

# ELIMU BORA WORKING GROUP

## Framework for Minimum Standards and Principles of Education

Suitable for Kenya in the 21st Century

JUN 2025



# MEDIA BRIEF

# BACKGROUND



## THE REFORMING JOURNEY

Education is the single most important tool that can transform a country.

From colonial Kenya to independent Kenya, and now in the 21st century, sweeping reforms in the education system have been made all in the name of what the country considers to be appropriate within its culture through presidential working commissions.

From the knowledge based curriculum of 7-4-2-3 through the erstwhile 8-4-4 and now to the Competency Based Curriculum which is the most recent reform initiative, most of the baseline pre-existing challenges within the system have been retained. CBC lacks a coherent and predictable approach in its development, making it reactionary with minimal research and other resources including adequate financial back up.



Kenya's quest for an education system that is fit, sustainable, and guarantees productive citizenship in Kenya has been marred with perennial challenges.

We note that underfunding, inequality, lack of a proper philosophical foundation and the government's slow-down on direct investments in public schools' infrastructure are areas that remain unaddressed in the reforms



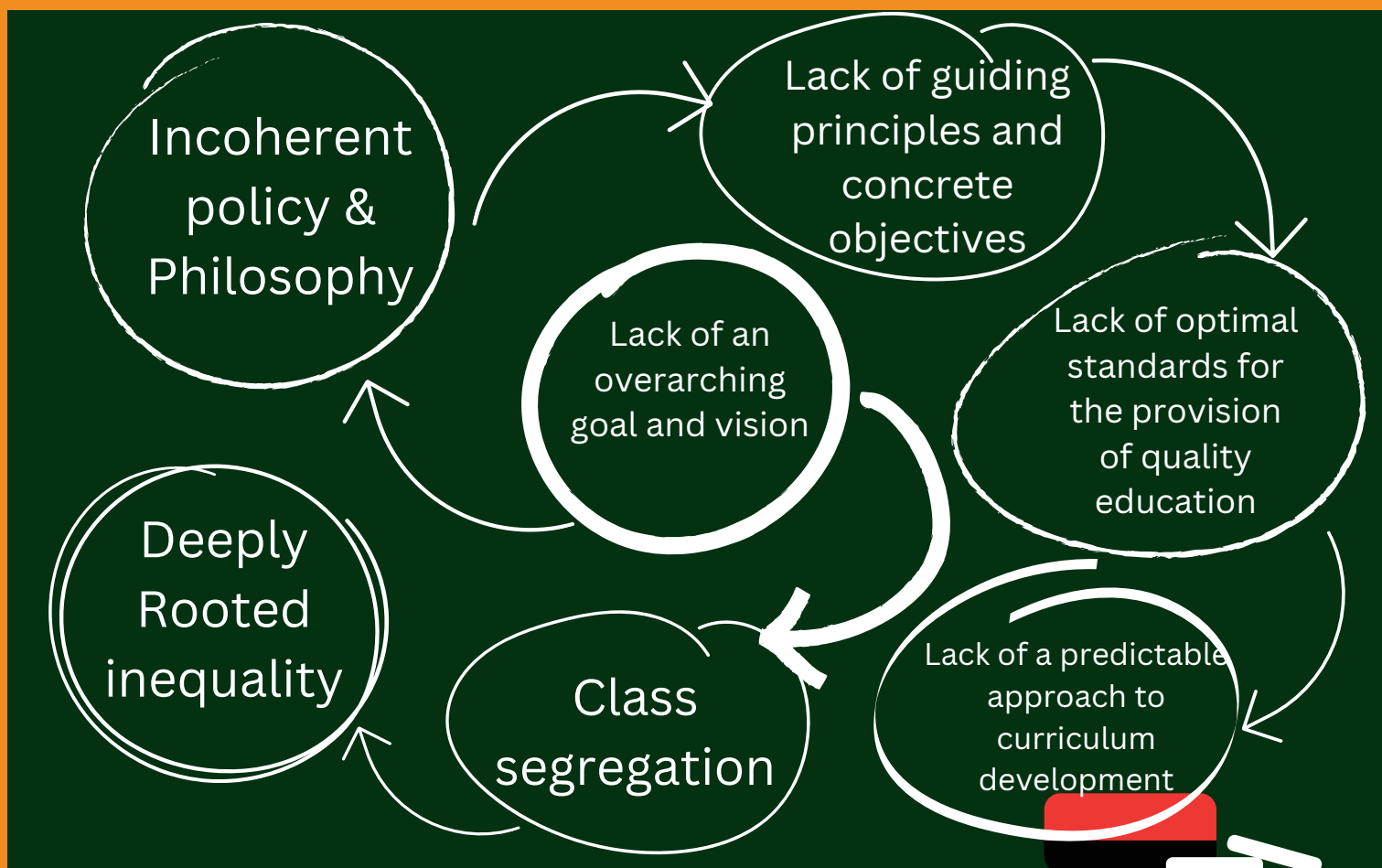
## THROUGH OUR LENSES

At a time when rigorous education sector changes are taking place in the country, we, members of the CSO organizations under the Elimu Bora Working Group are keen on providing standards to guide proper development to avoid another botched up initiative. These principles and minimum standards shall act as the guide upon which Kenyans will interrogate any new Education reform initiative including the work of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms 2022.



## KENYA'S EDUCATION CONTEXT

EBWG identifies the following challenges across the long unending trail of education reforms in Kenya:



Kenya's education is one of the most unequal, wasteful, exploitative and capitalistic in nature across Africa.

Inequality in access to education has its roots in the colonial and post-colonial education policies which favored the development of the so-called, 'High Potential Areas' against agriculturally marginal and urban poor communities.



# OUR SCOPE

ELIMU BORA SIO BORA ELIMU

## PHILOSOPHICAL & HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATIONS FOR AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

For a long time, Kenya's education reform recommendations have misconstrued the review of curricula to imply educational policy review. The search for a comprehensive, holistic, and empowering education policy must begin with the foundational question...

### Education for what?

Does it encapsulate an empowering and inspirational national philosophy?

Does it honour and adequately remunerate teachers?

Does it empower the learner to exploit his/her full potential?

Does it meet national development ambitions?

Does it place the learner and community at the centre of processes?

Does it meet ideals and values entrenched in our constitution?

Is it accessible without any discrimination?


Does it engender a sense of responsible and productive citizenship?

The preamble of the constitution expresses the commitment of the Kenyan people to nurture and protect the well-being of an individual, family, communities and the nation.

Putting in the context of education, attending school, acquiring knowledge, skills and human-utu values, and attaining relevant qualifications are at the core of reliable ways of nurturing an individual, developing and strengthening families, growing strong and confident communities well integrated within a sovereign and self-respecting nation.


# BOTTLE NECKS

## The Big Miss!



Despite the number of presidential working party, task force and commission reports on Education reforms in Kenya, none has attempted to provide a clear philosophy of education, a comprehensive national education policy, and education financing policies.

### PHILOSOPHICAL & HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION



EBWG notes that none of the reform-tasked commissions ever delved into the basic philosophy of Education based on Kenyan culture.

Kenya's education system is not founded on an empowering national philosophy. The learner and community; their well-being in the 21st century are not at the center of the education process.



### A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

The lack of intentionality to develop a comprehensive education policy has deterred the achievement of equality, inclusion, equity, and social integration.

A national education policy eradicates educational inequalities among historically disadvantaged groups such as the youth, the disabled, adults, women, the unemployed and rural communities.

### NATIONAL EDUCATION FINANCING POLICY

Also, no solution has so far been provided to the crisis of education underfunding and its ugly consequences of severe deterioration in quality especially in public schools.

Since the 90's the government virtually stopped investing directly, in the building of new primary and public schools in the country. This has left the development of Education institutions to the parents and some private sector actors.



# SETTING STANDARDS

## Recommendations

Education is a fundamental right as well as a public good. It should therefore be embraced in its wholeness as the foundation of our nationhood. Every government has the cardinal responsibility to provide to its citizens with an inclusive and quality education that shall endow them with equitable, lifelong learning for **responsible and productive citizenship**.

**EBWG recommends the following guiding principles for holistic education in Kenya.**

### Education is a fundamental right

Every child has a right to free and compulsory basic Education. Implementing this constitutional imperative in full is mandatory

### Education shall be holistic and value-based

It shall be a principle instrument for inculcating nationhood and responsible citizenship in the learner

### Education shall be inclusive, equitable, available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all

It shall not discriminate people based on ability, gender, age, culture, or socio-economic background

### Education shall empower the learner to exploit his/her full potential

It shall enable the learner to self-advance and be a resource to the society

### Education shall empower the learner with skills for the 21st century

The learner shall be empowered to nurture and produce beneficial ideas, knowledge and goods for societal prosperity

### Education shall nurture creativity, innovativeness & Critical thinking among learners

It shall nurture openness, self-expression, creativity and innovativeness



### Education shall be founded on our rich African heritage

It shall be founded on Kenya's cultural heritage and history; the history of people's struggles for the ultimate wellbeing of individuals, community and nation.

### Education shall be lifelong and continuing

Kenyans must be able to access meaningful and progressive education.

### Education shall be Liberative

It shall promote the exercise of freedom and independence of thought, expression and civic action

### Education shall dignify the teacher and the learner

It shall respect the professional dignity and intellectual development, remuneration, welfare and full support



# SETTING STANDARDS

## Recommendations

Leveraging the education funding in Kenya shall be supported through these interventions:

- **Prioritize Education for the next 20 years at a minimum**

The state shall take all measures including progressive enhancement of resource allocation and utilization thereof to ensure that education is accorded top priority

- **Implement free and compulsory basic education**

This shall include a minimum of 12 yrs uninterrupted continuous learning with learner-costed annual transfers which are done promptly.

A progressive realization of free Higher Education



- **Establish a National Education Fund**

Establish an Education Fund as a direct charge on tax revenue to support school infrastructure, equipment and other learning resources

- **Establish a Framework of Transparency and Accountability**

Institutionalize a framework that promotes a more sustainable resource mobilization, utilization and accountability in order to achieve the goals of Education as planned.

2

**EDUCATION  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

Every learner should be protected against discrimination in school infrastructure development within or by an education department, education or institution on any grounds whatsoever.

3

**ASSESSMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
OUTCOMES**

Continuous assessment should be for corrective and reinforcement of learning but not a basis of transition from one grade to the next.

4

**COMMUNITIES AND  
HOMES AS SUPPORT  
SYSTEMS**

Parental support by education extension officers to create purposeful and supportive environment for shared learning and optimal output for the students.

5

**EDUCATION AND  
SCHOOL  
MANAGEMENT**

Quality and standards should be set in school management to integrate accountability and democratic decision making within institutions of basic and Higher Learning.

6

**EDUCATION AND  
LIVELIHOODS**

Education be appropriately attuned to enable communities to exploit and benefit from natural resource endowments within their surrounding for sustainable livelihoods.

7

**SCHOOL  
FEEDING**

School feeding programs be implemented and strengthened to improve human capital and enable greater access to education, increase school retention rates, enhance children's health and nutrition and strengthen local and rural economies.

AND

# THE ACTION BEGINS

EBWG pins out the following for action towards setting minimum standards and principles of Education in Kenya

## 1 A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

The development of a National Education Policy shall be deliberate.

- It will ensure the eradication of educational inequalities among historically disadvantaged groups such as:
  - Youth
  - People with disabilities (PWDs)
  - Women
  - Unemployed
  - Rural communities



## 2 NATIONAL EDUCATION FUND

The government is to establish an education fund which shall be:-

- A direct charge on tax revenue
- At least 5% of annual tax revenue
- Allocated not less than 20% share of the annual national budget
- At least 6% of the GDP.



## 3 EDUCATION REFORMS TO BE BASED ON A NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY & HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION.

The government shall take full responsibility to make education:-

- As part of fulfilling Article 53(b) to nurture the well-being of the individual, family community, and nation through education.
- Reforms ensure it is holistic and value-based to instill a sense of nationhood and responsible citizenship in the Kenyan learner.
- Education be accessible, relevant, and without infrastructural and social discrimination, while meeting the needs and standards of the 21st century.





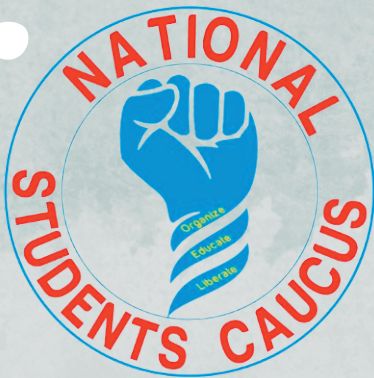


Elimu Bora Working Group is a network of Civil Society Organizations working to promote the right to Education in Kenya through awareness creation, research, advocacy and partnership building.

Elimu Bora - and not bora elimu – recognizes and is committed to the nurturing of an Education system that guarantees access by all to quality, inclusive and lifelong learning for responsible and productive citizenship.

Membership comprises the **Kenya Human Rights Commission, Elimu Tuitakayo, Universities Academic Staff Union, Kenya National Interface Team, Constitution and Reform Education Consortium, National Students Caucus, Youth Agenda, and the Social Justice Centre.**

# Members:



**Social Justice Center**  
**Working Group**

Educate... Organize... Liberate ...!!





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