
A Position Paper on the Values Pillar in Education Reforms in Kenya: Connecting the Dots

Submission To:

**The Ministry of Education Task Force on
Enhancing Access, Relevance, Transition, Equity
and Quality for Effective Curriculum Reform
Implementation in Kenya**

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By

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Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK)

Think Equal Kenya

Health Touch Foundation

Aga Khan Foundation East Africa (AKF)

African Institute of Children's Studies (AICS)

Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) - Kenya

About Jaslika



In traditional African cosmology, circles denoted wholism, something that has no beginning nor an end. The Jaslika emblem, designed as concentric circles, reflect this wholism signifying the interconnectedness of life and humanity and expressing the idea of perpetuity, continuity and infinity. The dotted lines radiating from the core draw attention to connecting the dots, seeing life as an interconnected whole and not as disconnected silos.

In the context of value-based education, our emblem reflects our conceptualisation of the indivisibility of values, and our concern with transforming society in and through a value-based education system that is connected and interdependent.

About the Principal Author

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Prologue

In many African societies, weaving baskets were an integral part of the indigenous cultures. Both the process of basket weaving and the product itself - the baskets - were reflective of African philosophies and value systems. For example, the traditional Kenyan kiondo of the Agikuyu and Akamba people encapsulated the concept of Ubuntu (“I am because we are”), [which in a sense teaches respect, responsibility, and the need to cultivate peaceful co-existence](#). The kiondo was synonymous with women. In many aspects the kiondo signified food, hope and trust.

We would like to use the imagery of the weaving of a kiondo - to also convey the process of inculcating, internalising and nurturing values¹. Value-based education is a lifelong journey that begins at birth and continues till the end of one’s life. The continuing journey of learning may be described as the process of basket weaving among many indigenous African communities. [A kiondo is woven by joining several strands of sisal and thread to form the navel, followed by the base, which then supports the cylindrical section](#). The warps - or the threads used in weaving remain till the basket is completed. These we can compare to the Core Values, the foundation of which are laid laid through informal socialisation at home, community and play groups as well as formalised environments in nurseries and pre-schools and lower primary schools. The mother and other caregivers are the earliest teachers of values.

The wefts, the longer threads used in weaving, keep on being added, the colour and size of the threads depending on the pattern. They signify to us the different levels of education - pre-school, primary and secondary, or in traditional societies, the rites of passage or the preparatory initiation schools. At each of these levels values are inculcated and nurtured. The final trimming of the kiondo is the finishing, equivalent to tertiary or university education in our conceptualisation. Here values acquired through life are reinforced and actualised as graduates enter the world of work. Values gained over the years manifest themselves at work. Also as the acquired values are passed onto the next generation and influence changes in their family statuses.

¹ This analogy – using the imagery of the weaving of a kiondo to describe the African indigenous value-based education process - is borrowed from Jaslika colleague, Mary Muito, a seasoned educationist and girls’ education advocate.

1. Background

This position paper is a follow up to an oral presentation made by the Jaslika Director on the morning of 2nd August, 2019 before the Ministry of Education Task Force on Enhancing Access, Relevance, Transition, Equity and Quality for Effective Curriculum Reform Implementation (henceforth referred to as the Task Force). It responds to the Terms of Reference of the Task Force (a)(vii), which states: “Design and implementation of Values-Based education; Community Service Learning; and Parental Empowerment and Engagement Programmes” (Republic of Kenya, June 2019).

The paper elaborates on this oral submission to the Task Force, incorporating evidence and insights from African scholarship guided by the wisdom of experts and like-minded organisations from the Education, Child Justice and Health sectors in Kenya. It also carries the voices of multitudes of children - girls and boys - children we talked to during our research and in the course of our work as educators and development workers.

It is organised into six sections, namely

- I. Background
- II. Conceptual issues and guiding principles
- III. The situation on the ground especially within and around schools
- IV. Nurturing positive values
- V. The way forward and recommendations
- VI. Conclusion: Education without Values ...

In addition, it has a prologue and epilogue, and references which include Internet links to some useful, primarily local resources on value-based education.

2. Five Conceptual Issues and Guiding Principles

In this section, we present and elaborate on five key conceptual issues and guiding principles. While the issues presented overlap with what is already contained in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2016), (referred to henceforth as the Curriculum Framework) they do *not necessarily agree fully* with

some of the perspectives reflected in the design and promotion of value based education in Kenya, including the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.

The Whole School, Whole Child Approach

Nurturing values is the business of the whole community, and not the school alone. The school is a social institution formally entrusted with the education of children and young people. However, the school does not exist in isolation; the Whole School Approach recognises and builds on this understanding. Briefly, as explained in the UNESCO IBE website, it [“involves addressing the needs of learners, staff and the wider community, not only within the curriculum, but across the whole-school and learning environment. It implies collective and collaborative action in and by a school community to improve student learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and the conditions that support these”](#).

The extract in Box 1 from a brief developed by Young Fails and Erasmus+ (no date) expounds on the whole school approach.

Box 1: The Whole School Approach

In a whole school approach, all members of the school community (school leaders, middle management, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners, parents and families) feel responsible and play an active role in tackling educational disadvantage and preventing drop-out.

A whole school approach also implies a cross-sectoral approach and stronger cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders (social services, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, speech and language therapists, guidance specialists, local authorities, NGOs, business, unions, volunteers, etc.) and the community at large, to deal with issues, which schools do not (and cannot) have the relevant expertise for.

The concept of a whole school approach allows for the entire *system of actors and their inter-relationships in and around schools* to be considered, acknowledging that each stakeholder has a part to play in supporting the learners’ educational journey and nurturing their learning experience.

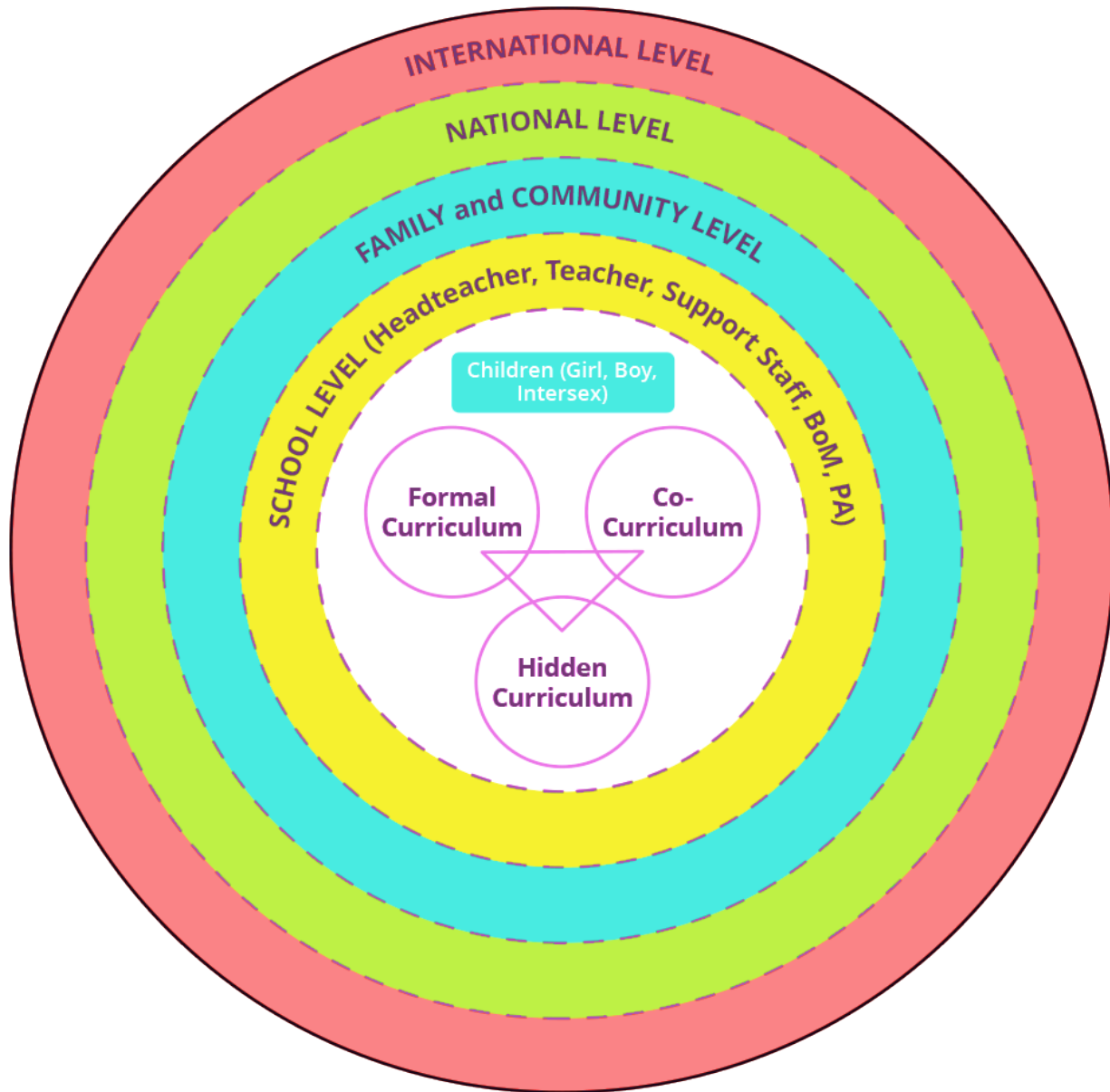
Source: Erasmus+ and Young Fail [“A whole school approach to tackling early leaving”](#)

There is a general consensus among the MoE, KICD and other VbE actors that the Whole School Approach is the most suitable strategy for taking value-based education forward in Kenya. While agreeing with this position, we would like to rename it the “Whole School, Whole Child Approach” to ensure that in all this the voice of the child is not lost. We base our concern on the fact that in most

definitions of the Whole School Approach, though the needs of learners are put at the centre, they do not explicitly mention children as key actors. Closer to the [Child Friendly Schools \(CFS\)](#) concept, the WERK commissioned national study on value-based education places children at the centre, arguing that neither the children nor teachers come to school as clean slates. In this framework, depicted in Figure 1, the multiple layers of stakeholders surrounding that child within the school are the influencers, and explicitly and/or implicitly play a role in instilling values in that child at the centre. The graphic also draws attention to the fact that children are not homogenous, they are differentiated by gender at a minimum. Gender is a significant variable that structures not only the perspectives of children but how others perceive them and their roles and social status. We know today we are no longer talking about the binary categorisation of human individuals into two sexes - boys and girls - but that biologically, we must recognise children not only as girls and boys but also acknowledge that some, (a minority), are also intersex, and that their sex/gender-identity may mediate their learning and internalisation of values differently within the school through the formal curriculum, co-curriculum and the hidden curriculum (explained in more detail in a later section of the paper).

The media, though not shown in the chart, is a powerful influencer, which cuts across all levels - from international to local.

Figure 1: Multiple Levels of Stakeholders Transmitting Values to Children in Schools



Source: Adapted from Wamahiu, S et al 2015 Value-based Education in Kenya: An exploration of meanings and practices - Synthesis Report Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK) Nairobi

Discerning the right from wrong

Box 2: Voices on Values

“Values are behaviour that does not harm, kindness” - Voice of child leaders from School-based clubs

“A child with good values has peace and tends to do well at school”.

“People with poor values like drunks, thieves, drug users tend to live in fear of being caught.” - Varied community leaders

*Source: Wamahiu, S (2017) Baseline Study of Value-based Education at the Kenyan Coast Aga Khan Foundation East Africa
Nairobi*

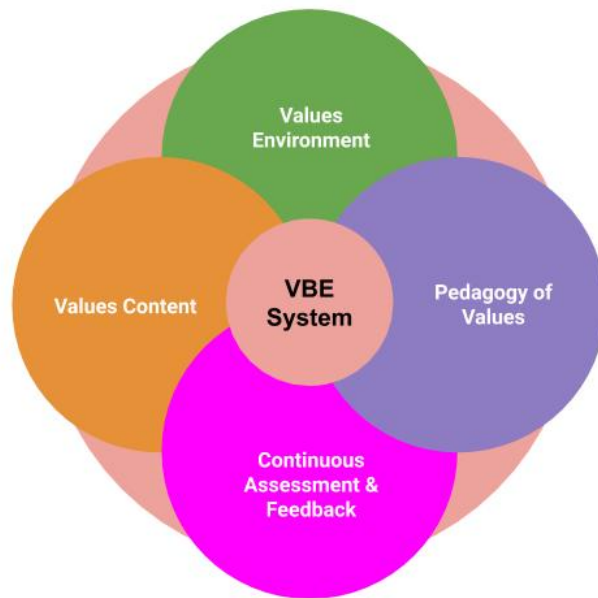
The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) very powerfully encapsulates the purpose of value-based education in the statement “to nurture learners who do the right thing because it’s the right thing to do” (KICD 2017:13).² It reflects the vision of the curriculum reforms in Kenya, which is to develop **ethical citizens**. In order to do the right thing and become ethical citizens, learners must learn the difference between right and wrong, the difference between positive values and negative values, and how to choose the positive over the negative. A value-based education must, therefore, embrace content and pedagogy that enables learners to think critically supported by an environment that is conducive and friendly, and monitored by continuous assessment and feedback. And this “learning”, this ability to “choose” right over wrong must be embedded in the four components of value-based education, that is, its content, pedagogy, environment and assessment as illustrated by Figure 2. The model applies to various levels of value-based education - a value-based education system; value-based schools and values education. It is consistent with the Whole School Approach as it takes cognizance of the broader context within which value-based education is implemented.

Values may be defined as standards that guide how an individual respond or behave in a given circumstance. This is a commonly accepted definition that has also been adopted in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017). Because values are intangible, people tend to express them in terms of behaviour, like in the first quote in Box 2, or outcomes of behaviour, as in the second and third quotes. In order to do the right thing, learners must be guided by the ideals, which is the realm of what ought to happen to produce ethical citizens. In this sense, one of the ultimate goals of value-based education

² I have interpreted this statement as the purpose of VbE in Kenya though the Curriculum Framework does not actually refer to it as such.

would be to replace negative values and vices with positive values and virtues; to develop the virtuous person and not one whose behaviour harms oneself and others. Note that I have differentiated between positive values and virtue, and negative values and vices. This is deliberate as values have to do more with the standards, how we perceive the worth of something while virtues and vices are more reflective of behaviour. This differentiation has implications for how we reach out to the learners and package the messages that we want to communicate. This will be discussed further in the recommendations section of this paper.

Figure 2: Four Components of a Value-based Education



Source: Adapted from Wamahiu, S et al (2015) Value-based Education in Kenya: An exploration of meanings and practices - Synthesis Report Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK) Nairobi

So how does one foster the ability to choose right over wrong? And who decides what is right or wrong in the first place, and which values are right or wrong? In the Curriculum Framework, reference is made to the values enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The Constitution recommits itself to all the international human rights treaties and declarations that Kenya has ever ratified. It has an elaborate Bill of Rights which is echoed in the Education Act of 2013. Though the Children's Act of 2001 does not refer

to the Bill of Rights as it predates the Constitution, it is generally consistent with the principle of the Best Interest of the Child.

In the Constitution, the values are identified mainly in Chapter 2 Article 10 (2) which provides for the national values and principles of governance; and in Chapter 6, which focuses on Leadership and Integrity. The Preamble also embeds a number of values and principles. The key values contained in these sections of the Constitution are largely universal and humanistic, have stood the test of time, and have been passed on through the generations. They key values are also interreligious in that the major religions emphasise them in the holy books and the sayings of the prophets.

The Constitution of a country is more than its the supreme law; it reflects the hopes, aspirations and vision of a nation. The summation of values by the young club leader cited in Box 2 as “behaviour that does no harm” reflect the spirit of the values identified in the Constitution and various international and national human rights laws. By anchoring itself in the Constitution, the Curriculum Framework guides the education reforms in Kenya towards this basic principle of doing no harm. It is therefore appropriate that the curriculum design is also guided by this basic principle. Seven of the eight values in the CBC curriculum design are derived from it. (These are highlighted in blue in the Table 1). The Curriculum Framework provides for a wider range of values than these eight, most of which are listed in the Constitution. Inclusivity and diversity, also in the Constitution, are included in the Curriculum Framework as guiding principles.

Table 1: Values Embedded in the Kenyan Constitution 2010

Values in the Preamble	National Values and Principles of Governance Chapter 2 Article 10 (2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supremacy of God • Freedom, justice, respect for diversity (ethnic, cultural, religious), peace, unity • Environmentalism • Safety, security, well-being • Human rights, equality, freedom, democracy, social justice, rule of law • Participation, good governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, rule of law, democracy and participation of the people • Human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection for the marginalized • Good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability • Sustainable development

Values Articulated in Chapter Six on Leadership and Integrity

- **Respect**
- Dignity
- **Patriotism**
- **Integrity**
- Servant leadership, meritocracy, fairness, impartiality
- Public interest, service
- Honesty, transparency, accountability, discipline, commitment

There is no doubt that universally acceptable positive values should be at the core of the value-based education curriculum. Ultimately, it is our expectation that the education system should be guided by these values and produce learners who are *morally autonomous* and able to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong, between positive and negative values. This is not a totally new concept in the Kenyan education system. In 1985, on recommendation from the Gachathi Commission of 1976, Social Education and Ethics was introduced as an elective subject at the secondary level as a response to the perceived degeneration of values and consequent social problems facing Kenyan society. The subject was popular with students as they perceived it to be a pathway to obtaining an easy “A” grade. Clearly the motivation for opting to study this subject was to succeed in national examinations; it had little to do with becoming a morally autonomous person. There is little evidence that Social Education and Ethics succeeded in addressing the social problems facing society as envisioned. So what lessons can we learn from this experience?

Wambari (1998) writing in the context of Social Education and Ethics (SEE), describes this as ‘moral discernment’ “which inclines us to do what is judged to be right and eschew what is judged to be wrong” (p.16). He attributes the failure of SEE to the inability of the education system to make the methodological shift from *didactic teaching* to “*engaged*” teaching. The former uses a teaching methodology that is authoritarian and uncritical; the latter is participatory and critical. There is a danger that if we fail to allow moral discernment to take the centre space in how we communicate key values-related messages to learners, then value-based education may not have the desired impact, and may even be counter-productive.

The values listed in the curriculum are the ideal. However, to the learners, these may not necessarily be the values that inspire them, the values that guide behaviour in the real world. For example, when the yardstick used to judge the worth of an individual in society is material success, people with integrity,

who are not wealthy are looked down on while a rich person who has acquired his/her wealth dishonestly, is considered to be worth emulating. It is crucial therefore to listen to their perspectives without passing a moral judgement, and guide them through experiential and self-reflective processes to discover the right from wrong, and embrace positive values that do no harm to oneself or to others.

Learning from Indigenous Education

While change is inevitable, the change brought about by colonisation was disruptive and brutal (Elkins, 2005; Mazrui, 1986). The attacks on traditional cultures were both physical and psychological; the identity and spirit of the diverse African ethnic groups were denigrated and systematic indoctrination contributed to internalisation of perspectives that the indigenous ways of life and value systems were inferior. Prof Mbiti was in the forefront of challenging the dominant colonial view on indigenous religions, in which the African value systems, cultures and education were embedded.

The impact of the racially stratified colonial education system, which was designed to support apartheid-like social system in Kenya, is well known and need not be repeated here. The point of relevance to the present discussion is dismissal of the indigenous education systems by the colonisers. Yet, indigenous African education was rich both in content, values and pedagogy, and in terms of the state of our knowledge today, incredibly modern in its outlook.

First, was the concept of Ubuntu that embodied the indigenous value systems, though different ethnic groups may have used different terminology to describe it. (For example, in Kiswahili, the comparable concept is 'utu'). As explained in the Preamble, Ubuntu originally from the Nguni language, is best translated as "I am because we are". It draws attention to the fact that we, as human beings are social beings, and our existence owes to this recognition that each person has a moral obligation towards the other. It embodies the communitarian ethos of most indigenous African societies, and emphasises humanistic values of dignity, togetherness, cooperation, warmth, openness, empathy, trust and responsibility. The indigenous education system inculcated these values in a child from birth, and this continued throughout life. By the time an individual became an adult, these values had become part of his or her being.

Second, values teaching in indigenous African education was not “caught”; it was done deliberately using informal, non-formal and formal methods. Children observed, listened, mimicked (adults and older siblings in the extended family sense) and immersed themselves in the business of daily living. Story-telling, proverbs and riddles were important channels of value transmission. The entire community was the teacher, but there were also specific individuals from communities who were designated to guide them. Learning was progressive and age appropriate, with appropriateness defined by specific cultures.

Education was lived in pre-colonial African societies. The prioritised values were embedded in the ethos of the societies and was infused into the psyche through osmosis. This was one key learning that needs to be transferred into the current context. Though not acknowledged as such in the Curriculum Framework, the CBC approach to education embraces this principle.

Breaking down the silos

Values’ teaching and learning is a process, not an event. It is non-linear, that transcends generations but also utilises peer learning. African indigenous education systems recognised this, and was therefore, effective in nurturing values seamlessly. Today, we compartmentalise our lives, failing to see the interconnectedness between our lives in, and outside, the school. The learning that takes place in schools is primarily guided by the formal curriculum and the curriculum support activities including clubs; music, dance and drama; and sports and games as well as parental engagement and community service learning. However, the learning within schools are contained in silos, with little opportunity of movement across them. If value-based education is to be effective, we will need to break down these silos.

Keeping an eye on positives

Finally, I would like to reiterate the importance of learning from good practice. No doubt a critical analysis of the prevailing “crisis of values” is imperative so we know the depth and extent of the problem. But knowing the problem is just a first step. We need to know how to transform the negatives into positives. We also need to recognise that despite the many challenges, there are those out there who are successfully nurturing value-based schools and initiatives. There is a lot that we can learn from these. In the third substantive section of this paper, we describe a few examples of the local solutions

and interventions. The international good practices are easily accessible on the Internet, so I shall not touch on them.

3. What is on the Ground

Consider the following findings of a survey in Kenya on youth perceptions of various aspects of integrity conducted by the Aga Khan University (AKU) in 2016:

Table 2: Youth Perceptions and Attitudes

50% believe it doesn't matter how one makes money as long as one does not end up in jail
47% admire those who make money through hook or crook, (including hustling)
30% believe corruption is profitable
73% are afraid to stand up for what is right for fear of retribution
Only 40% strongly believe that it is important to pay taxes
35% of the youth would readily take or give a bribe.

Source: Awiti A & Scott B (May 2016) The East Africa Youth Survey Report. Aga Khan University East African Institute.

The above findings are perhaps not surprising. We see incidents of impunity and other examples of vices by our leaders and lay people alike reported daily in the print and audio-visual media. We witness them in our daily lives. Even that same media, which draws to public attention, ethical violations and violent behaviour, are often complicit in transmitting negative values and glorifying bad behaviour. Analysis of the news reports by Wamahi et al (2015) concluded that “values transmitted through the media largely contradicted those values that were identified as ideal and positive, as articulated in the Constitution”. (p.61) Among the values largely missing in the reviewed media reports were peace, integrity, respect for others, responsibility and honesty. The media content is sometimes referred to as the “phantom curriculum” because of the powerful impact they have on children and young people in particular.

Key actors in the stories covered by the media are largely leaders - political, religious, business leaders and celebrities. These are the people who are the icons of “success” - the role models. Children and

young people tend to internalise the negative values reflected in their actions and attitudes, with disastrous consequences.

For the remaining part of this section, we shall turn our attention to the school, and what goes on within it with specific reference to the teaching and learning of values. We shall structure our discussion around three key findings on the teaching and learning of values within the school set up.

Within the school, there are two distinct spaces where the teaching and learning of values take place, that is, within the classrooms, and outside the classrooms. For values teaching and learning, both spaces are important. What goes on within these spaces have potential to nurture positive values, but they can also reinforce negative values.

Values teaching in the classroom

The classroom is where the formal curriculum is expected to be delivered through deliberate instruction. However, this intent is not always translated into practice. In the teaching of values, the distance between the intent and the practice is wide. Informal conversations with teachers and observations reveal the disconnect: formal values teaching is not going on in the CBC classrooms in much the same way that it was (and is) ignored in the 8-4-4 classrooms.

Learning under the 8-4-4 system is summative. Schools are driven by a culture of “mean score” making success through any means the dominant value. Teachers tend to teach to the exam and not to ensure that learning (with understanding) does place. The findings of various learning assessments including Uwezo and SAQMEC testify to this. The formal teaching of values take a back seat as the following points indicate:

- The time allocated on the time table for the teaching of Life Skills Education, which explicitly prioritises the teaching of values and life skills, is used to teach examinable subjects such as Mathematics and English. (Dayton and Manyeki, 2010).
- Despite recognition of Religious Education, Life Skills Education, History and English/Kiswahili as carrier subjects for the teaching of values, teachers tend not to do not do so. Wamahiu et al (2015) reports that over 90% of teacher respondents in the value-based education survey

admitted that the values of generosity, tolerance, kindness, integrity, and even humility among others, were not even in their teaching radar.

- In the AKF baseline study (Wamahiu 2017), secondary school learners likewise prioritised the same subjects through which they learnt values. However, the proportion of learners who were able to identify the values embedded in these subjects were relatively few. (E.g. respect, responsibility, love and humility were singled out by only 12%, 9.3%, 8.3% and 7.7% of the learner respondents).
- The least mentioned values by secondary school learners in Kwale and Mombasa as being taught through the curriculum subjects were equity, diversity, inclusiveness, integrity and non-discrimination (Wamahiu, 2017). However, teachers - both primary and secondary - claimed that most values, apart from equity, were taught through the different curriculum subjects. This discrepancy between teachers' and learners' perspectives on the teaching of values through the different subjects also emerged from the national study on value-based education (Wamahiu et al, 2015).

Channels of values transmission

Because of the didactic teaching-learning methods employed by teachers in many of the Kenyan classrooms, formal instruction is not very effective in the inculcation of values in learners. There are other channels of value transmission that exist within the school setting, including co-curricular and school routines. Clubs (including scouts and girl guides associations) and school assemblies are valued sources of value transmission. Table 3 highlights some values transmitted through clubs in selected schools.

The importance of clubs for the transmission of positive values are also confirmed by the AKF baseline study. Clubs, which are often supported by civil society organisations, tend to prioritise the values of the sponsoring agencies. Though active among the sponsors are a number of human rights and child rights organisations, teachers and school heads do not see them to be channels for the transmission of values such as non-discrimination and justice.

Table 3: Values Transmission through Clubs

# of Clubs	Values Transmitted			
1 to 2	Honesty	Vision	Courage	Non-discrimination
	Equality	Diversity	Holistic Development	Fairness/Justice
	Faith	Cleanliness	Integrity	Patriotism/ Nationalism/ Loyalty
	Helpfulness	Happiness	Time Management	Perseverance
3 to 4	Appreciation	Health/ Safety	Autonomy	Discipline
	Democracy	Environmentalism	Friendship/ Sociability	Compassion/ Consideration/ Care
	Competitiveness			
	Responsibility	Ambition/Drive	Education	Character/ Morality
5 to 6	Cooperation/ Teamwork/ Unity/ Cohesion		Respect	
7 to 8	Talent/ Resourcefulness/ Creativity			
9 to 10+	Leadership/ Confidence		Hard Work	Accountability

Source: Wamahu et al (2015) Value-based Education in Kenya: An exploration of meanings and practices Synthesis Report. Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK) Nairobi

It is important to note that there is little interaction between the clubs within the same schools, which means there is little cross-fertilisation of ideas from one to the other. Each club operates in silos. Similarly, what is learnt in the clubs rarely crossover into the classroom. For example, children in child right clubs who know that corporal punishment is a violation of the rights of the child, and do not allow it as a means of disciplining within their clubs, justify caning in the classroom as a means for correcting mistakes committed by learners.

Punishments for the enforcement of values?

In an ideal situation, values that are intended to be taught through the formal curriculum should be the same as what is actually taught, and reinforced positively through the hidden curriculum. But that is not what is happening on the ground. The disconnect between the values in the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum is in many instances, wide. Here we focus on one aspect of the disconnect - the widespread use of corporal and humiliating punishments to discipline children. The extracts in Box 3 taken from three different research studies conducted by the author demonstrates how the value-goals of the education system are frustrated by other competing practices within the school environment, which act as hidden curriculum channels.

Box 3: Examples of the Use of Corporal Punishment in Schools

Example #1

D5F: I came from B Primary and there was everything [there]. Good teaching, choirs, games, sanitary pads were provided, teachers were paid, we are beaten on our hands but here we are beaten without clothes [...]

D9F: Yes we are beaten. Teacher Jane beat me in class 2 without dress at my behind.

D8M: Yes it happened; I was beaten with shorts only. She forced me to remove my trousers. I had wronged maths. She used a stick to cane me at my behind.

D6M: Yes she also beat me using a wire on my toes and legs. I wanted to drop out of school.

D11F: She used a pipe on me. I had wronged English. It was not very long ago.

Source: Children's FGD, WWW case study #1 in Wamahiu et al (2014)

Example #2

Outside the deputy HT's office, I can hear the children being beaten and being asked by the Deputy why they are not performing? As he beats them, we can hear [him shouting]:

"...is it because you don't have a teacher, do you have lights, are you feeding? Do you know there are some children who do not have food? I have told you several times, you pay attention and that maths needs practice".

The beating goes on and the lunchtime bell rings. We head to the dining area.

Source: Lunch Time Observation, School #23 in Wamahiu et al (2015)

Example 3

Girls: We are beaten mercilessly especially by male teachers. Boys are beaten seriously on the buttocks and us on our palms till we swell.

Boys: Teachers cane students when they fail exams, failing any question during revision time, after academic analysis. This happens even when one has dropped with one mark from previous grade. It is worse for performances below 250 marks where one is caned by more than one teacher in a row.

The teachers use sticks, pointers and rubber bands (the boys indicated where they are hit with canes on the lower leg) One is punished by wearing sackcloth or speaking a language not prescribed for a given day. At the end of the shameful day, one is still caned.

Source: School #C in Wamahiu (2017)

Three different schools located in different counties and documented in different years, but the stories are similar in all the examples cited - violence, in the form of punishment, defined the children's school experiences. Physical violence in schools, perpetrated by adults (mainly teachers) on the learners may take the form of

- > Pinching, slapping
- > Caning
- > Beating using pipes, phone chargers, dusters
- > Spanking
- > Kicking, boxing, banging the child against the wall
- > Collective punishment (all teachers participating)

There is also verbal, emotional and psychological violence, which together with physical violence the Education Act 2013 makes illegal. While the policy banning corporal punishment in Kenyan schools has been in place since 2001, it has had little impact. The above examples demonstrate the onslaughts on the children's sense of dignity and self-worth, and the humiliation they experience at the hands of the teachers. They also illustrate the punishments are not gender neutral; there are clear gender dimensions in terms of *'who gets punished by who, and how'*.

Broadly, punishments are perceived by teachers and often the children themselves as justified and necessary to maintain discipline, and to teach children the value of discipline and responsibility. In the AKF baseline study, almost 86 percent of learner respondents mentioned punishments by teachers as a way of dealing with perceived disciplinary issues; only 15 percent identified counselling as being used in their schools as an alternative to punishment. Among reasons for disciplining learners through punishments was the practice of negative values such as disrespect, irresponsibility, disobedience, and dishonesty among others (Wamahiu, 2017).

In the WERK study, both child and adult research participants in case study schools identified 50 different grounds for the use of corporal punishment. The six most commonly cited reasons were bullying, disobedience/misbehaviour, fighting, making noise, absenteeism, and not completing classwork/homework (Wamahiu et al, 2015). To this list we may add poor performance in exams, as highlighted in the examples cited in Box 3.

The spate of violence we see in schools today is not because of the absence of corporal and other forms of punishment in school. The reality is that despite the ban, corporal punishment is rampant in our schools. The issue is violence breeds violence. Schools are not teaching children to resolve conflicts peacefully; instead, they are exposed to violent means of conflict resolution. If at all children in such schools do the right thing, it is not because it's the right thing to do, but do so out of fear of retribution or because they are modelling the negative values of their elders and influential peers.

Missed opportunities

In summary, missed opportunities for the nurturance of values in and through schools may be identified as:

- a. Compartmentalisation of efforts: There is little or no synergy between existing initiatives in and out of school to reinforce and nurture values.
- b. Critical capacity gaps: School heads, teachers, parents and community members have inadequate understanding of the constitutional values, and how to communicate, practice and nurture them either in themselves or the young.
- c. Silence on pluralistic values: Public schools generally are not wired to promoting pluralistic ideals embedded in the Kenyan Constitution, policy papers and the reformed curriculum framework.

4. Nurturing Positive Values

Despite the dominant cultures of negative values in many schools, value-based schools do exist. Though this was not the intention, the Twaweza commissioned study on positive deviance in primary schools Kenya discovered schools that conform to our conceptualisation of value-based schools, schools whose **ethos** is anchored on positive values, and the teaching and learning of positive values are seamless (Wamahiu, 2018). Following are some key characteristics of the schools that we “discovered”:

- > Schools that are “succeeding” academically and otherwise despite all odds;
- > Schools that target development of the “whole” child;
- > Schools that recognise and build on the different abilities of learners;
- > Schools that seek out the troubled, excluded child; and
- > Schools that are able to nurture positive values.

Qualities of value-based head teachers

In the value-based schools, head teachers

- > Are instructional as well as administrative leaders;
- > Encourage initiative and innovation;
- > Are inclusive, impartial, warm and welcoming, friendly and fair, focused and results-oriented;
- > Recognise and build on the differences in children; and
- > Effectively model positive behaviour and inspire teachers to do the same.

Some of the defining qualities that the school leaders model include

- > Creativity;
- > Critical thinking;
- > Compassion and empathy;
- > Commitment;
- > Delegation of responsibilities to staff through consultation;
- > Discipline; and
- > Determination and resilience.

Good practices in value-based education

In Box 4 we provide some examples of how the school leadership in selected value-based schools resolve common problems confronting them, and what lessons we can draw from them. More vignettes are presented in the Annex.

Box 4: Good Practices

Example 1: Giving Second Chances to the Wayward³

Thomas was a very popular boy studying in School A in a rural sub-county of Kenya. His popularity saw him elected to the position of President of his school's Children's Government. However, soon afterwards, the reason for his popularity became clear to the head teacher - the new President was allegedly the source of illicit local brews, which he generously shared with his peers during the election campaigning period.

Before taking any punitive action against Thomas, the head teacher decided to pay a surprise visit to his home to understand for himself what the deeper problem was. Thomas came from an impoverished single parent

³ The name of the child and school has been changed where the information could potentially be harmful

home. Brewing and selling chang'aa (an illicit local alcoholic brew) was a source of income for this family. The income from this activity put food on the family table and even met some of the school expenses for the children.

Following his visit to Thomas' home, the head decided not to expel the child but give him a second chance. He did, however, remove him from his position of President. The head kept a close watch over Thomas, and coached and mentored him. In his primary school leaving exams, Thomas performed above average, and qualified to transit to a public secondary school.

The story does not end well though. The mentoring did not continue while he was in secondary school. He got into bad company and started using drugs, and eventually dropped out of school.

The act of empathy and compassion that the head teacher demonstrated in dealing with Thomas was not a one-time, random action on his part. He actively seeks out children who miss school frequently or for several days in a row by visiting them at home to get a first-hand understanding of the problem.

He believes that positive change is incremental. When he took over the school, it was performing very badly and was at the very bottom of the zonal performance table. He got rid of the teachers who were in serious breach of teachers' ethical code - like the chronic alcoholic, the persistently absent teacher, and a teacher who was accused of sexually molesting girls in lower primary. The rest he worked with to inspire change in their attitude to work and teaching. "After all, how could I be sure that new teachers would be any better?"

Over the years, he has managed, through empathy and compassion mixed with hard work, discipline and commitment, to make the school one of the best performing schools in the zone.

Example 2: Making Everything and Everyone Count

I had the privilege of sitting in on two of Mr Ali's lessons, one on science and the other social studies. The children clearly enjoyed the lessons and were actively engaged. He involved them all, giving girls and boys equal opportunity to participate. Though he did not deliberately focus on the teaching of values, values learning was infused in the practice.

"Who says that teaching science effectively to children is expensive?" For Mr Ali, stones, strings, seeds, old paper - any kind of scrap material can be converted into teaching aids. He involves the children in identifying and collecting the materials that he uses to teach, things that are easily available and do not cost any money. Through this approach, children learn to value the environment and commonplace things, they learn to be inquisitive and to ask questions. They also acquire the values of respect, collaboration and cooperation.

The seamless learning is evident at the school assemblies. The assemblies are used as opportunities not only to make announcements but also to inform on current affairs, build confidence in learners, and strengthen bonds between teachers and the children.

This is one school where parents are involved actively, and are responsible for running a successful school meals programme through the Parents' Association. There is a standard charge levied per child but no child is excluded because of a failure to pay. Mr Ali follows up with the defaulting parent personally, and depending on the reason for non-payment, agrees on a payment schedule. In extreme cases, other parents who are financially able are encouraged to sponsor a child who is unable to pay for the meals. All this is done discreetly, so that the concerned child is not labelled and bullied.

Ali, who is the head teacher of the school, has a warm and cordial relationship with the parents, teachers and the children. He has an open door policy, so anybody can walk in for consultations any time. There is no secretary to act as an intermediary between the head, and those wanting to see him. In the secretary's room, there is a desktop computer. This appeared to be a communal computer as teachers, at various times, came to

use it. On probing, we found out that the school had agreed not to have a secretary. “We felt it was better to have a guard and pay him good salary, than have both a secretary and a guard and pay each below minimum wages.”

His school is among the top performing schools in the county. His predecessor laid the foundation for its good performance, but Ali has taken it a notch higher with his leadership style and qualities: He consults and delegates, leading from the front. An instructional as well as an administrative leader, he models integrity, creativity, commitment, and compassion.

Example 3: Networking for Resource Mobilisation

Teacher Lucy is a dynamic and well-networked head teacher. Until the first quarter of 2018, she was heading School C, which remains among the best public primary schools in the county. She left a legacy of values and good performance in her former school.

“Ours is the normal Bell’s curve --- we have kids who do well, and others who don’t, and that is how it should be”. She is unapologetic about it. She is clearly not a slave of the “mean score culture” believing that schools must take into consideration the strengths and limitations of every child. For example, a boy who was a poor performer and at risk of drop-out managed to make a career after completing primary using skills he picked up through the school’s income-generating club. He became a successful business person, breeding and selling rabbits.

The school has a Uniform Bank for children from needy families. Children leaving School C for whatever reason are encouraged to donate their uniforms to the Bank. The school takes the responsibility of having the uniforms washed and distributed to the targeted children. The distribution is done in private to protect the recipient child from being stigmatised by her or his peers.

The school also has a successful feeding programme. Teacher Lucy did not just depend on contributions from the parents but also used her networking skills to supplement the menu with donations of avocado and pineapple from a neighbouring plantation. In her new school, these skills came in handy. She has managed to start a meals programme where none existed prior to her transfer there with donations from a private milling company.

According to an independent observer who had been visiting the school for the last 10 years, the transformation in the school is very visible since Teacher Lucy’s arrival. It has become a joyful school where parents are now engaging actively, the children are confident and responsible and everyone, including the 15 children with disabilities feel included.

5. The Way Forward and Recommendations

“Through all my life I have seen the best of humanity that has inspired me, but I have also seen the worst of what human beings can do to other human beings. But the challenge is when you see the worst, you might allow the worst to take over so that is always the struggle. We should let the good inspire us - the good values, the good actions, the good behavior inspire us and build our character but learning lessons from what has happened in the worst that we have experienced.” - S Wamahiu in a talk on [Character Formation and Values](#) delivered at the Smart Governance Conference organised by the Jesuit Hakimani Centre on 12th June, 2019.

(<https://jaslika.com/articles/character-formation-value-based-education>)

What will it take to have the good inspire learners to do the right thing, and not get influenced by actions that harm others? A value-based system requires a value-based culture in which practicing positive values becomes a way of life of the citizenry. With this in mind, we make some recommendations for the consideration of the Task Force as they go about their task of advising on the design and implementation of values-based education through the CBC.

1. The CBC curriculum design identifies eight values, namely love, responsibility, respect, integrity, social justice, peace, unity, and patriotism. Inclusivity and diversity, which are also values, are included as guiding principles, but not listed as values. There are critical values that are embedded in the Constitution 2010 that are missing from this list: Equality, equity, fairness, tolerance, non-discrimination, dignity, and compassion/ empathy. While it may be argued that some of these missing values are subsumed under the values already prioritised by KICD, we know from research that values such as tolerance, non-discrimination, equality and compassion are values that are conspicuous in their absence from the classroom and the wider community. Yet, in a country as diverse as Kenya, unity cannot be attained if we don't respect the diversity (which is a positive value) and the address the huge inequalities in society (which is negative). Every election cycle we see the ugly head of intolerance rearing its head and pitting Kenyans against Kenyans. There is also chronic inter-ethnic, intra-clan violence which we like to attribute to culture, but may also have to do with the competition for scarce resources. Gender-based violence is a fact of life, with sexual offence cases clogging the justice pipeline. ([Daily Nation, Tuesday October 15, 2019](#)) Children are victims in all this. In view of this, we recommend:
 - a. Substituting selected values prioritised by KICD, for example, love with compassion. The two terms are often confused but there are important differences between them. Love is a personal feeling, an emotion, arising from a sense of self, and anchored in existing relationships. So when we talk of selfless love, we are talking of selfless love for somebody (for example, a mother for her children). That same selfless love for one's offspring may drive somebody to be selfish by protecting the interest of the child at the expense of all others. Love can also be narcissistic. In contrast, compassion is selfless, and can exist without any relationship with another. One can be compassionate towards total strangers. Compassion embeds empathy. Empathy, which is a psychosocial life skill (also referred to as soft or transferable skills by some), is much valued by private industry and employers. (MCF, March 2017; Youth

Employment Donors Group, 2017)

- b. Each value that is prioritised for teaching in school, must be unpacked, clarified and linked to the missing values with the aim of incorporating them. For example, social justice is a valuable addition to the KICD list. Equity and fairness are closely linked to the concept of social justice and are pathways to equality. However, there appears to be conceptual misunderstanding among layperson, and some prominent researchers and educators that I have spoken to severally, on the difference between equality and equity.

We must also not confuse the value of equality with sameness. They do not mean the same. Equality, which is an inalienable human right, may be defined as the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities. Sameness means being identical; it is not a human right and may even work to defeat the goals of equality. This conceptual confusion between equality and sameness has led many schools to impose regulations, especially relating to uniform, that contribute to the alienation of children from diverse, minority backgrounds and creates unnecessary conflict. It also drives schools towards petty practices. While the design of its uniform is a school's prerogative, it should not be used to exclude children. The problem of exclusion seems to be one common in faith-based and faith-sponsored schools; public schools in general do not appear to have this problem.

- c. We need to be careful with how the value of patriotism is interpreted. Patriotism is love for one's country; it should not be equated with narrow nationalism that breeds hatred and bigotry. We are witnessing the impact of the rise of nationalism in Europe and North America where politicians are manipulating the masses to violence and engage in discriminatory acts against people who are perceived to be different, against immigrants and minorities who they believe are "less patriotic" than the politically and often numerically dominant groups. We have seen this nearer home, in South Africa. In this context, the exclusion of the values of non-discrimination and tolerance from the curriculum, in our view, is a serious mistake. Though diversity is mentioned as a guiding principle, it is not clear to what extent it is linked to the teaching of values. It is our contention that true peace and unity cannot be achieved if these fundamental values

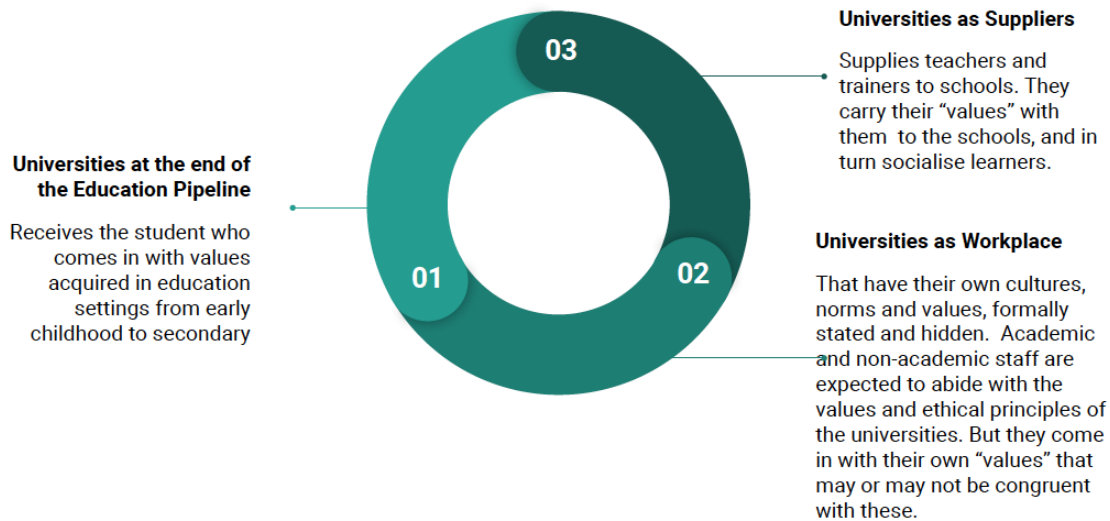
are missing from the priority list.

2. Investing in orientation of head teachers and Boards of Management (BoM) on value-based education is essential. Linked to recommendation #1 above, the orientation should focus on the rationale and understanding of key concepts. This can be done through already existing channels such as regular BoM and head teacher trainings, the latter through head teachers' associations.
3. Teachers are at the core of any education system. It is therefore critical that teachers are targeted for transformative action. This should involve integration of value-based education into pre-service teacher formation and into continuous and professional development courses. The main purpose of both pre-service and CPD should be threefold: (a) to change mindsets and the behaviour of teachers so that they live and model the values that they are expected to teach and nurture in learners; (b) to strengthen their conceptual understanding of values and related concepts, including the deep understanding of individual values and how they reinforce each other; and (c) to equip them with appropriate pedagogical skills to teach values, pedagogy that will steer them away from didactic teaching to *engaged teaching*.
4. The values should be taught, nurtured and reinforced through the use of diverse teaching-learning methodologies, including experiential learning, narrative-based approaches and self-reflection. The precise methods used must be age appropriate. For learners, the aim of the teaching of values should be to demonstrate value-based behaviour, and not to regurgitate the meaning of the words.
5. Value-based education systems and schools reach out to the excluded. The excluded children include children in remand homes, children with disabilities, children who have mental health issues, refugee and displaced children, intersex children, remote and minority groups (ethnic and religious minorities). Exclusion may be physical; it can also be psychological through the use of labelling and stereotyping. The teacher training curriculum should address the issues of labelling and stereotyping in the classroom and schools by teachers, linking child sensitivity to values and quality education for all.
6. There has been a lot of debate on the use of corporal punishment in schools. While there are those who believe strongly in "spare the rod and spoil the child", there are those - a significant number - who do not have the knowledge and skills to discipline children using alternative means. If we are serious about breaking the cycle of violence, enforcement of positive/alternative disciplining strategies is a must. It is important to point out that it is not only

corporal punishment, but also all kinds of emotional, psychological and exploitative abuse are banned in the Kenyan Constitution 2010, Education Act 2013 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

7. While education is a key channel for the enculturation of the young into a culture of values, it will require the effort and support of actors outside of education as well to achieve this. We propose that the education sector pro-actively seek multisectoral collaboration and alliances, especially with the health, justice, child rights, and social protection sectors as well as the media (including social media) to develop a positive environment in and outside the school in which values can be nurtured and reinforced.
8. Community service learning (CSL) is a good initiative that is expected to bridge gaps between the child in the school and the community. It is also expected to instil mutually beneficial and reinforcing values in both learners, their family and community members. However, there are a youth out in the community who have never enrolled into school or completed school but have not continued with it because of various reasons. There are also those who have dropped out of school before completion. Efforts should be made to engage the out-of-school youth through youth groups in community outreach activities.
9. The civil society has been instrumental in establishing clubs in schools and partnering with the education sector in developing tools and building the capacity of key actors (head teachers, teachers, children, parents, and communities) in values-related issues, including child rights, life skills, sustainable development, peace, integrity and transparency among others. This partnership is crucial and must be built on and continued.
10. While coordination of the sector is important and safeguards must be put in place for the protection of children, it is critical this is not used as an excuse to gag the creativity, skills and knowledge that the civil society brings with it, or to settle personal scores. The capacity of those in various subject and vetting panels within the Ministry of Education, KICD and other state agencies also need to be scrutinised, and their competency to undertake the tasks of vetting carefully ascertained.
11. The formal education pipeline comprises basic and post-basic, tertiary/university levels. As Figure 3 illustrates, universities are at end of the pipeline and must play a central role in finding solutions to redress challenges to the nurturance of values and ethical cultures and products (the students). There are three dimensions that have implications for the creation and sustenance of value-based cultures in universities.

3 Dimensions



- a. Universities need to look at itself critically, and identify concrete steps to reduce the gap between the theory and practice of positive values within its campuses, and operationalise the value statements into guidance for practice taking into consideration the three dimensions described in the illustration above.
- b. Universities must work out and implement strategies to facilitate better collaboration with KICD and other research institutions and think tanks to strengthen and operationalise values pillar in CBC.
- c. As teacher-educators, universities should develop curricula to prepare teachers in value-based education so as to break the vicious cycle of negative values and reproduction of these in schools and other institutions of learning.

12. The quality of value-based education must be assured at all stages of the pipeline. In this respect we would like to propose several actions:

- a. Allocation of resources for values-based education implementation, which includes the capacity development and monitoring, evaluation and research.

- b. Careful selection of those entrusted with capacity development of the key actors in value-based education.
- c. Strong MERL (monitoring, evaluation, research and learning) plans and execution. Sometimes, plans that look good on paper may not be implemented because they are too complicated. It is important therefore to identify simple indicators or signs of the practice of values by the schools (school administration, leaders, teachers and children) and their reflection in the school ethos. (The Ministry of Education Meriting Tool includes a section on values but is **not** a good example for the effective measurement of value-based education.

6. Conclusion: Education without Values ...

Finally, I would like to conclude with a reminder and a plea. First, the caution: *“Education without values, like science without ethics, is dangerous, destructive and not sustainable.”* These are words that I first uttered in a keynote address at Kenyatta University on 18th May 2015, and subsequently at other fora including at the launch of the national Value-based Education Study and the CBC Pre-Conference organised by Kenyatta University in August 2019. When science is driven by unfettered profit motive and greed, and not by the desire for safeguarding of the earth and its resources then environmental disaster is inevitable. When positive values are missing from the application of science, when it is manipulated by the power hungry for their own selfish gains, and not the common good of humanity, then war, conflict and violence is the result.

Unless the conceptualisation of quality education embraces positive values at its core, and is supported by psychosocial life skills like critical thinking, learners will not become empowered, engaged and ethical citizens for positive and holistic transformation of the society. My prayer, and that of all those enjoined in this paper is to help our children to learn to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do, and not because they are driven by extrinsic factors like fear and greed.

Epilogue or a Post-Script

There is a lot of rhetoric about the African Identity, how we do not recognise or have forgotten who we are. Much of the rhetoric reflects doublespeak, and ironically, indicates an urgent need to decolonise our minds, including of those who are raising the concern. What do I mean?

1. In the early 1990s, when conducting focus group discussions with educational leaders (school heads, education officers, school inspectors as they were referred to those days), I was shocked when I found the FGD participants referring to the Mau Mau as “terrorists”. I knew the Mau Mau as freedom fighters, and my knowledge was not acquired after I came to Kenya in 1981, but from my parents when I was growing up in my native Pakistan/Bangladesh. The Mau Mau were among my heros and heroines, and have remained so up to today.

The first positive reference to the Mau Mau I found after my arrival in Kenya was in Prof Ali Mazrui’s “The Triple Heritage”, a BBC/Nigerian television production in the 1980s that was banned in Kenya by then administration of President Moi. In the film he challenged the common image of the Mau Mau as violent extremists, brutal and destructive. He backed up his argument with statistics, showing how history had been distorted and manipulated to favour the colonisers. The historic win by ex-Mau Mau freedom fighters against the British government in 2012, testify to the veracity of Prof Mazrui’s perspective as that of other Kenyan scholars like Dr Tabitha Kanogo (formerly of Kenyatta University)

2. In 1994/1995, five little booklets profiled women who played a significant role in their communities in pre-colonial and colonial times. They were from five different ethnic communities: Agikuyu, Luo, Ameru, Giriama and Abagusii. Published by the Ad hoc Group of Women Researchers now known as the Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK), these booklets broke the dominant myth that women as political/administrative leaders were absent in precolonial and colonial Africa, a myth that was perpetuated by publishers through school textbooks and reinforced by teachers in the Kenyan classrooms.

One woman leader who had found her way into the Kenyan classroom by the 1980s was Wangu wa Makeri. However, she was depicted very negatively, as a dictator who sat on men in the

literal sense. Through careful research, Nyakwea Wai (1995) of WERK wrote the true story of Wangu. It counteracted the inaccuracies and falsehoods that were being peddled through the textbook in question. However, erasing falsehood once it has taken roots in the minds of people, is not easy. Though the stories of Wangu and others were brought to the attention of the publishers by the Ministry of Education courtesy of Dr Eddah Gachukia, the books that were in the market peddling the falsehoods or ignoring women's presence were not withdrawn on the pretext that it would be too expensive for them to do so. Once again the "profit" motive held sway over the virtues of honesty and fairness, and of presenting our history truthfully.

A few weeks ago, I was having a conversation with some people in their thirties and early forties. They were from different organisations - one was from a state agency, another from a funding partner, and a couple from NGOs. The distorted history of Wangu wa Makeri was etched in their minds from their primary school days.

Dr Anna Obura's seminal book entitled "Changing Images" (1991) found not only were women leaders but ordinary women and girls too were missing from the Kenyan textbooks in the 1980s. Since then, the review of textbooks shows quantitative changes in creating gender balance at best, but qualitatively the gender gap persists in and through our teaching and learning materials, thus frustrating the values of gender equality and equity enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution.

The modern African identity must recognise the principle of pluralism; we are multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-religious. As a nation-state, our strength is in our diversity. This means blending what is good from traditions as well as from more recent and contemporary influences, and ensuring that the practices of one segment of the population does not exclude any child from a different group from exercising their right to education.

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Annex: Vignettes Demonstrating Value-based Practices

Story A: “Bringing Everyone Together” - Role of the BoM

Before: The school had very poor academic performance. There was a lot of suspicion and disagreement between the school, parents and the school management committee making it difficult “to govern the school”.

The Transformation: I, and others, worked through the division and in 2003 we got another head teacher with whom we organized to bring in order and reconciliation in the school. We sat down as parents, because there was no cooperation between parents and teachers and even the SMC. So every department was doing things independently without involving the others. So firstly we resolved that the teacher should be respected, the parent too should be respected. You see at times teachers could even abuse pupils according to the parent’s behaviour or the parents abused and didn’t respect the teachers too. There was no unity completely. We decided to call a meeting where we all met and we reconciled. We looked at what was affecting us and each team presented its issues and we forgave each other and that is how we managed to solve that issue. So, we forgave each other and even after that we looked for food and ate together and after that we started speaking in one voice. Like the parents started supporting the teachers and the teachers too.

You know, when the Committee sat down with the teacher and parents, we agreed that there should be respect between everybody. Like the teachers and parents should respect each other ... like when a child comes and tells you that the teacher has done this and this, talk to that child that the teacher is trying to help them. Then when you come to school now you talk with parents or the teacher.

Story B: “Marketing School to the Children”

Before: Mr. Francis[1], an alumni of School #B, returned to It many years later as the head teacher to a school that was very mismanaged and among the worst in the district.

The Transformation: It took him five years to turn around the situation, which is the minimum time that it takes to have “adequate impact” according to him.

First, he recognized the need to involve all stakeholders. In his words, “being in a position of leadership it requires someone to combine the roles of a priest, a head teacher and a teacher at the same time. Because you cannot force them to work, you must invite them to join you ... to see your vision, consistently teach them and talk to them until you see a change of attitude. And this is what it took”.

Second, he realized the importance of using the art of persuasion by appreciating the teachers “because you cannot fight them although you can kick them all out but you can’t borrow from another school because all the systems are the same. So better try to change them”.

Third, he identified those who were involved in unprofessional and unethical behaviour, behaviour that the head teacher described as “extreme”. He defined “extreme cases” as “cases where you can see some teachers’ coming to work drunk. Kick them out” was his advice. “I couldn’t accommodate that. That is an extreme case. You could see a teacher indulging in affairs with pupils; that is extreme and I can’t stomach that. I am ready to sacrifice those ones; I did it. They were not many extreme cases, but the few that emerged; I dealt with them I then remained with the ones who depicted the vision I had for the school. I am happy that they adjusted and with time, they started working. That is how we managed the turn-around.

Fourth, he gave hope to the children who were lost in hopelessness. He did this by talking to them and convincing them by magnifying the positive trends. One of the positive trends that he magnified was improvement in ranking from the 19th to the 17th in KCPE in the zone. Though the progress was modest, what is significant is that he managed to achieve the improvement within just one term; he had been posted to the school in September ahead of the examinations in November.

Finally, he knew that if he were to succeed he would have to “market” the school to the children, and through them, reach their parents. His strategy was to organize school trips for pupils who had never been inside a bus, and had never stepped outside their neighbourhood before this. The marketing strategy bore results; it aroused children’s enthusiasm for attending school. This was the tipping point for the parents who began responding from that moment. As news got to children in neighbouring schools, they too started “pestering their parents that they want to come to this school”. You know a parent who is mindful of the child’s welfare will do what is good for their child.

Story C: School – Community Compacts

School #D was located on 22 hectares of land near a small shopping centre. Though it had a gate, it had no perimeter wall or fencing of any sort. Two public roads passed through the school’s premises and a borehole, located in the school compound, was shared with and managed by the community. The community had contributed to the digging of the borehole.

There was a *boda boda*⁴ shed directly opposite the school gate. The ECD class, which doubled as the boys’ dormitory in the evening, was on the outer side of one of the roads passing through the school next to the office of a community-based organization. Despite its location and open access to anybody passing by, the safety of the children in school was assured through a “moral compact” that the school management and Board had entered into with the community. The compact bound the community members not to interfere with learning at the school and encouraged them to act as watchdogs. Some examples of this were:

- There was an agreement that *boda boda* riders, widely perceived to be responsible for school girl pregnancies, would not enter the compound without permission from the school

⁴ Motorbike used as form of public transportation

administration. Not only did the *boda boda* riders respect this decision, they reportedly refrained from engaging in romantic relationships with girls from the school. Parents had been involved in building the foundation of the *boda boda* shed.

- Children were not permitted to wander and loiter in the marketplace. If found, they were reported to the school.
- If found watching television in shops in the market, they were sent away and their parents were informed.
- The local market was not allowed to engage in noisy activities such as rallies or noisy religious meetings during school hours.
- There was zero tolerance demonstrated for drunken teachers. Teachers who were found drunk in the community were reported to the school management.

This partnership between the community and the school was perceived to have borne positive results. There was a reduction in the number of girls who got pregnant while still in school. There were also fewer cases of truancy by pupils and there was no case of teachers coming to school drunk. Said the chair of the BoM:

When we come to meetings, we sensitize the community that the school belongs to them, and it is their responsibility to protect the school. Due to this, I get phone calls whenever there is someone who seems to interfere with the school such as herding cattle.

So I pointed him [the teacher] to go to head there [another school] because he was hardworking and very cooperative. And it is like a tradition that even when other teachers come here and even if any teacher is not performing, you find them working hard because I try to mould and guide. Sometimes when they move out they say this is an academy.

Like right now there are five head teachers who were teachers here but when they leave they become head teachers. No deputy head teacher leaves here as a deputy but they get promoted and are given a school. So its like, now the [Education] Office has recognised this school like a *promoting-school*".