



Scoping Study of Early Learning in Kenya

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List of abbreviations and Acronyms

BTL	Bible Translation and Literacy
CBO	Community Based Organization
DICECE	District Centre for Early Childhood Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMACK	Education for Marginalized Children of Kenya
FBO	Faith Based Organizations
ICC	International Criminal Court
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
MoE	Ministry of Education
NACECE	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
NASMLA	National Assessment for Monitoring Learning Achievement
PRIMR	Primary Maths and Reading
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTE	Primary Teacher Education
SMC	School Management Committee
TAC	Teachers Advisory Centre
RtL	Reading to Learn
SACMEQ	Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
Std.	Standard

1. Introduction to the study

The importance of having a firm foundation in early learning cannot be over emphasized. It is at the early learning stage that the foundation is laid for future learning and development and early learning programs normally have a significant impact on future education outcomes. If children lack a firm foundation, it is likely that learning in later years will not be effective. Further, economics returns to education will be as high as they are at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level of education. Yet, in spite of the social returns that would be realized from investing in ECD, countries have not either been able or willing to invest enough in this level of learning. International philanthropic organizations and donors have come in to help improve early learning because data shows that the more countries invest in early learning, the more economic returns they will get. There are many organizations that are or have been working in early learning. These include Van Leer Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation and World Vision.

By commissioning this scoping study, TrustAfrica aims to find out who is doing exactly what and where. Further, it aims to find out what innovations are taking place and whether these innovations can be up scaled in a cost effective matter. In this regard, TrustAfrica would promote investment and build capacity of local organizations that focus on early learning in sub-Saharan Africa. The area of concern for TrustAfrica is those Organizations that are dealing with areas that are underserved by the government.

2. Methodology of the study

The methodology for this study involved the following:

2.1 Desk Research

This was from various documents that are available from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). Information was also obtained from the various organizations that are working in this early learning. Unfortunately, it is difficult to get data from the MoE. Whatever data which exists is either not easily accessible or current. The web pages do not have enough information.

2.2 Personal Visits

Most of the organizations that work in early learning were visited. Where physical visits were not possible due to logistical challenges, the researcher was able to have telephone conversations with the lead persons in the project. In some cases, the researcher was also able to organize a focus group discussion with the key players. For instance there was a Focus Group Discussion (FGDO with board members of the Community Based Organisation (CBO) that is implementing the Opportunity Schools project in Loitoktok – a district on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, close to the border with Tanzania. There was also a meeting with head teachers of schools under the Dignitas project in Mathare Valley – one of the oldest slum areas (informal settlements) in Nairobi. Some of the projects are being implemented in northern Kenya where there are security concerns and travelling there, especially by road, is very challenging. However, these projects have their head offices in Nairobi and it was possible to meet the project managers even though it the researcher was not able to experience the environment in which education is offered.

2.3 Questionnaires

The researcher prepared a questionnaire based on the information that the scoping study aims to find. These questionnaires were used to collect data on organizations that deal with early learning. In some cases, the researcher completed the questionnaire during face-to-face meetings with respondents. Organizations that were not visited by the researcher were sent the questionnaire that they completed and returned by email. Any areas that were not clear were discussed and clarified on phone.

2.4 Limitations

Within the limitations of time and the fact that for the larger part of the time allocated was part of the school holidays, it was not possible to make visits to schools or centers outside the city. The researcher was also not able to meet with all the organizations working in this sub-sector and in a number of cases had to access information via email, telephone discussions and a questionnaire. In-depth information for organizations such as International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and partners, for example was not possible to access.

3. Education in Kenya – A Background

3.1 Political and Socio-economic context

Kenya is one of the East African countries and it borders Somalia to the north-east, Ethiopia to the north, South Sudan to the north-west, Uganda to the west, Tanzania to the south west and the Indian Ocean to the south east. It has an area of 581,309 sq km. The country is divided into eight administrative units (provinces) and an executive president heads the government. The president presides over a cabinet of ministers and is also a Member of Parliament; the current parliament comprises 222 members. Under the new constitution; promulgated in August 2010, the country is divided into 47 counties. The counties are subsequently divided into districts. Government services have been devolved to the counties that will be funded from the central government based on population and poverty level.

Figure 1: Map of Kenya showing the Provincial Administrative boundaries



About 80 percent of the landmass, particularly in the northern and north eastern parts of the country as well as those areas in the southern part of the Rift Valley province is arid and semi

arid. The majority of the population in these areas - about 25 percent of the total population of Kenya - is mostly pastoralists and nomadic pastoralists.

These areas are largely underserved by social amenities and infrastructure and have to deal with issues of insecurity (internal among different ethnic communities and external especially in North Eastern Province which is affected by spill offs from the protracted war in Somalia). The Coast Province too has unique problems. In addition to high poverty levels, low education levels; being a tourist attraction, many children do not attend or drop out of school as they are lured to hotels to provide entertainment and earn what is perceived as easy money.

Kenya has a population estimated to be 43 million in 2012, a significant increase from 38.6 million as per the last census in 2009. Almost 70 percent of the total population lives in rural areas. A large proportion of the population comprises dependants, as it is estimated that about 43 percent of the population are below 15 years; an indication of the large numbers that the education system has to cater for at the primary and secondary school levels.

3.2 Historical background of education system in Kenya

Missionaries, first in the Coast Province and later farther inland, established western education. After the partition of Africa in the 19th Century, British rule was established in Kenya and this led to increased Christian missionaries who set up schools mainly to convert Africans to Christianity. Later, they introduced literacy to enable the new converts to read the Bible. Before the white missionaries arrived on the Kenyan coast, the Arabs (who had a long history of trading with the East African coast) already had established centers where they taught the Koran. These schools still exist and are known as *madrassas*.

At the time Kenya gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1963, education provision was segregated along racial lines; European, Asian, Arabs and African. The best facilities were offered to the Europeans and the worst went to the Africans but schools were integrated after independence.

Prior to the 1970s, early childhood learning was offered in a haphazard manner. The institutions offering nursery school education were not controlled in terms of curriculum or methodology and by and large were of poor quality and had no trained teachers. Most parents, especially in the rural areas, did not take their children to nursery school and participation in pre-school¹ was not a pre-requisite for enrolment in Standard 1². It was not until 1991 that the government made an effort to address the issue of pre-school learning. This was done through the pre-

¹ Pre-school and nursery school are in many cases used interchangeably

² Grades or levels in the primary school are referred to as Standard. Thus Grade 1, which is the first level in primary school is referred to as Standard 1.

school education project that was based at the KIE. This project, with financial support from the Van Leer Foundation, was meant to support early childhood education through training of teachers and also development of a suitable curriculum. Pre-school education continues to be offered not only by the government (through existing institutions attached to primary schools) but also by private providers who may be individuals, CBOs or Faith Based Organizations (FBOs).

3.3 Organization of Education in Kenya

Between 1964 and 1984, education in Kenya comprised of 7-4-2-3 (7 years of primary education, 4 years of lower secondary education 2 years senior secondary and 3 years of university education). There was no mention of pre-school. However, this system was criticized for being too restrictive and not preparing the learners for the job market. By mid-70s, discussions were going on regarding changing the system of education to make it more responsive to the job market and self-reliant. However it was not until January, 1985 that the education system was changed to 8-4-4 (8 years of primary school, 4 years of secondary school and 4 years of university). It is instructive to note that pre-school education is not mentioned. While the 8-4-4 system has remained, the constitution promulgated in 2010 has expanded basic education to include learning from pre-school to end of secondary school.

The quality of education received by children in Kenya is usually dependent on their socio-economic status. The well-to do parents generally take their children to private academies which are better resourced in terms of teachers and learning materials and the class sizes are of a manageable size. On the other hand, the majority of the parents take their children to the public schools which are under resourced and where the classes are very large. There is also a large number of children, especially in the informal settlements (slums) in urban areas, who attend what is referred to as non-formal schools. These schools neither have trained teachers nor do they have an environment conducive for to learning. However, parents living in slum areas do not have much choice; the number of public schools within the slum areas is too few and far spread out to cater adequately to the children. However, whether children attend the private, public or non-formal school, they all follow the same national curriculum, sit the same national examinations at the end of eight years of primary school and compete for the same places in secondary school. Many of the innovations in early learning are taking place in the underserved areas of the society, which are mainly served by NGOs, FBOs and CBOs, with external funding.

3.4 Policy and Legal framework on early learning

Although most services have been devolved to the county governments according to the new constitution, all matters regarding education, including summative assessments and teachers' employment, will be the responsibility of the central government. The county governments

have been allocated the responsibility of managing pre-school education or Early Childhood Development – two years at this level are now obligatory and part of basic education. The counties are also responsible for youth polytechnics and adult education.

The MoE has had the responsibility over all education, with regard to policy and development of and it has therefore provided policy guidelines on the management of education in the country. The curriculum and learning materials are developed by the KIE while assessment of learning achievement (currently this has only been done at Std 3) is carried out by the National Assessment and Monitoring Learning Achievement (NASMLA) Centre at the KNEC.

The MoE has developed service standards guidelines³ which details the policy guidelines for pre-school institutions. According to this guideline, the children in early learning institutions should be grouped as follows:

Age (years)	½ -2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Group	Play group	Baby class	Pre-primary I	Pre-primary II	Std 1	Std 2	Std 3

This document also details the requirements for Children with Special Needs (CSN). From discussion with providers, most children start pre-school at age 3 and it is more of an exception than the rule to find children younger than 3 year olds in school.

Though policies exist on ECD, it would appear that there have not always been serious efforts to enforce the policies thus leaving players to, at times, operate in disregard to the existing policy. This became clear in my discussion regarding nursery school education. The provision of education at this level seems fragmented with different providers operating independent of the MoE. For instance, KIE develops the syllabus for the training of nursery school teachers. However, some private trainers of nursery school teachers use their own syllabus and do not want such syllabuses subjected to vetting by KIE or KNEC. Another area where the policy is not enforced is in the language of instruction in lower primary. Whereas the policy is that teachers should use vernacular or the language of the catchment area, this is not always enforced, partly because some teachers might not be conversant in the vernacular.

3.5 Current Status of Early Learning in Kenya

According to contemporary international education discourse, early childhood development covers 3 to 8 years of childhood. Early learning then covers pre-school to class three or Standard 3 as referred to in Kenya. Children start nursery school at the age of 3 years, which

³ Early Childhood Development Service Standard Guidelines, 2006 Ministry of Education – see www.edu.go.ke

lasts 3 years consisting of pre-school which covers 2 years of nursery school and one year of pre-primary education. Children then enroll in Std 1 at the age of 6 years. As stated above, the policy is that the language of instruction in lower learning is the local language/Mother tongue or the language of the catchment area. This is because children would find it easier to learn to read in their vernacular rather than having to learn the reading skill as well as a new language. This would mean that the teachers at this level should be from the local language group. There are however cases when teachers, even when they are from the same catchment area as the learners are not conversant with the written form for the vernacular. This presents challenges and that is why one of the organizations referred to in Appendix 1 is working on transitional literacy to enable such teachers to teach lower grades in vernacular.

As indicated above, the constitution now recognizes basic education as a basic human right. Further, the new Education Act recognizes nursery education which in the past did not feature in the Education Act. It is hoped that this step will enable the government to allocate more funds to nursery school education. It will also be possible to streamline both the teaching and the teacher qualification at this level.

It was interesting to note that most of the interventions on early learning appear to be by private organizations which are reacting to empirical evidence regarding poor learning achievements in lower grades. They have all noted that over the years, a lot of material assistance has been put into developing the infrastructure of the schools in the country. However, it does not look as if a great deal has been achieved in terms of quality with evidence showing that learning achievement has remained relatively low. It is not clear what intervention measures the government has put in place as a result of the Uwezo⁴ findings. The only involvement I could find was where staff of MoE sits in implementation teams of projects that are addressing quality of learning in early grades.

⁴ Uwezo is an initiative of Twaweza, which is an organisation working in East Africa. Uwezo has since 2009 been carrying out assessments in reading and numeracy at grade 2 of primary education. The household based survey gives the test to children and youth, in and out of school.

4. Recent Developments in Education

In 2007, the government published Vision 2030⁵ which is a blue print for a long term national strategy for 2008 – 2030. Under education and training, the vision aims to provide globally competitive quality education. The sections below show the recent developments in the provision of ECD and primary education.

4.1 Early Childhood Development (ECD)

A specific strategy in Vision 2030 that is relevant to this study is “integrating early childhood into primary education” (Vision 2030 page 16). This has been a legal obligation by the new Constitution, but its implementation is yet to be clearly stipulated in policy. Some of the sticky issues which need to be resolved by the central and county governments include the employment and payment of teachers at this level of education. Currently these teachers are not employees of the TSC, which is now a constitutional body mandated to be responsible for employment and deployment of teachers in public schools. Further, according to policy, primary education is free while children in pre-school centers pay fees.

While the central MoE provides the policy guidelines on ECD, each district has an office that takes care of issues relating to ECD known as the District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE). At the national level, there is the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) that is housed at the KIE, which prepares the curriculum for both the learners and for the training of the teachers. Though most public schools have ECD centers attached to them, private individuals, CBOs and Faith-Based Organizations run many of the ECD centers in Kenya and some of them do not follow the KIE curriculum for ECD.

4.2 Primary Education

Since 2003, primary education has been free but it has not been compulsory. The MoE has recently published a new Education Bill in line with the constitution that makes primary education compulsory with penalties for parents who do not take their children to school.

The language policy is that learners are instructed in their vernacular or language of the catchment area during the first 3 years of primary school (lower primary). English then becomes

⁵ Kenya Vision 2030, the popular version, Government of Kenya 2007. Any reference to Vision 2030 document refers to this version.

the language of instruction throughout the education system. While Kiswahili is the national language and English is the official language, there are over 40 distinct ethnic languages. This poses a challenge to teachers, partly because teaching/learning materials in these languages are not available and also those teachers who are posted to teach in areas that are not in their ethnic language block, experience difficulties teaching the lower grades. Some of the teachers who have grown up in urban areas speak only Kiswahili and English and they would not be able to teach in lower primary classes in rural areas where Kiswahili is not spoken. The situation is made more complex by the fact that all the three languages are supposed to be taught from the first grade, in addition to subjects such as Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences. English is mainly used in the teaching of all other subjects except the languages, even for the many children whose first interaction with English is at school.

5. Challenges in primary education

5.1 Infrastructure and staffing levels

The introduction of free primary education (the third presidential declaration since independence) meant a big surge in enrolment in the existing primary schools. From 5.9 million in 2002, enrolments rose to 7 million in 2003, a 17 percent increase. The free education has had a tremendous impact on access and this has led to overcrowding in public schools, as well as high pupil teacher ratio. Due to the fact that the announcement of free primary education was made at the beginning of the academic year, and in the middle of the fiscal year, the increase in enrolment was not matched with increased infrastructure, furniture, books or additional teachers. Consequently there was initially a low book pupil ratio meaning that most pupils had to share books with four or more other children, making it difficult for them to do homework since they could not take a book home. Although the government plan, with support from development partners, was to ensure that each learner has a book, high enrolment levels posed a big challenge for the government to provide them, within a short time, to all the children. The government has also not been able to employ sufficient number of teachers and in some cases parents (when they have the means) employ a teacher to bridge the gap. This has resulted in a high pupil/teacher ratio.

Information from FGDs show that the teachers with the least qualifications and experience are allocated lower primary classes, as these classes are deemed to be 'easier' than the final classes which are being prepared for summative evaluation. There are times when ECD teachers (who are not trained in primary methods) are pulled from their classes to go and teach in lower primary school classes, again showing that schools do not always emphasize early learning.

Further, whenever there is teacher shortage or absence, priority is given to Standard 8 classes who are being prepared for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations while pupils in Standard 1-3 are left to 'work on their own'. Since most children at this level cannot read, very little individual learning would be taking place when these children are left without a teacher. This situation is not helped by the fact that children have to learn in three languages from the beginning of primary education, with teachers who have neither the skills in multi-lingual education nor the resources required to work with, within the challenges that this situation presents.

5.2 Quality

Some of the key issues that have been of great concern, even with the expansion of enrolment in primary education--especially with free primary education--include the fact that it is estimated that over a million children are still outside the school system. Completion and transition rates, although greatly improved, indicate that there is still a high number of children dropping out of school and over 30% who do not proceed to the secondary education level.

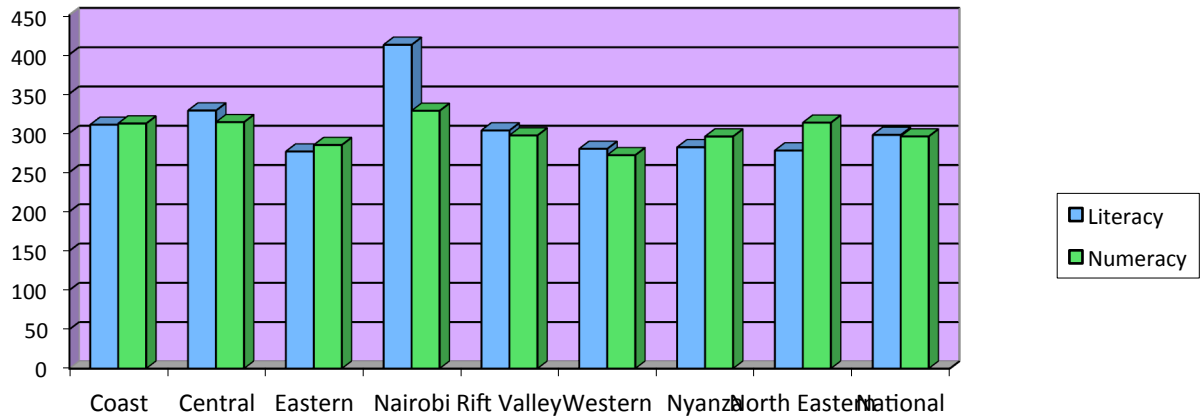
According to the Uwezo report of 2011, four out of a hundred children were out of school. The low completion rates are also an indicator of children repeating grades.

While factors such as poverty have been quoted as the main cause of wastage at this level of education, there have been serious concerns as to whether many children drop out due to frustrations of learning not taking place in the classrooms. These concerns have led to various studies being conducted to find out what learning was taking place at a different level from the one at which summative evaluation was carried out. One of these studies was SACMEQ1 which aimed at finding out the reading level of pupils in standard 6. This study found out that only about 25% of pupils could read at the required competence. Later, SACMEQ 2 in 2000 and SACMEQ 3 in 2007 were carried out. These were expanded to include not only reading but also Mathematics. These studies also found out that learning was not taking place at the expected level.

Since these studies involved learners at their 6th year of school, it was felt necessary to assess lower grades where the foundation was laid to find out what was going on at lower levels of schooling. The hypothesis was that the problems that were found at Std 6 could be traced to lower levels. To address this concern, the government through Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 titled *A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research*, approved the establishment of the National Assessment for Monitoring Learner Achievement (NASMLA) whose mandate was to gather empirical data on educational learning achievements at various levels and subject skills nationally. It is from this background that the KNEC did a Monitoring of Learner Achievement for Standard 3 in literacy and numeracy in 2010. The results of the study showed that the majority of pupils in this class demonstrated emergent reading ability that is congruent with Standard 2 level.

Performance in numeracy was not any better, with the majority of pupils in public rural schools attaining literacy at levels 1 and 2. These are the schools that by and large are overcrowded leading to a high pupil teacher ratio. They have also a high pupil book ratio, which would imply that the learners are not able to read on their own after school since they would not have a book of their own. In all but one province, achievement was better for girls in literacy while boys had a slight edge over girls in numeracy. The results are given in details in the chart below.

Figure 2: Analysis of achievement in Literacy and numeracy by province



Performance detail

Coast	Central	Eastern	Nairobi	Rift Valley	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	National
310.54	328.62	276.45	412.33	303.29	279.93	281.87	277.76	297.58
312.1	313.81	284.72	328.28	296.92	271.78	295.54	313.15	295.61

Source: The Kenya National Examinations Council 2010

The chart shows that schools in Nairobi and Central Provinces had the highest achievement in literacy and numeracy. The lowest achievement in literacy was seen in North Eastern and Eastern provinces while the lowest achievement in numeracy was in Western and Eastern provinces. Further analysis showed that 46 percent and 48 percent of the pupils in Std 3 demonstrated reading and numeracy ability respectively, which is congruent with Std 2 level.

6. Current initiatives

The most recent initiative on measuring education achievement has been by Uwezo, which involves three countries in East Africa; Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Uwezo has carried out annual national learning assessment since 2010. In summary Uwezo studies have continued to show that children at class 3 do not have the literacy and numeracy that is necessary for them to achieve any meaningful learning. Even the latest study carried out in 2011, whose results were released in August 2012, show that only one third of grade 3 pupils in Kenya can pass a grade 2 level test. Results also show that the children from socio-economically disadvantaged households have the worst performance. Clearly, very little meaningful learning seems to be taking place at these levels, especially in public primary schools.

These results present issues that are of great concern to educators because many learners drop out of school before completing 3 years of primary. though not much study has been done on why children drop out of school at lower primary education. It is however safe to assume that even those who had achieved emergent reading ability would most likely relapse into illiteracy once they were out of school. Information about achievement at this level would enable education managers to put in place necessary interventions. Current interventions in early learning must be seen in the light of the situation described above.

It is instructive to note that the studies done by Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), KNEC and Uwezo show that some schools perform relatively well in spite of facing challenges and constraints as other schools that do not perform as well. Perhaps these schools or communities do have a solution that can be shared with other schools. Communities and organizations are now coming up with innovative ideas on how to improve learning. Further, there is a great deal of public debate on the quality of education that the children are receiving. While free primary education has ensured that more than 95% of the children are enrolled in school, there is public debate on how to match the high access to education with quality learning. Parents are no longer satisfied with only free education; they want an assurance that their children are actually learning something.

While the assessment results have been acknowledged and have stimulated dialogue on the quality of education, the solutions and innovations are yet to be seen at a system level. Neither have the training institutions and universities started experiments that are known, in the schools of education, on improving early learning. Only organizations working in education who have started small components within their education projects have addressed issues of early

learning, especially literacy and numeracy. The largest entry into this work has been through RTI and the PRIMR project; a response to the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) undertaken by the same organisations within the region. This attracted attention at the MoE and development partners and there is likelihood of up-scaling the current initiative to ensure wider coverage, with an ambition of a nationwide program.

The next part of this report gives a summary of organizations that are working innovatively in the area of improving learning in lower grades. It is instructive to note that they all see a gap in teachers' pedagogical skills, even in cases where teachers have already received pre-service teacher training offered by the MoE.⁶ These organizations are addressing these gaps in various ways. Organizations that are working to improve achievement in early learning in Kenya are given in Appendix 1

⁶ All teachers in public schools have received pre-service training but few of those in non-formal schools have had any training.

Appendix 1: Organizations working in early learning in Kenya

i. Dignitas

This is an organization that is working in Mathare valley, a slum area that is located to the north of Nairobi. It is a disadvantaged area and also underserved by formal education facilities. Mathare Valley has a population of about 500,000 and has only three government/public primary schools which do not have the capacity to absorb all children going to school.

There are 85 non-formal schools in Mathare and Dignitas works with only 20 of these schools. These schools charge US\$5 - US\$10 per month but many parents and guardians are not able to pay. Due to limited capacity in public schools, parents opt to pay to take their children to these non-formal schools with deplorable physical structures, even when they live near the free public schools.

Both formal and non-formal schools use the same curriculum developed by the Kenya Institute of Education and children from these schools compete for the same places in secondary schools.

Dignitas project involves providing the learners with books to read for leisure because it is through reading on their own that the children can expand their knowledge even when there is no teacher around.

Since these children come from homes where there are no reading materials, Dignitas provides books in boxes. A person from the community will be recruited and trained to manage the books and also help children to read. Schools will be clustered based on proximity and a public area like a social hall, a religious meeting place or a school will be used as the centre where children can come to borrow books and also to read with the help of the recruited personnel. It is envisaged that parents will help the children with their reading. Further as the parents see children coming home with books, they will be interested to find out the progress of their children in school and will be encouraged to participate more.

In this project, Dignitas is working in partnership with Pratham India, which will offer technical support in the roll out of the project. Other partners in this project are shown in the database.

ii. Opportunity Schools

This is a project that is being rolled out by Women Education Researchers of Kenya (WERK) and it is based in two pastoralist districts in the Kajiado County located in the southern part of the Rift Valley Province. These are Kajiado Central and Loitoktok districts. The performance in these districts is below the national average, with only 15 percent of the children in Loitoktok having acquired reading competencies at the required level. School absenteeism is also high for both teachers and pupils. There is also low transition rates from primary to secondary school. The Opportunity Schools (OS) project involves 20 villages or school communities, 10 from each of the two districts. All of these schools are located in rural areas of these districts. In the implementation, OS are using existing community-based organizations, namely Dupoto-e-Maa in Kajiado Central and Illramatak le-Mpusel in Loitoktok.

The project aims to improve learning through four key areas, namely:

- i) Building capacity of teachers through training and certification ;
- ii) Energizing the communities to participate in the learning of their children, through the establishment of reading spaces within the community where children can spend about two hours every Saturday reading for leisure ;
- iii) Building capacity of lower primary teachers through coaching and peer support ; and
- iv) Tapping local resources in the production of reading materials in the local language

iii. PRIMR (Primary Math and Reading)

This project is taking place mainly in urban areas in Kenya; namely Nairobi, Nakuru and Thika and it is working with both formal/public and non-formal schools. The non-formal schools are located mainly in the informal settlements (slums). This project is both an intervention to improve learning as well as a research study to provide empirical evidence to the Ministry of Education on the most cost effective intervention that can be up-scaled nationally to improve learning.

A core component of PRIMR is reforming teaching methods. Before the start of this project PRIMR organized a two-week training session in January 2012 to equip teachers with a methodology that would enable them to teach the new lesson plans that PRIMR has developed and disseminated to teachers. These lesson plans are in line with the government curriculum but only the teaching methods are different from what the teachers learnt in their pre-service training. The main difference between the PRIMR methodology and the traditional

methodology is that PRIMR teaches all the skills in either literacy or numeracy in the same lesson using appropriate activities. To ensure that teachers are always up to the task, there are monthly training sessions, as well as cluster-based meetings with coaches in the non-formal schools and the Teachers Advisory Centre (TAC) tutors for the public schools. PRIMR has also developed books for pupils and teachers to use though pupils are not allowed to take these books home for fear that they might lose them. The coaches and the TAC tutor set up fortnightly meetings to discuss with the teachers on any areas of difficulty and help is given accordingly.

PRIMR has also introduced ICT into the classroom (on a trial basis) using video cameras to bolster the coaches and TAC tutors. It will also use mobile phone technology – SMS - to facilitate faster communication between coaches and teachers. PRIMR is partnering with the Ministry of Education, thus ensuring wide dissemination.

iv. EMACK: (Education for Marginalized Children of Kenya)

This project started in November, 2006 and will run until December, 2014 and it is implemented by Aga Khan Foundation. EMACK is being implemented in Standards 1-3 in 767 schools in Nairobi, Coast and North Eastern Provinces. These locations have been historically marginalized either through poverty or cultural practices and are underserved by the education system. The specific schools participating in the project were selected by the local communities which also provide learning resource centers and are involved in the preparation of three-year development plans for the schools. The project thus strengthens the school and community capacities to jointly plan and prioritize learning. All facilitators are sourced from the MoE for sustainability and cost effectiveness.

EMACK project has been training teachers in language, math and science as well as Reading to Learn (RtL). The RtL approach is an innovative approach to teach reading to early grades which can also be applied in upper grades. RtL focuses on teaching reading from the known to the unknown, a method that has been developed and tried in Australia. EMACK also encourages dialogue between local leaders and education policy makers to ensure that successful practices are scaled up.

v. EAQEL (East Africa Quality in Early Learning)

This is another initiative of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) that is being implemented for Std 1-3 learners in Kwale and Ijara/Hulugho districts of Coast and North Easter Province respectively. These areas have had poor learning achievement over the years and they are also classified as some of the poorest districts in the country. These districts were selected for this project due to very low literacy levels and learning outcomes.

AKF is working with 64 schools and this project has increased access to reading materials for children and communities by supplying English and Swahili books and book cabinets or boxes that serve as mini libraries in these schools. This project uses language to teach other subjects and this is quite challenging since the curriculum is arranged in subjects. Teachers are also encouraged to use locally available materials to produce books. Regular reading and writing competitions are held.

The AKF is also implementing the Reading for Children component of the project to increase parents' involvement in their children's learning. The mini libraries have been established in the communities and families can borrow books. The parents and older siblings undertake to read aloud to the younger children at least once a day. This project helps those parents who are illiterate to contribute to their children's learning through story-telling, using pictures and other everyday activities.

vi. Tusome (By Bible Translation and Literacy)

Tusome means 'let us read' in Kiswahili. The main objective of this project is to address the low literacy levels in lower primary school in 36 the Tana River and Kwale counties of the Coast Province. The communities in these two counties are the Pokomo (in Tana River) and the Digo and Duruma (in Kwale). These communities have a relatively small population and have low literacy levels. These areas perform poorly in learning assessments. Completion rates are also very low, especially for girls, partly due to high levels and cultural practices, for instance early marriages.

BTL is developing reading materials in the mother tongue to ensure that children are able to transit from the home environment to the school environment in a language that they understand. These books are prepared with the help of the local community and before the final print and rollout to all schools, they are taken to KIE for approval. BTL is also establishing children's reading clubs and involving parents in the reading clubs. It is expected that parents will start reading for their children at home since they are already involved in the project.

BTL is also working in conjunction with primary schools as it trains lower primary teachers in transitional literacy that helps these teachers to teach reading in vernacular.

vii. *Literacy Boost (by World Vision)*

This project is taking place in Mutomo and Kalawa districts of Kitui and Makueni counties respectively, counties that are located in lower Eastern Province. The climate in these districts is arid and semi-arid. The project starts in September 2012 and will go on until 2013. World Vision is teaming up with Save the Children, with the latter working in the area of capacity building and material development, while the former will be involved in the operational aspect of the project.

The percentage of schools selected for the project will be done using a mapped sample and the classes of interest are Standards 1-3. Literacy Boost project has been informed by results from various studies including the Uwezo, NASMLA, study that shows that very little learning has been taking place, in spite of material assistance that has been going to the schools. Literacy Boost project is a response to this. In the past, World Vision has offered infrastructural development support or financial support. In this project, the focus is to address gaps in quality.

Reading will be taught in the mother tongue with materials that will be developed with the assistance of Save the Children. The community will also be involved in producing materials on subjects of interest to the community. As the children see the parents reading, it is expected that this will interest them to read for pleasure and information. Save the Children will also develop teacher capacity through school-based training. In the implementation of the project, MoE staff at the district level will be involved, making it easy to disseminate information.

viii. *Pastoralist Education Project (by International Institute of Rural Resources)*

IIRR has been in Kenya since 1995 and works in areas that have the most limited access to education as well as weak delivery, gender inequality, and poor infrastructure. These areas are Marsabit, a county at the northern edge of Eastern Province that borders Ethiopia, Samburu in the northern part of the Rift Valley. In implementing PEP, IRR builds capacity of local organizations including the PTA to implement non-formal education that is relevant to pastoralist communities and that can be scaled up. The curriculum is flexible to suit the mobility lifestyles of the communities and also allows children to participate in daily family chores.