

Unpacking the Role of Culture Towards Quality Education for Sustainable Development in Kenya

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Abstract

The paper explores the link between culture and education for sustainable development in Kenya. To achieve this objective, a desk study was carried out on culturally appropriate education and education for sustainable development. Specifically, data was obtained from review of Kenya Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) that guides the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy for the education sector. The paper discusses the interplay of ESD policy and BECF with culture to identify the existing challenges and opportunities in implementing SDG target 4.7. The findings reveal that culture is superficially embedded in the ESD policy and BECF, and the cultural stakeholders are excluded from the development, implementation and evaluation of the policy. There is also no clear explanation on how cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue is translated into practice to achieve ESD. The paper concludes that embedding culture in ESD policy provides a deep and shared understanding of the development, implementation and evaluation of ESD policy and BECF. As a strategy to achieve ESD, the paper recommends integration of culture at all levels of the ESD policy and the BECF.

Keywords: Cultural diversity, Culture, Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Education sector, Indigenous knowledge, Sustainability, Sustainable Development.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a key driver in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet, Sub-Saharan Africa is still experience high rates of education exclusion and underdevelopment (Republic of Kenya, 2020). Despite the vision to provide quality, relevant and inclusive education, training and research for sustainable development (Republic of Kenya, 2019), environmental, economic, and social challenges continue to impede optimal performance of the Kenyan economy (Republic of Kenya, 2017). There are high unemployment rates, disparities in access to education and widespread poverty across the country. The current projections indicate that 56 percent of the Kenyan population lives below the poverty line and earns less than 1.00 US dollar per day; a trend that threatens present and future sustainability (Republic of Kenya, 2017).

As a commitment to sustainable development, Kenya has ratified the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and developed the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Policy (2017) for the education sector. Central to ESD under SDG goal 4 target 4.7, that obligates state parties to ensure that learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development by advancing education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, and appreciation of cultural diversity, and cultures contribution to sustainable development. However, the enforcement of these provisions has practically remained weak in many developing countries. Some of the challenges facing implementation of ESD could be linked to an education system that is inclined towards foreign philosophies. At the launch of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005-2014), re-orientation of existing educational programmes to address sustainability was identified

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as one of the four major thrusts of ESD (UNESCO, 2005). Notable effort to respond to DESD is ongoing in Kenya through the introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and the development of a number of ESD related policies and laws.

African scholars agree that the Western paradigm of education system is responsible for slow development in the continent. Curriculum in Africa has largely continued to be a product of British colonial education which has affected access to quality and relevant education (Ng'asike, 2014; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2009; Owuor, 2007). Linked to the curriculum issues, schools in Africa have been responsible for the continent's inability to ensure good life, renew and strengthen its own culture and worse off, to generate and share its culture's knowledge with the rest of the world (Nsemenang, 2005). It has been noted that in Kenya, basic education system has failed to produce graduates with skills and competencies that satisfy the needs of participatory society and the knowledge economy (Republic of Kenya, 2018). To improve the quality of education in Africa, Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011), suggest that efforts should begin by at least a brief reconstruction of the key features of the three education heritages in the continent; Western, Arab, and Indigenous African education heritages.

Unfortunately, Shizha (2014) notes that the rich traditions and culture which define things 'African' are now playing second fiddle to the incursion of globalized western philosophies. The indigenous knowledge, according to Breidlid (2008), has been characterized as inefficient, old fashioned and not scientific and, therefore, relegated to the realm of insignificance. However, Abdi (2006), observes that Africa, for all the pragmatic undertakings, may not go anywhere without recasting its cultural foundations for the educational and social development of children. According to Owuor (2007), the focus of an endogenous approach to education in Kenya should involve the following goals; i) maintain a balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental issues that are unique to the local context, ii) challenge the hegemony of western knowledge that has dominated classrooms for many countries, and iii) recognize the authenticity and legitimacy of indigenous knowledge and pedagogies and genuinely incorporate them into the formal educational system.

Indeed, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Development (2001), acknowledges cultural diversity as foundational in all aspects of development and peaceful co-existence.

While recognizing the strength of multicultural paradigm to education, this paper argues that education policies, programmes and practices should respond to local socialization values and cultural knowledge in equal measure if the vision for sustainable development is to be realized. The paper therefore explores the link between culture, education and sustainability in the Kenyan context. To achieve this objective, the study explored the extent to which culture has been integrated in Kenya Education for Sustainable Development Policy (2017) in the education sector. Additionally, the study sought to highlight the cultural linkages between Kenya Basic Education Curriculum (CBC) Framework (2017) and ESD policy for the education sector. The paper also discusses the theoretical basis of culture and ESD, with a view to position holism and inclusiveness as key factors for sustainable development.

THEORY

Interpretive Approach to Education for Sustainable Development

Education and sustainability cannot be defined outside the socio-cultural context. Therefore, this paper takes an interpretive approach to appreciate the role of culture in education and sustainable development. In this study, culture was defined as cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Interpretive inquiry suggests that sustainability is a dynamic learning process in a whole-system design in which, the strengths and limitations of purely scientific models are appreciated by incorporating multiple and qualitative dimensions into hard systems design (Porter & Córdoba, 2009). In this paper, Rogoff Cultural Discontinuity Hypothesis, Brofenbrenner Bio-Ecological Theory and Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory are used to explain the social interaction and construction of meaning as key drivers for education for sustainable development. The theories acknowledge that education is integral to the culture of any given group.

According to Vygotsky as cited in Werstch and Tulviste (1992), culture mediates human experiences and consequently transforms human activities. Vygotsky believes that development is a product of interactions between members of a cultural group, but also affects an individual's behaviour. Vygotsky argues that human mental functioning, even when carried by an individual acting in isolation, is inherently social, or socio-cultural (Werstch and Tulviste, 1992), implying that an individual can only be understood with reference to his or her socio-cultural context. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the importance of 'funds of knowledge', which defines every household as an education setting where elders transmit cultural knowledge to enhance survival of children. According to Ng'asike (2014), the funds of knowledge orientation, when used as a framework to guide instructional design and delivery, provide context relevance to classroom curriculum content. 'Funds of knowledge' can be a scaffold to school learning as children transfer their daily experiences to classroom, enabling learning to be interesting, practical and meaningful.

Rogoff (2003), extends Vygotsky's argument and asserts that cognitive skills rely on cultural inventions and therefore, the relative differences between the school and home cultures affect the quality of learning and behaviour. Since children are socialized in contexts where specific cultural values are salient, Rogoff (2003), argues that their cultural experiences inform the tasks they engage in, including learning experiences. Rogoff (2003), describes development as transformation of participation in socio-cultural activities, and places culture within community routines which form practices the child engages in to scaffold learning. In agreement, Bronfenbrenner (1986), explains the importance of culturally defined institutions, traditions and practices in establishing the settings and everyday practices in which members of a community will participate within the micro-system, including the transactions within the home and school. Consequently, the home and school ought to be principally connected to advance and enable transfer of relevant knowledge and experiences. The theories emphasize the importance of socio-cultural environment and the use of local resources in learning and development. When culture is embedded in curriculum, learning becomes relevant as education flexible enough to respond to the immediate local,

as well as global, cultures and needs essential for sustainable development.

Culturally Appropriate Education for Sustainable Development

Education and development are not islands, but are intricately linked to cultural knowledge and practices. Researches have attempted to define education, and they all agree that education cannot be provided outside the cultural context. Adeyeni and Adeyinka (2003), define education as the process of cultural transmission and renewal whereby, the adult members carefully guide the development of infants and young children, initiating them into the culture of the society. Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019), argues that education should assist individuals within a society to understand their lived reality and learn from experiencing real life, in order to develop freely and be able to contribute to the development of society. Fisher (2013), opines that culturally appropriate education should focus on educational competence needed in a global world and respect different world views of learners and teachers from different cultural contexts. This flexible approach to education melds instruction to better fit the expectations and cultural patterns of the group being served (Singh, 2011). Education for sustainable development is thus situated within the global and cultural contexts.

According to Trueba (1988), culturally appropriate relationships ground children in supportive environments, which help them contend with non-Native cultural values embedded in the school curriculum. Trueba (1988), acknowledges that the home culture is needed in the classroom to facilitate academic achievement and to be successful, children need to internalize their own cultures, as well as that of the school. Jordan (1985), agrees that natal culture should be used as a guide in the selection of educational program elements so that academically desired behaviours are produced and undesired behaviours are avoided. In this case, the desirability of the behaviours is defined by ability to survive, adapt and transform development for sustainable futures.

Besides enhancing learning achievement, culturally appropriate education allows children to smoothly transition to school and build pride in their home

cultures. While emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive education to bridge the gap between home and school, Irvine (1992), states that when students perceive that the school setting is hostile and incongruous, or when there is a cultural mismatch between students and their school; confrontations occur between the student, the teacher, and the home, leading to hostility, alienation, diminished self-esteem, and eventual school failure. Culture-based education thus grounds instruction and student learning in values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences and language (Kana'iaupuni, 2007 cited in Singh, 2011), which can reduce the confrontations that threaten education.

The concept of culturally responsive curriculum provides a lens for highlighting the cultural, historical, and social contexts in which people inhabit and engage in education (Marsico, Dazzani, Ristum and de Soussa Bastos, 2015), and enables legitimate salience for all students. Yazzie (1999), argues that deeply embedded cultural values drive curriculum development and implementation, and help determine which subject matter and skills receives the most attention. In a study to investigate the influence of culture on curriculum development in Ghana, Nijhus, Pieters & Voogt (2013), observed that curriculum implementation often falls short of expectation because of lack of cultural understanding by curriculum developers and aid organizations. This explains why the objective of curriculum construction is not often adhered to, which according to Owuor (2009), is to explore utilization of local resources as a way to address socio-economic and political problems that face Kenya as a country. Mudimbe (1988), is of the view that positively integrated education reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa should entail a reflection in the school curriculum that includes the history, principles, concepts and practices, tools and technology of communities from within and outside the country. This is basically a curriculum that prepares children for global citizenship and values.

Language as an element of culture provides a sense of identity and belonging to every member of the community. Research evidence points to the foundation of learning local language, both verbal and non-verbal, as key to refining the thought process of children. Njogu (2015), carried out a study among

pre-school children in Kenya and revealed that local languages contribute positively in learning of English language, and both languages reciprocally nurture each other. Awopegba, Oduolowu and Nsamenang (2013), assert that children learn best in their ethnic tongue, and will face difficulty when their non-verbal expressions are incongruent with the dominant communication norms in the school. Despite research evidence on the positive influence of local language in learning, many teachers and parents impose foreign languages on children. Ng'asike (2019), observes that in Kenya, children from pastoralist communities hardly understand Kiswahili and English, which are used as languages of instruction, thus leading to miscommunication. To avoid embarrassment, Ng'asike (2019), notes that children remain silent for long hours in school because they are afraid to speak poor English and Kiswahili. These children struggle as they think first in their local tongue, and translate the ideas to languages of instruction. In such situations, potential for creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration, as skills required for sustainable development, are diminished.

Culturally responsive teaching is flexible enough to integrate traditional educational practices and appreciate cultural diversity resources in education. The pedagogy utilizes the students' cultural knowledge and experiences to establish a caring learning environment that respects the students' personal and community identities (Irvine, 1992). Culturally responsive teaching uses cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles to make learning more appropriate and effective (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive pedagogy helps students to clarify their ethnic values, while correcting factual errors about cultural heritage. To deliver such a curriculum requires culturally responsive teachers. Ladson-Billings (2001, 1992), views culturally responsive teachers as those who help students to develop cultural competence, build a sense of socio-political consciousness, focus on students' academic achievement and use cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes. These teachers are able to reflect on their values and appreciate the cultures of their learners to provide education that fosters sustainable development.

Culture is dynamic and as Shizha (2014) explains, education must allow heterogeneity, avoid post-

colonial hegemonic school practices and acknowledge modern knowledge, without losing track of how knowledge has historically been organized. According to Shizha (2014), education system is appropriate to the extent that it allows social structures of the society to be represented in the schooling process. This is the education that validates a body of knowledge that deals with the social world and social experiences of the children and the teachers. Kenya is a heterogeneous culture which, according to Rodwell (1998), requires curriculum that is embedded in multiple voices, incorporates the best ideas and practices of different cultures without bias, prejudice, or discrimination, and ensures that the local cultural contexts of teaching remain pivotal to pedagogical practices. To implement such a curriculum, Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019), acknowledges the educator's crucial role in ensuring the society members are not carried away by the popular culture by constantly displaying to them the picture of truth. This truth, as Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019) describes it, is nothing new, but is the historically subscribed values which the society has lost as a result of the encroachment of modernization exemplified by science, technology and industrialization. It is subscribing to this truth that will enable Kenya to re-orient her education towards sustainable development goals.

Education for Sustainable Development in Kenya

Sustainable development is a concern of UN agencies that appreciate how well-being, social justice, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, human development and the health of our planet are inextricably linked (Tilbury & Mula, 2009). Kenya is committed to sustainable development goals because its future depends on holistic, participatory achievement of the dimensions of sustainable development (Republic of Kenya, 2020). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a vision for education that seeks to balance human and economic well-being with cultural traditions and respect for the earth's natural resources (Wals & Kieft, 2010). ESD is a transformational education that addresses learning content, outcome, pedagogy and environment to achieve societal transformation (UNESCO, 2014). Consequently, the Government of Kenya recognizes education as a key social pillar and an enabler in achieving Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2020, 2017).

The Kenya Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 on Policy Framework for Reforming Education and Training for Sustainable Development and the Sessional Paper No. 11 on Education for Sustainable Development, provide for integration of sustainable development at all levels of education, in national development plans and aligns education objectives to the global education agenda (Republic of Kenya, 2019). The Kenya ESD policy for education sector integrates sustainability issues including; climate change, poverty reduction, gender equality, disaster risk management, sustainable consumption and production, critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision making and taking responsibility, as core competencies for present and future generation (Republic of Kenya, 2017). At local level, ESD is currently being implemented in schools through non-formal learning activities such as music, drama, wildlife club, Eco-school and Green Campus programmes.

Culture has been identified as a key factor in achieving ESD, and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001), considers cultural diversity as one of the roots of development and a means to achieve a more satisfactory, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence. Legal and Policy Frameworks in Kenya, including the National Curriculum Policy and the Kenya Basic Education Act of 2013, acknowledge respect for ethnic and cultural diversity. To achieve sustainable development, ESD policies and programmes in Kenya must respond to local socio-cultural, environmental and economic context. As explained by Tilbury and Mula (2009), the culture lens can assist with reframing our thinking by locating sustainable development issues within a context of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. According to Tilbury and Mula (2009), the panoramic view permitted by this culture lens results in the inclusion of alternative perspectives and new connections, and gives access to traditional wisdom and forms of knowledge important for sustainable development.

Sustainable development theory recognizes cultural diversity as a rich source of innovation, experience and knowledge exchange, which can assist communities to move towards more sustainable futures, build a culture of peace, tolerance, non-violence and human fulfillment (UNESCO, 2004). However, enforcement

of the policies is still a challenge. According to Tilbury and Mula (2009), sustainable development policies and programmes do not always acknowledge cultural diversity as a valuable means to re-orient current practices, or assist with the creation of alternative futures. The education provided is therefore not tailored to drive the transformation necessary for sustainable development. Based on this gap, the study assessed the extent to which culture is embedded in the ESD policy for the education sector and BECF as key blueprints to sustainable development in Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODS

The paper employed a desk study to assess the extent to which culture is integrated in Kenya ESD policy for education sector and the BECF as a step towards sustainable development. Specifically, the review assessed; i) how culture is embedded in the BECF and ESD policy and ii) community involvement in the development and implementation of the BECF and ESD policy. In this study, journal articles, education reports and policies were reviewed to provide theoretical perspective of culture, education and sustainable development. The documents were screened by title, abstracts and full text for eligibility. The inclusion or exclusion of the documents reviewed was based on the following key words identified; cultural diversity, sustainability, education for Sustainable development, education, and indigenous knowledge. Data analysis involved identifying areas of BECF and ESD that had explicit or implied reference to culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in **Tables 1** and **2**. The results only showed sections of the ESD and BECF in which culture has been embedded, and excludes parts of the document that have no mention of culture.

In the BECF and the ESD policy, culture is considered as dynamic, and diversity is valued for sustainability. The BECF is based on the national goals of education. According to goal 6, education should instill in the learners' a sense of Kenya's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and help them to embrace positive cultural practices in a dynamic society (KICD, 2017). The BECF therefore acknowledges the critical contribution

of cultural diversity towards sustainable development. Cultural diversity is captured in ESD policy for the education sector, the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2019 on Education and Training for Sustainable Development and the Sessional Paper No. 11 on Education for Sustainable Development. The Basic Education Act (2013), further provides for education that eliminates hate speech and tribalism through instructions that promote the appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity. However, the legal provisions have not been effectively translated into ESD practices that include culturally responsive curriculum, pedagogies and teachers.

There is exclusion of local community as cultural partners who are conversant with the local cultures and are the consumers of the education in the BECF and ESD policy for the education sector. This is contrary to Sessional Paper No. 11 of 2014 on National Education for Sustainable Development Policy, which calls for nationwide stakeholder engagement (Republic of Kenya, 2014). Discriminatory stakeholder engagement is further compounded by two challenges; i) the policies are written in English language which is unfamiliar to many local community members and, ii) the policies are mainly electronically available on Ministry of Education website, yet many people are digitally illiterate and lack internet connectivity or digital devices. Although it may be argued that the organizations and agencies engaged as partners represent the local community, such assumptions can silence the local voices and lead to implementation of policies and curriculum that is disconnected from communities' sustainability goals. As argued by Garnesh and Holmes (2011), the themes of inclusion, openness and representation can create assumptions of equality and obscure existing discriminatory relationships. Therefore, honest grassroots participation is needed to foster strong partnership, sense of ownership, identity, participation, dignity, equality and purpose in education for sustainable development policies and programs.

The BECF embeds indigenous or local languages in the CBC curriculum as an effort to respond to diversity and produce global citizens. The BECF appreciates Kenya as a multi-ethnic nation, where people speak various dialects inherent with valuable

TABLE 1: Culture Reference in Basic Education Curriculum Framework

| BECF | Culture Reference |
|--------------------|--|
| BECF Vision | Enable every Kenyan to become an engaged, empowered and ethical citizen |
| Values | Contribute economically, socially, culturally and politically Ethical citizenship, diversity, stewards of the earth, build relationships, demonstrate respect, empathy and compassion |
| Guiding Principles | Diversity and inclusion, differentiated curriculum and learning, parental empowerment and engagement, community service learning |
| Core Competencies | Communication and collaboration, self-efficacy, critical thinking and problem solving, citizenship, creativity and imagination, digital literacy and learning to learn |
| Learning Outcomes | Appreciation of the country's rich and diverse cultural heritage for harmonious co-existence Protection, management and conservation of environment for sustainable development Ethical behaviour and good citizenship Pertinent and contemporary issues in society Health, hygiene, sanitation and nutrition |
| Learning Pathways | Arts and sports pathways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the learner to participate in the economic development of the country and contribute to cultural preservation, sustenance and development in arts, social sciences and sport • Prepare the future generations to be creative and responsible global citizens • Develop understanding of the environment and participate effectively in its activities • Recognize rights and responsibilities as a citizen and respect other's rights and environmental requirements • Act effectively and responsibly at local, national, and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to develop learner's innovativeness and use of technology to drive the Kenyan economy |
| Stakeholder | Government departments, development partners, religious organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), KICD subject panels and academic committee |

Source: Authors 2021

TABLE 2: Culture Reference in ESD Policy for the Education Sector

| ESD Policy Area | Culture Reference |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Rationale and Justification | Societal challenges- bigotry cultural diversity |
| Guiding Principles | Embrace diversity-understanding the importance of maintaining cultural diversity and biodiversity in local and global context Context specific-the need to address content while taking into account context, global issues and local priorities |
| Empowering and Mobilizing Youth | Create structures to empower youth to understand the value for embracing diversity in creating more resilient, inclusive and collaborative communities and organizations |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Stakeholder Engagement | National Steering Committee comprising Government Representative, CSCOs and Private Sector |
|------------------------|--|

Source: Authors 2021

cultural values and norms to be transmitted across generations. Since language affects creativity, problem solving, thinking, memory, expression and social skills, such as collaboration, appreciation of indigenous and foreign languages, such as English and French, brings a true sense of diverse perspectives in ESD. Although the documents acknowledge the importance of local and indigenous knowledge in sustainable development, there is no reference to the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) or indigenous knowledge in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), and in objectives and strategies. This is despite the fact that TEK includes aspects of STEM, and it is impossible to separate these aspects from indigenous perspectives (Ruef, Johnson, Jansen, Jacob & Beaver, 2020). When science knowledge is diversified, learners can benefit from multicultural perspectives and alternative useful insights that promote sustainable development.

Creativity is central to sustainable development in today's dynamic and complex world. Creativity enables people to imagine and construct pathways and strategies for a resilient future (Tilbury & Mula, 2009). Despite creativity and imagination being identified as core competencies in BECF, its relation to culture has not been explained. According to Shao, Zhang, Zhou, Gu and Yuan (2019), the impact of culture on creativity is typically manifested in three ways; i) distinct implicit and/or explicit conceptions of creativity, ii) preferred creative processes and creative processing modes, and iii) accurate assessment based on culturally fair and appropriate measures. Since creativity cannot be defined outside culture, its function in facilitating social harmony, sustainable human development, technological invention and scientific revolution as opportunities for sustainable development in Kenya are compromised.

ESD and BECF acknowledge capacity building as a strategy towards sustainable development. However, the policy documents do not explain how culture is integrated in training programs for ESD stakeholders.

This presents a challenge in Kenya, which is a multicultural country where learners and teachers come to classrooms with diverse cultural identities, hence the need for intercultural dialogue. Teachers' whose training are not responsive to cultural diversity lack cultural competence to appreciate learners' cultural backgrounds and experiences, to implement equitable and inclusive practices in schools, and to imagine strategies for challenging existing barriers to education for sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Culture is a key factor in sustainable development. Yet, it is evident from the findings that culture is superficially embedded in ESD policy and the BECF. However, the Government of Kenya has developed relevant policies and passed relevant laws as a commitment to achieve increased access to quality education for sustainable development. For example, the 2013-2018 National Education Sector Plan (NESP) provides strategy for education and training to promote ESD. Further, the introduction of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) aims to re-orient education programmes to respond to UN DESD (2005-2014) global call to increase access to quality and relevant education for sustainable development. Despite these efforts, there is scanty evidence to show how culture is effectively embedded in ESD policy and the BECF to provide education that view the world as a system, and equally responds to individual needs of every community. The education policies and programmes overlook the socio-cultural aspects that link education to local reality. Honest engagement of all stakeholders in education policy development, implementation and evaluation is central for deep shared understanding and responsibility at individual, community, national and global level. It is important to acknowledge Kenya's rich cultural diversity as an opportunity to nurture values and worldviews for sustainable development by providing rich perspective in education. However, this multiculturalism is equally a challenge as it becomes complex to harmonize or integrate the cultures of more than 42 ethnic groups and other races into the

curriculum. The paper concludes that embedding culture in ESD policy provides a deep and shared understanding of the development, implementation and evaluation of ESD policy and BECF.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper makes the following recommendations to be able to effectively embed culture in the ESD related policies and BECF. Firstly, communities should be engaged in ESD policy development, reviews, implementation and evaluation to enhance ownership, participation and to broaden the perspectives in education. Secondly, designed ESD professional development programmes should respect cultural diversity for all stakeholders including: teachers, policy makers, trade unions, parents and community leaders. Thirdly, Traditional Ecological Knowledge should be integrated into the curriculum, including STEM, to promote cultural relevance to enable students to learn Western science without getting pressured to assimilate totally into the knowledge system. Lastly, the monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of information through a cultural lens should be enhanced to improve quality of education in Kenya.

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