



## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE PRACTICES IN BASIC EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR REALIZING KENYA'S VISION 2030

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### Abstract

Currently basic education is receiving much attention because of challenges emanating from both Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education (FPE and FDSE) programmes that were introduced in 2003 and 2008 respectively. To this end, challenges in access, quality and relevance as well as school administration and management are widely acknowledged. However, the significance of effective leadership and good governance practices in schools appear to be underrated. As a result, basic education continues to be delinked from higher education and industry thus slowing down the country's impetus towards improved political and socio-economic development. This paper reviews extant literature on leadership and governance practices in the context of public primary and secondary schools and examines goals of basic education vis-à-vis those of Kenya's Vision 2030. It develops a conceptual understanding of effective leadership and good governance and highlights important levels in current leadership and governance in schools that needs to be accorded prominence in future education sector strategic planning. The paper identifies leadership, governance and management challenges facing schools and concludes that effective leadership is important in ensuring that schools develop and uphold good governance and management practices which are critical ingredients in the provision of quality basic education as a spring board to realization of Kenya's development as premeditated in vision 2030.

**Key Words:** Basic Education, Effective Leadership, Good Governance, Management; Vision 2030.

### 1. Introduction

The role of education in imparting intellectual, moral and social skills and values in order to achieve economic, social and political prosperity of a nation is imperative (Keriga & Bujra, 2009). In fact, education is described as one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and for inciting sustained economic growth (Brunns, Mingat, & Rakotomalala, 2003). Similarly, the importance of basic education in driving political and socio-economic development of a nation is widely acknowledged (see, Ngigi & Macharia, 2006; Onsomu et al, 2006; World Bank, 2005). Therefore, like in many countries world over, Kenya experience challenges of transforming basic education to meet the demands of a globalized world. In order to participate and reap from the benefits of globalization, there's need for people who are knowledgeable, skilled and have the right attitude and values that are favourable to economic and social development (Keriga & Bujra, 2009).

Recent policy initiatives have focused on the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and, in particular, Universal Primary Education (UPE) (MoEST, 2003). Research shows that primary education yields higher social returns on investment compared to secondary and higher education (Colclough, 1993; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). However, secondary education prepare students to make a positive contribution to the development of society, and to acquire attitudes of national patriotism, self-respect, self-reliance, cooperation, adaptability, and a sense of purpose and self-discipline (Sifuna 1990). In recognition of the significance of primary and secondary education, the government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Secondary Education (FSE) programmes in 2003 and 2008 respectively. Prior to introduction of FPE, access to secondary education was already worsened by increased poverty and high cost of providing it (UNESCO 2000). The idea behind Free Secondary Education (FSE) introduced in 2008, may have originated from the National Conference on Education For All (EFA) held in Kisumu in 1990 which observed that Kenya needed to raise access to secondary education by increasing Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) from 29.4% to 70% by the year 2010 (Ngigi & Macharia 2006).

Challenges arising from FPE and FSE programmes are in areas of access, retention, equity, quality and relevance, and internal and external efficiencies within the education system (Ngigi & Macharia 2006; Nungu, 2010). According to Keriga and Bujra (2009) Kenyan education has failed to instill values, aesthetics and beliefs that are unique to people's orientation. Another criticism leveled against the education system includes poor administration structures. However, in view of the challenges of FPE and FSE programmes, the government completed the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for the period 2006-2011, and shows commitment in developing sector policies and implementing strategies aiming at providing relevant quality education and training to all citizens (Ngigi & Macharia, 2006).

Although, the government, communities, development partners and other stakeholders continue to make substantial investments to support education programmes within the sector, there is little emphasis on the role of effective leadership and



good governance practices in basic education. As a result, educational managers continue to wallow in ambiguities a situation that is likely to deflect their focus to align basic education with Kenya's vision 2030. Thus the critical role of basic education as a fundamental link between higher education and industry is in jeopardy. Basic education lays the foundation upon which progress in other sectors will be realized towards Kenya's vision 2030.

This paper reviews literature including the Education Sector Review of 2003; Report of the National Conference on Education and Training of March 2004; Seasonal Paper No 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework on Education, Training and Research; Kenya Education Sector Support Programme 2005-2010, the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006-2011, and Kenya's vision 2030. Literature on leadership and governance practices is reviewed in the context of public primary and secondary schools (as the main components of basic education). The paper examines goals of basic education vis-à-vis those of Kenya's Vision 2030. It develops a conceptual understanding of effective leadership, management and good governance practices and highlights important levels in current leadership, governance and management in schools that needs to be accorded prominence in future education sector strategic planning. The paper further identifies leadership, governance and management challenges facing schools and concludes that effective leadership, good governance and management practices are critical ingredients in the provision of high quality basic education to spur Kenya's development as premeditated in vision 2030.

## 2. Goals of Basic Education Vs. Goals of Kenya's Vision 2030

### 2.1 Goals of Basic Education

The long-term objective of the Government is to provide every Kenyan with basic quality education and training, including 2 years of pre-primary, 8 years of primary and 4 years of secondary/technical education (Ngigi & Macharia 2006). Thus basic education extends for fourteen years of formal education from pre-primary to secondary education level. However, this paper focuses on primary and secondary components because of their developed organizational structures and because pre-primary education is usually integrated with primary education. Primary education is expected to provide knowledge that is (a) essential for individual, household, community and national development, and (b) the foundation for further formal education and training. Therefore, specific objectives of primary education are to:

- a) Impart literacy, numeric and manipulative skills.
- b) Develop self-expression, self-discipline, self-reliance, and full utilization of senses.
- c) Develop ability to clear logical thought and critical judgment.
- d) Acquire a suitable basic foundation for further education, training and the world of work.
- e) Develop awareness and understanding of the immediate environment and to foster positive attitudes towards other countries and towards the international community.
- f) Develop a strong whole person, including the physical, mental and spiritual capacities.
- g) Develop desirable social standards and attitudes (MOEST & Unicef 1999).

Thus, the effects of primary education on development are largely a result of cognitive skills which impart literacy, numeracy and problem solving. Higher education and training rests on a solid foundation which is a by-product of primary education system (Sifuna 1990). Sessional Paper No. 6 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond identifies objectives of secondary education:

- a) To provide for all round mental, moral and spiritual development.
- b) To provide relevant skills towards positive contribution to the development of society.
- c) To lay a firm foundation for further education, training and work, and
- d) To lead to the acquisition of positive attitudes and values towards the well-being of society (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

Therefore, secondary education aims to prepare students to make a positive contribution to the development of society, and to acquire attitudes of national patriotism, self-respect, self-reliance, cooperation, adaptability, and a sense of purpose and self-discipline (World Bank 1990). Hence, with heightened expansion of the basic education sector, there's need to formulate policies that deliberately aim at improving effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and accountability systems in schools.

### 2.2 Goals of Kenya's Vision 2030

Kenya Vision 2030 is the country's new development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030 (Kerre, 2011). The vision's economic pillar envisages a 10% average annual growth rate sustained up to 2030 while the social pillar focuses on building a just and cohesive society enjoying equitable social development in a clean and secure environment. The political pillar on the other hand aims to produce a democratic political system that nurtures issue-based politics, the rule of law and protects all the rights and freedoms of every individual and society (Government of Kenya, 2007).

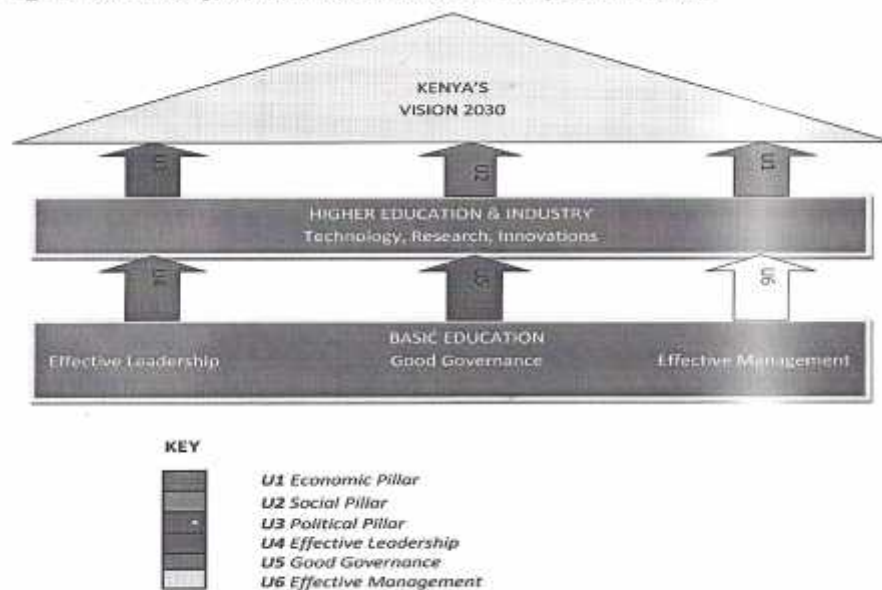


According to Ngigi & Macharia (2006) the government’s overall development strategy is to provide basic education that aims at enhancing the ability of Kenyans to preserve and utilize the environment for productive gain and sustainable livelihoods. They observe that development of quality human resources is central to the attainment of national goals for industrial development. They also note that education is necessary for the development and protection of democratic institutions and human rights.

The goals of basic education appear to have a strong connection with those of Vision 2030. For instance, it aims at helping learners to acquire positive attitudes and values towards the well-being of society which is critical in building a cohesive and just society in line with Kenya’s vision 2030. Similarly, basic education lays in pupils a basic foundation for further education, training and work and this has a direct impact on the economic pillar. Quality basic education graduates will join higher education or industry with a predisposition to observe the best practices. Thus effective leadership, and good governance will help in ensuring effective management of schools which constitute roots upon which higher education and industry tree is anchored. On the other hand, Kenya’s vision 2030 is reminiscent of fruits from the tree.

From the foregoing review, the relationship between basic education and Kenya’s vision 2030 is conceptualized in figure 1 which presents basic education as being complementary to higher education and industry.

Figure 1 Relationship between basic education and Kenya's vision 2030.



\*Source: Authors' own

### 3. Effective Leadership and Good Governance in Basic Education

#### 3.1 Effective Leadership

Cole (2002) defines leadership as inspiring people to perform. Leadership is the process by which a person exerts influence over other people and inspires, motivates, and directs their activities to help achieve group or organizational goals (Stogdill, 1974; Yukul, 1989). On the other hand Okumbe (1999) defines leadership as a process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards objectives. Leaders play an important role in governance (DfES, 2006). They provide direction for governance through fostering a shared understanding (NCSL, 2008a), clarity around roles between local and national actors (Craig, 2005; Lownsbrough and O’Leary 2005; Brooks, 2006), promoting collaboration and joined-up working (Harker et al, 2004; NCSL, 2008b; UEA with NCB, 2007), and encouraging commitment at all levels (Robinson et al, 2008). Thus effective leadership contributes to good governance. It clarifies processes and accountability needed for good governance. Effective leadership articulates the vision for the governance framework which provides strategic direction for leaders, help them to foster commitment, shared aims and hold people to account (Lords et al, 2009).

An effective leader is one who inspires others to give maximum effort to achieve a worthwhile goal. Walker (2005) in his book “Effective Leadership” believes that integrity and humility form the basic foundation upon which effective leadership is built and that effective leaders do not use force to get others to do what they want. That, effective leaders do not coerce,



cajole, threaten, plead, or bargain with their followers but inspire them to do what needs to be done. In addition, followers are usually happy to give the leader their maximum effort to achieve a worthwhile goal. Therefore, in a school setting, effective leaders must inspire their teams to give maximum effort in order to achieve goals that are deemed worthwhile by all interested parties. Otula (2007) points out that when the values of the leader and the led are synchronized, the followers don't have to be supervised because they will know what to do when the time comes, and that is the goal of effective leadership. Thus for the purposes of this paper, effective leadership is defined as the process in which leaders at all levels in the school setting inspire others with humility, integrity, and observing ethical practices in order to elicit maximum effort to achieve school goals. Effective leadership demands that leaders at all levels must exude high degrees of trust and be able to communicate the visions of their organizations (Walker, 2005). Thus effective leadership arises out of the utilization of various theories of leadership.

### 3.2 Good Governance

The need for governance exists anytime a group of people come together to accomplish an end (Institute of Governance: <http://iog.ca/en/aboutus/governance/governance-definition>). Governance rests on authority, decision-making and accountability and includes a deliberate effort to create a structural and ethical relationship with stakeholders that is inclusive, transparent and responsive to their concerns (Transparency International-Kenya, 2010). Thus governance refers to representing the will or interests of a group of people. It consists of a governing body which oversees the overall functioning of an organization. The governing body appoints management personnel who are given power to administer the organization. It sets the right policy and procedures for ensuring that things are done in a proper way. The governing body also directs the management to achieve particular results that are desired by the owners (Badek, 2008). Therefore, management is accountable to the governing body which is in turn accountable to the owners (Lord et al, 2009).

Good governance is about both achieving desired results and achieving them in the right way (as shaped by the cultural norms and values of the organization). According to Transparency International-Kenya (2010), improving governance and enhancing institutional integrity in Kenya's education sector is a vital step towards achieving our national educational goals and objectives. The main characteristics of good governance are amplified in a paper titled: "What is Good Governance?" (United Nations, 2006), which states that good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. Figure 2 illustrates the major characteristics of good governance.

Figure 2: Characteristics of Good Governance



\*Source: [www.Unescap.org/huset/gg/gorvenance.html](http://www.Unescap.org/huset/gg/gorvenance.html), 24 December 2006

In a school setting, effective leadership and good governance will enlist the participation of the people led without any form of discrimination. Involvement of all stakeholders in decision making processes may be one way of enlisting participation which is a vital component of both effective leadership and good governance. Similarly, Leaders at various levels in schools should also embrace the rule of law by establishing fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. School rules and regulations for instance should not infringe on the rights conferred to children by the country's statutes and international statutes. For instance, disciplinary cases should be handled with impartiality and in a fair and transparent manner. Thus integrity demands that leaders comply with requirements of established laws without favouring themselves or those for whom the laws apply. Another important factor is effective communication which facilitates both effective leadership and good





governance. Information should be freely made available to those in need of it. In schools, policies and goals set should be understood by all. On the other hand, humility in leadership demands that leaders establish processes that serve all stakeholders within reasonable time frame. Hence school activities should be responsive to the unique needs of all stakeholders.

Effective leadership and good governance practices must value consensus among the people led. Consensus ensures that people's support is enlisted towards accomplishing desired results. By involving all members of an organization, a team that holds common interests is built making it possible for leaders at various levels in the organization's governance structure to inspire their respective teams to achieve overall goals. Thus resources are likely to be used effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable manner. Similarly, it will be possible for leaders at all levels to be accountable to the people they lead with clarity. Accountability is as important ingredient of good governance as is to effective leadership. Elmore (2000) observe that the fundamental unit of accountability should be the school, because that is the organizational unit where teaching and learning actually occurs.

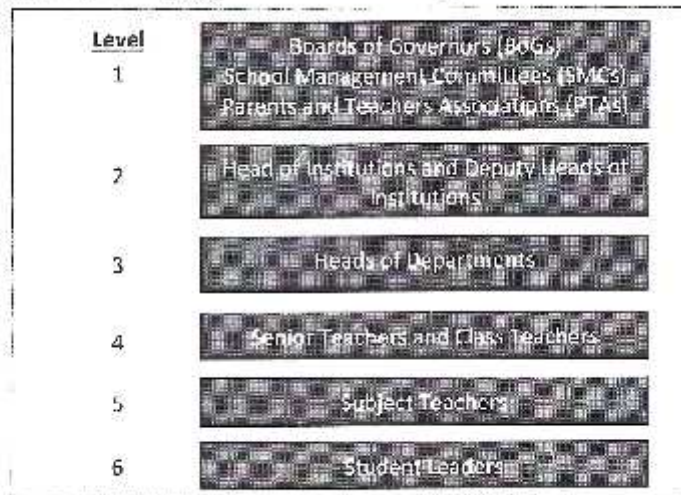
From the foregoing discussion it is discernible that concepts of effective leadership and good governance complement each other. It will therefore be unwise to imagine that an organization can achieve either of them fully without the support of the other. Leadership, management and governance have insurmountable influence on each other such that none of the three can replace another. However, each plays specific functions that if not exercised accordingly, will cause serious challenges in an organization.

#### 4. Structures of Leadership and Governance in Schools

Ownership of public schools constitutes many stakeholders such as the government, sponsors, parents and communities in which the schools are located. The leadership and governance in these schools mainly focuses on Boards of Management (BoMs) and Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs). Heads of institutions are members of BoMs and PTAs. The roles and composition of BoMs are provided for in Part VIII of the Basic Education Act No 10 of 2013. According to the Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005, the role of BoMs is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of secondary schools.

On the other hand, SMCs today have more powers than before over the expenditure of funds provided under the free primary education program (MoEST, 2003). BoMs/SMCs and PTAs play different roles in the governance of schools (on behalf of stakeholders), and although PTAs are not a creation of the Education Act, their role in schools is indispensable. There is need to establish a legal framework that will reduce competition amongst these committees in order to safeguard the interests of stakeholders. Thus top levels in the school leadership, governance comprise of BoMs, SMCs and PTAs. Although heads of institutions are members of the committees, they also constitute the second level which is basically management. The management trickles down to deputy heads of Institutions (DHIs), heads of departments (HoDs), senior teachers, subject teachers followed by student leaders, who occupy the base of the structure.

Figure 3 Levels of leadership, governance and management structure in schools

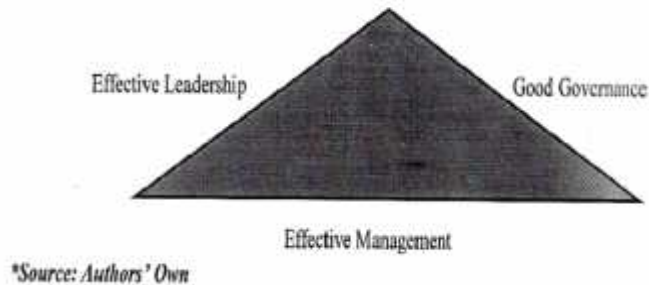


\*Source: Authors' Own



Figure 3 shows six levels in the school leadership, governance and management structures. The efficiency and effectiveness of a school will depend on whether leaders at all levels are involved in effective leadership and good governance practices (see MOE&HRD and UNICEF 1999). The relationship between effective leadership and good governance is conceptualized in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Conceptual Framework of Effective Leadership and Good Governance in Schools



From the foregoing discussions, effective leadership is depicted as impacting positively on both governance and management practices in schools. It strengthens the ability of the governing body to select a strong management team to administer the affairs of the school effectively. Effective leadership will thus resonate throughout the school governance and management hierarchy inspiring teachers, parents, support staff, students and other stakeholders to work towards achieving worthwhile goals. School heads do their work through others such as Deputy Heads of Institution (DHIs), Heads of Departments (HODs), Senior Teachers (STs), Class Teachers (CTs), Subject Heads (SBs) and Student Leaders (SLs). Hence, effective leadership should not only be exhibited by governing bodies and top school management but also by all the leaders under the school management structure.

## 5. Leadership, Governance and Management Challenges Facing Schools

In most schools effective leadership and good governance practices are lacking. Due to poor leadership, governing bodies (BoMs, SMCs and PTAs) have not been able to provide good governance in schools, a problem passed on to the management. Existing legal frameworks do not clearly distinguish governance bodies from management hence their roles are overlapping. For instance, cases of mis-allocation and misappropriation of funds, lack of transparency by school heads, accounting staff and some BoM members are rampant (MOE&HRD and UNICEF, 1999). School governing bodies are supposed to oversee the performance of school management a responsibility that is abdicated when the governors act as the managers themselves. Chelimo (2007) in a paper presented in the annual conference of the Kenya Association of Educational Administration and Management (KAEAM) identifies administrative challenges facing schools to include:

1. Corruption of BOGs and tendering committees.
2. Political interference.
3. Community harassment of school heads.
4. Bureaucratic and unclear student disciplinary procedures.
5. Conflicting roles of BOGs and PTAs, and
6. Stress on school heads when teachers are on strike.

Although the Kenya Basic Education Act (2013) defines the composition and functions of boards of management in basic institutions of learning, managers still require training through Kenya Education Staff Institute, KESI, in order to carry out their mandate effectively. There is need for a holistic approach in tackling the interwoven nature of leadership, governance and management challenges facing public schools. The demand by the public for teacher accountability on student learning outcomes and performance management present emerging huddles that require school boards of management to be adequately equipped in order to impact positively on school progress. These issues are weighty considering the significance of basic education in the social, economic and political development of the country.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

This paper brings into focus concepts of effective leadership, governance and management in the context of public primary and secondary schools in Kenya. Literature reviewed depicts that for any reforms targeting schools to yield expected outcomes they should be founded on principles and practice of effective leadership, good governance and management. The



three concepts are integrated in that effective leadership breeds good governance and effective management practices. It is also clear that there's an overlap of roles of school governance bodies and management resulting in conflicts between stakeholders such as parents, sponsors, BoM/SMC or PTA members and Heads of institutions and teachers.

## 6.2 Recommendations

1. To prepare primary and secondary schools for realization of Vision 2030, school leaders at all levels in the governance and management structures must be helped to realize and domesticate effective leadership at governance and management levels.
2. School leaders at governance level and all other levels of management should always embrace principles of integrity, humility, transparency, accountability and participation when dealing with people they lead.
3. A clear delineation between school governing bodies and management urgently needs to be done in order to avoid rampant and unnecessary conflicts between stakeholders and management.
4. Effective leadership practices needs to be entrenched at all levels of the school governance and management as a necessary condition for boosting efficiency and effectiveness of schools to spur Kenya's development as premeditated in vision 2030.

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