



Zizi Afrique
Foundation

ZIZI IMPACT

Issue 11-July 2025



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Greetings from Zizi!

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter, where we share key milestones and insights from our continued efforts to strengthen education systems for lasting impact.

In the second quarter of 2025, we strengthened our focus on systems change by enriching government-led policies and frameworks with evidence, supporting the institutionalization of proven education models, and strengthening data-informed decision-making across five countries. We deepened strategic engagements with government agencies to influence reforms and build strong momentum for the implementation of Values-based Education across Kenya.

Through collaborative partnerships, we amplified efforts to improve foundational learning, enhanced parental engagement through existing government structures, and fostered inclusive, gender-responsive approaches. We continued to champion the integration of Life Skills and Values in education across four jurisdictions. Together with our partners, we are laying the groundwork for education systems that are equitable, holistic, and responsive to the needs of all learners across the East African region and beyond.

We also strengthened our work in education evidence ecosystem building, contributed to regional conversations, and built a vibrant learning community with our partners. We made significant strides in unlocking data and data use across three countries by producing important evidence products.

Finally, do not miss our regular series where we introduce you to the amazing additions to the Zizi Afrique Foundation (ZAF) Team.

Happy reading

Sam



Outcome 1: Enriching Government-Led Policies and Frameworks with Evidence to Improve Foundational Learning

Zizi Afrique Foundation continued its close partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its key agencies, ensuring evidence-based practices and research agendas are integrated into policies to drive systematic change through co-creation.

Strengthening Foundational Numeracy and Parental Engagement in Bungoma West, Kenya

Zizi Afrique Foundation is driving system-level change in foundational numeracy through its error analysis approach, which has boosted ownership and readiness among local education officers. Field immersion exercises have reinforced teacher professional development, head of department accountability, and curriculum support systems. In Bungoma West, collaboration with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTE) has earned strong endorsement from education leaders, leading to the formation of a county advisory group championing school-level action and parental engagement. During a recent review, school leaders and teachers were introduced to five global best practices in Parental Empowerment & Engagement (PE&E), leading to increased awareness and application of strategies to involve parents in learning. Schools are now more actively tracking reading levels and applying catch-up strategies, with headteachers reporting improved follow-up on non-readers. It is expected that the next steps will include scaling the initiative to more schools in Kenya, training additional teachers, and developing localized PE&E guides to support broader adoption. Read the [Numeracy Error Analysis Report – March 2025](#).

Career Pathways for Junior Schools in Kenya, Gain National Endorsement

Zizi Afrique Foundation collaborated with key education institutions, including the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Education's Directorates of Junior School, Quality Assurance and Standards, and Secondary (Senior schools) Education, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTE), Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), and universities, during a two-day convening to advance the institutionalization of career pathways in Junior Schools. The Ministry of Education's senior leadership officially endorsed the simplified Career Pathways Guidelines under the Competency-Based Education (CBE). The next steps include developing a national action plan and supporting resource development through a multi-agency working group led by the Ministry.

Influencing the Review of Kenya's National Education Quality Assurance and Standards Framework (NESQAF)

In Kenya, Zizi Afrique Foundation collaborated with the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) to review the National Education Quality Assurance and Standards Framework (NESQAF) to align with the Competency Based Education (CBE) context as well as international standards. This will be followed by the creation of national tools and benchmarks for assessing life skills in Grades 3 and 6, laying the foundation for a standardized, competency-based measurement system for improved tracking of learners' non-academic competencies throughout the basic education cycle in Kenya.



Outcome 2: Supporting the Institutionalization of Proven Education Models through Government and Community-Led Initiatives.

Zizi Afrique Foundation is focused on strengthening government and community ownership of interventions, driving the institutionalization of education reforms and long-term sustainability beyond Zizi Afrique's direct involvement.



Shaping Local Education Planning in Dagoretti South

Zizi Afrique Foundation played a key role in influencing local education planning in Dagoretti South Sub-County by contributing to policy discussions during a cross-sector forum convened by the area MP's office, Hon. John Kiarie. The forum brought together over 225 stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Education, Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), and school governance bodies to strengthen dialogue on learner retention and transition. This engagement highlights the power of collaborative, community-led solutions in advancing education outcomes.



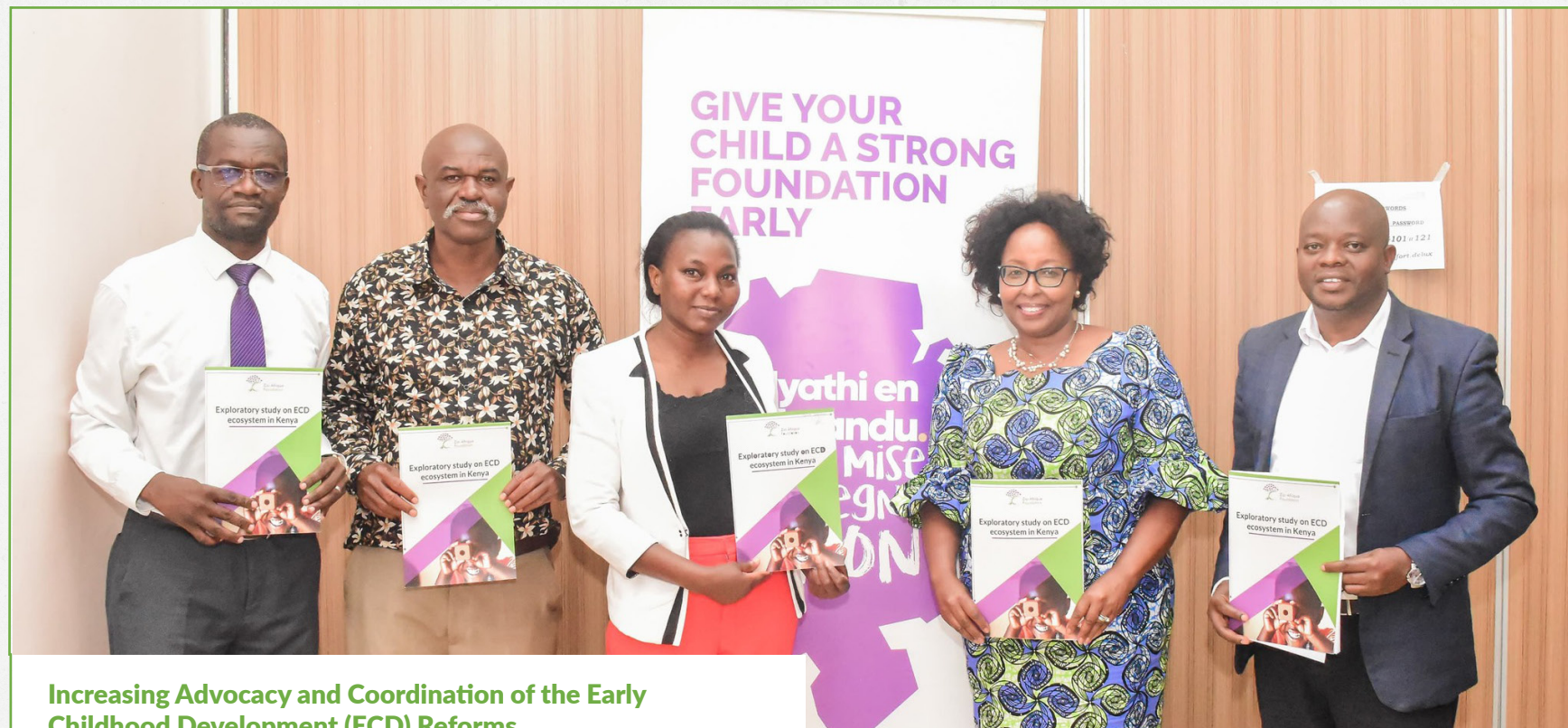
Sustaining School-Based Literacy in Kirinyaga through Strategic Partnerships



Zizi Afrique Foundation reaffirmed its partnership with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) to sustain and scale the Napenda Kusoma reading initiative. Recent engagements strengthened alignment with national priorities and secured institutional support for continued literacy efforts. Moving forward, Zizi Afrique will work with the new TSC leadership to formalize local implementation protocols and co-create a unified literacy assessment tool.

Outcome 3: Strengthening Data-Informed Decision-Making in Different Educational Levels

We continued our drive to convene strategic partners for data and evidence sharing to inform their local planning on educational matters.



Increasing Advocacy and Coordination of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Reforms

Findings from the ECD political economy study were disseminated in Mombasa and Samburu counties, leading to an official acknowledgement of the culture of diverting ECD funds and a commitment to ring-fence resources for ECD going forward. As a result, there is greater awareness of systemic gaps in ECD for children aged 0–3 and political commitment to improve funding structures. The next steps include follow-up with county officials to track progress on ECD budget allocation and coordination frameworks.



Generating Evidence on Skills in Demand for the Youth in Mombasa County



Evidence on hospitality sector skills needs in Mombasa County informed youth skills alignment and employment programming. Findings were disseminated through three events to 58 stakeholders, contributing to policy dialogue on youth skills development. This strengthened multi-sector collaboration and positioned the evidence to support advocacy for increased youth employability funding and integration of employer-informed skills into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programming for the hospitality and tourism sector.

Outcome 4: Unlocking Data and Data Use across Three Countries

EVIDENCE GAP MAP

CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE GAP MAPS IN MALAWI, KENYA, AND CAMEROON

Date of publication: June 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53832/unlockingdata.1034>

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FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING RESEARCH IN KENYA

Date of publication: June 2025

DOI: [10.53832/unlockingdata.1022](https://doi.org/10.53832/unlockingdata.1022)

Authors: Karen Arisa and Charles Gachoki

We continued our work with partners to unlock data and increase data use across three countries: Kenya, Cameroon, and Malawi. To deepen understanding of foundational learning in Kenya, Unlocking Data Initiative (UDI) developed a [policy brief](#) that provides a nuanced analysis of the country's foundational learning ecosystem. The brief identifies key stakeholders, systemic barriers, and opportunities for strengthening learning outcomes. By synthesizing existing evidence and policy frameworks, the document serves as a strategic resource for education policymakers, advocating for targeted interventions where evidence is most needed.

Significant strides were made in evidence generation through the creation of:

- A Kenya-specific Foundational Learning [Evidence Gap Map](#), which systematically identifies where research and data are lacking, helping prioritize future studies and investments.
- A [cross-country report](#) covering Kenya, Cameroon, and Malawi, which offers a comparative perspective on foundational learning evidence gaps. This report supports regional collaboration and shared learning to address common challenges in education systems.

As part of capacity-building efforts, the Graduate Associate Program engages PhD students in research and policy analysis. One of the associates developed a [blog post](#) to disseminate findings from the Evidence Gap Map, making complex research accessible to a broader audience. This initiative not only enhances research visibility but also nurtures the next generation of education researchers and policymakers.





Outcome 5: Building Momentum for Values-Based Education Implementation in Kenya

We made bold steps in partnering with the Kenyan government to kick-start the process of implementing Values-based Education in Kenya.

Collaborating with System Actors to Pilot Values-Based Education in Kenya

Zizi Afrique Foundation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, KICD, TSC, and KNEC, has strengthened the education system's capacity to implement Values-Based Education (VbE) across the country. Through this multi-stakeholder effort, VbE training materials were finalized and are being piloted in 80 schools across 19 counties in Kenya. This marks a key milestone in equipping teachers and schools to nurture values and character alongside academic learning. Teachers reached by this initiative so far have reported improved capacity to support the Competency-Based Curriculum/ Education (CBC/E) at home, demonstrating strong uptake and relevance of KICD-developed materials. Feedback collected from stakeholders shows the 9-step guide is widely valued and inspired by a demand for similar parent-facing resources

Boosting Parental Engagement in Values-Based Education

There is growing adoption of Zizi Afrique Foundation Parental Empowerment & Engagement (PE&E) framework among national education stakeholders. During the quarter, the Ministry of Education's Directorates of Quality Assurance and National Cohesion and Values used the framework to shape parent-focused strategies for national campaigns. KICD, in collaboration with Zizi Afrique Foundation, also applied the framework to develop capacity-building resources supporting the Whole School Approach in 19 counties.



Outcome 6: Strengthening Parental Engagement through Government Structures

Strengthening Parental Engagement through Government Structures

Zizi Afrique Foundation has successfully institutionalized the Parental Empowerment & Engagement (PE&E) approach within government systems, working closely with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education. This collaboration has led to the establishment of a national advisory committee on parental engagement, now fully operational and integrated into local governance through community barazas. This marks a significant step toward sustainable, government-led parental involvement in children's learning.

Launching a Community Engagement Campaign in Uganda

Zizi Afrique Foundation enhanced public awareness on life skills education in Uganda by launching a 10-week Parental and Community Engagement campaign across six districts, sparking grassroots support for life skills development at the household level in partnership with RELI members. This will contribute to nurturing a stronger enabling environment for life skills education by mobilizing families and communities as active co-educators. In Bungoma, 13 education actors committed to using PE&E tools in non-intervention schools, reaching 388 parents, 33 teachers, and four CSOs. Upcoming efforts will focus on tracking implementation fidelity and documenting insights on parental engagement in literacy.

Outcome 7: Establishing Strategic Partnerships to Accelerate and Amplify Reforms in Foundational Learning

ZAF partnered with other organizations to establish a coalition for foundational learning.

Zizi Afrique Foundation collaborated with partners to consolidate the Lighthouse Coalition into a strategic vehicle for advancing foundational learning in Kenya. The 22 members (14 champions and eight technical experts) were inaugurated as the Champions for foundational learning in Kenya. This coalition will serve as an advisory team for the numeracy design phase and will engage in strategic conversations and spaces to shape the national discourse on foundational learning. During this period, the team contributed to drafting the Foundational Learning Guidelines and co-created a classroom observation tool in collaboration with teacher educators from four TTCs.



Outcome 8: Continuing Leadership in Supporting the Integration of Values and Life Skills across Education Systems

Advancing Life Skills Assessment in Kenya and Zanzibar

Zizi Afrique Foundation (ZAF) is strengthening national education systems in Kenya and Zanzibar by embedding life skills into formal assessment processes. In Zanzibar, ZAF supported the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in integrating creative thinking into Grade 3 assessments, marking a shift toward learner-centered, skills-based education. A pilot and national framework are currently in development. In Kenya, ZAF partnered with the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards to initiate the creation of national tools and benchmarks for assessing life skills in Grades 3 and 6. These efforts lay the groundwork for standardized, competency-based tracking of non-academic skills across the basic education system.

Rolling Out a Research Agenda to Support Life Skills and Values in Schools

As part of its broader research agenda, the ALiVE program is working to define the life skills and values (LsV) most essential for children's development, identify effective teaching and parenting practices, assess training needs, and develop strategies for the long-term integration of LsV into the education system. In Kenya, the focus is on retooling Junior School teachers, building the capacity of tutors in Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), promoting Values-based Education (VbE) through a Whole School Approach at the primary level, and addressing gaps in teacher training models. To inform this work, members of the ALiVE National Advisory Committee, including representatives from the Ministry of Education (Quality Assurance), the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), carried out school immersion visits in June and July 2025. The first visit took place at Olare Owang Comprehensive School in Narok County, where the team engaged teachers in focused discussions and conducted classroom observations to assess how LsV are being taught and modeled.

Advancing Digital Tools and Open Access Resources

ALiVE's open-source platform continues to gain traction across the region and beyond. Since its launch, over 90 individuals have signed up, 89 tools and resources have been downloaded, and 33 organizations have expressed interest in using the platform. In parallel, ALiVE's book on life skills and values, published by Springer, has achieved over 40,000 downloads, making it one of the most accessed publications in its field. A first draft of a monitoring framework has also been developed to guide how we track the use and impact of this open-source resource. These digital efforts are ensuring that evidence and tools from ALiVE are not only accessible but actively informing practice around the world.

Strengthening Teacher Training Institutions in the Incorporation of Life Skills and Values

Zizi Afrique Foundation supported the incorporation of life skills and values-based education ideals through pre-service and in-service systems by supporting institutional capacity enhancement in four teacher training colleges (Morogoro, Marangu, Machakos and Eregi TTCs) across East Africa.



Outcome 9: Influencing Conversations in the Region and Beyond



African Leadership on the Global Stage

The ALiVE Learning Hub and Research Team took part in the Global Life Skills Conference hosted at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. This event brought together educators, researchers, funders, and policymakers from Africa and Europe to reflect on the future of education partnerships. What set this event apart was its focus on shifting power, allowing African countries to lead their own education reforms rather than merely implementing ideas developed elsewhere. ALiVE used this platform to showcase how countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania are contextualizing life skills education and assessment in ways that resonate with their young people. Our participation demonstrated that when African voices lead, education reform becomes more grounded, relevant, and impactful.



Driving Advocacy and Influence across the Region

During the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2025, ALiVE led exhibitions in Katavi, Tanzania, where more than 500 people were engaged and over 300 educational materials were distributed. These activities strengthened our grassroots presence and affirmed our commitment to making learning visible and valued across the region. In Zanzibar, ALiVE partnered with Milele Zanzibar Foundation and the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) to participate in the Annual Joint Education Sector Review. Our dedicated session on life skills and values led to the adoption of key recommendations into the national 2025 action plan, clearly demonstrating how evidence from ALiVE's work is shaping education priorities at the national level.

Contributing to Knowledge and Regional Evidence

We continue to play a key role in advancing research and thought leadership in life skills education. A major highlight this quarter was the publication of a peer-reviewed manuscript in SAGE Open titled *Extent to Which Life Skills and Values are Embedded in the Education Systems of Four East African Jurisdictions: A Scoping Review*. The paper explored how life skills and values are embedded in the education systems of four East African countries. This contribution is already informing policy discussions and promoting systems-level thinking across the region. In another key milestone, our life skills and values assessment tools were officially published in the INEE Measurement Library. <https://inee.org/resources/assessment-life-skills-and-values-east-africa-alive>. This international recognition affirms the quality and relevance of ALiVE's work, ensuring that practitioners and policymakers around the world have access to tools grounded in African realities.

Outcome 10: Building a Learning Community with Partners

Reimagining How Organizations Learn

ALiVE and its partners have made significant progress in building a learning-centered culture within their organizations through the development of a formative learning framework, aimed at reshaping how they collect, interpret, and use data to improve program delivery. The process began with core partners such as Uwezo Uganda and Luigi Giussani Foundation, and has since expanded to include organizations like Milele Zanzibar Foundation, the Organization for Community Development (OCODE), Uwezo Tanzania, Kukuza Education, Dupoto-e-Maa, Edukans Kenya, and Grassroots Nest for Innovation and Change (GRIC). Together, we have introduced an organizational learning approach, identified learning champions, and designed tools that promote active reflection and documentation. This initiative lays the foundation for a stronger, more accountable learning ecosystem.

Building a Regional Learning Community

We continue to strengthen regional collaboration through a growing learning community, now comprising over 500 members, including teacher training institutions, academics, RELI partners, government stakeholders, and global collaborators. In this quarter, we hosted a LearnShop titled The African Take on Life Skills Education, a significant moment for peer learning and reflective dialogue across East Africa. The event provided a platform for experts, practitioners, and policymakers to explore how life skills and values can be meaningfully embedded in African education systems. Discussions highlighted the need for contextualized approaches that support teachers not only to teach but also to assess competencies like communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. The LearnShop deepened shared understanding and reinforced the importance of grounding education reforms in local realities.

Outcome 11: Advancing Gender Equality through Data, Tools, and Inclusive Engagement



Zizi Afrique Foundation continues to embed gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) across its programs and partnerships. A major milestone this quarter was the successful validation of a centralized GESI Data Hub model by key stakeholders. This hub will consolidate research, statistics, and analysis to support gender-responsive, data-driven policy and decision-making. Gender equity was also integrated into core innovations, including the Error Analysis and Parental Empowerment & Engagement (PE&E) initiatives. Custom tools were used to track equitable participation and gather gender-sensitive feedback, improving the responsiveness of programs to the unique needs of girls, boys, and their caregivers. Training sessions and community engagements intentionally included both male and female participants—teachers, parents, civil society actors, and local champions—promoting balanced dialogue and shared ownership of life skills education. In addition, the national gender thematic group approved the Transformative National Gender Research Agenda (2025–2027), aligning research priorities with national development goals. The agenda emphasizes the implementation of the data hub, institutional advocacy, resource mobilization, and long-term sustainability.

New Staff



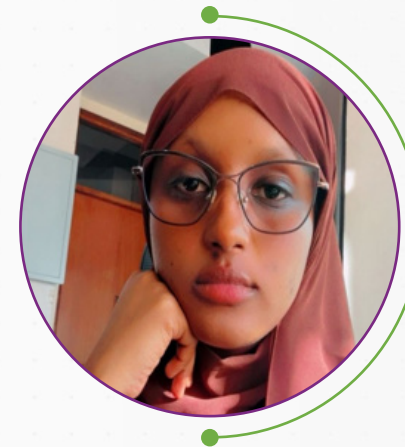
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