

2023 Zizi Impact issue 5 – December 2023

Inside: Zizi and National Education Reforms, Partnering for 100% transition, From Assessment to Action: The Alive Program Journey.

EDITORIAL

Greetings, as we come to the end of 2023, we are delighted to share highlights on the progress, achievements and outcomes of Zizi's work. Over the last months, the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms (PWPER) report findings and proposals have dominated education conversations in Kenya. The report made far-reaching recommendations for education reforms. While the report supported the continuation of the competency-based curriculum (CBC), it made some proposals for review of the learning areas and reduction of content. The report gave recommendations on funding of both basic and higher education, improving the quality of learning, teacher education and management framework and processes, integration of technology in education, equity and access with a focus on addressing the plight of those in marginalized areas and education for learners with special needs. Zizi Afrique contributed steadily, getting evidence to inform decisions and different players to leverage on each other's strengths. Zizi Afrique's approach followed through the three areas of strategic interest: evidence generation and learning, advocacy for policy change, and innovation for improved policy and practice. This was achieved through the overall approach of collaborating with other organizations and with government for change that impacts on millions of children and youth. Internally, completed the midline review of our performance against our 2020-2025 strategic plan, generating key insights to guide our work over the 2024-2025 period. The organization also continued the path to grow a pipeline of leaders, investing heavily in personal and team development. And yes, we are also growing! We introduce you to Zizi's new signings and promotions. As we take the Christmas and End-of-year break, we look to the future with great optimism. Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to more impactful collaborations and partnership.

Wishing you a Happy and Prosperous 2024!

Zizi Editorial Team

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1.0 Staying tuned! How Zizi is Engaging in the National Education Review Process!

On the 14th of August 2023, Zizi joined other civil society organizations in the education space in a consultative forum with National Assembly Departmental Committee on Education and Research forum convened by Usawa Agenda. This was a platform for civil society organizations working around education policy, research, and advocacy, to interrogate the 14-point Presidential Working Party on Educational Reforms (PWPER) proposals within the context of the evolving Competency Based Curriculum. The meeting brought together civil society organizations which are focusing on education policy reforms: Usawa Agenda (host), Zizi Afrique Foundation, Population Council, Dignitas, and Education Evidence for Action. Three members of the parliamentary participated, led by the committee chairman Hon. Julius Melly, Hon. Eva Obara and Hon. Abdul Ebrahim. Zizi Afrique Foundation's Director of Research Dr. Maurice Mutisya presented on the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector. This forum was part of Zizi's effort to stay connected to the ongoing conversations on education reform in Kenya and followed the release of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms (PWPER) report. More such meetings are planned in the coming days.

2.0 Partnering for 100% transition: Zizi convenes stakeholders to boost transition to secondary school in Kenya.

In September 2022, Zizi Afrique entered a collaborative initiative with the Ministry of Education (Directorate of Secondary Education) to strengthen evidence-use for 100% transition to secondary school. Over the last one year, the initiative has generated research evidence on the drivers and barriers to transition and set up a community surveillance mechanism that tracked 6,409 2022 KCPE cohort in four sub-counties: Cheptais (Bungoma), Sololo (Marsabit), Dagoretti (Nairobi) and Kahuro (Murang'a). In addition, a collaborative national study was conducted with Usawa Agenda, reaching 16,000 children aged 6-15 years, with focus on primary and junior schools. This September, key stakeholders from these counties, and the Ministry of Education, developed a road map to strengthen multi-sectoral work and public accountability, addressing the barriers and strengthen the drivers to have all the 2023 KCPE candidates to transit, and remain in secondary school. The lessons will also be applied to other four additional sub-counties with the lowest transitions rates in the pilot counties. Participants at the National Stakeholders' Workshop.

3.0 Extending the application of the ALiVE tool in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The Assessment (now Action) of Life Skills and Values (ALiVE) programme tools continue to gain more prominence and use across the region. Zizi worked with three partners including **Komo Learning Centres**, Foundation for Inclusive Community Help (**FICH Uganda**) and **EducAfrica Foundation** to generate evidence on life skills and values through classroom-based national assessments in Kenya Uganda and Tanzania reaching 1,187 learners. This is part of supporting the availability and use of locally contextualized tools for assessing values and life-schools within the school curriculums in East Africa and beyond. The open sourcing of this tool is delayed, but well on course for release to the public, with full documentation of data and tool application.

4.0 Co-creating with Government for Whole Youth Development in Kenya.

Zizi has Co-Created the National Integrated TVET Communication and Advocacy Strategy (NITCAS) with the State Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

(TVET) in the Ministry of Education. In addition, Cocreation with the TVET Authority in Kenya has led to the drafting of the Safeguarding Standards for TVET in Kenya. When finalized, these standards will be adopted for all the over 2,000 TVET institutions in the country, for safeguarding vulnerable youth, especially the minors in TVET, with potential impact on close to 0.5 million TVET students. Lastly, co-creation was done with the Kenya School of TVET to embed essential competences (including life skills and values) in the TVET Trainer curriculum, which is proceeding to the pilot phase for production of the new generation of TVET trainers in the country. The Values and Life Skills (VaLi) Working Group contributed heavily to these processes, demonstrating the power of collective impact in support education reform in Kenya.

5.0 Making TVET ‘cool’ again! How #FormNiTVET Campaign is shifting perceptions on TVET in Kenya. Zizi has Completed the Roll-Out of the #FormniTVET Campaign across Six Counties in Kenya.

The multimedia campaign was implemented in partnership with the county governments of Bungoma, Kakamega, Kilifi, West Pokot, Baringo and Turkana, reaching through 200,000 youth and parents through in-person activities, and millions through community radios and the media. The campaign dubbed #FormNiTVET, Skills for Life aimed at supporting the sectoral efforts to rebrand TVET in the country to increase access and participation of youth. The campaign partnered with 30 TVET institutions to provide comprehensive information about the opportunities available in TVET, while making it real for the youth not in training, education or employment (NEET)

6.0 Strengthening Parental Engagement across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The framework for Parental Empowerment & Engagement (PE&E) has been piloted successfully in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda through collaboration with four Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) members. This was a systematic application process with 12 primary schools (and their communities) that tested the framework on what works in engaging parents, especially those in arid and semi-arid contexts. Beyond this pilot, RELI has co-hosted a series of PE&E Learnshops with the Africa Voices Dialogue that has seen participation of actors from more than 17 countries.

7.0 From Assessment to Action: Steady Evolution of the ALiVE Program.

Assessment of Life skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) has now been renamed Action for Life skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE). This is in line with the ALiVE phase two focus and strategy. The new Theory of Change (ToC) and new name was unveiled during the firstever Values and Life Skills Africa conference in June here in Nairobi attended by over 184 delegates from 11 countries. ALiVE’s vision is that learners in East Africa are equipped with life skills and values, to support learning, working and living in the context of the 21st century. This vision is being pursued through three pathways: system shift, assessment shift, and a learning hub.

8.0 Zizi’s Innovations for Practice in Foundational Learning and Numeracy (FLN).

Through the innovations for policy and practice pillar, we continued to test concepts, and generate lessons from our work. o

- **Power to read: Innovating around foundational literacy.** The South-South fellowship, successfully completed, brought forth two emerging innovations (Kirinyaga reading pilot and Africa Evidence Forum that took place in April). The Napenda Kusoma (I love reading) is a government-led Initiative under pilot in 40 primary schools in Kirinyaga, under the leadership of a technical committee co-chaired by the County Director of Education, TSC County Director and the Kirinyaga County Executive Committee Member in charge of education. The technical committee is inclusive of all institutions and teachers and are pursuing one vision – to have all Kirinyaga’s children reading with comprehension by end of grade 3.
- **The pilot of the ‘My Village’ concept is nearing completion.** This is a collaborative initiative by the PAL Network that involved three countries – Kenya, Nepal and

Tanzania, piloting a whole-community process to have all children learning. In Kenya, Zizi Afrique has piloted this initiative in 86 villages in Bungoma, Kitui and Kilifi, driven by 141 youth champions. While there are challenges, there is promise for youth who want to invest their time and passion to support the learning of children in their communities.

9.0 Greening TVET: Promoting 'Green Skills' for Women and Youth to End Poverty!

Zizi has been working in partnership with Welthungerhilfe, Anglican Development Services, the State Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVET) and three Agricultural Training Colleges (ATC) to implement the greening enterprise business project. The project aims at promoting 'green skills' of women and youth as a way of reducing poverty and hunger in rural areas of three counties in Kenya namely, Kakamega, Makueni and Kajiado. The project focuses on priority greening value chains such as horticulture, aquaculture, poultry, and dairy farming among others. This culminated in the launch of the Makueni Agricultural Training Centre by the County Government of Makueni; which was officially opened by H.E Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.

10.0 Ecosystem Building: How Zizi is Strengthening Capacities of Partners.

Zizi continues to contribute to ecosystem building in the education sector, through capacity development and re-granting support to other organizations in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Over the last quarter:

- The ALiVE delivery mechanism was expanded to include new partners, among them OCODE, Uwezo Tanzania, Strathmore University and the University of Dar es salaam. This RELI programme is now coordinated at Zizi Afrique with regranting to seven partners in the region.
- We enhanced the design capacities of four partners on holistic Parental Engagement & Empowerment (PE&E) interventions, and successfully conducted a pilot in 12 school communities across 3 countries. The result is a regional framework to guide collation of evidence in PE&E.
- We partnered with 23 community-based organisations working on education in 16 counties to address key capacity areas that including financial management and communication and visibility.
- The Unlocking Data Initiative was coordinated by Zizi Afrique Foundation to apply to the GPE Knowledge Innovations Exchange (KIX) call on catalyzing use of data and evidence. Members of this coalition include Education Sub-Sahara Africa (ESSA), eBASE Africa, University of Malawi and the EdTech Hub.
- 15 youths attached to My Village graduated from the youth fellowship programme at GRIC. One of them received funding worth Kes. 100,000 for a proposal developed through the process. My Village has so far built capacities of 141 youths on FLN, leadership and life skills. Besides, 1,027 youths under the Safaricom Foundation Scholarship completed their trainings in various trade areas.
- With support from Porticus, we engaged KPMG in a process that targets support to 29 organizations in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa. A needs assessment was completed, and capacity strengthening initiative is scheduled to follow from 2024, addressing the gaps that emerged.

11.0 How Zizi is Working with Strategic Partnerships for Policy Support.

- We continued to foster strategic partnerships, used evidence to engage and participated in initiatives and conversations around education policy directly but also through our partners. We forged multistakeholder partnerships leading to the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with key academic institutions (Kenyatta

University, Kenya Teacher Training Colleges and Principals Association), Tanzania members of parliament (20 in Dodoma) and associations of headteachers of primary and secondary schools.

- We collaborated with Africa Voices Dialogue on Parental Engagement and Empowerment (PE&E), among other initiatives.
- Zizi was a partner during the Education Sector Joint Review, participating in monitoring in Mombasa and Nairobi counties.
- The WYD and ALiVE program also supported the hosting of Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association (KESSHA) annual Conference, reaching 4,000+ principals with messages towards the rebranding of TVET and the importance of nurturing life skills and values.
- Zizi partnered with the Kenya Primary Schools Heads Association (KEPSHA) to host the KEPSHA 2023 annual general meeting (AGM) and 20th Anniversary conference to be held at Sheikh Zayed children's Welfare Centre, Mombasa. The annual event brings together Primary School Head Teachers, policy makers, education authorities and other education stakeholders from across the country to share experiences and discuss ways of strengthening the role of school leadership in shaping education in Kenya. The theme of this year's Conference is "Rethinking Education Management within a Comprehensive School Framework: Inspiring Innovation for a Sustainable Impact in the Present and Future Decades."
- Zizi convened 81 participants to share evidence and explore gender and inclusion in TVET with the Ministry of Education, as well as engagement with the Disability Enterprise support center (DESC). DESC is a collaboration of Zizi and the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE). It's a center set up to support Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) for youth with disabilities.

12.0 The Midline Review and Zizi Afrique's Direction

Zizi commissioned an independent mid-term review of its 2021-2025 strategy. The review concluded that the organization is generally on track to achieving the strategic targets for 2025, across all three strategic pillars. Overall, Zizi successfully navigated a challenging inception phase during and post COVID-19 that radically altered education in the country amidst curriculum reforms and change of Government in 2022. The organization has skilled and committed staff, has expanded its funding base, and extended its sphere of partnerships to lead cutting-edge innovative work across the region. Four areas emerged as most crucial to focus on the second half of strategy implementation including 1) the need to strengthen the advocacy approach in view of the changing education landscape. 2) Rethinking the "Innovations for Practice" pillar and its function in the organization. 3) Developing clarity and intensifying focus on gender, equity and inclusion, both within the organization and in its mission and, 4) Strengthening storytelling and impact reporting. Read more about the Midline Review [here](#).

13.0 PAL Network's ICAN Wins the 2023 World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) Awards

On September 4, 2023, the People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network – of which Zizi is a member, celebrated the recognition of its International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN) as one of the 2023 WISE Awards winners. ICAN stands out as a cost-effective and comparable assessment, tailored to address the unique realities of the Global South. ICAN is also a simple-to-use and scalable tool that measures children's foundational numeracy. It is designed to monitor the progress of SDG 4.1.1 (a) and is aligned to the Global Proficiency Framework. PAL Network is currently developing the Early Language & Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (ELANA), a new common assessment initiative. ELANA comprises two components: a numeracy assessment that builds on ICAN, expanding the number of items that form the item bank; and a

literacy component that evaluates skills in the subdomains of oral language, decoding and reading comprehension.

14.0 Zizi Afrique – A Kenyan Global Organization?

One of the findings of the midline review was the argument against the ‘local’ and ‘global’ organizations, depicting that anything founded in the global south is local. True to this critique, Zizi Afrique continues to engage in initiatives that inform and shape national and global knowledge: o

- **July 6, 2023:** Dr. John Mugo discussed and reflected on the challenges and opportunities to improve foundational learning for children in Africa at the UCL seminar in London.
- **July 15, 2023:** Through the Whole Youth Development (WYD) program, Zizi marked World Youth Skills Day through a media interview at a community youth radio station, Ghetto FM. The interview involved participation from WYD program manager, Principal Secretary, State Department for Technical, Vocational Education and Training. Ministry of Education, TVET instructors and TVET champions (students who have benefited from pursuing TVET courses).
- **August 21 – 25, 2023:** From hosting a pre-conference on assessment of life skills to finalizing on implications of the results of 21st century skills’ assessments on policy & practice in East Africa, ALiVE team members held engaging sessions at the 39th Association for Educational Assessment (AEAA) conference hosted by KNEC.
- **August 30 – September 1, 2023: RELI Africa Kenya Convening 2023:** The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) Africa Kenya country convening was held from 30th August to September 1st under the theme “Making Our Voice Count, Bringing the New Strategy to life”. The convening which brought together representatives from 24-member organizations had a series of activities including launch of the new strategic plan, child participation, gallery walks for the different thematic groups and panel discussions that centered around ways in which RELI Kenya can make the strategy work for children across the country.
- **September 8, 2023: International literacy Day 2023:** Zizi in collaboration with PAL Network and other partners hosted the commemoration of International Literacy Day (ILD), online. The spotlight was on PAL Network’s My Village project, and how it is contributing to improving foundational learning. Our panelists included representatives from Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Nepal, Zizi Afrique Foundation and Uwezo Tanzania, all piloting the project within their respective countries. Among the panelists was PAL Networks’ Action Manager, Winny Cherotich. Members shared their unique experiences in implementing the project and some of the key lessons in promoting foundational learning in the communities. A model worth emulating was the mobile libraries that are being used in NEPAL. These can be replicated in Kenya’s pastoralist communities or communities ravaged by conflicts and natural calamities like floods and drought. Get more about the ILD celebration [here](#).
- **September 12 – 15, 2023: Zizi at UKFIET 2023:** ALiVE principal investigators held engaging sessions on measurement of life skills and at The Education and Development Forum (UKFIET) 2023 in Oxford, UK.
- **September 25-27, 2023:** Through the Policy Learning for Universal Secondary Education (PLUS) Program Zizi hosted a National Stakeholders’ Workshop. The workshop brought together participants from the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), Ministry of Education, Usawa Agenda, Ministry of Interior, Population Council among other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); providing an opportunity for discussions on how we can work towards realizing 100% transition. This was the culmination of the various dissemination workshops PLUS held across 4 subcounties (Cheptais, Sololo, Dagoretti and Kahuro).
- **September 27-29, 2023. RELI Africa Tanzania:** The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) Africa Tanzania country convening was held in Dar es Salaam under the

theme "RELI Tanzania Strategy 2023-2026: Fostering Collaboration for Transforming Education system in Tanzania" marking the launch of our strategic plan that will inform our work for the period 2023- 2026. The event brought together RELI Tanzania members and other stakeholders across the education sector.

- **November 15-17, 2023: RELI Africa Uganda:** The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) Africa Uganda 2023 convening was held in Kampala, Uganda. The theme for this year is "Fostering Collaborative Voice to Advance Quality Education for All Children in Uganda" marking the launch of our strategic plan that will inform our work for the period 2023-2026. The event brought together RELI Tanzania members and other stakeholders across the education sector

15.0 Recent Events

- **October 23 – 27, 2023: Zizi Staff Annual Retreat 2023:** Zizi staff took a 5-day break to reflect, re-boot and plan for 2024. You can look forward to a much bolder, greater and more impactful Zizi in 2024.
- **November 7 – 10 2023:** Zizi partnered with the Kenya Primary Schools Heads Association (KEPSHA) to host the KEPSHA 2023 annual general meeting (AGM) and 20th Anniversary conference to be held at Sheikh Zayed children's Welfare Centre, Mombasa. The annual event brings together Primary School Head Teachers, policy makers, education authorities and other education stakeholders from across the country to share experiences and discuss ways of strengthening the role of school leadership in shaping education in Kenya. The theme of this year's Conference is "Rethinking Education Management within a Comprehensive School Framework: Inspiring Innovation for a Sustainable Impact in the Present and Future Decades."
- **November 21, 2023:** Zizi held an event to celebrate the achievements of the Whole Youth Development Programme, one of its flagship programs at the Kenya School of TVET (KSTVET). The event was graced by various stakeholders among them County Executive Committee Members (CECMs), Ministry of Education officials particularly under State Department of TVET, Ministry of Interior, donors, funders, and partners.
- **November 29–30 2023: EE4A Conference 2023:** Zizi joined researchers, academics, policymakers and other producers and users of evidence in the education sector at the Fifth Biennial Education Evidence for Action (EE4A) Conference to engage in discourses about the use of evidence for actionable and measurable planning and outcomes. The theme for this year is "Revitalizing the evidence community for Kenya's Education". It was the first time this event was held in a university; Tom Mboya University, in Homa Bay County playing host. Zizi Afrique Foundation ED, is one of the Co-chairs of the event alongside Dr. Samuel Ngaruiya.

16.0 Poetry Corner

Kaloleni Kindness I met them after a while
They welcomed me dearly The villages became my
home I enjoyed the fresh made food
From the local outlets They were so kind!
They were open to have discussions
They were kind to share information
They shared more ideas To better the
villages And to improve learning outcomes
They were so kind to me! I met new friends
The lively life skills team We danced and had fun
We got to learn assessment Mentorship became
our anthem Promising to make a difference
They made me feel nice! I saw positivity and passion
Honesty and openness Truthfulness and love
Joyfulness and patience Of this all was kindness
I wish you all the best!
Bid adieu!

We live to dream!

My heart is full! Grateful for every moment
Indeed, you came to our space We are happy
our paths crossed And our hearts connected!
Two days became abode We chatted and laughed
We learned and unlearned And now we are out there...
Together, we dream To light Mayekwe and

change the image To bring more professors from Sibumba And more accountants from Nabulooli Not forgetting mentoring new leaders To have Kibindoi the new leaders hub Indeed, we are grateful! As we begin the community work Remember the 3H's A heart that connects to the hands and head We believe in you And already, I see a bright star 'My Village' to the World We live to dream!

All the best!

James Mburu

17.0 New Appointments and Promotions

Samuel Otieno: Director- Advocacy and Partnerships

Lucy Karwigi: Human Resource Officer

Horine Kinoti: Knowledge Management Officer-ALiVE

Gloria Muthoni: Program Assistant- ALiVE

Philip Makori: Communications Officer - RELI

Caitlin Mboya: Grants Accountant

David Alelah: Regional MELs Officer - ALiVE

Mary Chepkemai: Manager- ED's Office

Ezekiel Sikutwa: Senior Manager- Directorate of Operations

Nyambura Thiong'o: Kenya Country Coordinator RELI

Raynor Osare: Senior Communications Officer- ALiVE

For more information on our work, please visit our website at **www.ziziafrique.org** For information on how you could get involved, please email us on **info@ziziafrique.org**