

POSITION PAPER



QUALITY ASSURANCE IN BASIC EDUCATION

KENYA

by

Mr. P. M. Wasanga
Kenya National Examinations Council

UNESCO Nairobi Cluster Consultation

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1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) was recently structured into departments which coordinate and oversee the implementation of all the education sector policies. These departments are:-

- Basic Education
- Higher Education
- Quality Assurance and Standards
- Technical Education
- Educational Planning and Policy

The Department of Quality Assurance and Standards which was established this year used to be called “*the Inspectorate*”. It changed this year to be called the “*Department of Quality Assurance and Standards*”. This demonstrates the importance the Government of Kenya is placing on issues of quality education. The mandate of this department which is described fully later in this paper is to ensure quality and standards in Kenya by working closely with other stakeholders in the education sector.

2.0 INSTITUTIONS CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION IN KENYA

The key variables that impact on quality of education include the following:-

- ❖ Curriculum;
- ❖ Instructional materials and equipment;
- ❖ Physical facilities;
- ❖ Teachers/instructors/lecturers;
- ❖ Assessment and examinations;
- ❖ Institutional management; and
- ❖ Institutional environment.

The educational bodies or departments that handle quality Assurance in the education sector in Kenya are basically three (3). These bodies or departments and their mandates are described below. Apart from the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards which is directly under MOEST, the other institutions namely the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) are mandated by Acts of Parliament to execute their functions in the education sector within their acts and report to MOEST and the country as a whole.

2.1 The Kenya Institute of Education

The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) is charged with the responsibility of curriculum development for schools and post school institutions. The school curriculum is made for primary education from Pre-school to Standard (Class) 8 as well as secondary education (Form I to Form IV).

The post-school curriculum is basically for courses offered in tertiary institutions which include polytechnics, primary teacher training colleges, teacher certificate in adult education colleges etc.

KIE is involved in quality assurance in education by ensuring that needs assessment are carried out often to align the curriculum with current trends in education as well as developing a curriculum that is driven by provision of quality education with respect to market demands.

2.2 The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC)

The Kenya National Examinations Council ('hereafter referred to as 'the Council') is the other body that plays a central role in quality assurance in education in Kenya.

The role of the Council in the education sector is well-defined in Kenya. It is set up by the Act of Parliament of 1980 (KNEC Act. Cap 225A) to oversee all school and post-school national examinations in the country except at university level. It is therefore the body that is charged with the responsibility of monitoring learning achievement so as to inform the country on the quality of education and the learning that are taking place. In a way, the Council acts as the Bureau of Standards of education in Kenya.

The Council strategic objectives are:-

- (i) To develop and administer tests and examinations annually for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and post-school candidates and to ensure that these tests and examinations are free from bias, valid, reliable, efficient and of globally-accepted standards.
- (ii) To conduct examinations, publish results and issue certificates for these examinations.

In achieving these strategic objectives the Council has the following functions.

- 1) Develops both school and post school examinations (except universities)
- 2) Registration of candidates
- 3) Administration and processing of the examinations
- 4) Certification
- 5) Researching into examination and curriculum#
- 6) Equation of certificates issued by other examining bodies
- 7) Makes rules and regulations for conduct of examinations

From the above it is clear that the Council plays a central role in quality assurance in education in Kenya and could perhaps be used to do more.

2.3 The Department of Quality Assurance and Standards

The 'mission' of the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards is to establish, maintain and improve educational standards in the country. Its 'vision' is to provide quality assurance feedback to all educational stakeholders on all educational institutions in Kenya.

From the mission and vision statements of this department, it is clear that it is a very central department in the provision of quality assurance in education.

The legality of the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards is stipulated in the *Education Act Chapter 211 Section 18* of the Laws of Kenya.

Improvement on the quality of education focuses on setting of standards for these variables and ensuring that the set standards are adhered to. The quality assurance function is undertaken by the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards in MOEST. While this department deals with school-level institutions, the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) deals with post-secondary institutions (also referred to as 'middle level colleges') and university level institutions.

The Department of Quality Assurance and Standards is mandated to co-ordinate, follow-up and advise on curriculum delivery at school-level. The *Education Act Cap 211 of 1968* did not extend its work to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions that are at the school level, thus excluding a vital component of education and training. However, the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards has now been given this mandate but needs the legal provision to do so. The staff in the department are expected to supervise and advise curriculum implementers. In order to carry out their duties, therefore, they should have good academic qualifications, specialized skills and well-established staff development programmes. This will enable them keep pace with the changes in the education sector.

At the moment, the work of the department is hampered by the following:-

- i) Inadequate legal provision which limits enforcement of inspection recommendations;
- ii) Inadequacies in requisite skills. This is mainly due to lack of a specific policy on recruitment and deployment of Inspectors. Such a policy should take into account an officer's academic background and experience in the education sector;
- iii) Lack of a definite staff development policy. Although a number of inspectors undergo some induction course when they are deployed to the Inspectorate, others are never inducted at all. In addition, there are no regular in-service courses for Inspectors; and
- iv) Inadequate budgetary allocations and tools.

In order to ensure that the education offered at the school level continues to be of good quality, the following is necessary:

- i) The *Education Act Cap 211 of 1968* should be revised to provide the Inspectorate function with the requisite legal enabling powers;
- ii) A specific policy on recruitment and deployment of inspectors;
- iii) A staff development policy for Inspectors; and
- iv) Adequate budgetary allocations to facilitate quality assurance services.

3.0 THE PROCESS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION IN KENYA

To achieve the national educational goals, MOEST has two complementary objectives: 1) quality assurance; and 2) quality development.

- ❖ **Quality assurance:** This is achieved through inspection of institutions and reporting on these inspections to the institutions and to MOEST. It is also achieved through assessing the curriculum through valid and reliable national examinations whose results are used as indicators of quality of education in the country.
- ❖ **Quality development:** This is achieved through the work of the advisory services, the provision of staff development opportunities and the development of teaching and learning materials.

3.1 The objectives of quality assurance

Some of the objectives of quality assurance in Kenya are to:

- 1) Have regular reporting on the general quality of education at national, provincial, district and school levels.
- 2) Identify educational institutional needs for improvement.
- 3) Ensure that quality teaching is taking place in the institutions.
- 4) Monitor the performance of teachers and educational institutions in accordance with 'All Round Standard Performance' indicators.
- 5) Ensure the equitable distribution of teachers by working out the curriculum-based establishment (secondary/colleges) and class-based staffing (primary).
- 6) Carry out regular inspection of all education institutions.
- 7) Advise on the provision of proper and adequate physical facilities in educational institutions.
- 8) Ensure that the appropriate curriculum is operational in educational institutions.
- 9) Encourage a collaborative and corporate approach to educational institutional management among the various stakeholders.
- 10) Organize and administer co-curricular activities with a view to developing all around learner.

3.2 Selection of quality assurance personnel

Modalities of identifying potential quality assurance personnel are based on:

- 1) The track record of the applicant, in relation to previous and present performance.
- 2) The level of education of the applicant. The applicant should at least have a degree in education or equivalent, with at least three years teaching experience.
- 3) Evidence of potential on quality assurance in education courses.

3.3 The code of conduct for educational quality assurance personnel

Essential characteristics:

- 1) Experience of being an outstanding teacher;
- 2) Ability to create a good rapport with colleagues, teachers and other stakeholders in education;
- 3) Knowledgeable on curriculum matters;
- 4) Ability to write comprehensive and accurate reports;
- 5) A good time manager;
- 6) Resourceful and widely read;
- 7) Abreast with changes taking place in education (nationally and world wide);
- 8) Impartial in judgment;
- 9) Well-informed and conversant with government policies;
- 10) Conversant with the civil service code of conduct and regulations and code of regulations for teachers;
- 11) Able to collect collate, analyse and disseminate data;
- 12) Able to manage projects; and
- 13) Excellent interpersonal skills.

3.4 The role of quality assurance in Kenya

- 1) Inspecting all educational institutions regularly and compiling appropriate reports.
- 2) Advising the government on the type and quality of education being offered in the country.
- 3) Advising the government on the trends in the learning institutions in areas of equity, access, equality, gender, enrolment, wastage (dropout and repetition rates), retention, curriculum delivery, learning and teaching materials, leadership, staffing, governance, health care, career guidance, discipline, curriculum evaluation, pre-service and in-service training of teachers, costs, institution development plans, etc.

- 4) Reviewing the teaching and learning materials in collaboration with KIE.
- 5) Advising on curriculum evaluation in collaboration with, the Council (KNEC).
- 6) Assisting the quality development service with the design of in-service training programmes for teachers.
- 7) Advising stakeholders on education matters pertaining to curriculum delivery, assessment and the provision of resources.
- 8) Monitoring and advising on standards in education based on 'All Round Standard Performance' indicators (benchmarks), for various areas including: sports, games, drama, music, science congresses, girl scout guides, academic performance, environmental conservation, health care and nutrition, pupils' welfare, pastoral and spiritual well-being of pupils, provision and optimum use of available resources etc.
- 9) Establishing and maintaining professional linkages with institutions of higher learning on matters of educational standards.
- 10) Providing career guidance to educational institutions.
- 11) Developing curricula based on market demands and aligned to the country's national goals and aspirations.
- 12) Developing quality national examinations to assess the quality of education in the country.

3.5 Purposes of inspections for quality assurance in Kenya

Currently the purposes of inspections are prompted by the following factors:

- 1) Agreed inspection plans and work programmes at national, district, division or zonal levels.
- 2) Inspectors' personal initiatives.
- 3) Adverse reports or anonymous correspondence from stakeholders and governors etc. asking for inspection
- 4) Follow-up inspection from concerns indicated in previous inspection reports.

The purpose of these inspections would be to have an overview of the quality of education in Kenya based on agreed 'All Round Performance' indicators of the performance (benchmarks) of an educational institution. The aim would be to report back in full to the educational institution, so that it can plan effectively to improve the standards of education that are being offered to their pupils.

3.6 Types of inspection and their frequency

In Kenya, the following types of inspections are carried out:

➤ Panel inspection

This involves a full, diagnostic and situational analysis of the institution. This type of inspection is carried out with a view to examining the strengths and weaknesses, or limitations of the institution while suggesting the type of intervention to be administered for the improvement of educational standards.

➤ Subject-based inspections

Subject-based inspections are specialized inspections carried out by the inspectors in their areas of subject specialization. These inspections are planned and prompted by the following factors:

- a) Performance trends in a particular subject in the national examinations by school, zone, district or province.
- b) The inspector’s programme of work.
- c) Inquiring into teachers’ needs with a view to making suggestions for in-service training (INSET) to be carried out by the quality development service.
- d) Monitoring visits to gather data and information about teaching and learning in subject areas or another aspect of school life, and provision made for it, for the purpose of producing a national review on practices and standard. This type of visit is programmed by the National Subject Inspectors at MOEST. Textbooks are likely to be the focus of such visits in future.
- e) Assess the interpretation and implementation of the curriculum.

➤ Educational institutions registration inspection

This type of inspection should be carried out upon the request of the District Education Board (DEB).

➤ Advisory inspection

This is a routine type of inspection where one or more inspectors visit a school and sample some aspects of the school. The frequency of this type of inspection depends on the number of schools in a district and the inspectors’ programme of work.

➤ Inspection of teachers

This includes assessment of teachers for:

- a) Promotion.
- b) Appraisal of competence.
- c) Grading or regarding.
- d) Pre-service teachers and final teaching practice.

The frequency of such inspections depends on the need.

➤ **Inspection of educational institutions for the introduction of a new subject in the school curriculum**

It is usually prompted by a school's request to the Inspectorate to introduce a new subject, especially in applied/technical subjects and languages.

➤ **Block inspections**

This inspection is carried out as a block covering all or most schools in a given district e.g. primary schools, secondary schools etc. It is usually organized at national level with Inspectors drawn from all over the country.

➤ **Mass inspection**

Mass inspections are for a specific purpose e.g. schools awards, to determine to what extent recommendations have been implemented.

3.7 Organization of Inspection in Kenya

• **Preparation by Inspectors**

Before an inspection is undertaken, there is a need for prior planning.

• **Preparation by the institutions**

Once given notice the schools will be required to prepare the following documents:

- a) Pre-inspection analysis of the school curriculum, staffing, costs and results.
- b) School statistics on enrolment.
- c) Individual teacher time tables.
- d) School internal audit and review reports.
- e) School mission, motto, aims and development plan.
- f) Past examination performance.
- g) List and addresses of school committee and BOG members.
- h) Records (if any) of school indiscipline.

3.8 Collection and collation of data: During quality assurance inspection schedules

To ensure that appropriate and uniform data is collected effectively during inspection, schedules are first developed for each area of institutional effectiveness.

▪ Purpose of the schedules

The schedules provide reliable, comprehensive, detailed, focused and constructive feedback on the quality of education in schools, in order that schools, stakeholders and projects can identify and address their weaknesses in future and in order that good practice can be effectively shared between schools.

▪ Objective of schedules

The objective of the schedules is to organize the data into manageable forms and styles, which are readily accessible to the intended stakeholder audience, including: the schools themselves; heads; DEOs; district, provincial and central inspectorate; and the Planning Development Department (MOEST).

▪ The structure of the inspection schedules

- a) For ease of reference and induction and training purposes, all schedules have similar structures.
- b) Each divides data collection into manageable areas, marked as Section A, B, C, D etc.
- c) Each schedule allows the Inspectors to grade the effectiveness of the school according to the scale (below) which is given on each schedule, under:

Notes to Inspector:

Enter data according to the scale below. The scale has a positive and negative end, 3 being very positive and 0 negative. The precise meaning may vary according to the statement or question and is as explained in the table below:-

3(E)	2(G)	1(S)	0(U)
Excellent, very much, always/very often	Good, a lot, often	Satisfactory, adequate, usually	Unsatisfactory, very little, never/rarely

It must be stressed that a score of 1 means that the institution meets minimal standards.

Carefully total up the scores at the foot of the table. Divide the total score by the number of appropriate items (excluding inappropriate items) to work out the mean score, e.g. $2 \times 3 = 6$, $+5 \times 2 = 10$, $+6 \times 1 \times 0 = 0$: Total = 22, Divide by 14 items = 1.57. Round up to 2 = Good.

However, some schedules also have factual information sections which require that you provide a tick, a figure or a Yes/No answer. The answer you give in these sections will help you establish a reliable score in the graded section.

▪ **Examples of format of the schedules**

Demographic performance schedule

This schedule is to be used to collect essential demographic data at the institutions especially in relation to key concerns such as enrolment, drop-out, repetition and attendance rates by gender.

Records and legal details schedule

This is designed for the collection of essential facts about the school, including legal issues such as school registration and staffing issues. It is to be completed with care using all appropriate sources to verify the data entered.

Staffing issues schedule

This deals with staff establishment and training issues, as well as learner: teacher ratios.

Examination performance data schedule

This deals with examination performance. Examination performance is only one indicator of educational effectiveness. Nevertheless, it is key data if used properly. Most significantly, it allows us to assess whether a school is declining or improving in its own performance.

Learners' welfare and participation schedule

This deals with:

- ❖ The physical environment.
- ❖ The management of teaching and learning resources.

Management of the curriculum

This focuses on curriculum management issues in terms of both the main academic curriculum and co-curriculum.

Human resource management (HRM) schedule

This taps important information on issues of motivation, decision-making and relationships etc.

Management of time schedule

This schedule handles all aspects of time management in the institution.

School ethos schedule

This schedule attempts to develop a picture of the overall ethos of the school.

Learner welfare and participation issues schedule

This schedule is divided into several sections

- ❖ Gender issues
- ❖ Special education needs issues
- ❖ Guidance, counseling and social welfare issues

Physical environment schedule

This schedule is divided into several sections.

- ❖ General impression
This section focuses on ambience (or atmosphere), security, safety and the quality of the buildings.
- ❖ Water supply and sanitation issues
- ❖ Classroom environment issues (e.g. pupil to classroom and pupil to desk ratios)
- ❖ Workshop facilities and equipment for practical subjects
- ❖ Office buildings and equipment
- ❖ Co-curricular facilities and activities
- ❖ Access to textbooks
This schedule deals with factual information on access to textbooks and availability and use of the textbooks.
- ❖ Effectiveness of textbook programmes
The aim of this section is to ascertain whether supplied textbooks reach the intended learners including: 1) utilization of textbooks; and 2) access to readers and other reading materials.

Individual teacher observation schedule

- ❖ *Lesson planning and development issues*
This section relates to planning issues that should be familiar to all teachers.
- ❖ *Reading, writing and listening skills*
- ❖ *Classroom Communication/Interaction*
- ❖ *Approach to teaching and to classroom interaction schedule*
- ❖ *Curriculum knowledge and interpretation*
- ❖ *Learning methods and development of attitudes and skills*
- ❖ *Gender issues*
- ❖ *Attention to individual needs and abilities schedule*
This section includes questions related to children with special educational needs including those of slow and fast learners.
- ❖ *Teacher as behavioural/role model*
- ❖ *Teacher record keeping aspects*
Record keeping should be comprehensive and up-to-date.
- ❖ *Assessment and evaluation*
Assessment and evaluation takes place for a variety of reasons. These include: diagnostic, formative, exam preparation and summative.
- ❖ *Organisation of classroom resources*
- ❖ *Overall quality of the lesson*

4.0 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THREE QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES

All the professional activities of KIE, KNEC and the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards (MOEST) are supposed to be carried out by involvement of the three bodies as illustrated by the triangle below:

