

## Chapter 4

# Structure and Scope of School Education in East Africa

**Table 4.1 Education in East Africa**

Country	Level	Age	Duration
Kenya	Pre-primary	4–6	2
	Primary	6–14	8
	KCSE	14–18	4
	Tertiary	18+	4
Tanzania	Pre-primary	4–6	2
	Primary	7–13	7
	CSE	14–17	4
	CASE	18–20	2
	Tertiary	20+	3
Uganda	Pre-primary	3–5	3
	Primary	6–12	7
	UCE	13–16	4
	UACE	17–18	2
	Tertiary	19+	3

KCSE: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

CSE: Certificate of Secondary Education

CASE: Certificate of Advanced Secondary Education

UCE: Uganda Certificate of Education

UACE: Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education

## Kenya

Kenya attained independence in 1963 from the British government. The new government undertook the provision of education and training as key to overall national development. To address the challenges facing the

education sector, a commission of education chaired by Professor Simon Ominde was formed to reform the education system inherited from the colonial government to meet the country's needs (ROK, 1964). Since then, the challenges facing the education sector have been addressed through commissions, committees and taskforces. This commission proposed an education system that would foster national unity and the creation of sufficient human capital for national development. Kenya's current education system was put in place in 1981, as a result of a Presidential Working Party Report on the second university in Kenya (ROK, 1981), which led to the establishment of the 8.4.4 system of education. The system includes three years early childhood development education (ECDE), two years pre-primary, eight years primary and four years secondary/technical education (see table 4.1).

Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) is charged with developing education policy documents. Current education policy is based on the recommendations of the National Conference on Education and Training, which was held in November 2003. The theme of the conference, *Meeting the Challenges of Education and Training in Kenya in the 21st Century*, reflects the government's continued pursuit of relevant education. The conference was held against a backdrop of challenges facing the education sector, which were listed as access, equity, quality and relevance.

The overall policy goal of the Kenyan government is to achieve Education For All (EFA). The priority is to ensure equitable access and improvements in quality and efficiency at all levels of education. The ultimate goal is to develop an all inclusive and quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans. This is guided by the understanding that good education can contribute significantly to economic growth, improved employment prospects and income generating opportunities (MOEST, 2004).

## **Tanzania**

The school system in Tanzania comprises two years pre-primary, seven years primary education, four years secondary education (leading to the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination [CSEE]) and an additional two years of advanced secondary education (leading to the Certificate of

Advanced Secondary Education Examination [CASEE]). Pre-primary education is not compulsory and is offered mainly by private schools. At primary school, children are required to study Kiswahili, English, mathematics, social studies, science, life skills and religious instruction as compulsory subjects. At the secondary level, students must take six compulsory subjects and at least one subject from their chosen stream. They can choose from agriculture, commerce, arts and science streams.

Students may undertake vocational and professional training after completing primary education. Those who complete upper secondary (advanced level or 'A-levels') can join either tertiary or higher education and vocational training institutions or enter the job market. There are more than 140 tertiary training institutions in Tanzania, and some 33 of these are higher education institutions, categorised into universities (eight public and 12 private) and university colleges (four public and nine private).

The government, through its Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MEVT), is the main provider of school education. However, there is a growing number of private and non-governmental organisation (NGO)-managed schools.

There has been a substantial increase in primary school enrolment since the Tanzanian government made primary education compulsory and free: some 2.2 million additional learners enrolled between 2001 and 2004. In 2006, the gross and net enrolment ratios (GER,<sup>3</sup> NER) for primary schools were 117.7 per cent and 96.1 per cent respectively. Eighty-seven per cent of children continue in school to grade 5 and 74 per cent complete grade 7 (2006). Enrolment at secondary level is low, but has shown improvement and has doubled since 2000. In 2006, the secondary school GER was 14.8 per cent and the NER was 13.0 per cent.

The official recommendation for the teacher-pupil ratio in Tanzania's schools is 1:45. However, the actual average teacher-student ratio in primary schools is 1:52 and can go as high as 1:90 in some districts.

## **Uganda**

Pre-primary education is mainly managed by private agencies and individuals. Most nursery schools and kindergartens are concentrated in urban areas, where a large percentage of parents can afford to pay and

appreciate the value of such education. Primary education terminates at grade 7 with the Primary Leaving Examination Certificate. The focus of the examination is English, mathematics, science and social studies.

Secondary education comprises four years of lower secondary (ordinary level) leading to the Uganda Certificate of Education and two years of upper secondary (advanced level) leading to the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education. Technical schools are alternatives to secondary education. Both primary and secondary school leavers study technical education for three years, with the curriculum including various crafts and vocational skills. Some technical and commercial institutes are privately owned. However, opportunities in vocational education are restricted due to the high cost of establishing and maintaining basic facilities (Ministry of Education and Sports [MOES], 2006a).

In Uganda, the terms 'tertiary' and 'higher education' are used synonymously to refer to post-secondary education offered in universities, polytechnics, institutes, colleges and other institutes affiliated to these. There are five public and more than 25 licensed private universities, which award various degrees (National Council for Higher Education [NCHE], 2006). The government sponsors about 4,000 students each year for different courses in public universities. There is also significant investment by the private sector (including NGOs) in higher education (MOES, 2006a). More students are enrolled in private universities than in public universities.

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) provides, supports, guides, co-ordinates, regulates and promotes quality education and sports to all persons in Uganda for national integration, individual and national development. Although the government endeavours to provide public schooling for all Ugandans, government-aided schools are insufficient in number and so public education is offered through private schools affiliated to religious organisations and those owned by educational entrepreneurs. The MOES regulates education in private schools.

Compared to pre-primary (4 per cent) and secondary education (19 per cent), primary school enrolment is high (119 per cent) (MOES, 2006b). Primary education in Uganda has thrived since the introduction of universal primary education (UPE) in 1997. In 2005, over 7.7 million children of primary school-going age attended school (MOES, 2006b). However, only 49 per cent of children who begin school complete five years of

schooling and only 25 per cent complete the last grade of school. The teacher-student ratio is high in primary schools, averaging 1:52 – although there are some classrooms with up to 250 children.