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THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN KENYA: THE ROLE OF KENYA INSTITUTE OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (KICD) WITH REFERENCE TO KIKAMBA

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the measures put in place by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to support the development of teaching and learning materials in indigenous languages, with specific reference to Kikamba. Anchored in Munene Mwaniki's Language Management Approach (LMA) (2004), the study investigates policy-driven institutional measures and processes established to support mother tongue instructions. Drawing on qualitative data from interviews with KICD officials and primary school head teachers, and questionnaires administered to lower primary teachers, the study identifies a variety of deliberate efforts, including orthography development, development of curriculum designs, teacher training and workshops, digitisation of teaching resources and educational media programming. The findings revealed that, while KICD shows a clear devotion to indigenous language material development, challenges persist in accessibility, stakeholder participation, monitoring, evaluation and the scale of implementation. This article calls for improved coordinated and inclusive language management strategies to strengthen multilingual education policy and practice in Kenya

KEYWORDS: *Kikamba, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), Language Management Approach, indigenous languages, instructional materials, multilingual education.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indigenous languages are languages that are native to a specific locality and are traditionally used by its original inhabitants embodying long-standing cultural, historical and social connections to the community. The integration of indigenous languages into formal education systems remains an important aspect of inclusive and equitable multilingual education across Africa. In Kenya, the language-in-education policy mandates the use of learners' mother tongues during early childhood education and lower primary (Gachathi, 1976; Ogechi, 2009; BECF, 2017, 2019). Nevertheless, the availability, accessibility and quality of teaching and learning materials in indigenous languages such as Kikamba remain uneven, largely due to systematic constraints in policy implementation. As the national body responsible for curriculum design and instructional material development, The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), occupies a central position in shaping the linguistic ecology of early education. This article examines the institutional measures and processes instituted by KICD to support the development of Kikamba instructional materials. The study research questions are: what institutional measures has KICD undertaken to support the development of indigenous language instructional materials? What processes does KICD follow in the development of these materials? Guided by the Language Management Approach (LMA), this paper analyses how policy intentions are translated into concrete practices and the extent to which these practices advance equitable multilingual education in Kenya.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the widely acknowledged pillars of successful mother tongue based education is the development of indigenous language instructional materials (BECF, 2017, 2019; UNESCO, 2017, 2019; Mose, 2020). As research shows, well-designed indigenous language instructional materials, coupled with instructions in that language enhances learners' participation, comprehension, and learning performance outcomes significantly (Kioko et al, 2014; Al Zoubi and Younes, 2015; Roy-Campbell, 2019; Mose, 2020). Established institutional measures which oversee their design, development, standardisation, and distribution determine the success of such materials.

In the creation of instructional materials in indigenous languages, dialectal diversity and absence of standardised writing systems are the two most pressing setbacks. Dialectal variation compromises the process of material development. This calls for deliberate structured institutional measures and processes to

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ensure that indigenous language materials are pedagogically relevant and linguistically accurate across various regions. Non-standard orthographies lead to variations across textbooks, complicating pedagogical consistency (Gebre, 2013; Matavire, 2024; Dormer Chew, Child, Child, Hinson, Lokosh, Morgan, Sammons and Souter 2024).

Indigenous language instructional materials also serve cultural and social purposes. These materials facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge. They also allow learners to engage constructively with their heritage while simultaneously acquiring literacy competencies (Friesen, 2002; UNESCO, 2023; Saka *et al*., 2024; Ghafar *et al*, 2025). Previous research underscores the role of mother tongue instruction in reinforcing the cultural identity of learners and supporting the development of learners' cognitive skills in multilingual societies (Brock-Utne, 2000; UNESCO, 2022; Karunanithi and Sivanathan, 2025; Sudoh, 2025; Mulaudzi et al, 2026).

Institutional structures, therefore, are crucial in the transfer of language policy into classroom practice. Previous research highlights the significance of curriculum agencies and national education bodies in organising orthography development, instructional material production and teacher training within mother-tongue based multilingual education programmes (Ball, 2011; UNESCO, 2016; Githinji, Wambiri, and Kamau-Kang'ethe, 2024). In the African context, the success or failure of mother tongue based education programs is attributed to the strength of institutional deliberations, commitment and implementation mechanisms rather than policy intent alone (Bamgbose, 2000; PanSALB, 2020; Birnie, Robinson-Jones and Jansen, 2025; Mulaudzi *et al,* 2026). Programmes supported by strong institutional frameworks coupled with dedicated language boards, teacher training frameworks, coordination, monitoring and evaluation tend to be more successful. On the contrary, well-articulated policies fail to attain intended goals when curriculum agencies, teacher training frameworks and education boards lack capacity, coordination, control mechanisms, or follow up (Sudoh, 2025; Mulaudzi *et al*, 2026).

In Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) plays a critical role in the creation of indigenous language instructional materials, including Kikamba. KICD is mandated to design curricula, create syllabi, approve textbooks and oversee the production of teaching and learning materials for basic education (KICD, 2018).

Kenya's approach is not unique compared to other countries. In Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig provides policy direction and institutional support for Gaelic language education, including curriculum development as well as teacher support, underscoring the importance of dedicated bodies in sustaining indigenous language instruction (McPake, 2013; Birnie, Robinson-Jones and Jansen, 2025). Similarly, in South Africa, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) is tasked with promoting and developing indigenous languages through standardising orthographies, lexicography and support for educational materials (PanSALB, 2018; Alberts, 2022). PanSALB's institutional framework has been pivotal in increasing the functional use of indigenous languages in education and public life (PanSALB, 2020).

Several challenges still remain despite these institutional efforts. Limited documentation of some languages, unequal teacher preparedness and shortage of resources are some of the constraints which continue to negatively affect the quality and availability of indigenous language instructional materials (Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi, 2002; Muchemi, 2024; Magaju, Kubai and Kanyi, 2024; Ntshangase, 2025). Earlier research explains how discrepancies between policy and actual practice (Mose, 2017), together with policy and linguistic tensions (Ramothwala, 2024) can complicate the implementation of mother tongue instruction even where formal institutional frameworks are in place.

In sum, the reviewed literature shows that clearly stated institutional measures and systematic processes contributes to successful development of indigenous language instructional materials. These institutional frameworks include standardisation of orthographies, curriculum alignment, collaboration of stakeholders, teacher support and material production. The present study builds on this body of literature by investigating the specific measures and processes that KICD has put in place in the creation of indigenous language instructional materials, with specific reference to Kikamba.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT APPROACH (LMA)

This study was guided by Language Management Approach (LMA) by Mwaniki (2004). LMA offers a systematic approach for analysing institutional responses to challenges related to language in educational and policy contexts. LMA emphasises targeted intervention, deliberate planning, and structured evaluation as key to success in language management. LMA further advocates for strategies that are context-sensitive, participatory and aligned with clearly defined goals in the language policy formulation and implementation.

In this study, LMA is applied to examine the measures instituted by KICD in developing Kikamba instructional materials. The framework enables an assessment of whether these measures are purposeful, contextually responsive, and participatory in supporting Kenya's multilingual education.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design to examine the strategies and practices used by the KICD in the development of indigenous language instructional materials. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with KICD officials involved in indigenous language curriculum and material development. Primary school head teachers responsible for overseeing

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classroom practices were also interviewed. In addition, questionnaires were administered to lower primary teachers, who serve as the primary implementers of the indigenous language curriculum at classroom level.

Through purposive sampling, participants and primary schools involved in the teaching and learning of indigenous languages were selected. Thematic analysis was employed for data analysis, which enabled the identification and organisation of recurring patterns related to institutional language management practices.

5. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings on the measures and processes established by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to facilitate the creation indigenous language instructional materials. The analysis is based on data collected through interviews with KICD officials and primary school headteachers, as well as questionnaires completed by lower primary school teachers.

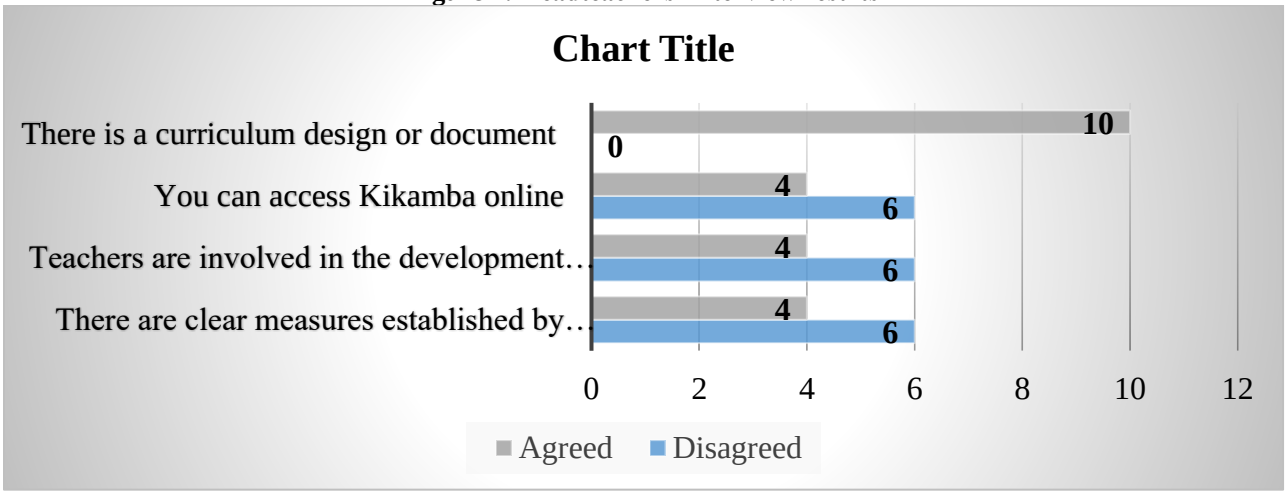
5.1 Measures by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)

The study found that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has put in place a range of deliberate and structured measures to enhance the development of Kikamba and other indigenous language teaching and learning materials. These initiatives cover training of teacher, curriculum design, development of orthographies, digitisation of resources, and educational media programming. Evidence from interviews and questionnaires indicates that these interventions are designed to promote the quality and accessibility of indigenous language instructions. This reflects KICD's commitment to supporting Kenya's multilingual education policy. Data collection involved questionnaires with lower primary teachers and interviews with primary school headteachers and KICD officials. The findings are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1: Lower Primary Teachers' Questionnaire Results

Measures taken by KICD to develop teaching and learning materials in reference to Kikamba.	D	N	A
1. There are clear measures put in place by KICD to ensure that indigenous language textbooks align with language-in-education policies in Kenya.	83 94%	3 3%	3 3%
2. There are clear processes that are followed by KICD in the production of Kikamba teaching and learning materials.	82 92%	4 5%	3 3%
3. There are enough teaching and learning materials for Kikamba language.	86 97%	0 0%	3 3%
4. There is a curriculum design or document guiding the development of Kikamba textbooks.	20 23%	1 1%	68 76%
5. You can access Kikamba publications and textbooks online	69 78%	2 2%	18 20%
6. Enough Kikamba teaching and learning materials have been developed and distributed	87 98%	0 0%	2 2%
7. I have attended educational conferences that focused on collecting views and trends on indigenous languages	83 93%	0 0%	6 7%

Figure 1: Headteachers' interview results



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5.1.1 Alignment of indigenous language textbooks with language-in-education policy.

The study established that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has put in place clear measures to align indigenous language textbooks, including Kikamba, with Kenya's language-in-education policy. A KICD officer noted:

> *"Indigenous languages should be used as languages of instruction from PP 1 to grade 3 in linguistically homogenous environments according to the Basic Education Curriculum Framework. They also should be taught as subjects in grade one to three. Clear measures exist at* Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) *for aligning indigenous language textbooks with the language-in-education policy."* (KICD officer A)

These measures reflect the stipulations of the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) (2017), which endorses indigenous languages as both languages of instruction and subjects in Grades one to three.

However, evidence from the teachers and headteachers highlights a significant gap. A vast majority of lower primary teachers 93% (83 out of 89) reported being unaware of any alignment measures, while 60% (6 out of 10) of headteachers shared this view.

One headteacher had this to say:

> *"As far as I am concerned, there are no clear measures. If they exist, such information has not reached our end."* (Headteacher B)

Another claimed:

> *"In this school we do not teach Kikamba. It was phased out. The new curriculum, CBC, phased it out."* (Headteacher D)

Headteacher D's claim is inconsistent with the official language-in-education policy which recognises Kikamba as an approved subject in grades 1-3 and allows Kikamba to be taught as an optional subject at junior and senior school level (BECF, 2017).

These findings demonstrate a disconnect between policy formulation and classroom implementation. This observation aligns with Mose (2017), who similarly noted a gap between policy intentions and classrooms realities.

From a theoretical perspective, this outcome is inconsistent with the leading principle of the Language Management Approach (LMA). It illustrates a limitation in the leading strategy employed by KICD or Ministry of Education in the implementation process. Leading emphasises the importance of clear communication of multilingual policy goals and their implementation to all stakeholders. Mwaniki (2004) notes that effective language management goes beyond policy development to include ensuring that practitioners understand the goals, processes and expected outcomes of policy interventions.

The position of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) on structured measures is supported by Mother Tongue Education Programme for Indigenous Languages (MEPIL) initiative. MEPIL successfully produced culturally appropriate educational materials for Pokomo, Oromo, Digo, and Duruma using KICD frameworks. This demonstrates the presence of well-defined measures though they are poorly communicated to teachers.

In summary, while Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has institutionalised measures to guide indigenous language materials development, limited dissemination and weak feedback loops between Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and schools hinder policy implementation. Strengthened management-oriented strategies, consistent with Language Management Approach (LMA), are required, including systematic communication, regular training of teachers and structured feedback procedures.

According to Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) Act No 4. Of 2013, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is mandated to develop and approve curricula and educational materials that meet national and international standards, reinforcing the expectation that clear measures should guide indigenous language educational material development.

The following section outlines the specific measures implemented by KICD to support this process.

5.1.1.1 Development of Kikamba teaching programme for KICD radio and TV

This study found that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is in the process of developing Kikamba teaching programmes, for its educational broadcasting platforms, KICD Radio and Edu TV (KICD, 2025). A senior KICD officer confirmed this initiative, stating:

> *"We are in the process of developing Kikamba teaching programmes for KICD Radio and Edu TV."* (KICD senior officer A)

This initiative suggests institutional effort to expand access to indigenous language education through educational media. According to Brooking, Mutamiri and Mugari (2015), educational broadcasting promotes language learning outcomes in linguistically diverse contexts. By integrating Kikamba curriculum content into KICD radio and Educational TV (EDU TV) programmes, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) expands instructional access for learners, including those in remote or underserved areas.

From a Language Management Approach (LMA) perspective, this initiative demonstrates deliberate management intervention in both language acquisition planning and language dissemination processes. It illustrates that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) commitment to standardising curriculum-aligned content alongside addressing practical language needs in Kenya's multilingual educational system.

The strategy concurs with Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) legal role in educational media. The

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KICD's role covers the development, production and dissemination of instructional programmes through its radio and television platforms (KICD, 2025). Through the Language Management Approach (LMA) framework, such initiatives demonstrate a structured intervention to bridge the gap between policy-level language management and practical classroom-level implementation strategies supporting the continued use of indigenous languages.

5.1.1.2 Development of orthographies for indigenous languages

According to Gebre (2013), Matavire (2024) and Dormer *et al*., (2024), lack of standardised orthographies creates inconsistencies in learning content, thus limiting the effectiveness of mother tongue instruction. Further, dialectal variation hinders the creation and publication of instructional materials for indigenous languages.

Findings from this study show that the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is deliberately engaged creating orthographies for languages with either undeveloped or underdeveloped orthographies particularly in marginalised communities. A KICD official observed:

> *"We are doing our best to develop the orthographies for languages with no orthography or it is underdeveloped, especially within the marginalised communities."* (KICD senior official A)

This demonstrates continuing institutional interventions to implement practical orthographies able to facilitate the development of curriculum, literacy acquisition and indigenous language preservation. This finding aligns with Chebanne (2016) who argues that the creation of orthographies is an important step toward enhancing educational fairness and language empowerment among marginalised communities.

Comparative interventions have been recorded in other studies in Africa. For instance, the creation and standardisation of the Oroko orthography in Cameroon, supervised by the Oroko Language Development Committee (OLDC) together with the National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO), highlight how structured institutional mechanisms contribute to the advancement of indigenous language literacy (Friesen (2002).

Informed by Language Management Approach (LMA) frameworks, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) participation in developing orthographies represents an intentional language planning and management initiative designed to build basic linguistic infrastructure. Standardised orthographies support the creation of instructional materials that are culturally appropriate and pedagogically sound, thus allowing indigenous languages to operate more efficiently in formal educational contexts.

5.1.1.3 Development of Curriculum designs for indigenous languages

The findings show broad recognition of the existence of curriculum designs guiding the development of Kikamba textbooks. A majority of questionnaire respondents 76% (68 out of 89) and all interview respondents 100% (10 out of 10) reported awareness of a curriculum design or policy document informing indigenous language material development. This perception concurs with data from Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) confirming that indigenous language curriculum designs have been developed for Pre-Primary 1 through grade 12. A senior KICD Officer explained:

> "*We have developed indigenous language curriculum designs for PP 1 up to grade 12. They are written in English because they are formal policy documents. They are to be used for all indigenous languages therefore achieving uniform curriculum. We make sure that the content is not only standardised but also customised to each language."* (KICD senior officer A)

Similarly, headteachers affirmed their awareness and access to the curriculum designs. One headteacher remarked:

> *"In this school, teachers have access to indigenous curriculum designs for PP 1 up to grade three. The designs are available online, we downloaded the one for PP 2 last week."* (Headteacher B)

These findings reflect Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) institutional dedication to integrating indigenous languages in Kenya's formal education system, aligning with the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017). The creation of the curriculum designs demonstrates an intentional initiative to foster inclusive and linguistically responsive education through strategic policy interventions.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that the accessibility of curriculum designs does not directly guarantee successful classroom implementation. In many schools, indigenous language policy endures weak enforcement, demonstrating challenges linked to top-down language management in multilingual settings. Mwaniki (2004) notes that macro-level policy initiatives are unable to translate into effective classroom practice when communication, oversight and institutional support mechanisms are insufficient. In this study, challenges included minimal transmission of information, conflicting school-level language policies and ongoing negative attitude towards mother tongue instruction.

The language of the curriculum designs is another factor contributing to this implementation gap. The study found out that the curriculum designs are written in English rather than in indigenous languages. While this choice supports uniformity and formal documentation standards, it places a burden on teachers to creatively interpret and adapt the content into culturally relevant classroom practices such as proverbs, riddles, stories and tongue twisters. This finding contrasts with Magaju (2024), who reported that schools in Meru County lacked access to Kimeru language curriculum designs. The present study clarifies that

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indigenous language curriculum designs in Kenya are not written in individual languages but in English since they are standard policy documents intended to guide mother tongue instructions across contexts.

From a Language Management Approach (LMA) standpoint, the development of curriculum designs signifies a deliberate macro-level intervention in language policy planning and management. In contrast, the gap in micro-level implementation illustrates a weakness in the communication, monitoring, and administrative support functions that are key to successful management. Addressing structural setbacks such as contradicting school language policies and continuing negative attitude toward mother tongue education would enhance the possibility that policy intentions result into reformative and significant educational outcomes.

5.1.1.4 Accessing Kikamba textbooks and publications online

This study investigated the online availability of Kikamba publications and textbooks. The findings show minimal access, with a majority of respondents reporting that such Kikamba materials were not accessible online. Specifically, 78% (69 out of 89) of questionnaire respondents (lower primary teachers) and 60% (6 out of 10) of headteachers interviewed claimed that Kikamba publications and textbooks were not accessible through digital platforms. In contrast, 20% (18 out of 89) of lower primary teachers reported having accessed Kikamba materials online.

Several factors were identified as contributing to these low access levels. At school level, teachers' limited digital literacy, limited access to devices such as computers, laptops, and smartphones and inadequate internet connectivity including high data costs, unstable Wi-Fi and weak network coverage were cited as key constraints. One headteacher explained:

> *"It is challenging for us as heads of institutions to implement the MTE policy because the few books we have in the school are outdated and the recent ones are not available even online. Even if they were, some of the teachers are not technologically up to date, and we lack computers and internet services."* (Headteacher E)

At the institutional level, data from Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) indicate that efforts to facilitate access to Kikamba instructional materials online are ongoing. A KICD official stated:

> *"We are doing our level best to ensure that our publications are available online, can be accessed at KICD radio, KICD education cloud, and EDU TV. However, this is yet to be achieved."* (KICD official D)

These findings suggest that although progress has been initiated, access to online Kikamba materials remains constrained for most teachers. Nonetheless, this initiative indicates an important step towards expanding access to indigenous language resources beyond print-based publishing, a development that has been shown to enhance resource sharing and inclusivity in multilingual education contexts (Masilela, 2018: Mlambo and Matfunjwa, 2024).

From a Language Management Approach (LMA) perspective, this initiative reflects the controlling component of language management, which emphasises intentional and responsive processes aimed at addressing emerging implementation challenges. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) efforts demonstrate a management-oriented strategy to improve access to indigenous language resources. However, Language Management Approach (LMA) underscores that top-down interventions must be complemented by practical, ground-level support, including teacher capacity building and infrastructural investment if they are to be effective.

These findings align with international trends. Studies by UNESCO (2023), Mlambo and Matfunjwa, (2024) and Chakma, Khisa, Khisa, Noor and Sultana (2026) indicate that while digital platforms can reduce barriers to accessing indigenous language resources, their effectiveness depends on addressing technological, human capacity and infrastructural limitations.

5.1.1.5 KICD's efforts to promote indigenous languages in urban centres

Data from Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) indicate that efforts are underway to address the challenges of implementing mother tongue education in urban centres, where the linguistic diversity is pronounced. Although current language-in-education policy prescribes the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction in contexts where no single indigenous language predominates, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is exploring strategies to ensure that learners are instructed in their respective mother tongues where possible. A senior KICD official explained:

> *"We are in the process of finding a solution for learners in lower primary in urban centres who come from different communities and possess a variety of mother tongues. We are looking for ways of accommodating these learners in their mother tongues for instruction."* (KICD senior official B.)

The complexity of the implementing mother tongue education in urban settings has been documented in other studies. Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012) note that the co-existence of several languages and dialects in urban and peri-urban areas complicates the establishment of a standard mother tongue for instruction thus limiting the creation of uniform instructional materials and constraining effective policy implementation.

These challenges notwithstanding, the findings of this study indicate that ongoing interventions strive to recognise and accommodate the linguistic realities of learners (Kaviti, 2023). This approach concurs with Language Management Approach (LMA), which emphasises that successful language policy implementation extends beyond formal prescriptions to include context-sensitive and adaptive management practices. Language Management Approach (LMA) differentiates between policy formulation, management initiatives, and actual implementation underscoring the need for flexibility and responsiveness in multilingual environments.

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The urban classroom, characterised by various coexisting mother tongues, thus poses a language management dilemma that needs innovative rather than inflexible approaches. Acknowledgement of this challenge by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) and its initiative to develop workable strategies highlights the management-oriented approach recommended by Language Management Approach (LMA), specifically in addressing the challenges of multilingual education in urban contexts.

5.1.1.6 Including Kikamba into Formal Assessments

This research found out that Kikamba is in the process of being made examinable at two key levels in the education system: Grades 1 to 3 (lower primary) and Grades 10-12 (senior school). According to a senior KICD official, learners in Grade 4-9 currently engage with indigenous languages through learner based tasks rather than formal examinations. The official explained:

> *"Indigenous languages are in the process of being made examinable, starting with Grades one to three and then Grades ten to twelve. Grades four to nine are expected to interact with the language through learner based tasks."* **(**KICD senior official A)

Evidence from schools corroborated this institutional position. One headteacher reported:

> *''The Kenya National Examinations Council set a project assessment to grade 7 learners in 2023 which required the learner to collect a narrative from their community. Learners were expected to write it down in the original language as narrated by the resource person then translate it to English.*'' (Head teacher B)

The researcher confirmed that this assignment comprised a section of the Grade 7 School-Based Assessment in English (Oral Literature Project) conducted in July 2023. Such initiatives suggest a gradual integration of indigenous languages into assessment practices, although indirectly at the middle primary and junior school levels. This approach implicitly assumes that learners have attained sufficient mother tongue proficiency in lower primary, as envisaged in Kenya's language-in-education policy. From a Language Management Approach (LMA) perspective, the initiative to make Kikamba examinable reflects a planned language management intervention. Language Management Approach (LMA) stresses the role of systematic management interventions such as standardised assessments in enhancing the functional status, recognition and academic relevance of indigenous languages in formal education system. The integration of examinable components therefore indicates growing institutional recognition of indigenous languages as recognised academic subjects rather than marginal curriculum components.

These findings are consistent with Mose and Kaschula (2019), who identify the absence of uniform mechanisms of assessment as a persistent limitation in indigenous language education. The continuing introduction of school-based examinations by Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) illustrates an emerging, though still incomplete, intervention to this persistent gap.

5.1.1.7 Integration of Reading and Writing Skills in Kikamba Textbooks

The study found that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is progressively integrating reading and writing skills into Kikamba textbooks currently under creation. This development aligns instructional materials with the indigenous language curriculum design and recognised language pedagogical principles. A senior KICD official explained:

> *"We usually have listening and speaking as the main skills in teaching the language...we are now introducing reading and writing skills.''* (KICD senior official A)

The incorporation of reading and writing activities reflects an intentional effort to enhance learner participation, engagement, comprehension and literacy outcomes. Ginkel (2017) observes that including all the four language skills in instructional materials promotes understanding and facilitates meaningful learner participation. Similarly, this shift addresses calls by Mose and Kaschula, (2019), Okal, (2022), and Omusonga, Simiyu and Chesaro, (2023) for standardised and pedagogically appropriate instructional resources for indigenous language education.

Viewed through the Language Management Approach (LMA), this development constitutes an intentional management-level intervention aimed at improving acquisition of indigenous language. This move by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to ensure that Kikamba is taught through the four language skills positions the language within formal schooling frameworks that apply instructional practices used for national and international languages. This strategy strengthens the academic status of Kikamba and also promotes inclusive literacy avenues for learners in linguistically diverse contexts.

Integrating reading and writing into Kikamba books demonstrates a deliberate language management intervention in indigenous language education. The transition from exclusively oral approach orientation towards parity with other languages of instruction is a reflection of alignment with established with pedagogical standards in language education.

5.1.1.8 Dialects

Dialectal diversity, in previous studies, has been highlighted as a limitation in the implementation of mother tongue education. Gebre (2013) notes that dialectal variation often results in content inconsistencies in instructional materials, thus compromising uniformity and overall quality in mother tongue instruction.

Findings from this study revealed that interventions to address dialectal hindrances are being undertaken, especially in communities where several dialects coexist. This agrees with the controlling, a dimension of the Language Management Approach (LMA), which stresses timely diagnosis of deviations from language management plans to ensure corrective intervention (Mwaniki, 2004). One official observed:

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> *"In a community where there exist different dialects, we try to create a common orthography or content. In some communities, there are wide variations, so we use the orthography used by the Bible Translation society*" (KICD official D)

Further, the study found that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) draws extensively on the expertise of Bible Translation organisations in the development of standardised orthographies for instructional purposes. This reliance demonstrates staffing, a strategy of the Language Management Approach (LMA) which emphasises the involvement of language experts such as lexicographers, interpreters, translators, language technologists and terminologists (Mwaniki, 2004). A senior KICD official A stated:

> *"We do not work alone, we involve other organisations like Bible Translation and Literacy Society in the development process of books. They have published Bibles in our Kenyan languages…and they have established orthographies that are more reliable and acceptable to all... we therefore work with their orthographies…"*

These findings concur with global experiences. Mtsatse (2018) reports that early missionaries such as Johnnes Theodorus van der Kemp learned and documented the Ngqika dialect of isiXhosa. He used it in Bible translation and schooling. The Ngqika dialect, as a result, became the standard dialect or rather the standard written form of isiXhosa used in education, although Ndlambe and Thembu dialects were added as standard dialects of isiXhosa.

Overall, the findings demonstrate the strategic use of established orthographies and collaboration with language experts as solution oriented language management interventions for addressing dialectal diversity.

5.1.1.9 Publishing

Findings on publishing indicated that most commercial publishers are reluctant to publish indigenous language books due to low profit margins and perceived limited market demand. In such cases, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) intervenes by producing the required resources. KICD official D stated:

> *"Concerning resources, that is books, usually in Kenya books are done by publishers. But publishers are after profit making. KICD is a publisher of last resort. We do publish books especially where publishers are unable or unwilling to produce materials required. In this regard, we have produced indigenous language books for grades one, two, three and six."*

This finding agrees with previous research by Ogechi and Bosire-Ogechi (2002), who found that publishers hesitated to produce Kiswahili materials because English dominates in formal education and limited market demand. Similar commercial perceptions continue to influence publishers' unwillingness to develop indigenous language resources. Integration indigenous languages into formal education system has the potential to generate sustainable market demand for indigenous language books.

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD) role as a publisher of last resort demonstrates a corrective management measure aligned with the Language Management Approach (LMA). The unwillingness of commercial publishers indicates a deviation from the objective of language management plan. As a result, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) intervenes to guarantee the availability and accessibility of instructional materials. This intervention highlights the significance of proactive and flexible management approaches in shielding indigenous language education from the limitations imposed by market-driven forces.

5.2.2 Clear processes that KICD follows in the creation of Kikamba instructional materials.

The study investigated whether Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is guided by systematic procedures in the production of Kikamba instructional materials. Findings revealed a disconnect between institutional mechanisms and awareness among teachers. Whereas 92% (82 out of 89) of lower primary teachers indicated that they had not observed any processes in place, interviews with KICD staff confirmed the existence of institutional procedures. This disparity shows that, though processes exist, they are insufficiently transmitted to primary implementers. These findings concur with Mose (2017), who highlights inadequate dissemination of language-in-education policy directives from policy developers and key institutional agencies to teachers as a long-standing challenge in indigenous language education. The limited awareness of KICD's processes among teachers compromises their effectiveness in classroom delivery.

From the perspective of the Language Management Approach (LMA), the existence of processes reflects deliberate planning, which involves coordinated interventions to realise outlined objectives (Mwaniki, 2004). However, LMA emphasises that effective planning should be combined with rigorous communication and participation. The evident disconnect between KICD and teachers demonstrates a gap in the communication of management decisions, which compromises the implementation of Kikamba teaching and learning materials in schools.

The study further identified four core processes at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development:

5.2.2.1 Stakeholder engagement

Findings showed that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) engages teachers, language experts, and community members in the creation of Kikamba materials. By so doing, cultural appropriateness, linguistic accuracy, and pedagogical soundness is ensured. A KICD official had this to say:

> *"At KICD, we do not just decide on the content... Before any text is approved, it must be linguistically,*

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pedagogically, and culturally reviewed." (KICD official C)

Community elders are consulted on culturally sensitive content to address taboos and ensure contextual appropriateness. KICD official D explained:

> *"... we work with language teachers who understand the language. There are instances where we pick one or two community members to guide cultural aspects, so we do not miss anything important."*

This participatory approach is consistent with the leading dimension of the Language Management Approach (LMA), which emphasises collaboration, consultation and stakeholder mobilisation in the implementation of language policy (Mwaniki, 2004). Findings also align with Hardman and Set (2023) whose study in Namibia shows that sensitivity to cultural norms and taboos influenced classroom practices and material development.

5.2.2.2 Development, review and distribution of books

The study sought to establish the standing of development, review, and distribution of Kikamba books. While 98% (87 out of 89) of lower primary teachers reported not receiving Kikamba teaching and learning materials, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) data indicated that books for grades *one, two, three and six* had been developed but were undergoing review prior to distribution. A headteacher explained:

> *'I am yet to see new developed Kikamba materials or even revised ones. All we have in this school are the old books."* (Headteacher H)

KICD official D stated:

> *"We have done indigenous languages books for grades one, two, three and six…we need to review those books. We are in the process of developing books for the other levels…once we are done, they will be distributed formally to schools."*

Delayed distribution of instructional materials highlights administrative and logistical challenges including procurement constraints, funding limitations, and administrative protocols (Amutabi, 2017). From an LMA perspective, such delays signal limitations in coordination and controlling strategies. Controlling and coordination are intended to ensure that planned activities are executed in line with educational objectives. Enhancing coordination, strengthening communication and improving resource mobilisation are therefore necessary for timely material delivery.

5.2.2.3 Teacher Participation

Teacher involvement in the creation of Kikamba instructional materials was minimal. 60% (6 out of 10) of headteachers reported limited teacher participation and no teacher surveyed had been selected to serve on the indigenous language panel. One headteacher observed:

> "*Since I became a headteacher, I have never met one teacher in this sub-county who is a member of the indigenous language panel."* (Head teacher C)

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) affirmed such an observation:

> *"We have only one panel for indigenous languages which is composed of seven stakeholders and therefore it cannot accommodate many teachers."* (KICD official C)

This limited participation reflects findings by Magaju, Kubai and Kanyi (2024) in Meru County, where only 25% of respondents participated in MTE curriculum development. From a Language Management Approach (LMA) perspective, sidelining teachers undermines the policy's relevance and practicality in classrooms, contradicting the Language Management Approach's (LMA) framework emphasis on inclusive and context-sensitive management.

5.2.2.4 Teacher trainings and workshops

Teacher training specifically focused on Kikamba instruction is scarce. 70% (7 out of 10) of interviewees reported that no workshops had been conducted, and 93% (83 out of 89) of the questionnaire respondents reported that they had never attended indigenous language-focused workshops. Only 7% (6 out of 89) had participated in relevant conferences.

A KICD officer had this to say:

> "*KICD may not be able to train and do workshops to teachers because it oversees the entire curriculum for all subjects and levels and lacks enough personnel to do the training. The change in curriculum is also posing a challenge because we are adjusting to the new curriculum, CBC."* (KICD officer F)

Some headteachers perceived this neglect as intentional:

> *"There seems to be a deliberate move to ignore workshops in Kikamba or rather indigenous languages because they are not examinable."* (Headteacher G)

These findings align with Mose and Kaschula (2019), Omusonga, Simiyu and Chesaro (2023) and Magaju, Kubai and Kanyi (2024), all of whom highlighted inadequate in-service training as a barrier to mother tongue education. This points to a weakness in the leading strategy, a crucial human resource for successful policy implementation

The study found that KICD has established clear measures and processes to support the development of indigenous language instructional materials including Kikamba. Nevertheless, many lower primary teachers are insufficiently informed about these initiatives. This indicates a communication gap between policymakers and classroom implementers. From an LMA perspective, this shows a partial breakdown in planning, coordination, leading, and controlling strategies, thereby highlighting the need for enhanced stakeholder engagement, dissemination of information and capacity building to facilitate effective policy implementation.

6. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the measures and processes implemented by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to support the development of Kikamba instructional resources. The findings reveal that, while KICD has made deliberate moves to promote indigenous language education, gaps in communication,

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teacher engagement, accessibility and implementation still remain. The discussion below interprets these findings in light of the Language Management Approach (LMA) and related literature.

The study found that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has established clear measures to align Kikamba instructional materials and textbooks with national language-in-education policies, thus reflecting the provisions of Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF, 2017, 2019). The creation of orthographies, curriculum designs and educational media projects such as KICD Radio and Edu TV show proactive institutional planning to standardise indigenous language instruction. These measures reflect the planning and leading components of LMA, which stress structured, goal-oriented strategies to manage the implementation of language policy (Mwaniki, 2004).

However, the findings also indicate a disjunction between policy formulation and classroom implementation. Majority of lower primary teachers and some headteachers reported that they were unaware of these measures, pointing to a communication gap. This confirms prior observations by Mose (2017) that insufficient dissemination hinders effective policy implementation. From an LMA perspective, planning, on its own, is insufficient because it cannot guarantee effective implementation; the leading function, which includes communicating objectives and engaging stakeholders, is the most crucial for translating policy into practice.

The incorporation of Kikamba into the educational broadcasting platforms of KICD demonstrates a strategic management intervention to increase reach, especially in areas that are under-resourced or remote. This is in line with international trends, where digital and broadcast media promote access to minority language instruction (Brooking, Mutamiri and Mugari, 2015; Masilela, 2018; Kgaswane, 2019).

Nonetheless, access challenges persist because of low digital literacy, insufficient infrastructure, and unreliable internet connectivity. LMA's controlling function emphasises the significance of monitoring and responding to such implementation barriers. While KICD has initiated digitisation of resources, complementary support such as infrastructure development and teacher training is needed to facilitate equitable access.

The strategic development of indigenous curriculum designs, inclusion of reading and writing skills as well as gradual introduction of examinable components of Kikamba point to deliberate interventions to promote language functionality and prestige. These initiatives place indigenous languages at par with national and international languages in terms of pedagogical rigour, effectively addressing historical gaps in instructional standardisation (Ginkel,2017; Mose and Kaschula, 2019).

From LMA perspective, these actions show a combination of planning, leading and controlling strategies: planning through structured curriculum design and orthography development, leading through pedagogical standardisation, and controlling through school-based assessments and examinations. Nevertheless, limited teacher awareness and the partial roll-out of examinable components indicate a need for fortified dissemination, monitoring, and evaluation strategies.

Dialectal variation remains a significant challenge for standardised indigenous language instruction. The study found that KICD addresses this by adopting common orthographies, and collaborating with various people such as community elders, language experts, and Bible translators. This approach demonstrates technical management within LMA, which emphasises the use of linguistic expertise and stakeholder collaboration to ensure linguistic uniformity without violating cultural norms (Mwaniki, 2004). Similar approaches have been reported elsewhere around the world, including in South Africa, where orthographies used for educational materials were drawn from prior missionary translations (Mtsatse, 2018).

Stakeholder involvement, specifically with community elders, exemplifies participatory leadership in LMA. Nonetheless, teacher participation was minimal, limiting the practical relevance of created materials at classroom level. Given that teachers are frontline implementers, their inclusion is indispensable to ensure effective and contextual operationalisation of policies.

The study revealed that commercial publishers often avoid dealing with indigenous language materials because of low profit margins, making KICD the publisher of last resort. While this intervention guarantees material availability, delays in distribution, together with limited teacher training, compromise effective implementation. Within LMA, this reflects weaknesses in controlling and coordination, emphasising the importance of proactive management to mitigate structural and market-based constraints (Amutabi, 2017).

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The findings highlight the necessity of taking a holistic, management-oriented strategy to indigenous language education. For effective working of such programmes, clear communication is paramount. Teachers should be clearly informed about the measures and processes, so that they understand the policies established, how they are expected to execute them, and what instructional provisions are available. Another important thing is regular monitoring and evaluation, which ensures that teaching and learning materials are distributed to school, are available and accessible to teachers and learners and are being utilised in classrooms. Successful policy implementation also depends on meaningful collaboration of key stakeholders such as language experts, teachers and community members in curriculum development thereby ensuring linguistic accuracy and cultural

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relevance. Lastly, sufficient resources and infrastructure are fundamental especially through media platforms, improved digital access, and availability of instructional materials to all learners, ensuring that learners benefit from indigenous language education.

These initiatives promote the functional use of Kikamba and other indigenous languages in education. Alignment of policy intentions with classroom practices is also enhanced there by enhancing multilingual equity and cultural sustainability.

This discussion shows that KICD has put in place deliberate measures and processes to support indigenous language education. It highlights key LMA principals of planning, leading, and controlling. However, gaps in communication, digital accessibility, teacher engagement, and implementation still exist. These gaps can be addressed through an integrated management approach that combines stakeholder collaboration, capacity building, policy formulation, and monitoring to achieve inclusive and sustainable multilingual education in Kenya.

8. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the measures and processes implemented by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to support the creation of Kikamba and other indigenous language instructional materials. The findings show that while KICD has established intentional institutional measures and processes, notable gaps still remain in communication, teacher engagement, accessibility and classroom-level implementation. Many lower primary teachers remain insufficiently informed about these measures. This demonstrates a persistent disjunction between policy formulation and policy enactment at the school level, a challenge that has been noted in earlier studies.

The study revealed various critical measures undertaken by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to facilitate indigenous language education. These include the development of instructional programmes broadcast through KICD Educational Radio and Edu TV, aiming at enhancing instructional reach and access. The development and standardisation of orthographies for languages with either undeveloped or underdeveloped writing system has also been spearheaded by the KICD. This ensures linguistic uniformity and accuracy in educational materials. In addition, KICD has created curriculum designs that support mother tongue instruction across several educational levels as well as making efforts to increase the online availability of Kikamba instructional materials. The institute is also exploring approaches for instructing lower primary learners in their respective mother tongues in linguistically heterogeneous urban settings. Other notable strategies include the incorporation of reading and writing components into Kikamba textbooks to enhance literacy and the measured integration of Kikamba as an examinable subject across various grade levels. To address dialectal diversity and promote consistency instructional materials, KICD adopts a standardised dialect, guided by existing Bible translations. Lastly, in cases where commercial publishers are unwilling to produce indigenous language instructional resources, KICD publishes such materials to facilitate their availability and equitable distribution.

The study further identified systematic processes that shape KICD's work in indigenous language education. These include the involvement of key stakeholders such as teachers, language experts and community members in the development of indigenous language instructional materials. In addition, the KICD undertakes systematic textbook review exercises to ensure linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and pedagogical soundness. Further, the KICD involves teachers in indigenous language panels. However, teacher participation is limited due to panel size restrictions, which limits opportunities for frontline classroom input. Finally, KICD conducts training sessions and workshops for teachers, participation remains relatively low, leaving many teachers without sufficient professional development s in indigenous language instruction.

In sum, KICD demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to support indigenous languages in education. Nevertheless, gaps in information dissemination, implementation logistics and teacher engagement persist. These gaps compromise the effectiveness of these efforts. Viewed through the LMA perspective, these findings call for strengthened planning, control, leadership and stakeholder engagement frameworks to ensure that policy intentions translate more effectively into classroom practice. To improve literacy outcomes, enhance equitable multilingual education, and support the continuous functional use of indigenous languages in Kenya's education system, these gaps need to be addressed.

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