

6TH BIENNIAL EDUCATION EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 2025

Redesigning Teacher Curricula: Anchor the Next Revision Cycle in Assessment Evidence, Not Aspiration

Introduction and Background

This brief is addressed to the institutions with direct authority over teacher curriculum content: the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the statutory body mandated under the KICD Act No. 4 of 2013 to develop, review, and approve curricula for basic and teacher education in Kenya; the Ministry of Education's Directorate of Basic Education and Directorate of Higher Education, which respectively oversee curriculum implementation in schools and approve teacher-training programs in universities and TTCs; university Schools of Education and Teacher Training Colleges, represented through the Education Deans Forum-Kenya (EDF-K); and EE4A's research partners, who generate the assessment evidence this brief argues should drive revision.

It draws on the Teacher Education Curriculum and Approaches sub-theme of the 2025 EE4A conference, in which 77 of 84 surveyed stakeholders responded, and on national assessment data presented alongside it. Where EE4A's companion Teacher Education Policy brief addresses mentorship structures and practicum governance, this brief addresses an earlier and narrower link in the same reform chain: whether curriculum content itself is being revised using evidence, or largely independent of it.



30 of 84	5.4%	48%	31%
stakeholders named curriculum design & review as their top concern, more than teacher preparation (19) and evidence use (16) combined	of learners exceeded expectations in a 2024 national numeracy assessment	of learners' numeracy struggles were attributed to confusing teaching methods	of teachers could effectively apply cognitive-conflict techniques shown to raise numeracy performance by 97%

The Problem, With Scale

At the 2025 EE4A conference, 77 of 84 surveyed stakeholders (92% response rate) named a top priority for teacher education curriculum reform. The single most-cited concern, raised by 30 respondents, was curriculum design and review itself, more mentions than teacher preparation (19) and evidence-informed design (16) combined. Evidence and research use ranked a distant third, cited by fewer than one in five respondents. Kenya is nine years into rolling out Competency-Based Education, and university and Teacher Training College (TTC) curricula are being revised to keep pace, but the people closest to that process are telling us the revisions are not evidence-led.

The cost of that gap is measurable, not assumed. A 2024 national numeracy assessment found that only 5.4% of learners exceeded expectations in basic mathematics. Nearly half of learners' numeracy struggles (48%) were attributed to poor interpretation and negative attitudes, and a third (33%) to confusing teaching methods. Cognitive-conflict instruction, a technique shown to raise numeracy performance by up to 97% when applied correctly, was used effectively by only 31% of teachers. These are not new pedagogies waiting to be invented. They are known, tested practices that have not been systematically built into the curricula that prepare teachers to use them.



What is missing is not curriculum activity; it is an evidence pipeline

This is a deliberately narrower question than the one addressed in EE4A’s companion Teacher Education Policy brief, which examines mentorship structures and practicum governance. This brief asks a prior question: what goes into the curriculum in the first place, and whether classroom assessment evidence, Grade 3 and Grade 6 results, national numeracy and literacy diagnostics, and practice-based findings presented at EE4A itself have any standing mechanism for reaching the people who write and revise that curriculum.

Currently it does not. No university, TTC, or KICD process reviewed at the conference described a recurring, structured channel feeding assessment results back into curriculum content. Curriculum design proceeds on its own cycle; evidence review does not happen on any cycle at all. That is the specific, checkable gap this brief addresses, not teacher motivation, not mentorship, not funding in general.



Recommendation

One institution has the authority to close this gap directly. The action below is the single highest-leverage step; the three that follow support it.

ONE ASK: KICD

Establish a fixed annual curriculum-evidence review that formally feeds FLANA results, Grade 3/6 national assessment data, and EE4A-presented findings directly into CBE teacher-curriculum content with outcomes published each year so the cycle itself can be tracked and its absence, if it lapses, is visible.

Supporting recommendations

Supporting Actor	Supporting Ask
Universities / Schools of Education (via EDF-K)	Audit current pre-service curricula against specific high-yield practices with published effect sizes (e.g. cognitive-conflict numeracy instruction), and feed the coverage gap into KICD’s review within one academic year.
MoE — Directorate of Basic Education & Directorate of Higher Education	Commission a one-time baseline audit of how well existing university/TTC curricula reflect CBE competencies, providing KICD’s review cycle with a measured starting point rather than an assumed “catch-up.”
EE4A / Research Partners	Track KICD’s review cycle publicly at each biennial conference, reporting whether it ran and whether curriculum-evidence coverage moved.

Conclusion

Kenya does not need another conversation about the broad importance of curriculum reform; stakeholders have already said, at scale, what the top concern is: curriculum design activity itself dominates current discourse, while evidence use trails behind it. Closing that gap does not require fresh consultation; it requires a standing, resourced pipeline that connects evidence already in national assessments and EE4A’s own research to the content of the curricula that train Kenya’s teachers