



**Republic of Kenya**

**FINAL DRAFT**

**THE NATIONAL  
SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION POLICY  
FRAMEWORK**

Ministry of Education

[JULY 2009](#)

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBO	- Community Based Organization
CSO	- Civil Society Organization
EARC	- Educational Assessment and Resource Centre
ECDE	- Early Childhood Development Education
EFA	- Education For All
FBO	- Faith Based Organization
FPE	- Free Primary Education
HI	- Hearing Impaired
HIT-MAC	- High Impact Trainers and Management Consultants
ICT	- Information Communication and Technology
IT	- Itinerant Teachers
KIE	- Kenya Institute of Education
KISE	- Kenya Institute of Special Education
KU	- Kenyatta University
KNEC	- Kenya National Examination Council
KSL	- Kenyan Sign Language
MDGs	- Millennium Development Goals
MOE	- Ministry of Education
NGO	- Non Governmental Organization
PS	- Permanent Secretary
SAGA	- Semi Autonomous Government Agency
SNE	- Special Needs Education
SSI	- Sight Savers International
TTC	- Teacher Training College
TSC	- Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	- Universal Primary Education
VI	- Visual Impairment
VSO	- Voluntary Service Organization

## **Definition of Key Terms**

**Assistive Devices:** These are equipment aimed at reducing effects of disabilities resulting from impairments. They enhance functional abilities of persons with special needs. Examples are computers with software for persons with special needs, text phones for the deaf, hearing aids for persons with hearing impairment, magnifying glasses for persons with low vision and wheelchairs for persons with mobility difficulties, among others.

**Community Based Rehabilitation:** This is a strategy within general community development for habilitation and rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all people with disabilities. It covers services provided for persons with disabilities and their families within their own community.

**Curriculum:** This is all the organized experiences that schools provide to help children learn and develop. It includes the subjects taught, the content, the school environment and other organized learning enhancement activities that take place outside the classroom.

**Disability:** This is lack or restriction of ability to perform an activity in the manner within the range considered normal within the cultural context of the human being.

**Inclusion:** This is a philosophy which focuses on the process of adjusting the home, the school, and the society so that all the individuals, regardless of their differences, can have the opportunity to interact, play, learn, work and experience the feeling of belonging and experiment to develop in accordance with their potentials and difficulties.

**Inclusive Education:** This is an approach in which learners with disabilities and special needs, regardless of age and disability, are provided with appropriate education within regular schools.

**Integration:** This is a process through which learners with and or without special needs are taught together to the maximum extent possible in a least restrictive environment. The child is expected to adapt to the environment.

**Intervention Programs:** These are programs that include assessment, placement and adaptation of the curriculum, environment and facilities to ensure that they are disability friendly and can accommodate the various categories of learners with special needs.

**Regular Schools:** These are institutions referred to as mainstream schools and normally admit learners who are not disabled.

**Resource Teacher:** This is a teacher who has received training in special needs education and is deployed to advise and assist learners with special needs and disabilities, teachers and other service providers in one or more institutions.

**Sign Language:** This is a visual and or tactile language that uses manual signs that have structure and meaning like other languages. In this case, the primary or first language of deaf children in Kenya is the Kenyan Sign language, which is used for instruction and communication within and outside the school environment..

**Special Schools:** These are schools set aside to offer education to children with special needs in education, based on their respective disability.

**Special Units/Special Classes:** These are classes set aside either in regular or special schools to cater for needs of learners with special needs. The classes should not be less than 15 children.

**Special Needs Education:** This is education which provides appropriate modification in curriculum delivery methods, educational resources, medium of communication or the learning environment in order to cater for individual differences in learning.

**Special needs education teacher:** This is a teacher who is trained to teach and support learners with special needs in education.

**Support Staff:** These are personnel who are employed to assist learners with special needs and disabilities in institutions and include cooks, house mothers/fathers, drivers and others.

**Specialist Support Staff:** These are trained personnel employed/deployed to provide professionally recognized services, other than teaching, to learners with special needs and disabilities. These include sign language interpreters, sighted guides, refractionists, braillists, transcribers, readers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, counselors, orientation and mobility trainers and ICT experts.

**Teacher Aides:** Staff that assist teachers in special needs education to carry out some of the duties due to the diversity of the learner's needs.

**Tactile:** These are formats that facilitate reading through the use of touch such as Braille, embossed maps and touch sign for the deaf blind and the blind.

## **Foreword**

The Government of Kenya recognizes the importance of Special Needs Education as a crucial subsector for accelerating the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005 on “A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research” outlines the vision of our education sector as a major enabler of our youth. This vision will be achieved through the provision of quality education that is accessible and relevant to the lives of all children including those with Special Needs. Such an education will contribute significantly towards provision of employment opportunities and self-reliance.

Our policy framework resulted from active participation of all sector stakeholders in Kenya and represents a consensus of stakeholders on the provision of Special Needs Education. It addresses some of the critical issues which determine delivery of quality and relevant education to these and other learners. For this reason we have no doubt that we are on the right path towards the realization of our set targets.

Successful implementation of this policy framework is expected to improve the quality and access to education provided to children with special needs. It also addresses issues of equity and improvement of learning environments in all schools. This will ensure that inclusive education becomes a reality and consequently improves the participation and involvement of people with special needs in national development in general.

Given the above, I urge all of our partners to read this policy document and give us their comments. I also appeal to you all to support us in our noble undertaking of providing education to all.

**HON. AMB. PROF. SAM K. ONGERI, EGH, MP  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**



## **PREFACE**

Education plays an important role in addressing the issues that impede the education of children with special needs in Kenya. The overall goal of the Ministry of Education is to provide equal access to education to all learners irrespective of their physical or mental state in pursuit of the government's commitment to achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015.

Significant gains have been realized in the provision of education to children with special needs over the past six years. Among the major milestones in special needs education are the Disability Act 2003, The Report of the Taskforce on Special Needs Education appraisal exercise of 2003, increased funding to SNE and increased support to teacher training for SNE at KISE.

The Ministry of Education together with stakeholders and partners has developed the National Special Needs Education (SNE) policy framework to address critical issues related to education for learners with special needs. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Ministry of Education staff and other stakeholders in the provision of education to these learners. It aims at ensuring that learners with special needs fully participate and are treated equally in learning activities at all levels.

It is our expectation that this policy will enhance access, transition rates and retention of learners with special needs in formal learning institutions. Successful implementation of the policy hinges on unrelenting and concerted efforts by SNE providers and stakeholders.

It is imperative that all providers of education and training services read and understand this policy document so that they can fully comprehend the intentions of the Government and what is expected of them.

**PROF. KAREGA MUTAHI, CBS**  
**PERMANENT SECRETARY**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

## Acknowledgements

The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework is a product of the experiences, practice and collaborative effort of various stakeholders and Ministry of Education officials. It is with the support of each and every one of all key stakeholders that this framework has been made a reality.

Participants in stakeholders' meetings included representatives of various Ministry of Education directorates, NGOs, CBOs, development partners, SNE teachers, EARC officers and parents.

We acknowledge the support from Salvation Army, Sight Savers International, Voluntary Services Overseas, Kenya Institute of Special Education, Kenyatta, Maseno and Cambridge Universities, Mr. Alfred Muli, Dr. Tororei and Mr. Sitati Makhandia of HIT-MAC consultants limited who were constantly available for consultation, financial and technical assistance.

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Last but not least I would like to thank the following members of the Technical Committee on SNE policy for developing the comprehensive National SNE Policy Framework;

Mr. H. S. Abdi	- MOE - SNE
Mr. Jackson Musungu	- MOE – SNE
Mr. Musa Wambua	- MOE – SNE
The late Simon Muhongo	- formerly of MOE – SNE
Mr. Boniface Lentoimaga	- MOE – SNE
Mr. K. P. Yator	- MOE – PE

Mrs. Anne Musalia	- MOE – DQAS
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Miss Winnie Muthumbi	- MOE-SNE (Retired)
Ms. Elizabeth Mbui	- MOE – SNE
Ms. Catherine Rintari	- MOE – SNE

**PROF. GEORGE I. GODIA, EBS**  
**EDUCATION SECRETARY**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **SCOPE**

The technical committee in Special Needs Education policy examined the already existing government policy documents in education and related legislation.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The committee organized 8 workshops, one in every province, to collect views and ideas from various stakeholders in Special Needs Education. During the hearings, the committee received oral and written presentations from organizations, NGOs, Societies faith led organizations government officers and individuals.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The information collected during the public hearings and written memoranda were analyzed and examined using the content analysis method.

### **VALIDATION**

Stakeholders were again invited for a workshop to validate the information contained in the draft policy document.

### **EDITING**

After validation, the committee edited the document and presented it to the Ministry's senior management for input, approval and printing.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

People with disabilities (PWD) make up 10% of the total population of Kenya, approximately 3.5 million people (WHO 2006). They are the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups and experience discrimination at all levels of society. A complex web of economic and social issues including gender inequality, create barriers within mainstream education, social and economic life to learners with special needs and disabilities. Therefore a disproportionate numbers of children and adult with special needs are unable to access quality education and are illiterate.

Disabled persons, especially children, face a host of problems as a result of their special needs. Many children with special needs live in hostile, bleak environments, where their safety and security is compromised and their future jeopardized. They are disempowered and marginalized, have no opportunity for advancement and largely remain voiceless as a result of inbuilt social, cultural, economic prejudices, violence and abuse. Their rights are usually violated since existing legislation suffers slow implementation.

Kenya earliest efforts for organized care and provision of special needs education dates back to the late 1940s, with much involvement of the religious institutions, notably the Salvation Army Church and much later the Anglican, the Catholic, the Methodist and the Presbyterian churches in establishing special schools and institutions for children with visual, hearing, physical and mental disabilities in various parts of the country where they had mission. Since then the management of most of these institutions has been taken over by the Ministry of Education.

In 1986 the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) was established to build the capacity of Special Needs Education (SNE) service providers through teacher training/teacher in-servicing and research.

Since the introduction of FPE in 2003 the Ministry of Education has undertaken several measures to enable children with special needs access

education. Amongst the key milestones of the Ministry efforts is the setting up of a task force (Dr. Kochung Taskforce 2003) whose objectives was to appraise the status of special education in the country. The Dr. Kochung report's key recommendations were as follows;

1. Training and in-service of teachers for children with Special Needs
2. Strengthening Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs) through increased budgetary allocation and equipping
3. Carrying out of special needs National Survey to establish population of Special Needs children in and out of school and an inventory of assistive devices and equipment available in our schools.
4. Special Needs schools be made barriers free to enhance access.

The implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) led to an influx and inclusion of new categories of Special Needs Children such as autistic children, those with down syndrome, cerebral palsy, loco-motor impairment, maladjusted children, multiple handicapped children and gifted and talented learners in public schools. These increased demands from parents and teachers overstretched the ministry's resources.

The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 underscored the importance of Special Needs Education as human capital development that empowers those most likely to be marginalized to participate in mainstream education sector.

The United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disability (UNCRPWD) 2006 further affirms the right to education in an inclusive setting for all children. The focus here is to enable children with special needs to enroll in schools of their choice within their localities. Therefore, there is need to remove barriers within the education system that bars them from inclusiveness and equity.

The Ministry of Education faces a number of challenges in its effort to address barriers to education for children with Special Needs. These include issues relating to;

- Access
- Equity
- Quality
- Relevance
- Attitude
- Stigma
- Discrimination
- Cultural/taboo
- Skills
- Physical environment
- Physical facilities
- Poverty

The government is committed to provision of education and protection of the rights of all its citizen including those with special needs as stipulated in all international conventions and Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005.

In this endeavor the Ministry of Education has developed this policy document in order to provide a framework for the planning and implementation of Special Needs Education devoid of all barriers that inhibit access to quality and relevant education.

# CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Background

Education is a prerequisite to national development. Seen in this light, education is an indispensable means of unlocking and protecting human rights since it provides the environment required for securing good health, liberty, security, economic well-being, and participation in social and political activities.

Good performance in education, training and research sectors immensely contributes to any country's national development. Performing education sectors produce appropriate human resource capital that is integral in spurring productivity. Improved national productivity is an important channel in the elimination of poverty, disease and ignorance, hence improving human welfare.

The Government of Kenya is committed to the provision of equal access to quality and relevant education and training opportunities to ALL Kenyans. Towards this goal, the government has ratified and domesticated various global policy frameworks in education. The government signed Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), consequently recognizing and committing itself to the right of every child to access education. The Article recognizes the intrinsic human value of education, underpinned by strong moral and legal foundations. Other international policy frameworks ratified and signed by the government include, (but are not limited to) the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Salamanca Statement (1994), the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1999), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) by 2015.

At independence in 1963, the government recognized education as one of the basic human rights and hence a powerful vehicle for human resource and national development. This recognition has been demonstrated by the government's expansion of schools and other



educational facilities. In 1963, the country had 6, 058 primary and 151 secondary schools with respective enrolments of 891, 553 and 30, 121 pupils. The government declared Free Primary Education (FPE) for ALL Kenyan children in 2003. Implementation of FPE is critical to the attainment of Universal Primary Education which is a key milestone towards achievement of the EFA goals. By 2008, these numbers had increased to 18,600 public and 1,839 private primary schools with a total enrolment of 8,563,821 pupils. Secondary schools had increased to 3,621 public and 490 private schools with an enrolment of 1,382,211 students. This expansion has not been without major challenges, one of which is equity especially in relation to learners with special needs and disabilities.

Educational opportunities for children (learners) with special needs and disabilities are a major challenge to the education sector. The national education system has been characterized by inadequate systems and facilities that respond to the challenges faced by learners with special needs and disabilities. Rule number 6 of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities, not only affirms the equal rights of children, youth and adults with handicaps to education, but also states that education should be provided “in integrated school settings” and “in the general school setting”. There is need to link inclusive education with wider community-based programmes for Persons with special needs and disabilities.

### **1.1 Status of Special Needs Education in Kenya**

Special needs education started in Kenya after the end of the Second World War and has since been offered mainly to four categories of children with disabilities, namely; children with hearing impairment, mental handicap, visual impairment and those with physical handicap. Education to these children was only offered in special schools until the 1970s when units and integrated programmes were initiated. Special needs education has continued to expand and currently includes Learners with/who:

1. Hearing impairments
2. Visual impairments

3. Physical impairments
4. Cerebral palsy
5. Epilepsy
6. Mental handicaps
7. Downs Syndrome
8. Autism
9. Emotional and behavioral disorders
10. Learning disabilities (LD)
11. Speech and language disorders.
12. Multiple handicaps
13. Albinism
14. Other health impairments
15. Are gifted and talented
16. Are deafblind
17. Are orphaned
18. Are abused
19. Are living in the streets
20. Are heading households
21. Are of nomadic / pastoral communities
22. Are Internally displaced

However, educational opportunities for learners with special needs and disabilities are a major challenge to the education sector. Majority of learners with Special Needs and Disabilities in Kenya do not access educational services. For instance, in 1999 there were only 22,000 learners with special needs and disabilities enrolled in special schools, units and integrated programs. This number rose to 26,885 in 2003 and 45,000 in 2008, which compares poorly with the proportion in general education.

In 2008 there were 1341 special units and 114 public special schools in the country which include vocational and technical institutions that cater for learners with special needs and disabilities. This is still inadequate despite the government's commitment to support the provision of equal access to education by all children. The government's commitment to special needs education has been demonstrated through establishment of

a special needs education section and the appointment of a Special Needs Education Inspector in 1975 and 1978 respectively at MOE headquarters. The government further posted a special needs education specialist at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) in 1977. Other developments included the preparation of teachers of learners with special needs and disabilities that have led to the establishment of Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) and departments of special needs education at Kenyatta, Moi, Maseno and Methodist Universities.

In view of the above, this situation calls for a re-appraisal of available approaches to expand Special Needs Education services so as to achieve an enrolment rate at par with that of other children. To attain this, Kenya needs to ensure the realization of inclusive education and simultaneously develop and implement guidelines that mainstream special needs education at all levels of the education system.

## **1.2 Situational Analysis**

Since independence there have been various policy recommendations given by education commissions and committees. Recommendations from these commissions have been used to direct and advise on the provision of education to learners with special needs and disabilities. However, most of these past recommendations have not been put into a legal document or harmonized for smooth provision of special needs education.

In order to implement to the recommendations of the various committees and commissions and to respond to the needs of stakeholders in education, particularly those with special needs in Kenya, there is need for a clear vision and goal on SNE to be entrenched in the policy document.

The National SNE policy framework therefore will serve to harmonize education service provision for learners with special needs and disabilities in Kenya. The policy shall provide a comprehensive framework of the principles and strategies to be followed in order to create equal access to quality and relevant education and training for these learners. It will also

acknowledge other initiatives that are ongoing to bridge any gaps arising out of provision of SNE, identifying extra measures to be taken by the government and other stakeholders to address inequities and inequalities.

### **1.3 Policy and Legal Context**

The government of Kenya is committed to the protection and provision of equal opportunities to persons with special needs and disabilities. The government has developed a number of policy guidelines for SNE dating back to 1964. These include: Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled chaired by Ngala Mwendwa (1964), Kenya Education Commission chaired by Ominde (1964), National Education Commission on Education Objectives and Policies (Gachathi Report, 1976). Other commissions that have given policy guidelines on special needs education include: The Presidential Working Committee on Education and Training for the next Decade and Beyond (Kamunge Report, 1988); Commission of Enquiry into Education Systems (Koech Report, 1999) and the Task Force on Special Needs Education (Kochung Report, 2003).

The work of the Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled (Hon. Ngala Mwendwa, 1964) resulted in the formulation of Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1968. The Ominde report (Kenya Education Commission, 1964) recommended that children with mild handicaps be integrated to learn in regular schools. The National Education Commission (the Gachathi Report, 1976) recommended several measures to address SNE. These included coordination of early intervention and assessment of children with special needs, creation of public awareness on causes of disabilities to promote prevention, research to determine the nature and extend of handicaps for provision of SNE, establishment of ECDE programs as part of special schools and development of policy for integrating learners with special needs.

The Education Act - Cap 211 (Revised edition – 1980) states in part that “no pupil shall be refused admission to, or excluded from, the school on any grounds of sex, race or colour or on any other than reasonable

grounds” (Admission and removal of pupils). This in essence affirms the principle of inclusive education in Kenyan learning institutions.

The Presidential Working Committee on Education And Training For This Decade And Beyond, (The Kamunge Report, 1988), emphasized deployment of SNE inspectors at district level and The Totally Integrated Quality Education And Training Taskforce (The Koech report, 1999) recommended the establishment of a national special education advisory board and noted that there was no comprehensive SNE policy or legal framework on SNE despite existence of various policy guidelines.

The Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) further provides a comprehensive legal framework which outlaws all forms of discriminative treatment of persons with special needs and disabilities. This includes, among others, access to education and training. It provides for adaptation of infrastructural, socio-economic and environmental facilities to ensure a conducive environment for persons with special needs and disabilities. The Children’s Act (2001) harmonizes all existing laws and policies on children into one document and aims at improving the well being of ALL children irrespective of whether they are disabled or not.

The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 states in part the overall government policy direction on learners with special needs and disabilities. It sets out clear policy guidelines for all education sub-sectors, including SNE and further underscores the government’s commitment to ensuring that learners with special needs and disabilities have equal access to quality and relevant education. It provides the overall policy framework for the education sector and references the necessary legal context within which education and training, including SNE, shall be designed, developed and implemented in Kenya.

The gender policy in education singles out education for learners with special needs and disabilities as an area of specific focus. This policy states in part that to increase participation, retention and completion for

learners with special needs and disabilities, the government should provide an enabling (legal and policy) environment. This should be done through flexing curriculum, providing trained personnel, equipment and facilities and ensuring accommodative physical infrastructure for learners with special needs and disabilities. There is also need to create public awareness on causes of special needs and disabilities especially in rural areas. Coordination of early intervention and assessment of children with special needs and disabilities should be reinforced.

#### **1.4 Ongoing Initiatives, Disparities and Underlying Causes**

Early initiatives for provision of services to persons with special needs and disabilities were mostly undertaken by Faith Based Organizations such as the Salvation Army, the Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist Churches. Other initiatives included the Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB), Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK), Kenya Society for the Mentally Handicapped (KSMH) and the Kenya Society for Deaf Children (KSDC). The Government has supported the efforts of these players through provision of financial, technical and human resource support, as well as development of an enabling environment to facilitate their work. Currently, majority of SNE institutions are run by the government in collaboration with other service providers.

Although the Government has made progress in the provision of educational services for persons with special needs and disabilities, it has also faced various challenges. These include:

1. Inadequate data on children with special educational needs and disabilities,
2. Lack of a comprehensive policy on SNE and proper guidelines on mainstreaming of special needs education at all levels and in the country.
3. Lack of appropriate tools and skills for early identification and assessment;
4. Inadequate physical infrastructure, teaching/learning materials and facilities appropriate for SNE learners

5. Inadequate skilled manpower and inappropriate placement of children with special needs and disabilities

The development of the National Special Needs Education Policy Framework in Kenya is taking place at a time when the international community is in agreement that education is the main driver in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In an attempt to provide quality special needs education, the government has committed itself towards inclusive education and has set out to re-examine the provision of education to all through review of existing physical facilities, curriculum, instruction materials and teacher preparation to ensure that all learners have equal access to quality and relevant education.

### **1.5 Rationale for a Comprehensive Special Needs Education Policy**

Universal primary education is a global goal. Providing education as a right is an obligation of all governments and requires that they translate their national commitments into legislation. This goal will only be achieved when the universal right to education extends to individuals with special needs and disabilities in the country.

While the government is providing Free Primary Education for all Kenyan children, lack of clear policy guidelines for the provision of Special Needs Education has resulted in situations where special schools and training institutions are established without proper coordination. Poor coordination of activities of SNE service providers has led to duplication, substandard and unregulated provision of services to learners with special needs and disabilities. This hinders the realization of the Ministry of Education's goal of providing accessible quality services to learners with special needs and disabilities. Major challenges have been in the areas of staffing, training, quality assurance, research, examinations, curriculum development and teaching/learning materials. It is against this background that the Government has embarked on the development of the Special Needs Education Policy.

Special Needs Education has been provided on the basis of circulars and general education policy and statements, which have not been translated into a comprehensive policy. The government is aware of this challenge and has recommended in various policy documents the need for developing a comprehensive SNE policy. Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 specifically states the government's aim to develop a comprehensive SNE policy that covers all aspects and levels of education. The government commits to develop and implement appropriate ECDE programs for children with special needs and disabilities, including the marginalized, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It further commits itself to develop strategies to enhance participation of children in special circumstances and work with partners to ensure barrier free primary schools for those with special needs and disabilities. Towards this end, the government undertakes to provide special capitation grants for special needs education. Despite these measures and many others that the government is implementing, access to special education for those with special needs remains limited.

It is therefore imperative to develop a national policy that comprehensively defines and identifies areas of special needs. A comprehensive SNE policy framework is essential to guide the work of all actors involved in provision of special needs education to ensure consistency and a coordinated implementation. The policy is important in the elimination of disparities and enhancement of equity and equality for all learners, especially inclusion of learners with special needs and disabilities in the education system.

## **1.6 Goal and Objectives**

The overall goal of education is to achieve education for all by 2015 in line with the national and global commitment. The government's vision is to have globally competitive **Quality Education, Training and Research for Sustainable Development**. Towards this end, the MOE is mandated to work with other education stakeholders to provide, promote and coordinate quality life-long education, training and research for Kenya's sustainable development and responsible citizenry for ALL.



## **Vision**

In line with the government's overall goal for education, the SNE sub-sector's vision is to have:

**“A Society in which ALL persons regardless of their disabilities and special needs achieve education to realize their full potential”**

## **Mission**

To create a conducive environment for learners with special needs and disabilities in order for them to have equal access to quality and relevant education and training.

## **Core Values**

The National SNE policy framework implementation has been guided by the following core values

1. Commitment and service to learners with special needs.
2. Respect for diversity.
3. Self motivation for multi-tasking and skillfulness as relevant to learners with special needs.
4. Sacrifice and resilience.
5. Honesty in service provision.
6. Empathy and solidarity with people with Special Needs.
7. Self – motivation for guiding and counseling learners with special needs.

## **Overall objectives**

The National SNE policy framework is hinged on and aim to achieve the following overarching objectives at all times;

1. To enhance early identification, assessment, intervention, placement, habilitation and rehabilitation of learners with special needs and disabilities.
2. To promote awareness on the educational needs and capabilities of persons with special learning needs and disabilities.
3. To promote and facilitate inclusion of children with special needs in formal and non-formal education and training.

4. To put in place measures to promote barrier free environment for learners with special needs in ALL learning institutions.
5. To provide and promote the use of specialized facilities, services, assistive devices and technology, equipment and teaching / learning materials.
6. To promote quality, relevant and holistic education in ALL learning institutions for learners with special needs and disabilities.
7. To develop capacity of SNE professionals, specialists and essential service providers to deliver quality services to learners with special needs and disabilities.
8. To enhance collaboration and networking, strategic partnerships and participation of stakeholders including learners with special needs and disabilities in provision of SNE services.
9. To support research and development on SNE, documentation and dissemination of relevant information.
10. To promote effective management and coordination of SNE and other related services.
11. To provide education that promotes spiritual growth and value development.

### **1.7 Scope of the Special Needs Education Policy**

The policy applies to all educational, training and research activities, educational intervention programs of special needs and disabilities in Kenya.

The policy will apply to (but not limited to) the following key stakeholders:

1. Public and private service providers to learners (individuals) with special needs and disabilities.
2. Development Partners, CBOs, NGOs, CSOs and FBOs.
3. Learners with and without special needs and disabilities.
4. Heads and managers of educational institutions.
5. Ministry of Education, other government ministries/departments and SAGAs.
6. Other SNE service providers

## 7. Parents and guardians

Thematically, the policy covers the following sub-sectors:- Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE), Primary, Secondary, Adult and Continuing Education (ACE), Non-formal Education, Technical, Industrial and Vocational Entrepreneurship and Training (TIVET), Teacher Education and Training and all other Tertiary institutions including universities. In line with the global and national trends, the policy will address issues of access, equity, retention, transition, relevance and quality of education in SNE. Application and implementation in relation to financing, management and coordination and governance of SNE at all levels is covered within this policy.

### **1.8 Guiding Principles**

In coming up with this policy document, the following guiding principles have been taken into consideration:

1. Professional delivery of services to the learners with special needs and disabilities for the best of their interests.
2. Equal access to all educational institutions by learners with special needs and disabilities
3. Equitable access to services that meet the needs of individual learners with special needs and disabilities within diverse learning environments.
4. Non-discrimination in enrolment and retention of learners with special needs and disabilities in any institution of learning.
5. Barrier free transition of learners with special needs and disabilities through the various educational levels in accordance with their abilities.
6. Learner – centered curriculum and responsive learning systems and materials.
7. Holistic realization of the full potential of learners with special needs and disabilities.
8. Protection of the human dignity and rights of learners with special needs and disabilities.

9. Gender parity applying equally to men, women, boys and girls with special needs and disabilities.
10. Active and proactive primary role of parents and families as caregivers and health providers of their children.
11. Equal opportunities for all learners with Special Needs.

## **2.0 CHAPTER TWO – POLICY PROVISIONS**

### **Introduction**

The National SNE policy framework addresses the following 15 target areas which have been incorporated as policy provisions. The policy provisions discussed in this chapter will be interpreted to mean areas of intervention covered by this policy.

1. Assessment and intervention
2. Access to quality and relevant education
3. Conducive environment, health and safety (adaptation of facilities)
4. Specialized facilities and technology
5. Inclusive education
6. Curriculum development
7. Capacity building and development
8. Participation and involvement
9. Advocacy and awareness creation
10. Partnerships and collaboration
11. Gender mainstreaming in SNE
12. Research and documentation
13. Disaster preparedness
14. Resource mobilization – finance, human and material resources
15. Guidance and counseling

### **2.1 Assessment and Intervention**

#### **Background**

Educational Assessment and Resource Centers (EARCs) were introduced in 1984. The primary purpose of EARCs is to ensure early identification, assessment, intervention and placement of learners with special needs and disabilities. EARCs aim to improve the growth and quality of SNE services by placing emphasis on assessment and early intervention.

Effective early identification and intervention strategies are based on multidisciplinary teams of professionals, accurate assessment of the special needs and clear referral systems. In order to carry out these functions adequately, each district shall have EARCs, fully equipped with the necessary tools and qualified personnel. Parents and the community are primary in the process of identification. They are the first contact with the child at birth and closely relate with the child during the early development processes.

Development partners and other actors in the education sector play a major role in facilitating early identification, assessment and placement of learners with special needs and disabilities. They shall provide resources and services for ECD and ECDE. ECD processes are integral to early identification, assessment and intervention of children with special needs and disabilities.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Assessment teachers posted to the centres are either not well trained in assessment or lack necessary facilities to assess learners with special needs and disabilities. They work with the knowledge acquired when they trained as special education teachers. The assessment team in the district is made up of assessment teachers and other professionals from other ministries like Health & Social Services. This multidisciplinary approach is only conducted informally since it has not been formalized.

### **Objective**

To strengthen the existing structures and develop new ones for early identification, assessment and intervention of learners with special needs and disabilities in every assessment centre.

### **Policy Statements**

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with other ministries and government bodies (SAGAs) shall:

1. Develop and continually review the curriculum in assessment in line with the requirements of children with special needs and disabilities.

2. Conduct in-service and professional development courses for assessment teachers.
3. Establish formal linkages with relevant ministries, partners and professionals in assessment, referral and intervention of learners with special needs and disabilities.
4. Have a formalized multi-disciplinary team appointed by the Minister of Education.
5. Develop new, and continually review existing assessment and referral tools.
6. Ensure all EARCs established fall under the jurisdiction of the District Education Board.

### **Strategies**

To implement the foregoing policy interventions, the Government shall engage the following strategies:

1. KIE shall develop and continually review curriculum in assessment of learners with special needs.
2. KIE shall develop training manuals and guidelines in assessment of learners with special needs.
3. MOE shall conduct regular in-service and professional development courses for teacher deployed to work as assessment teachers in the EARC.
4. MOE shall put in place mechanisms for engaging partners, professionals and other ministries in the assessment and rehabilitation procedures; such as Joint committees, joint planning meetings at all levels, joint implementation and pooling of resources.
5. MOE in collaboration with KISE and KIE shall carry out reviews of the existing assessment and referral tools.
6. KIE shall develop assessment tests, administrator's and norms manuals, and referral tools/mechanisms in line with recommendation made in the review.
7. MOE shall establish and enhance linkages with the Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries for appropriate assessment,

- intervention, and referral and follow up of learners with special needs.
8. MOE in collaboration with other stakeholders shall develop and strengthen home based programs and ECDE for learners with Special Needs.
  9. Directorate of Basic Education, Quality Assurance and Standards and TSC shall coordinate the management of all EARCs.
  - 10 MOE shall ensure that the teachers posted to EARCs are trained in Special Needs Education and do not exceed the approved number per centre.

## **2.2 Access to Quality and Relevant Education**

### **Background**

Enrolment of learners with special needs and disabilities in educational institutions is still very low. According to statistical figures (Gender Policy in Education, 2007), there were 23, 459 pupils with special needs and disabilities enrolled in primary and secondary schools in 2003 with a significant increase after introduction of free primary education. In 2006 there were 98 special primary schools, 1341 special units, 7 special secondary schools and 4 special technical training institutes with a total enrolment of 36,239. There was also one resource centre for the blind and 3 teacher training institutions integrating learners with VI and HI. However, these learning institutions are too few and limited to cater for all types of disabilities.

### **Issues and Constraints**

There are several challenges relating to access and equity in the provision of education and training for learners with special needs and disabilities. Lack of guidelines to support inclusive education implementation and data on children with special needs and disabilities in and out of school, poses a major challenge to learners with special needs and disabilities. Inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities and lack of equipment for the learners with special needs and disabilities included in regular institutions is a major challenge.



Other challenges include the current examination system which is limiting and rigid, denying the majority of learners with special needs and disabilities opportunities for higher education, lack of coordination among service providers and inadequate supervision and monitoring of special needs education programmes.

### **Objective**

To increase access to quality and relevant education for learners with special needs and disabilities at ECDE, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary and University levels.

### **Policy Statements**

The Ministry of Education shall;

1. Enforce equal access and inclusion of persons with special needs and disabilities in education and training programmes at all levels.
2. Intensify monitoring, supervision and quality control in all schools to ensure children with special needs and disabilities are provided for without discrimination.
3. Ensure timely provision of learning and teaching materials in accessible formats.

### **Strategies**

MOE (in collaboration with partners) shall;

1. Sensitize administrative personnel and others working with learners with special needs and disabilities on their roles in education.
2. Educate the parents, other learners and the communities on the needs of the learners with special needs and disabilities.
3. Intensify monitoring, supervision and quality assurance and standards in all schools to ensure quality education
4. Ensure KIE produces learning/teaching materials in tandem with the change of curriculum and textbooks.
5. Expand educational services to cater for other categories of youth/children with special needs and disabilities not currently catered for in regular learning institutions.

6. Maintain and increase necessary support for special institutions to cater for children and youth who cannot benefit from inclusive education.

## **2.3 Conducive and Safe Environment - Health and Safety (Adaptation of Facilities)**

### **Background**

The appraisal exercise on SNE (Kochung Report, 2003) noted that learners with special needs and disabilities required a barrier free environment to maximize their functional potentials. The physical environment where learners with special needs and disabilities operate should be accessible and or be disability friendly. It is important that learners with special needs and disabilities operate in educational environments with minimum support. Learners with special needs and disabilities require more conducive material resources for their education than their non-disabled peers. The government provided support to each primary school in order to remove existing barriers that made the school environment unfriendly to learners with special needs and disabilities.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Currently, the learning environment, including the location of institutions, buildings, amenities, equipment and furniture, pose accessibility challenges to learners with special needs and disabilities. The physical environment where children with special needs and disabilities operate should allow them to access education with minimal hindrance. Schools' (and other related institutions) environments that are disability unfriendly to children with special needs and disabilities include class learning environment, social amenities (e.g churches and mosques), public transport (such as buses and 'matatus') and public utilities (e.g libraries, toilets, telephones and lifts).

### **Objective**

To enhance provision of accessible, safe and friendly learning environment and facilities for learners with special needs.

## **Policy Statements**

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with stakeholders shall:

1. Facilitate establishment of barrier free environment in all learning institutions.
2. Continuously develop modalities for enhancing safety measures in learning institutions
3. Liaise with the Ministry of Health to ensure that learners with special needs and disabilities are provided with regular treatment and medicine to preserve or improve their level of functioning.
4. Put in place measures to ensure appropriate modification of learning institutions to respond to the needs of learners with special needs and disabilities.
5. Provide a learning environment that is free from violence, sexual harassment and abuse, drug and substance abuse.

## **Strategies**

The MOE (in collaboration with stakeholders) shall:

1. Provide resources to make learning institutions accessible to children with special needs and disabilities.
2. Ensure provision of adequate and friendly buildings, furniture and equipment among others in learning institutions for learners with special needs and disabilities.
3. Ensure appropriate modification of tuition, boarding and sanitation facilities to respond to the needs of learners with special needs and disabilities.
4. Constantly collaborate with MOH in provision of clinical services geared towards prevention and treatment of disability conditions.
5. Ensure that all learning institutions have a safe environment that is user friendly to learners with special needs and disabilities.

## 2.4 Specialized Facilities and Technology

### Background

Learners with specific disabilities and special needs in education require specialized educational resources at individual and school levels depending on the nature and extent of disability. The high cost of special equipment for learners with special needs remains a hindrance to the government's goal to provide education for all in line with the global goal of UPE. Teachers and support staff in schools and units which have learners with special needs and disabilities should be in-serviced on needs assessment and maintenance of specialized equipment and technological devices.

### Issues and Constraints

There is inadequate provision of appropriate teaching and learning materials for SNE because most of the materials available in the market are mainly developed for the regular curricula and regular students. The limited availability of curriculum support materials also limits the ability of the teachers in SNE to employ a variety of content, teaching and learning activities for effective curriculum delivery.

Apart from the funds allocated to every learner in primary schools/units, those with special needs and disabilities get a top up capitation to cater for specialized teaching/learning materials and other assistive devices. This capitation has not been formalized as it is usually done on *ad hoc* basis. The capitation is also inadequate for purchase of teaching/learning materials in these institutions.

### Objective

To support learners with special needs and disabilities access affordable assistive devices and advanced technological systems.

### Policy Statements

The MOE, in collaboration with relevant partners shall facilitate acquisition and promote usage of assistive technology among learners with special needs and disabilities.

## **Strategies**

The MOE (in collaboration with partners) shall:

1. Provide information on available technical aids
2. Enhance accessibility and utilization of software that will enhance easy access of information and education materials.
3. Acquire, standardize, produce, fabricate, adopt, repair and maintain assistive devices in the provincial assessment workshops, KISE and other services providers.
4. Provide teachers who will train learners with special needs and disabilities on the use of assistive devices.

## **2.5 Inclusive Education**

### **Background**

The government places emphasis on inclusive education through regular schools for learners with special needs and disabilities as opposed to the practice of using special schools and special units attached to regular schools. However, special schools and units are essential for learners with severe special needs and disabilities in the areas of hearing, visual, mental and serious physical challenges. Inclusive education approach will increase access to education for children with special needs. The government under the FPE programme is facilitating provision of additional capitation grants to facilitate implementation of inclusive education. The funds are provided to learners with special needs and disabilities enrolled in both special education institutions, units attached to regular schools and integrated programs.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Mainstreaming of special needs education in all education sub-sectors and programmes has been faced with a number of challenges. These challenges include inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities, inadequate equipment which makes it difficult to integrate special needs education in regular programmes, inadequate capacity of teachers to handle learners with special needs, and inappropriate placement of children with disabilities, inadequate and expensive teaching and learning

materials and inadequate supervision and monitoring of special education programmes.

### **Objective**

To increase enrolment and promote values which enhance access to education and retention of learners with special needs and disabilities in all learning institutions.

### **Policy Statements**

MOE shall Recognize and Reinforce inclusive education as one of the means for children with special needs to access education.

### **Strategies**

1. MOE shall promote the development and use of Kenyan Sign Language as an official language.
2. Government ministries and agencies shall provide information in the public domain to learners with special needs and disabilities in both Kenyan Sign Language and Braille.
3. MOE and partners will provide funds for adaptation of infrastructure, equipment and facilities in learning institutions.
4. KIE shall adapt curriculum and learning materials to suit learners with special needs and disabilities.
5. MOE and partners shall provide and fund forums for learners with special needs and disabilities to participate in co-curricular activities so as to enhance social integration.
6. KIE shall review teacher education curriculum in order to impart skills and competencies in teaching learners with special needs and disabilities.
7. Kenya National Examination Council shall establish a special needs education section to deal with issues of curriculum evaluation of learners with special needs and disabilities.
8. KNEC shall mark Braille scripts directly without debrailing them.
9. MOE shall enforce affirmative action in admission for learners with special needs and disabilities at all levels and shall include those with low vision.

9 MOE together with partners shall create awareness among teachers and learners (both with and without disabilities), parents and other members of the community about inclusive education.

MOE shall organize for in-servicing of teachers on inclusive education

10 MOE shall promote the development of Braille as an official communication for touch readers.

11 MOE shall mainstream and strengthen the development of Integrated Education.

## **2.6 Curriculum Development**

### **Background**

KIE has made effort to develop pre-school curriculum for children with visual and hearing impairments; developmental and independent living skills syllabus for learners with VI; perceptual training, communication and mathematical skills syllabuses for learners with mental handicaps; foundation syllabus for learners who are deaf-blind; certificate curriculum for SNE teachers and various diploma curricula in SNE. Despite this effort, it is notable that several other curricula and examination support materials for learners with SN require to be developed/reviewed. The government and other stakeholders have to undertake coordinated and collaborative interventions to develop suitable curricula for learners with SN.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Education for learners with special needs and disabilities has faced several challenges in regard to the curriculum development. The curriculum and support materials for these learners come later when their counterparts in regular school set up are already familiar with the curriculum contents and requirements. These delays make the students lag behind in the syllabus implementation which adversely affects their performance in schools. In some cases, by the time the curriculum is designed for them, new changes may be again taking shape in the same curriculum hence the vicious cycle.

Other problems have been rigid and inaccessible curriculum and rigid methods of evaluating the curriculum. Currently, there are six types of special institutions catering for three major categories of disabilities leaving out more than three quarters of learners with special needs and disabilities without a curriculum to address their needs.

There is need to have a curriculum that is adequately responsive to the different categories of children with special needs and disabilities. It should be flexible in terms of time, teaching/learning resources, methodology, mode of access, presentation and content. Many subject areas of the 8.4.4 curriculum need to be adapted and some areas prepared anew to suit learners with special needs and disabilities. For proper implementation of the curriculum, piloting is necessary.

### **Objective**

To develop diverse and flexible curriculum that meets varied needs and learning environment of learners with special needs and disabilities.

### **Policy Statement**

The Ministry of Education shall ensure constant review and development of curriculum that is tailored to the needs of learners with special needs and disabilities.

### **Strategies**

1. KIE shall develop adapted, specialized and regular curriculum for all specialized areas in special needs education and monitor their implementation to ensure sensitivity to the needs of learners with special needs and disabilities.
2. KIE shall expand teacher training curriculum to include a component of special needs to develop their capacity to support children with special needs in regular schools
3. KNEC shall design national examinations for learners with SN as individuals and provide certification to learners with special needs who do not sit for national examinations due to their diverse learning needs.



4. KNEC shall train examination invigilators and supervisors to enable them to provide specialist support to candidates with special needs during examinations.
5. KNEC shall ensure specialized subjects such as KSL are examined in all national examinations.
6. KNEC shall ensure that time allocated to learners with special needs for examination papers is determined by the nature and severity of their special needs and disabilities.
7. MOE and other stakeholders shall sensitize the society on the importance of all learning processes to demystify the value given to certificates of final exams at the expense of the skills acquired in the learning process.
8. MOE shall seek copyrights from publishers so as to adapt regular curriculum and have mass production of teaching/ learning materials for learners with special needs and disabilities.
9. KIE shall ensure the development of Braille curriculum for use in schools from Pre-primary to Post Primary levels.
10. KNEC shall design national examinations for Braille transcribers (Brailleists).

## **2.7 Capacity Building and Human Resource Development**

### **Background**

The government is aware of the fact that capacities and skills of staff at all levels within SNE should be commensurate with the tasks they perform. The success of special needs services and education depends on provision of specialized human and institutional capacity. SNE teachers in the country are trained at Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Kenyatta and Maseno universities among others. The government is focused on the development and implementation of an effective criterion for appointment and deployment of education managers at all levels of the education system.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Insufficient number of trained teachers has an effect on teacher-learner ratio in learning institutions. While some special institutions are lacking

teachers, sometimes special needs trained teachers are posted to schools where their services are not required or are not posted at all. SNE teachers do not have an established promotional structure or scheme of service and this could be the reason why many of them opt for other forms of employment after training.

There is need for other personnel like teacher aides, house mothers/fathers, sign language interpreters, readers among others in institutions. Services of these professionals are lacking in the education system either due to lack of training or funds for their remuneration.

### **Objective**

To facilitate provision of effective and efficient professional and support services to learners with special needs and disabilities in institutions of learning/training.

### **Policy Statements**

The Ministry of Education shall:

1. Ensure deployment and retention of adequate SNE teachers and other support staff in learning institutions and other areas where their services are required.
2. Undertake and collaborate with development partners to develop mechanisms to improve efficiency in human resource training and deployment in institutions offering SNE
3. Develop and implement mechanisms to identify and strengthen recruitment procedures.

### **Strategies**

MOE shall ;

1. Facilitate provision of adequate support staff in SNE such as physiotherapists, sign language interpreters and braillists in institutions enrolling learners with special needs and disabilities.
2. In collaboration with TSC ensure the staffing norm for teacher/pupil ratio is adhered to.

3. Develop a scheme of service for other related professional support personnel such as, teacher aids, sign language interpreters, braillists among others in SNE
4. Ensure quality and standards control in the training of professional and support staff in SNE
5. Strengthen transparent recruitment establishment for SNE learning institutions
6. In collaboration with relevant ministries shall increase opportunities for continuous training of professional and support staff in SNE
7. Have Key Resource Teachers for SNE in every school/learning institution.
8. Sensitize all school heads to ensure the welfare of learners with special needs and disabilities is safeguarded.

## **2.8 Participation and Involvement**

### **Background**

Participation and involvement of learners with special needs in socio-economic issues and in decision making on matters affecting them directly or indirectly is important in the process of ensuring that these learners enjoy equal opportunities in society. The government has declared affirmative action to ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of persons are actively involved in policy and governance issues. It is therefore critical that learners with special needs and disabilities participate in all matters within the learning environment and are encouraged to be involved in activities and decision making processes.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Learners with special needs and disabilities in schools and institutions are sometimes marginalized and are not represented in areas like management and decision making processes.

Learners with special needs and disabilities have not been actively involved in sporting, cultural and recreational activities, thus denying them solidarity and team building. Their participation is limited due to inaccessibility and/or unsuitability of the facilities. Issues related to

special needs and disabilities are often not adequately addressed within the educational system and other fora.

### **Objective**

To promote participation of learners with special needs and other key stakeholders in decision making on matters that affect their education.

### **Policy Statement**

The MOE will involve learners with special needs in decision making processes at all levels in education and training.

### **Strategies**

1. MOE shall develop modalities to involve learners with special needs and disabilities in decision making on issues that concern them.
2. School administrations shall appoint learners with special needs to positions of responsibilities in their learning institutions.
3. MOE shall encourage institutions to employ persons with special needs and disabilities in learning and training institutions.
4. School Management boards shall engage and utilize learners with special needs and disabilities in sports, culture and other recreational activities.
5. School administrations shall encourage formation of clubs and associations for learners with special needs and disabilities in learning/training institutions

## **2.9 Advocacy and Awareness Creation**

### **Background**

Lack of awareness about issues surrounding learners with special needs and disabilities by service providers, policy makers and the community at large is a common problem. There is low level of advocacy and lobbying for the rights of persons with special needs and disabilities by parents, communities and disability organizations. Issues relating to special needs

and disability are given prominence in public meetings and the media. In some cases, local communities are not aware of special needs programmes and EARCs within their localities. MOE officers and other government officers are not fully sensitized on SNE. There is also lack of awareness and sensitization among the general public.

### **Issues and Constraints**

The previous national census did not provide adequate statistical and qualitative data on disability. Lack of accurate data on SNE hampers proper national planning and provision of effective services to persons with special needs and disabilities. NGOs, FBOs and other development partners have made effort to create awareness, sensitize communities, lobby and advocate for policy development and reviews. However they face challenges as their services are not well coordinated. The media has an important role in sensitizing the public on the needs and rights of persons with special needs and disabilities.

The marginalization is largely founded on misconceptions and mistaken beliefs, cultural practices and attitudes, which have led to prejudice, paternalistic treatment and at times, discrimination. As a result, the majority of learners with special needs and disabilities have limited access to education due to lack of public awareness that would otherwise address these issues.

### **Objective**

To advocate and create awareness among stakeholders on the needs and issues affecting learners with special needs and disabilities.

### **Policy Statements**

The MOE (in collaboration with partners) shall:

1. Recognize and respond to issues of advocacy on learners with special needs and disabilities in line with other existing policies, conventions and practices.
2. Undertake continuous awareness creation and campaigns on special needs education.

3. Ensure that minimum teaching and learning requirements are in place in all institutions providing education to learners with special needs and disabilities in Kenya.

### **Strategies**

1. MOE shall liaise with other relevant ministries to sensitize public transport providers on the special transport needs of the learners with special needs and disabilities.
2. MOE shall use both public and private electronic and print media in sensitizing and creating awareness among the general public.
3. Teachers shall instill in all learners values of mutual support and responsibility towards learners with special needs and disabilities.
4. MOE shall educate stakeholders on the legal and social rights of learners with special needs and disabilities.
5. MOE and Partners shall advocate for mainstreaming of issues of persons with special needs and disabilities in matters of the society.

## **2.10 Partnerships and Collaboration**

### **Background**

The government is working in collaboration with various partners in the provision of SNE. Partners and/ or stakeholders need to be guided by a comprehensive policy framework to ensure effective coordination and implementation of SNE programmes. An integrated approach is necessary for various government ministries, partners and/or stakeholders and parents for improved service delivery of SNE.

NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, the private sector and bilateral and multi-lateral organizations form a core group of partners with whom the government collaborates in the implementation of SNE. These groups of partners provide SNE services directly through sponsoring institutions, facilitating improvement of learning facilities and infrastructure through provision of grants, carrying out advocacy and providing technical support including capacity building to the government and SNE institutions. It is an important policy option for the government to partner and collaborate with non-public providers of education to reduce gaps in public financing especially in SNE.

## **Issues and Constraints**

Parental and family support in terms of health, nutrition and provision of learning resources for children with special needs and disabilities is important. However, most parents, families and communities are not involved in the education of children with special needs and disabilities. This has led to some parents and families playing a minimal role in supporting their children access education. Sometimes, there is duplication of services by partners due to lack of coordination among different assisting agencies. There is need to coordinate all the service providers in order to avoid wastage and duplication

## **Objective**

To establish new and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations in special needs education among all stakeholders.

## **Policy Statement**

The MOE shall encourage and coordinate partnerships and collaboration with other stakeholders in provision of services and materials towards special needs education.

## **Strategies**

MOE (in collaboration with partners) shall:

1. Periodically organize stakeholders' national conferences at different levels to share information on special needs and disabilities.
2. Coordinate the activities of all partners for purposes of transparency and non-duplication of activities.

## **2.11 Gender Mainstreaming in Special Needs Education**

### **Background**

Gender mainstreaming to ensure equity and equality in SNE is a challenge. According to the Gender Policy in Education (July 2007), gender differences in favor of males are considerable. In 2003, out of the 23, 459 learners with special needs and disability enrolled in primary education, only 10, 106 (43%) were girls. In secondary schools, there has

been a decline in the girl child enrolment resulting in gender disparity in favor of boys. Generally, the national education system has been characterized by gender disparities at the national level and across regions. SNE has not been spared. The widest gender gaps exist at higher education levels and hence the need to address gender issues in SNE.

### **Issues and Constraints**

While education has grown rapidly in Kenya over the last 40 years, the SNE sub-sector has lagged behind. There are 116 primary, 8 secondary, 4 technical, 3 integrating teacher training colleges and one resource centre for the blind special education programmes, including vocational and technical institutions with an enrolment of 49,000. These, viewed against the background that an estimated 1.8 million people in Kenya aged between 0 – 19 years have special needs and disabilities (National Development Plan 2002 – 2008) show big disparities in the development of SNE.

The community and society in general has a negative attitude towards people with special needs. The situation is worse for the girl child with special needs and disabilities. They face a bigger challenge than their male counter-parts. The drop out rate for girls with special needs and disabilities is high due to teachers who may not be sensitive to the needs of these kinds of learners. These learners are also sometimes left out of sex education, HIV and AIDS and life skills education programmes because people believe that they do not engage in social activities and sex.

### **Objective**

To enhance gender mainstreaming in SNE programmes at all levels and ensure increased enrolment, participation and completion rates for both girls and boys, men and women with special needs and disabilities in education.

### **Policy statements**

To address gender disparities in SNE, the ministry shall:



1. Encourage gender mainstreaming of boys and girls, men and women with special needs in education programmes at all levels.
2. Enforce the gender policy in education to ensure effective implementation in all education programs at all levels.

### **Strategies**

MOE together with other stakeholders shall employ the following strategies to implement the above policies:

1. Create awareness and sensitize communities on the importance of SNE, especially for the girl child.
2. Sensitize teachers, communities and other stakeholders on the provisions of a gender policy in education.
3. Ensure that quality assurance and standards officers deliberately focus on equal participation of both girls and boys with special needs and disabilities in social and educational activities alongside regular learners.
4. Carry out surveys and research to understand the gender and education issues for learners with special needs and advise the government and other stakeholders on emerging issues and how to address them.
5. Develop a conducive physical environment for learners with special education needs with emphasis on the girl child.
6. Reroute young mothers back to school to reduce their drop- out rates.

## **2.12 Research and Documentation**

### **Background**

Management of research lies within the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. This ministry provides the overall national policy on science and technology. Documentation of research findings, recommendations and conclusions is an important part of development of learning. The government is collaborating with partners to carry out

research in various sectors of education. The government plans to invest more on research and target priority development areas for more funding. The government is also committed to ensuring that research findings are widely disseminated and utilized. Despite these efforts, specific research on SNE remains a challenge due to various reasons.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Research in SNE and disability is inadequate. Kenya has also been slow in generating knowledge and taking advantage of new and emerging innovations in the field of special needs and disabilities. Constraints facing research and development include lack of effective coordination between various actors; lack of harmonization on research policies and limited research funding. Other challenges are limited appreciation for the role of research and documentation, inadequate mechanisms and systems for dissemination and utilization of research findings and absence of up-to-date research bank of inventories. Demand driven research and collaboration has not been effectively utilized. There is need to design effective programmes on special needs and disabilities, using various research methods, conducted continually to gain new knowledge about emerging issues.

### **Objective**

To promote research, documentation and information sharing in Special Needs Education

### **Policy Statements**

The MOE in collaboration with partners shall undertake and provide an enabling environment for research development, documentation and information sharing in special needs education

### **Strategies**

MOE (in collaboration with partners) shall:

1. Undertake research on different aspects of children with special needs and disabilities and ensure documentation and dissemination to stakeholders.

2. Empower KISE to carry out research in SNE
3. Undertake baseline surveys to establish the actual numbers and requirements of learners with special needs and disabilities.
4. Provide funds and other resources for research on Special Needs Education and development of appropriate technology for learners with special needs
5. Establish and strengthen databank on Special Needs Education within the planning division of the MOE and the utilization of the data in planning and resource allocation for special needs.
6. Ensure the dissemination of research findings to planners, consumers and stakeholders among others

## **2.13 Disaster Preparedness**

### **Background**

Kenya has experienced a number of disasters in the recent years which were both human caused and/ or natural. These include collapsing of buildings due to tremors and/ or poor construction, flooding and slight tremors, social crises and accidents among others.

Vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and people with special needs and disabilities are the most affected whenever disasters occur. In many situations, people evacuate leaving behind those with special needs and disabilities who cannot be evacuated fast enough. It is therefore important that special and extra attention be given to people with special needs and disabilities during instances of disaster. The government has addressed the issue of disaster preparedness through essential forces who are normally the first to arrive at scenes of disaster but more education and disaster preparedness need to be carried out among the public and communities. Specific emphasis needs to be placed on handling learners with special needs and disabilities during disaster response.

### **Issues and Constraints**

The negligence of learners with special needs and disabilities by those concerned with their care exposes them to immense suffering during emergencies, conflicts and disasters. Lack of specific training for handling people with special needs and disabilities among essential

service officers is a major constraint in providing preferential attention to these target groups in situations of disaster and conflict.

### **Objective**

To put in place measures to advocate, mitigate, evacuate and care for people with special needs during disasters and conflicts.

### **Policy Statements**

The Ministry of Education shall develop and enforce mechanisms for mitigation, evacuation and care for learners with special needs during disasters and conflicts.

### **Strategies**

1. MOE shall sensitize the public, security agencies and humanitarian organizations to be responsive in prevention, mitigation, caring and evacuation of learners with special needs and disabilities during times of disaster and conflicts.
2. MOE, Communities and humanitarian agencies shall identify learners with special needs and disabilities and evacuate them to safe areas on a first priority basis.
3. MOE and other strategic partners shall train SNE teachers and other service providers in practical knowledge and skills in the delivery of services during disasters and emergencies
4. MOE shall prepare disaster preparedness Information and Educational Communication materials and disseminate to SNE schools and other institutions.
5. MOE shall facilitate provision of guidance and counseling services to learners with special needs during disaster and conflict periods.

## **2.14 Resource Mobilization**

### **Background**

Resource mobilization is imperative for the success of SNE services. Resources play a significant role in enabling provision of SNE services in the country. SNE services require specialized human, materials and physical resources. The government is providing required specialized teaching staff, albeit challenges faced in having required numbers.

Learners with special needs and disabilities require more and specialized material resources for their education than their non-disabled peers. Material resources are needed at both the individual level and school level. The nature and type of materials required depend on the type and degree of disability. The physical environment where learners with special needs and disabilities operate should be accessible to them and be disability friendly. This calls for adequate allocation of material resources to learning institutions to improve physical structures and provide individual learners with special needs and disabilities with basic learning aids.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Adequate resources and proper utilization of administrative structures are crucial in the implementation and the realization of the objectives of the policy. The main sources of funding are the Ministry of Education, other line ministries and relevant government agencies.

Many parents cannot afford assistive and functional devices needed by learners with special needs and disabilities as they are expensive and out of reach. The government is providing basic learning aids: though provision of assistive/functional devices is still a constraint due to inadequate resources and funding. These will be supplemented by other service providers, which include individuals, faith based organizations, civil society organizations, the corporate sector, bilateral and multilateral agencies.

## **Objective**

To enhance resource mobilization and sustainable professional and support services to learners with special needs in education.

## **Policy Statements**

The MOE in collaboration with development partners shall continually review and increase budgetary allocation to institutions and programs that provide special needs education.

## **Strategies**

MOE together with partners shall:

1. Identify programmes in special needs education that require financial support.
2. Ensure affirmative action in provision of bursaries, loans and scholarships to learners with special needs and disabilities for further studies.
3. Allocate adequate funds for teaching and learning materials for learners with special needs and disabilities.
4. Put in place sound procurement processes to facilitate easy and timely access to the required equipment and materials.
5. Provide incentives for local production of relevant equipment and material

## **2.15 Guidance and Counseling**

### **Background**

The ministry is committed to facilitating the establishment of guidance and counseling programs in special education institutions. Essential skills will include training to improve counseling of learners with special needs and their families, developing self reliance and confidence in them in order to improve placement. It is a requirement in schools to have a department of guidance and counseling. However, there is under-staffing within learning institutions for personnel/teachers with specialized training that addresses the situation of learners with special needs and disabilities.

## **Issues and Constraints**

Institutions for children with special needs are very few in comparison with those of regular learners. Apart from inadequate institutions for learners with special needs, there are other challenges faced by these category of learners. These include inadequate specially trained teachers, skilled counselors, specialized resources and facilities. Further more, some children are not identified for educational assessment and placement until it is too late in their adult life.

Moreover, schools do not have trained guidance and counseling teachers and the few who are there, are not trained in sign language, Braille and other special skills to handle children with special needs. Lastly, inadequate career opportunities for children with special needs have led to the current state of lack of placement among school leavers with special needs.

## **Objective**

To develop diverse and specialized guidance and counseling opportunities to meet the varied needs of learners with special needs.

## **Policy Statement**

The ministry in collaboration with other service providers shall develop, avail and provide guidance and counseling services to learners with special needs.

## **Strategies**

1. MOE shall develop guidance and counseling guidelines for learners with special needs
2. MOE shall ensure interests of learners with special needs are addressed in guidance and counseling programmes in all learning institutions.
3. Special learning institution shall establish guidance and counseling programmes to cater for interests of their learners.

### **3.0 CHAPTER THREE – IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

A multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary strategy is imperative for successful implementation of a comprehensive SNE policy. A collaborative effort between the Ministry of Education and other line ministries, SAGAs, private education institutions, Development Partners, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs, parents, and other partners is necessary. However, the primary responsibility and accountability of implementing this policy remains with the Ministry of Education.

#### **Implementation Requirements**

Effective implementation and coordination of the SNE policy requires a number of measures. These include a detailed financing strategy, management and coordination structures, Information and Communication Technology and internal control systems and structures. Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks, contextual interpretation and a provision for review and amendment of the policy are necessary to keep abreast with changing trends and emerging issues.

#### **3.1 Financing Special Needs Education**

The cost of providing educational services to learners with special needs and disabilities is relatively high and constitutes the single most limiting factor to increased enrollment, retention and transition of such learners within educational programmes. This is compounded further by the fact that a majority of learners with special needs and disabilities come from poor families. Such families find it difficult to participate in cost sharing where this is required.

There is also inadequate planning of service delivery programmes. This is mainly due to lack of skilled personnel and insufficient financial resources, thereby compromising the quality of services provided. On the other hand, uncoordinated planning amongst partners often results in duplication of programmes, poor utilisation of resources and gaps in service delivery. Financial and human resources are inadequate, the prices of equipment are ever rising and training of professionals is below expectations. Consequently,



educational services for children with special needs call for concerted efforts between the government and development partners.

Since Free Primary Education does not cover boarding and other mandatory requirements which learners with special needs and disabilities have, children in boarding special institutions are still paying for them. The government's allocation of additional grants to special schools and units which are meant for schools recurrent expenditure and emergencies is insufficient.

### **Objective**

To enhance access to education for learners with special needs and disabilities through provision of free basic education in public institutions and support for post secondary education.

### **Policy Statement**

The government shall offer free basic education to learners with special needs and disabilities through provision of funds to institutions hosting them.

### **Strategies**

1. The MOE shall allocate funds per child commensurate with the needs, circumstances and cost of living for learners with special needs and disabilities in day and boarding institutions respectively and review these allocations periodically.
2. The Government shall take up the full responsibility of educating children/students with special needs and disabilities at all levels.
3. MOE shall ensure proper use and maintenance of the existing physical structures and facilities for learners with special needs and disabilities.

## **3.2 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

ICT in the context of SNE refers to communication systems and techniques which are specific to various learners with special needs and disabilities. Currently ICT has not been optimally applied to the SNE teaching and learning processes. These include both augmentative and alternative modes of communication such as spoken language and sign language, Braille, tactile

communication, readers for the blind, print, audio and visual tapes, and ICT skills.

ICT plays a critical role in educating people on issues like human rights, democracy and sustainable development. It is an important tool for shaping opinions, educating and entertaining people.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Provision of SNE services has not adequately integrated the use of ICT. Existing information and communication services remain largely inaccessible and unaffordable to persons with special needs and disabilities. Different disabilities require specific approaches to meet their information and communication needs. This requires heavy investment and increased funding levels. This is a challenge that the government and partner organizations have to address in the delivery of SNE services.

### **Objectives**

1. To enhance access to public information and communication technology for persons/learners with special needs and disabilities.
2. To enhance effective communication and learning for learners with special needs and disabilities in all learning institutions.

### **Policy Statements**

The government through the Ministry of Education shall:

1. Continue to work with ICT partners to increase ICT services to educational institutions particularly for persons with special needs and disabilities.
2. Establish mechanisms to ensure persons with special needs and disabilities venture into technical training in ICT.

## Strategies

To achieve the above objectives, the government shall:

1. Provide guidelines on special needs and disabilities' friendly language for use by the media, educational institutions, individuals and the general public.
2. Promote and develop use of alternative communication systems for persons with special needs and disabilities and especially those with communication difficulties.
3. Promote the development and use of standard sign language and braille while enhancing availability of information in these modes of communication in educational and other institutions.
4. Waive duties, taxes and other levies on equipment used in the production of information in accessible formats for persons with special needs and disabilities.
5. Assist stakeholders involved in the industry reduce the cost of availing information to persons with special needs and disabilities through the reduction of taxes on information and communication equipment.
6. Facilitate and provide incentives to public and private broadcasters and other media outlets, universities, research institutions and libraries to encourage provision of user friendly information to persons with special needs and disabilities.
7. Require educators and employers to provide assistive communication equipment, such as talking computers and tape recorders, to learners and employees with special needs and disabilities according to their needs.
8. Facilitate access to public communication and information service points by persons with special needs and disabilities.
9. Make adaptation of ICT equipment mandatory in educational and other service provider institutions.
10. Ensure that ministries and agencies provide information in the public domain to persons with special needs and disabilities in accessible formats such as sign language and braille.  
Ensure that all teachers learn and apply techniques and methods of communication appropriate to learners with special needs and disabilities.

- 11 Ensure that teacher training institutions and other institutions training SNE personnel incorporate Information and Communication Technology and techniques appropriate to learners with special needs and disabilities in their training curriculum.
- 12 Sensitize entire communities within learning institutions and the general public on the need to learn communication techniques used by learners with special communication needs.

### **3.4 Management and Coordination of Special Needs Education**

The Ministry of Education established a section that provides SNE services in 1978. A special education inspector was appointed to be in charge. Currently, the section is headed by a Senior Assistant Director of Education. The services managed and coordinated by the section shall include: coordination of administration and management of special schools, formulation and development of SNE procedures, review and amendment of the policy and preparation of budgets for special needs education among others. The section shall be responsible for ensuring that the efforts and services of other stakeholders who provide special needs education and support are coordinated and geared towards attainment of the government goal of provision of accessible quality and relevant basic education for ALL Kenyans.

A multi sectoral approach will be used in the management of SNE services. The government will establish a coordinating organ whose responsibility will be to ensure proper coordination and effective integration of diverse SNE services and programmes by various MOE departments, line ministries, partners and other stakeholders. A national SNE advisory council will be established under the Education Act whose primary role is to coordinate, supervise, monitor and evaluate all SNE services in the country. The composition of this council will include representatives of key stakeholders in SNE, professionals, parents' representative and organizations for and of persons with special needs and disabilities. The SNE division in the MOE shall be responsible for licensing and registration of private SNE programmes to ensure compliance with the SNE policy.

The quality assurance and standards officers at MOE shall ensure quality and standards control in schools. The capacity of all quality officers at zonal, district and provincial levels shall be developed and enhanced through inservicing in SNE to ensure effective supervision of SNE services alongside regular educational services. The capacity of head teachers of special schools and units will be a minimum of diploma in SNE. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) will be required to post SNE teachers in specialized subjects to meet the minimum demand for both special education institutions/units and regular schools to support inclusive education.

### **3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

A comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) framework will be required to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the SNE policy. The framework shall address issues of monitoring processes to collect information/data, analyze, report and recommend necessary action for improvement of SNE service delivery. An indicator performance monitoring tool shall be developed to track continuous implementation and consumption of SNE services by the target group and the general public. Specific activities will include identification and development of SNE responsive indicators and targets, building capacity of the quality assurance and standards team on the indicators, framework concepts and procedures, actual field monitoring, evaluation and interpretation of findings for use in future planning and improvement.

Continuous monitoring will be undertaken by MOE and periodic (annual) evaluations will be used to inform the process of decision making on areas that require immediate, medium term and long term planning and improvement. Feedback from evaluations will be used for overall program improvement. Impact assessment will be integrated in the design, development and implementation of the M & E framework of the policy.

### **3.6 Review and Amendment of the Policy**

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with key stakeholders shall review the SNE policy every (5) years to ensure that the policy remains relevant to changing national and international environments. Reviews shall incorporate emerging issues and trends, both local and global, that impact on SNE services. Specific policy provisions may be reviewed from time to

time in circumstances where there is a major legal and policy shift requiring government ratification and inclusion in the national legal framework. Review of part of or whole of SNE policy shall remain the prerogative of the Government of Kenya through the MOE.

### **3.6 Interpretation and Context**

The SNE policy shall be interpreted in the context of Kenyan Laws, existing policy frameworks, national and other education stakeholders' policy environment.

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