

POLICY BRIEF

Inculcating an Entrepreneurial Mindset in Young Learners to Enhance the Delivery of Goals for the Competency-Based Curricular in Public Primary Schools in Kenya

This Policy Brief explores the current status of entrepreneurial thinking among young learners in Public Primary Schools and proposes ways of amending this within the current Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) to enhance performance and results.

Key Messages

- An Entrepreneurship Mindset needs to be inculcated in young learners from lower Primary School;
- There is already an investment in the current basic education curriculum to incorporate certain aspects of entrepreneurship in the subjects covered;
- That while the basic topical approach to financial literacy is mentioned and covered within the subjects, there is a missing congruence in achieving a productive entrepreneurial mindset in young learners across all subjects; and
- The end product from the basic education level remains remotely conversant in entrepreneurial thinking, ending up only achieving examinable tasks rather than building their creative energies in young learners.

This Policy Brief, therefore, proposes that:

- Entrepreneurship be taught as a subject area among those covered in Junior Secondary Schools. Entrepreneurship is not just a business studies subject. Rather, it is an attitude of problem-solving and a critical thinking approach that can be inculcated in the learners and integrated across different subject areas;
- Entrepreneurial Clubs be established as co-curricular activities at Primary, Junior, and Senior Secondary School levels;
- The teaching pedagogy to instill an entrepreneurial culture among young learners be reinforced from the most viable earliest age. This will result in producing skilled, resilient, open-minded, and innovative citizens who will not only be job creators but also problem solvers in the country and the continent at large.

Target Group: Policy makers and planners in the Government (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development(KICD)); Non-state institutions (Public and Private Schools); Publishers; communities; media

Abstract

Entrepreneurial thinking builds in an innate risk-taking nature, that is one of the most important skills young learners require in order to thrive in the 21st Century. While the importance of enhancing entrepreneurial skills cannot be overemphasised, the current school curriculum in Public Primary Schools has not cohesively integrated it. And although there is an

evident attempt to introduce some relevant topics in some of the examinable subjects, there has been limited congruence in its application. The products of the curriculum have been persons whose skills and experience is stunted, thus retarding their entrepreneurial efforts. This Policy Brief argues that had the entrepreneurial mindset been inculcated during their early ages, it would have built their strength and resilience – traits that are crucial for entrepreneurs.

This proposal contributes to the on-going conversation on how to ensure that the education system nurtures an engaged, empowered, ethical learner who will continuously do well amid the challenging economic environmental. In addition, its introduction at lower primary school level will result in improving the quality of education (accomplishing SDG4¹) and build towards access to decent work, leading to the growth of economies (SDG 8²).

Currently CBCs efforts to create the required impetus to enhance building the “whole person” for learners is highly lauded. To sustainably achieve this, this Policy Brief calls to action the collaboration and partnership with related Government agencies, state and non-state actors, and the public and private sectors. This will ensure that entrepreneurial learning is explicitly taught to learners either through the formal curriculum or the non-formal curriculum to ensure that learners develop the entrepreneurial mindset from an early age.

Background

The Kenyan education system is undergoing radical changes as the nation seeks to replace the 34-year-old 8-4-4 system that began in 1985, with the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), that was rolled out in 2019.

The 8-4-4 system which has had various reforms over the years has been criticized for being too content oriented, focusing more on the acquisition rather than the application of knowledge. It has been orchestrated as a curriculum that is overly academic and examination-oriented and one that offers very rigid education pathways for learners.

In its place, various stakeholders, government agencies, employers and parents, have appraised the new curriculum as its focus is now more on achieving competence rather than the abstract acquisition of knowledge. It is anchored on the role of education being more on “*what a learner can do*” rather than “*what a learner knows*”.

It seeks to ensure that learners are competent in seven key areas: i) Communication and collaboration; ii) critical thinking and problem solving; iii) creativity and imagination; iv) citizenship; v) digital literacy; vi) learning to learn; and vii) self-efficacy (Basic Education Curriculum Framework Manual, 2016).

Competency based education has gained traction in the recent past in various fields and domains including medical fields, education and psychology, strategic management and policy among others. Entrepreneurial education has also been argued to complement the aspects of the competency based education as it emphasizes on imagination, creativity, and risk taking attitudes.

¹ SDG4 - Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all to enable upward social mobility and end poverty

² SDG8 – Promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

It involves teaching styles that are: action-oriented; encourage experiential learning; problem solving and project based learning; creativity; and peer evaluation. It provides a mix of enterprising skills and behaviours that are likened to those required to create and manage a small business (Jones & English, 2004). The need to develop entrepreneurial competencies may have to take pedagogical approaches that are non-traditional; leaning more towards the action oriented approaches that are likely to result to developing critical capabilities such as opportunity identification, risk mitigation and resource leverage that cannot be acquired through the traditional lecture and teacher centered techniques (Morris, Webb, & Sigal, 2013).

As noted in the census data of 2019, more than a third of Kenyan youth have no formal employment. The census data identifies 38.9% of young Kenyans to be jobless with most of the jobs created being low paying and informal (Alashula, 2020). In order to engage more learners to be job creators rather than job seekers, the Kenyan government has adopted the training and teaching of entrepreneurial education as submitted by Ominde Report (1964), Ndegwa report (1971) and international Labour Report (1972) which all recommended the teaching of business education in schools to develop the culture of entrepreneurship among the youth in Kenya.

In spite of all this, the education and training program of entrepreneurial education in Kenya being offered at the tertiary level in many Kenyan Universities, does not result in the inculcation of an entrepreneurial culture among the young people as it is not taught during a learners formative years, when values and attitudes are formed **Error! Reference source not found.**

Moreover, the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education is dependent on the delivery of the curriculum content. Of which, the delivery of entrepreneurial education is mostly done through the traditional approaches of teaching that emphasize on the mastery of content rather than experiential learning that is necessary to acquire entrepreneurial skills and competencies (Gichana, 2015).

This policy brief therefore proposes an enforcement of the existing pillars in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) and the core competencies for basic education through the provision of entrepreneurial education to learners from a young age. A study done by Kimencu (2021) found that the curriculum as illustrated in the basic education curriculum framework incorporates several entrepreneurial themes such as communication, identification of opportunities, collaboration, empathy and venture creation.

The curriculum however, does not offer learners the opportunity to integrate the entrepreneurial skills as the subject is not taught explicitly in the formal curriculum, nor is it offered as a co-curricular activity in the non-formal curriculum. For the learning of the entrepreneurial competencies to have greater effect, there is need for the learners to acquire entrepreneurial personal qualities in their formative years so that the skills acquired at the senior secondary and tertiary levels can be actualized.

This policy brief is therefore a call for action to the various actors: state and non-state actors; public and private entities; basic education providers (private and public schools offering primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary education); communities, and the media to play a role in the inculcation of entrepreneurial culture among learners from an early age. This will create an entrepreneurial mindset of problem solving and critical thinking skills. When effectively done, this will result in a change in the mindset by the young people from that of job-seekers to job creators, thus reducing unemployment in the country.

Moreover, the introduction of entrepreneurship through either the formal or non-formal curriculum in schools will add value to Kenya's education system and result in the achievement of the UN global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG1, SDG4, SDG8, SDG9 and SDG17) of 2015 – directly contributing to ending poverty, protecting the planet, ensuring prosperity and financial inclusion among all. This Policy Brief proposes that this inculcation be delivered either through formal or non-formal curriculum (co-curricular) activities.

In order to successfully achieve this, there will be a need for direct and direct participation and contribution of various actors as follows:

Government:

Implementation of basic education in Kenya is anchored in the Basic Education Act, 2013, which also provides clear regulations and guidelines. The adoption of the proposal falls squarely on this and envisages adding value to the basic education curriculum framework³. Guided by the National Education Sector Plan, this policy brief proposes that the government through the Ministry of Education, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards, adopt policies in regard to the formal introduction of entrepreneurial education at lower primary school. In this regard, this introduction could be provided in form of mindset building and preparation, in terms of problem solving skills and practical creativity models. In the following level, entrepreneurial education could comprise of explicit teaching of entrepreneurship as a subject area in the junior secondary school levels. The learners would then be presented with various aspects of required competencies. Currently, entrepreneurship is included as a topic only in the Business Studies subject, which is not sufficient to inculcate an entrepreneurial culture and foster positive attitudes on entrepreneurship among learners. Hence, it will be crucial to have it as a stand-alone subject area that is taught across the different levels in the learning cycle.

Alternatively, this proposal recommends including it in the non-formal curriculum through entrepreneurial co-curricular activities within the schools, guided by acceptable education guidelines at the basic education level. The Ministry of Education through the various institutions that offer teacher professional education programs such as Kenya's Teacher Education and Professional Development (TEPD) could also provide teachers with the requisite skills of teaching the pedagogy of delivering entrepreneurial education to learners and integrate its learning across other subject areas. Resources under the Ministry of Education could also set aside to ensure that entrepreneurial education is offered within the schools at National and County levels. The Government through the Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO) and Kenya Intellectual Property Institute (KIPI) shall also help schools in protecting the innovations by learners from the class projects across the learning cycle.

Non- State Actors

The non-state actors including those contributing or playing a role in the education sector, private and public primary and secondary schools could support the teaching of entrepreneurship education. This could be done as follows:

³ Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)

- **In schools** – through identifying knowledgeable Club Patrons to spearhead the introduction of Entrepreneurial Clubs – the school heads shall support entrepreneurial projects that are done in school by providing rewards to the learners with innovative ideas, as well as ensuring that the teachers are integrating the teaching of entrepreneurship within other subject areas; and
- **In public and private agencies** – through providing entrepreneurship models and financing projects that create real-life attachments for future prospects. This could come from not only student sponsorship, but in role-modelling, attachments, and industry experience for learners could also promote inter-agency collaboration that builds the capacity of teachers and staff to enhance their delivery across the levels.

Communities

As is already evident, the CBC delivery requires an important contribution by parents, guardians and the community at large especially during creation and implementation of the learning projects. Parents and guardians can support the teaching of entrepreneurial education through instilling the right attitude regarding entrepreneurship to their children, providing their expert role, and engaging with the schools as illustrated in the parental empowerment and engagement guiding principles in the basic education curriculum framework. Investors and goodwill leaders should provide the role modelling and good stewardship to the learners through supporting the school projects that are entrepreneurial in nature. The investor communities could fund the various entrepreneurial innovations through incubation centres.

They also include the other stakeholders such as text book publishers, investors, and community leaders. These will support the teaching of entrepreneurial education in schools by creating and disseminating required and up-to-date content on the entrepreneurial environment. Text book publishers could provide adequate and validated content that inculcates an entrepreneurial culture among learners from a young age. These different subject books should also explicitly tie the teaching of various concepts to entrepreneurial learning.

Media

The media in this proposal is a conduit for content and highlights in the entrepreneurship sector. They will provide accurate, validated and informative content on entrepreneurial education, targeting the learners at different levels. This could be in supplements covering learner projects, pitched models that require highlighting or upscaling, success stories and perception changing information. In order to regularly churn demanded for content, the media will moot partnerships with agencies, education institutions, community and other strategic links. This will enhance creativity and in turn an entrepreneurship mindset across different forums, creating growth opportunities for leading youthful innovators and institutions.

Conclusion

The policy brief recommends the explicit teaching of entrepreneurial education during the learners' formative years. Early exposure to entrepreneurial education from the formative years will result to an entrepreneurial mindset and culture that perceives societal problems as entrepreneurial opportunities. The policy brief therefor recommends that the teaching of entrepreneurial education be packaged formally through a vocational subject to equip learners

with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare learners for careers in paid or self-employment. This will result to the realization of the vision of the competency based education in Kenya that aims at nurturing learners who are engaged, empowered, and ethical as envisioned in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF).

In addition to the teaching of entrepreneurship as a vocational subject within the curriculum, there is need to have it emphasized through co-curricular activities such as school clubs.

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