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Capacity

Developing Sustainable Assessment Systems in Africa: Kenya

Report prepared by:

Jack Thunde (AFLEARN)

Linda Zuze (AFLEARN)

Epha Ngota (Kenya National Examination Council)

ROBUST GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE SUPPORTS AN EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM



ASSESSMENT TEAM

- The **National Assessment Centre**, under the **Kenya National Examinations Council**, is mandated by the **Ministry of Education** to **monitor learning achievements** across all education tiers including foundational levels.
- The core team comprises **five dedicated coordinating officers**, each with specific roles: **overall coordination, international learning assessments, grade three and below assessments, and secondary level assessments**.
- To **build internal capacity**, coordinating officers also take on different roles across studies, namely **logistics, sampling and data management**.



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

- The **technical team** includes members appointed by heads of relevant institutions, providing **technical expertise**.
- Members include **teachers, test developers, educational researchers, ICT officers, diversity/equity leaders** and **statisticians**.
- Responsibilities include developing **guidelines for implementation** of learning assessments, providing **expertise** during activities, and **monitoring National Assessment Centre activities**.



STEERING COMMITTEE

- The **steering committee** includes representation from multiple departments within the **Ministry of Education** as well as other relevant stakeholders.
- Members include executive officers from the **Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development**, the **Teachers Service Commission**, the **National Treasury**, and directors from the **Ministry of Education** (e.g special needs education, infrastructure, quality assurance).
- Responsibilities include **advising the National Assessment Centre** on **policy issues**, **approving implementation** of work plans, **monitoring implementation** and **finances**.



COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK GUIDES EVALUATION ACROSS EDUCATION LEVELS

Kenya's assessment frameworks are designed to balance national education goals with global reporting requirements, ensuring alignment with both local priorities and international standards.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS	REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS	INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS ¹
• NASMLA (<i>National Assessment System for Monitoring Learner Achievements</i>) - Conducted every 3 years; assesses English and Mathematics in Grade 3. • School Readiness Survey - Conducted every year; assesses every Pre-Primary 2 learners' readiness for Grade 1 in pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills. • KEYA/MLP (<i>Kenya Early Years Assessment/Monitoring of Learners' Progress</i>) - Conducted every year; assesses English, Mathematics and an integrated learning area (a combination of environmental studies and creative studies through a themed project) in Grade 3.	• SEACMEQ (<i>Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality</i>) - Conducted every 4 to 5 years; assesses English and Mathematics in Grade 6.	• AMPL-ab (<i>Assessment Minimum Proficiency Levels</i>) - Participated in 2023; combined test items from Grade 3 to Grade 6 to assess minimum proficiency levels for SGD reporting.

¹ Other international assessments: **PISA** (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) - Conducted every 3 years; assesses **English** and **Mathematics** in **Grade 10**.



For me, I think donors should have an open mind and consult really deeply with the technical teams before presenting their concept notes so that they can address the need that is going to be working towards having better foundational learning assessments.

- Donor Coordination and Aligning with National Needs

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO ENHANCE ASSESSMENT EFFECTIVENESS

The National Assessment Centre faces funding constraints and alignment challenges but has leveraged partnerships, capacity building, and strategic integration to address these issues effectively.



CHALLENGES

- **Limited budget allocation** within the Ministry of Education, creating **reliance on donor funding**.
- **Unclear cost structures** for assessment analysis and implementation due to **externalisation of services**.
- **Donor-driven agendas** sometimes misaligned with **national education priorities**.
- **Limited integration** of inclusive **assessment practices** for children with disabilities.



POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- **Embedding assessments** into the Ministry of Education's **strategic plans** to secure funding.
- **Leveraging partnerships** with **universities, civil society, and technical partners** for capacity building.
- Ensuring **technical teams** are involved in **test development, sampling, and data analysis**.

Source	Description	Frequency	Duration	Participation
World Bank	Training on data analysis (Stata) and report writing	Once off	1 week	NAC Team
UIS (UNESCO Institute for Statistics)	Workshops on test development, sampling, data management and analysis.	Per Assessment (AMPL-ab & AMPL-a)	1 day per aspect	NAC Team
SEACMEQ	Training on policy brief development.	Once off	3 days	3 people from NAC Team
PISA	Training on data management and sampling.	Once off	1 day per aspect	NAC Team/ PISA Team

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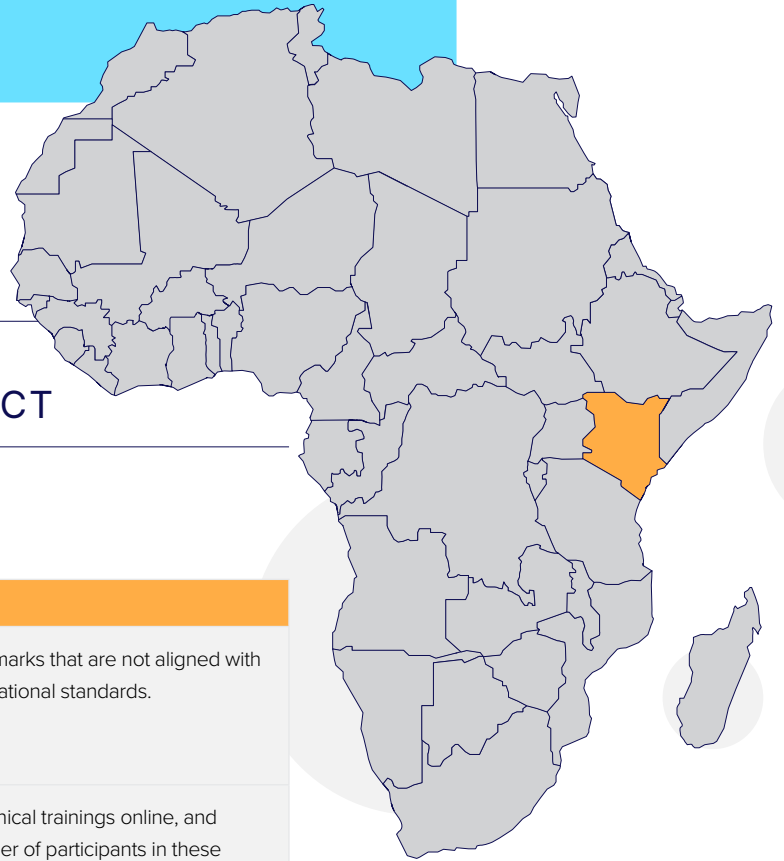
If they intend to have a sustainable way of doing national assessments or international assessments, let them embrace a systems approach, empower the people that really do the work... It will be easier to make provisions in the strategic plans and eventually into the budget.

- Capacity Building and Sustainable Practices

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING ASSESSMENT IMPACT

Recommendations for International Organizations:

Start Doing	Stop Doing
Prioritize co-creation of assessment processes with national teams, including test development, adaptation, and psychometric analysis, to build sustainable local capacity.	Imposing benchmarks that are not aligned with national or international standards.
Increase inclusivity in assessments by adapting tools and methodologies to effectively assess children with disabilities.	Conducting technical trainings online, and limiting the number of participants in these online sessions.
Incorporate aspects of climate change and children's wellness into assessments to address relevant contextual factors impacting learning in Africa.	Excluding technical personnel from the planning process to ensure that assessments effectively address national needs.



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Don't make reports only for conferences and desks and wardrobes that we have for many books and reports, but talk about [it] in different form, in different aspects. Break it down to the parent level to the learner level too, so that everyone sees what it is that they can do to improve.