AMINA: WE’LL SUSTAIN REFORMS MOMENTUM

A publisher’s agony in preparing materials for the new curriculum

The new teachers’ guide: what you need to know

Season of harvest for publishers as education reforms kick in

Plus much more!

We are ready for the new system, publishers say

What the new curriculum means for the publishing industry
# Competency-Based Curriculum

**Our Books on**

**Competency-Based Curriculum**

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**THE ONLY KICD APPROVED COURSE FOR ALL GRADES 1, 2 & 3**

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**Other approved titles**

### Pre-primary Books

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<th>S. No.</th>
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<td>Fun with CRE Activities PP 1</td>
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### Lower Primary Books

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[Image of books]
WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE KENYA PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION (KPA) 2018 QUARTERLY BOOKNEWS MAGAZINE.

The BookNews magazine will be a quarterly magazine primed to inform you on matters publishing, the new curriculum developments and various activities and projects that the publishing industry is undertaking. We hope to update readers with developments in digital publishing, various awards worldwide, partnerships and regional happenings to keep you fully informed.

Over the last decade, the publishing industry in Kenya has grown and yet not celebrated. We hope that the BookNews magazine will act as a celebration tool where we will spotlight authors, writers, content developers and appreciate their works. The magazine will also provide a platform for publishers and those in education sector to showcase their products as well as announce new releases. Let us nurture our skills through books.

We hope that you will find the BookNews magazine both informative and exciting as you read through the articles.

Mr Lawrence Njagi,
Chairman, Kenya Publishers Association

“I never feel lonely if I’ve got a book - they’re like old friends. Even if you’re not reading them over and over again, you know they are there. And they’re part of your history. They sort of tell a story about your journey through life.” - Emilia Fox
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Published by:
Kenya Publishers Association
P.O. Box 42767 Nairobi, Kenya  Tel: [+254] (20) 375244
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Plans to overhaul the 8-4-4 system will go on despite the change of guard at the helm of the Education ministry.

Upon taking office, Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohamed vowed to continue with the replacement of the 8-4-4 system with one that is more responsive to the needs of the 21st Century, which is part of the reforms initiated by her predecessor, Dr Fred Matiang’i.

In a series of meetings with stakeholders, Ms Mohamed left no doubt that she would rally all players in the sector to ensure the far-reaching reforms in the sector, which she termed “critical,” are actualised.

“I will focus on building on what has been achieved and sustaining the momentum for reform in the education sector. We should deepen our impact and resolve to work together,” Ms Mohamed said.

Ms Mohamed has reportedly held consultative meetings with university education, basic education and vocational and technical training officials and urged them help ensure the shift from rote learning.
Spotlight Competency-based Curriculum Course Books

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loading...
to a knowledge-based system is a success.

Her predecessor, Dr Matiang’i, had also spearheaded radical changes in Kenya National Examinations Council – the national exams agency – and the overhaul of the education syllabus. The pilot phase of the new syllabus has already been rolled out.

And in the clearest indication that she is keen to uphold and sustain policy changes in the crucial institutions, sources said the new CS had already met the top management of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and The Kenyan National Examinations Council.

Basic Education Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang also added his voice to the determination by the government to “make a difference in the lives of the students”.

Another area of focus that the new CS is expected to pay attention to, in furtherance of education reforms, is retention of students in schools.

Another area of focus that the new CS is expected to pay attention to, in furtherance of education reforms, is retention of students in schools. Heads of departments have been asked to act on such bottlenecks as congestion in schools.

Top directors in the ministry have also been outlining the policies, programmes and projects the ministry is undertaking to ensure responsiveness of the newly launched education system to the needs of a modern economy and to prepare a well-equipped workforce for the fast-changing, highly-competitive labour market.

The new CS has been holding meetings to gather information that would help her and other top officials understand the challenges the ministry faces.

These meetings also seek to brainstorm on the opportunities that changes in the sector offer for improvement of the quality of education and delivery of service by the ministry’s workforce.
**Mashetani wa Alepo** and the power of imagination

By Philip Ochoi

**Mashetani wa Alepo**, a Kiswahili novel by Tom Olali, is dedicated to Prisoner No. 46664, the archetypal identity of Nelson Mandela during his detention on Robben Island.

The novel, published by the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, took first position in the Text Book Centre Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature (2017). Alepo is an imaginary country that is reminiscent of the city of Aleppo in Syria. It is a country in Africa, where evil permeates and dominates all spheres of society. Two factions led by two warlords, Megido and Makanyaga, are embroiled in ethnic supremacy. Megido is the leader of Nyakwelekere people while Makanyaga is in charge of the Maya. Megido is immersed in total recall and hallucinations. His wife Siprosa, who hails from the Maya people, ignores ethnic profiling and shows tenderness and care. In the year 3020, Megido’s people march towards the land of the Nyakwelekere for a final showdown. Megido is assisted by Champion. Their militia is known as “Sisimisi”.

*Mashetani wa Alepo* is just but a long realist dream!

The book is recommended for use by Kiswahili literature students both in schools and colleges.

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The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation maintained its unparalleled lead in the Text Book Centre Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature. This is a biennial literary award organised by the Kenya Publishers Association to recognise outstanding authorship. Thanks to its high quality publications, JKF has scooped over 90 per cent of the Kiswahili prizes in the past five years. The book titles include *Pamba, Mkakasi, Masaibu, Utoro, Fumbo, Dago, Vipanya,* and *Migogoro.*

Last year’s ceremony was not any different. Judges in the 2017 edition declared *Mashetani wa Alepo* by Tom Olali the overall winner in the Kiswahili Adult Category. *Kigoda cha Shimanzi na Hadithi Nyingine* and *Zaidi ya Mipaka* both by Jeff Mandila were each nominated in the Adult and Youth Categories respectively.

During the award ceremony held on September 30, 2017 at the Pride Inn Hotel, Westlands, winners took home cash prizes worth sh300,000.

September is known as the “book month” especially in the publishing circles, owing to the various book related events held in the month such as International Literacy Day, the Nairobi International Book Fair, and Maktaba Awards.

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The book is recommended for use by Kiswahili literature students both in schools and colleges.
One Sunday in October 2017, I decided to drive to the office. Nairobi, the brawling capital was like a sleeping lion; unlike the hurried city on weekdays teeming with bustle, crowds and action. The city was somewhat subdued of its glamour, legendariness and hardwired urbanity. It was a lazy Nairobi afternoon; the streets a bit deserted. A bus screamed and hurtled down the road after a few minutes. People walked in generative ease; men in suits carrying Bibles probably from church and some ladies in clothes padded at the shoulders so they looked like mushrooms — that's the closest thing my village mentality could come up with.

As I entered the reception area at the office, there was a whiff of dry season air and some scent I couldn't immediately recognise. On a weekday, it would have been busy with shuffling feet but now it was quiet — suddenly looking empty, as if it had been ransacked by thieves. If I had closed my eyes, I swear I would have heard in my mind's ear the buzz of the walking feet of people coming and going.

I went over to the main floor where the publishing team worked from and was greeted by backs of people hunched over their desks. It was like an engine room — editors, graphic designers and proofreaders busied themselves. Two printers, sitting proud of place, on each end of the floor spat out printing papers in an unending flow; stopping only for a few seconds to recalibrate inks and whatever else they recalibrate. When a printer stops, even momentarily to recalibrate, an editor's heart stops and they clasp their hands in silent prayer. Nothing scares an editor more when approaching the KICD doomsday deadline than a printer that stops printing — all the work done

Cont'd on page 12
NEW COMPETENCE-BASED

APPROVED CURRICULUM BOOKS

A cut above the rest

Get Your Copy Now!
would be wasted if not printed for KICD to evaluate. And KICD need 7 printed copies per title – bringing the printed sheets need to thousands of copies.

I remember in one of my former jobs as publishing manager, on the night before a major submission of books to KICD, the printer shut down in the middle of printing. I was summoned at 1am in the morning from my office (we had decided to spend the night in the office to beat the deadline). The CEO had, of course, gone home by then and I was the senior-most officer so had to deal with whatever headache at that time. I found a funereal mood around the printer; a bunch of editors had gathered around it as if for final rites. I touched the printer; it was as hot as a piece of fiery charcoal. My heart sunk. Who would I call for printing services at 1am on a dark Nairobi night? Mercifully, after panic attacks and much confusion, the printer started printing again. It probably had overheated and that’s why it had shut down after running for one week straight day and night without a break – even machines get tired! At that time, computers also got tired! We would send work from a computer for printing and what it printed were things we couldn't understand; sometimes it was jumbled-up fonts or if it was Mathematics, a certain ugly character would replace a certain mathematical symbol throughout the manuscript. It was like there was madimoni (demons) everywhere on the night before submission.

In the office on this particular Sunday, my mission was to see the publishing team and lend my helping hand where I could. I touched the printer; it was as hot as a piece of fiery charcoal. My heart sunk. Who would I call for printing services at 1am on a dark Nairobi night? Mercifully, after panic attacks and much confusion, the printer started printing again. It probably had overheated and that’s why it had shut down after running for one week straight day and night without a break – even machines get tired! At that time, computers also got tired! We would send work from a computer for printing and what it printed were things we couldn't understand; sometimes it was jumbled-up fonts or if it was Mathematics, a certain ugly character would replace a certain mathematical symbol throughout the manuscript. It was like there was madimoni (demons) everywhere on the night before submission.

In the office on this particular Sunday, my mission was to see the publishing team and lend my helping hand where I could. It was in the final, frantic stage of the publishing process before the submission of the new competence-based books to KICD – a flurry of phone calls, hurried feet, panicked edits and last-minute changes. I was taken aback when I saw the work still to be done – especially the acres of missing artworks and it felt like we were falling farther and farther behind. Doomsday was approaching.

In my earlier days, I was a fierce editor (or so I believed) but after climbing a few ranks, my life became scurried – a treadmill of things to do, rushed meetings and hundreds of telephone calls – so I could not help with the real editing. Sure, I sat down, helped edit some titles and impressed myself by picking a few things but I felt hugely inadequate on the editing front. In the evening, as I drove home, I wondered what more I could have done. I felt a helplessness I cannot express in writing. I remembered my own time as an editor and how overwhelmed I felt on such times and wondered if the books I had worked on would be approved. And how many sleepless nights I had and how I would wake up sweating after a nightmare in which I had dreamt the books I had worked on had all flopped at KICD. As publishing manager in my former job, it fell on me to pick the results of approvals from KICD. One day, when about to pick results from KICD (then KIE), another senior manager decided to drive me to KICD (I was in no mental state to drive). There was tension and a sense of dread in that car! We had done our best but submission results were like exams, one could never be quite sure how it would turn. My colleague and “driver” suddenly pulled over and said, “John, let’s pray”.

As I drove home after meeting my team on that Sunday and as I remembered my own helplessness as an editor in such times, I heard a sob and hoped I was not sobbing. It was an emotional time for me.

The writer is the general manager of Oxford University Press East Africa (OUPEA).
The teacher’s resource book has now replaced the traditional teacher’s guide. It is a resource book because it is equipped with much of what a teacher will need to take charge in various learning areas.

W
hat is in the new teacher’s guide, if any, that was not in the old one? Why is it important? These and related questions were at the centre of the February 10-11 expo for the new learning and teaching materials under new competency-based curriculum.

At the expo at Pride Inn, Westlands, and organised by Text Book Centre in conjunction with Kenya Private Schools Association (KPSA) and Kenya Publishers Association (KPA), attendants were drawn to the look of the new teacher’s guides among other things.

In the old order, the teacher’s guide was just that – a guide. It was a peripheral reference book. It, at best, presented lessons under each topic, objectives, teaching aids, a few suggested teaching steps and, most importantly, the answers for the exercises in the learner’s book.

In the past curriculum, the teacher’s guide was just that – a guide. It was a peripheral reference book. It, at best, presented lessons under each topic, objectives, teaching aids, a few suggested teaching steps and, most importantly, the answers for the exercises in the learner’s book.

By Sam Ng’ang’a

**THE NEW TEACHERS’ GUIDE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

By Sam Ng’ang’a

Cont’d on page 14
Most teachers only sought the teacher’s guide to confirm answers when marking learners’ work. That’s why a copy for a teacher’s guide of a given subject per level would serve all the teachers in a staffroom.

That is all in the past now. The teacher’s resource book has now replaced the traditional teacher’s guide. It is a resource book because it is equipped with much of what a teacher will need to take charge in various learning areas. The teacher’s resource book, therefore, is a key support tool that is meant to nourish the work of the teacher.

The teacher needs to note that the current learner’s textbooks are activity-oriented. Unlike in the past when a lot of content was domiciled in the learner’s book, content is now in the teacher’s resource book. Activities in the learner’s book, therefore, make full meaning in the context of the teacher’s resource book. The teacher’s resource book, therefore, is an indispensable companion for the teacher. It is the manual without which one cannot use the learner’s book meaningfully.

The new curriculum envisions bringing forth an engaged, empowered and ethical citizen. In line with that vision, a properly prepared teacher’s guide must integrate all the vital aspects of the curriculum in a particular learning area. These aspects are: national goals of education, level learning outcomes, strands and sub strands, specific learning outcomes, learning experiences, key inquiry questions, core competencies, pertinent and contemporary issues (PCIs), values, use of digital technology in learning, connection amongst learning areas, community service learning, non-formal activities that support learning, suggested learning and teaching resources, assessment methods and assessment rubrics. The teacher has to be well versed in all these areas.

Besides, the teacher has to understand how to track his or her work and that of the learner using proper professional documents. The curriculum requires that, after every strand, acquisition of competencies among learners be documented well in their individual progress reports. This is a major responsibility that came with the new competency-based curriculum. The teacher needs guidance on how to perform these tasks. It is incumbent upon the teacher to ensure that the resource book for the textbook selected in any learning area aptly empowers him or her to execute the new teaching roles.

In appreciation of the aforementioned changes in learning and teaching materials, educational publishers are expected to sponsor regional teacher workshops in all learning areas. These workshops are meant to enlighten teachers on how the newly published learning and teaching materials addresses themselves to the new curriculum. Teachers need to look out for such events.
The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation scholarship programme stands out as JFK’s special and unique contribution to national goals and ideals. To help expand access to education the Foundation expends its profits to educate bright but needy students in public secondary schools.

The programme that began in 1968 has so far educated over 15,000 beneficiaries at a cost of KES. 540 Million.

Sponsorship of the bright but needy students has all along been done through income generated from the sale of its publications. The number of scholarships offered, therefore, varies from year to year depending on the financial ability of the Foundation.

The 50-year journey of the scholarship programme has been paved with both challenges and great opportunities. But rather than discourage us, the challenges have enabled us grow to greater heights, sharpening our experience and expertise in providing scholarships to deserving students’ countrywide.

This year 2018 was not an exception. Soon after the KCPE 2017 examination results were released, Kenyans were informed of our process, through adverts in the print media, our website, social media and through County Educational Officers.

By close of the application period, about 700 requests had been received from aspiring beneficiaries. This triggered the process of identifying the most deserving that culminated in interviews carried out in various counties. A total of 111 beneficiaries were selected to join our programme this year.

Quite often the interview sessions featured moving tales of destitution, lost hope and unfulfilled dreams. Students who had worked hard and scored highly were staring at joining the growing number of dropouts if no one took them in. For most, the interviews presented the only glimmer of light in their otherwise shattered dreams of joining the schools of their choice.

There were those who walked miles to try and secure the space and their dressing and weariness attested to that fact.

In Embu County one of the beneficiaries, 13 year-old Stacy Wanjiru, came with her ailing mother. The bright and confident girl was aware of her abject situation but this did not dampen her resolve to further her education and desire to become a doctor.

Stacy proved herself quite deserving and was awarded the scholarship. She is now a proud student pursuing her dreams at Kyeni Girls High school in Embu County. Unfortunately, her mother’s condition worsened and passed away just as Stacy was breaking for her mid-term, end of February 2018. Nonetheless, Stacy remains hopeful that her education will one day free her and her family from the yoke of poverty, ignorance and disease.

Her story is just one of the many tales encountered in our quest to fulfil our mandate of offering scholarships to bright but needy student’s countrywide.

As we continue to meet our mandate, the number of deserving students continues to increase. It breaks our hearts to see that some bright but needy students may never reach their potential because they did not get a hand to hold them. Hence, seek greater partnerships with donors and other corporate institutions to touch more of such hearts in the country. Our unwavering vision is to see all bright but needy students reach their potential.
On a visit to a publishing firm, one is met with the image of a quiet world of opulence – thick carpets, polished mahogany desks and well-resourced staff. To an aspiring author, especially one whose manuscript has stayed with a potential publisher for months, the wheels of publishing industry grind excruciatingly slowly, hoarding manuscripts that should have given us a new crop of world-beating literary greats.

Beneath the veneer of contentment one sees at a publishing firm, lies a series of challenges, ranging from tight deadlines, overstretched funds and seemingly impossible programmes, to stomach-churning uncertainty.

Nothing illustrates this better than the review of the school curriculum, of the type witnessed between 2003 and 2005, and the total education system overhaul already under way in Kenya.

In most cases, publishers are asked to prepare new books in accordance with a new syllabus and submit them within tight deadlines.

This sees many editors, designers, publishing managers and outsourced support staff reporting early and working late into the night to create extra time to prepare scripts for submission to government vetting bodies such as the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).

And with the Kenyan government tightening controls, especially with regard to the number of books to be approved for every level of learning, cut-throat competition for the reduced slots calls for measures to ensure the highest quality in terms of presentation, syllabus coverage, editing and adherence to specifications set out by KICD.

The rush to beat deadlines and maintain high standards means there is little time for cultural productions such as story books, plays, novels, short stories and (auto)biographies.

Publishers wishing to ensure continuity in cultural and general publishing, even as they rush to
beat KICD deadlines, would find themselves in a hard spot as their cash and other resources are over-stretched in times of curriculum overhaul.

Without this background, someone who may have submitted a script of, say 100 pages, may wonder how or why a whole publishing firm would take months to assess such a “small” manuscript.

The truth of the matter, other than demanding deadlines in school publishing, is that publishers receive many scripts in the East and Central Africa regions, mainly because there are few or no literary agents.

Again, publishing is a qualitative engagement. This means if a publisher has 200 scripts of a certain genre and needs to publish only five, it would be imprudent to read a few and select the five. This is because what is needed is not just five books, but the best five out of the pile. This means the publisher has to plough through the whole pile, keenly.

Actually, a diligent literary editor goes beyond the pile submitted to scout for any talent that could churn out a script that would make it to the top five. This ensures competitiveness. A conscientious literary editor can only sit back and relax when they know that not only has the whole pile been read, but there are no better scripts lying out there or going to the competition.

This kind of keenness in literary publishing is simply unattainable in times of curriculum overhaul, which means the manuscripts keep piling as the deadlines bite.
A treat for literary lovers

By Felix Musango

The elders expressed their protests with loud expletives and explicit curses. They violently hit the ground with their walking sticks while declaring that only death would remove them from that forest. And in any event, their wish was that when they died, their interment be in that forest. (P5)

These words capture the tension between the protagonists (the Konini elders) and the antagonists (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) in Ole Kulet’s The Elephant Dance. The book is an action-packed novel written with such linguistic and literary dexterity that any literary fan would love to read.

The story captures the conflict between a community that lives in Konini Forest and a set of self-proclaimed investors over 100 acres of forestland. These investors, who want the community out of the forest, are led by the trio of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The community responds to the threat with the wit and determination of a wounded lioness. They knock at government offices, talk to their learned children and invoke the cultural wisdom of their ancestors – all in an effort to retain what they believe to be theirs – the Konini land.

In the labyrinth of this conflict, akin to that in The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Bertolt Brecht, the reader is exposed to the rich African culture through the eyes of Maasai elders. Indeed, the young generation and scholars of oral literature would benefit a lot by reading this novel as it espouses and exposes traditional life in an African setting.

Indeed, the novel makes a good read for students of both literature and language. It is replete with varied language structures and vocabulary that students of language can copy. The author has also used varied stylistic devices that will benefit students of literature.

But the novel is not just for academics. It raises critical issues close to the hearts of the proletariat. For example, the words of Abednego leave the reader with the question: Is every development project claimed to be intended to improve the lives of the poor indeed well-meaning?

In his words:

‘Those are ignorant people. Next time they come, let us tell them we are friends who have come to help them out of their perennial problems. Let us tell them we shall build them cattle dips, construct water troughs and build and equip dispensaries for them.’ (p.22)

This book will make a great class reader both in secondary schools and universities. It is also a great tool of social awakening for the common man. As Prof Chris Wanjala put it: ‘The novel is quite a read for all of us who want to know about corruption and the wanton destruction of game by poachers in the country, and the way pastoral communities have co-existed with wildlife for centuries. It is at once a great source of information on the hunter-gathering communities of East Africa and a wake-up call on the misuse of the youth in profit-motivated activities by the region’s commercial and political elite.’ (Daily Nation, June 9, 2017)
Kenya’s focus on transformative education is seen in the funds allocated to the sector in successive financial years. In the 2017/2018 financial year, the proposed allocation to the Ministry of Education is Ksh202 billion out of a total national budget of Ksh2.62 trillion. The government has also scaled up capitation to schools from Ksh12,870 to Ksh22,244 per student. This is indeed commendable, considering the numerous competing expenditure centres in Kenya’s annual budget.

As a country that is following through on a number of reforms aimed at transforming its education sector, Kenya has put measures in place to achieve a student-book ratio of 1:1 in order to improve learning outcomes. In these measures, publishers have a big role to play and much more to gain.

Kenya has seen the need to improve access, quality and equity in education to create a labour force equipped with 21st century skills and competences necessary for economic, social, cultural, and economic transformation into a middle-

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After a successful implementation of the free primary education programme, the country is now working on free secondary education. Dr Fred Matiang’i, the former Education Cabinet Secretary, played a significant role in the reforms that are now taking shape in the sector. The current CS and successor to Dr Matiang’i, Ms Amina Mohamed has promised to sustain the reform agenda.

Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP)

In line with the desire to achieve education for all, the Ministry of Education has partnered with the World Bank to improve equity, and access to quality education in a programme dubbed Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP). This project is also meant to improve current skills gap in the quality of teaching. This is in compliance with World Bank’s Operational Policy 4.10 that seeks to promote inclusive development of the vulnerable and marginalised groups in society. The World Bank policy is in consonance with the letter and spirit of the bill of rights of the 2010 Kenya Constitution. It is also in concurrence with the Sustainable Development Goals and captures the spirit of the social pillar of Kenya’s Vision 2030 and Kenya’s medium-term plans.

Scope of coverage of SEQIP

At its inception, SEQIP had four main components: Improving the quality of teaching in targeted areas; system reform in curriculum and students’ assessment that are critical in aligning education outcomes with the needs of the Kenyan economy; support and project management, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation.

SEQIP has turned out to be a huge business opportunity for Kenyan publishers, whose revenue had started to shrink as the implementation of the new competence-based curriculum had rendered obsolete books in ECDE, Standard 1, 2 and 3. SWQIP will be implemented in 110 educationally and economically disadvantaged sub-counties in 30 counties, identified on the basis of high poverty levels, low retention rates in primary school and worrying transition rates to secondary school. The programme, to run for six years, will benefit 7,852 primary schools and 2,147 secondary schools.

The Ministry of Education
studied the World Bank model and decided to use it to roll out distribution of government approved books to all learners in the country, free of charge, in an attempt to achieve the 1:1 student-book ratio. As a result the government is saving over Ksh8 billion that would otherwise have been taken up by middlemen in the book supply chain or lost through malpractices in the procurement of books. Previously, school book procurement committees and unscrupulous school heads working in cahoots with rogue booksellers would rob government of millions of shillings through dubious deals.

**Rare opportunity for publishers**

SEQIP has turned out to be a huge business opportunity for Kenyan publishers, whose revenue had started to shrink as the implementation of the new competence-based curriculum had rendered obsolete books in ECDE, Standard 1, 2 and 3. Lack of access to high quality textbooks had been identified as a contributor to poor learning outcomes.

The World Bank and Ministry of Education, in collaboration with KICD, floated a competitive tender to publishers to print and distribute selected books to targeted schools. The textbooks are being procured for Standard Seven and Eight for all learners in all public schools in science, mathematics, Kiswahili and English; and English, biology, chemistry and mathematics for Form 1 to 4. Later the programme will be rolled out to the other subjects in phase two. Respective publishers with approved books in the Orange Book submitted proposals for the tender and awards were given to the publishers that had given the most competitive prices.

**Status of distribution of the approved books to schools**

The selected books are being distributed by the publishers. The first books to be distributed to schools were *English* by Kenya Literature Bureau, *Biology* by Kenya Literature Bureau, *Chemistry* by Kenya Literature Bureau, *Physics* by Moran East Africa Publishers, *Mathematics* by Oxford University Press and *Kiswahili* by Moran East Africa Publishers – all for Form One. All the concerned publishers distributed a million copies per title of the awarded books to schools before Form One students reported to school.

The distribution of the other books selected for Phase I of the project is ongoing and respective publishers are rushing to meet the March 31 printing and distribution deadline lest they be slapped with sanctions. Publishers who had fewer titles are through with the distribution while others who had a bigger distribution load have covered 40 per cent. On average, 65 per cent of the books for phase 1 have been printed.
In the new system, the government paid publishers for their books and the publishers delivered the textbooks directly to schools. Under the previous regime, the government would send money to schools, and teachers would then purchase books from booksellers.

When he locked out booksellers from the textbooks gravy train, Dr Matiang’i argued that some were complicit in a plot to deny school children essential reading materials. It was alleged that crooked headteachers would collude with corrupt booksellers to sell “air” to schools. In this scheme, booksellers would pretend to sell books to schools while schools would in turn pretend to buy the books. The two parties would then split the proceeds.

What this alleged plot meant was that the government, under the free education programme, would never attain the desired

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COMPETENCY BASED CURRICULUM BOOKS

Mountain Top Publishers Ltd.
Kigali, RWANDA.
EMAIL: info@mountainpublishers.com
WEBSITE: www.mountainpublishers.com
pupil-to-book ratio of 1:1. This also meant that without access to books, pupils would be denied quality education.

An unintended consequence of the collusion was that publishers took a financial hit as their books kept gathering dust in warehouses and bookstores. On paper, the books were supposed to have been purchased but publishers did not get the proceeds as the books never left the bookstores.

But to be fair to booksellers, not all of them were engaged in this vice. Pressure was put on the booksellers’ association to rein in rogue booksellers. Booksellers put up such a fight, promising to make things right. They even came up with rules, requiring only registered members to sell books under the free education programme. But all these fell on deaf ears.

Under Seqip (Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project), publishers who won the tenders were given money to deliver books directly to schools. The result of this is that the government ended up buying books at a 60 per cent “discount”.

With booksellers out of the equation, the 35 per cent of the cover price that goes to them ended up benefiting the government, as did the 25 per cent that publishers spend marketing their books. The reduced book prices also meant that the government was able to purchase more copies.

Having tasted the benefits of buying books at heavily discounted rates, it is doubtful the government will agree to go back to the old system. Should things remain as they are, many booksellers will find themselves out of business. Considering that the public school market constitutes about 60 per cent of all book sales, the effect will be huge.

Without the public school market, booksellers will be left with private schools, general readership and revision books. However, if booksellers continue to be locked out, the government will find itself answering to charges of killing legitimate businesses.

The government defends itself against this accusation by arguing that it is not mandatory for it to use booksellers to deliver books to schools. Governments in Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, South Sudan, Zambia, Rwanda, India and even the US, deliver books directly to schools.

From the look of things, and if the reforms in the education sector are entrenched, as Cabinet Secretary Amb Amina Mohamed has promised, booksellers with have to tighten their belts and brace for tough times ahead.
• User-friendly, colourful, elaborate and easy to follow.
• Written in simple but articulate language.
• Boldly illustrated, making learning a visual delight.
• Comprehensive and cover the curriculum, sufficiently addressing the relevant skills and intended learning outcomes.
• Concise, with sufficient learning experiences and revision activities.
• Helpful, promoting positive values and attitudes.
• Current, covering the Pertinent and Contemporary Issues (PCIs) affecting learners today.

The books are written by experienced teachers with a track record of assisting learners realise excellent performance and learning outcomes.
New Curriculum the hottest subject among publishers

The new curriculum is the hottest subject among publishers at the moment even as questions over payment and delivery of books to schools remain unanswered. Many publishers bid for tenders – opened in September 2017 – to supply the books. Come December, books by 22 publishers were approved. But now, it is not clear how the government will finance the purchase and distribution of books, leave alone how the books will get to schools.

Will the government pay publishers to deliver books directly to schools or will it send money to schools to purchase the books from booksellers?

New Appointments

The publishing sector is reporting new faces in the management composition of a number of firms. Victor Lomaria became MD of Kenya Literature Bureau, taking over from Eve Obara, who contested and won the Kasipul Kabondo Parliamentary seat, in Homa Bay County. Joan Muse became new General Manager Queenex Publishers.

Herculean task ahead for Matiangi’s Successor

With the transfer of the tough-talking, no-nonsense Dr Fred Matiang’i from the Ministry of Education to that of Interior, his replacement, Ms Amina Mohamed, faces the herculean task of following up on the reforms he started at the ministry. She has maintained that the reforms undertaken by her predecessor will be carried through.

Among other things Dr Matiang’i stared down cartels in the examinations sector and chased them out of town. In publishing, Dr Matiang’i rubbed a number of publishers the wrong way with his directive that publishers deliver books directly to schools.

Dr Matiang’i’s main grouse was pilferage of books meant to be delivered to schools in cases where rogue booksellers colluded with corrupt headteachers to deliver “air” to schools.
Booksellers interests hang on the balance

Last year, then Education CS Dr Fred Matiang’i, had his way, resulting in a change in how books are supplied to schools. Publishers were then invited to submit their bids. The first phase involved books from Standard Seven to Form Four under the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP).

SEQIP was funded by the World Bank on a 70:30 basis, with the government taking care of the 30 per cent. The World Bank’s 70 per cent would cater for 30 counties while the government would take care of the remaining 17 counties.

Publishers whose bids were approved received money from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), then proceeded to distribute the books to schools. Under the scheme, each pupil got one textbook per subject.

When he launched the book purchase programme, President Uhuru Kenyatta remarked at how cheaply the government had acquired the books. This was made possible by knocking out booksellers and marketing, or 60 per cent of the cost of books (in the book chain, booksellers take up to 35 per cent of the cover price while marketing accounts for about 25 per cent).

Price was key in determining who won the tender; the lower the price, the higher the chances of clinching the tender. That is how KLB got the bulk of the tenders.

Still, should this method of book distribution be adopted, questions will be raised about the role of booksellers, who are now saying that the government wants to drive them out of business.

How the interests of booksellers will be balanced with the needs to have books in schools remains to be seen.

KPA AGM

Towards the end of last year, KPA held its Annual General Meeting to, among other things, elect new officials.

In the elections, Lawrence Njagi returned to the helm of the publishers’ body when David Waweru, who had who had just completed his first term as chairman, did not defend his seat. This amounted to a vote of confidence in Mr Njagi, who had completed his mandatory two terms as chairman, prior to Mr Waweru’s election.

In 2005, an almost similar thing occurred when Mr David Muita, after serving his two terms, found himself back as chair, following the resignation of Barack Mulluka, who was then the managing director of East African Educational Publishers.

Council members who were elected alongside Mr Njagi include Simon Sossion (Spotlight), who was retained as vice chair. Others are Kiarie Kamau (EAEP), John Mwazemba (OUP) as treasurer, Mary Maina (Moran), Musyoki Muli (Evangel/Spearsharp) and Simon Ngigi (Longhorn).
Parents can have fun exploring new curriculum with their children

By Picoty Ng’eno Rotich

“Do not be quick to tell them that a spoon is smooth while a pineapple is rough then sign off the diaries.”
One Wednesday evening as I was checking my children’s school diaries, I asked my daughters, who are in Pre-Primary 1 class, what they had learned in school that day. That week they had been learning about “Who God is”. This is how the conversation went:

Mom: What did you learn in school today?
Cherop: Mom, God is our heavenly father.
Mom: Good.
Kaku: Mom, God was in church today!
Cherop: Yes, God was in church today.
Mom: Wow! Which God, Cherop?
Kaku: You don’t know that God that puts on Jesus’ clothes?
Cherop: Yes Mom, and he lives behind the school compound!
Mom: Huh! (Laughing out loudly)

(Every Wednesday, the children attend Mass conducted by a Catholic priest, usually referred to as ‘Father’. He wears white robes. My children then concluded that he was ‘God’. After all he is called ‘Father’.)

This conversation opened my eyes to the significance of parental engagement in children’s learning. The concept of God is an abstract thing to young children but I understood the basis of their conclusion. They were learning about a sub-strand in CRE Activities where learners are expected to know “Who God is” and “Where God lives”. I then spent the next hour discussing God with them while correcting their misconceptions.

As someone who has interacted with curriculum designs during book development, and a parent whose children started school under the new curriculum, I can confidently share several insights with other parents in regard to the competency-based curriculum.

Parents/caregivers are actively engaged in the learning process. You probably have noticed that your child’s homework has changed from what it used to be. Homework now consists of

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activities that engage both the parent and the child. Therefore, find out what your child learns in school everyday. Ask them: “What did you learn in school today?” Allow them to tell you what they know before you give your input.

For example, you could be asked to help your child/children practise to wash hands, tell a story, or identify things that are rough or smooth within the homestead. Do not be quick to tell them that a spoon is smooth while a pineapple is rough then sign off the diaries. Children are natural explorers. Give them an opportunity to construct their own knowledge through exploration and experiential learning. Set up a rich and conducive environment by providing a variety of materials of different textures.

Let your child explore to identify on his or her own the smooth or rough things. Show interest by encouraging their curiosity as you have fun together. Encourage them to develop their own judgement about their findings and communicate them. Pay attention as they talk; this way, you reinforce the acquisition of core competencies such as communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination, as well as self-efficacy. It also helps you identify their potential, gifts and talents early in life.

On account of this rationale, I encourage all parents, however busy, to ensure they are actively involved in their children’s education. As parents, we have a shared responsibility with the school to ensure our children attain excellence. Therefore, let us embrace this added role with enthusiasm. Seek to know what is expected of your child in school. Attend meetings organised by the school to get opportunities that will empower you to contribute meaningfully to the learning outcomes of your child. Collaborate with teachers and consistently do follow-up on your child’s progress. Above all, know and be a friend to your child.

Picoty Ng’eno Rotich
The writer is a senior editor - Early Childhood Development and Education, Longhorn Publishers
picotyngeneno@gmail.com
Text Book Centre Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature was held at the Nairobi International Book Fair towards the end of September 2017.

The following titles emerged winners:

**Adult Category in English**
*The Elephant Dance* by H. Ole Kulet - Longhorn Publishers

**Adult Category in Kiswahili**
*Mashetani wa Alepo* by Tom Olali – Jomo Kenyatta Foundation

**Youth Category in Kiswahili**
*Majilio ya Mkombozi* by Mwenda Mbatiah - Moran Publishers

**Youth Category in English**
*Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* by Goro wa Kamau – Longhorn Publishers

**Children Category in English**
*Koko Riko* by Muthoni Muchemi – Storymoja

This year’s Nairobi International Book Fair will host the awarding of the Wahome Mutahi Literary Prize.

Still on awards, 2018 will witness a brand new literary prize that is in keeping with technological trends. KPA and Centum Investments Limited will host the inaugural Centum Digital Literary Awards. There will be English and Kiswahili prize for adults and similar ones for children’s writing. Winners in the adult categories will pocket Ksh700,000, while those in the children’s categories will take home Ksh300,000.

Kindly send brief stories of achievements, book releases, book/product launches or interesting goings-on in the publishing world to josengunjiri@gmail.com, info@kenyapublishers.org. They will be published in subsequent editions of this publication.
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1. Upon purchase, scratch the panel on the cover to reveal a sixteen PIN number.
2. Send an SMS of the PIN number to 22776. (Free-of-charge).
3. You will instantly receive an SMS confirming if the book is genuine or not.
4. If the book is not genuine, kindly return to the bookseller and demand a refund.

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