improving educational outcomes.
- **Action 4: Implement gender mainstreaming measures:** This action emphasises the integration of gender perspectives into professional development initiatives. It involves designing programmes and resources that address gender-specific needs and promote gender equality in school leadership.

### 4.3. Monitoring, evaluation, and Research

The monitoring and evaluation of school leadership in Kenyan schools are facilitated through various mechanisms such as the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, supervision by CSO and QASO, and oversight by the school's Board of Management. The Ministry of Education also introduced school-based audits to ensure accountability in resource utilization. Furthermore, the accreditation of professional development programs by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and national assessments conducted by the Ministry of Education contribute to monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of professional development offerings. School leaders are guided by policies and strategies set by the Ministry of Education and TSC, limiting their autonomy in implementing school-based policies. While national sector reports and independent research provide insights into school leadership, there's a need for more focused research to understand the specific impact of school leadership development in Kenya. To further promote a culture of continuous learning and evidence-based decision-making in school leadership, the following actions are proposed:

- **Action 5: Enhance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms beyond the TPAD tool to comprehensively assess the holistic impact of school leadership.** This action entails developing additional monitoring and evaluation frameworks that go beyond the current TPAD tool used in assessing teacher performance. These new mechanisms could involve the implementation of comprehensive evaluation tools that consider multiple stakeholders' perspectives, including teachers, students, parents, and community members.
- **Action 6: Implement systematic national assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development training programs.** This action involves establishing a structured system for conducting national assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development training programs for school leaders. The assessments can include standardized tests, surveys, and performance evaluations conducted at regular intervals to track the progress of participants and identify areas for improvement in the training programs.
- **Action 7: Conduct more targeted studies to inform policy and practice effectively in the field of school leadership.** This action entails conducting in-depth research studies focused on specific aspects of school leadership to generate evidence-based insights that can inform policy and

practice in this area. These targeted studies can explore various topics such as the impact of different leadership styles on student achievement, the effectiveness of leadership development programs, and the role of school leaders in promoting equity and inclusion.

#### **4.4. Knowledge mobilisation, advocacy, communication, and sector coordination.**

Effective coordination and dissemination strategies are pivotal for enhancing school leadership professional development in Kenya. Key actors, including the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education, diverse donors, and various partners like VVOB and the British Council, play significant roles in supporting educational initiatives. Dissemination strategies, such as public launches of reports and information sessions through national media channels, ensure widespread accessibility of valuable insights. Existing platforms for coordination, such as school leaders' associations, the Education Development Partners Coordination Group (EDCPG), and Education Evidence for Action (EE4A), offer avenues for collaboration and evidence-based decision-making.

- **Action 8: Establish a school leadership dedicated sector coordination platform:** Create a platform for stakeholders to collaborate, advocate for policy reform, and conduct needs assessments. Furthermore, collaborative partnerships between researchers, policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders are essential to ensure that learnings are translated into actionable policies and practices that benefit schools and students.



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