

Institutionalising Evidence-Based Education Reporting:

Key Lessons from the Inaugural Quality Assurance Report 2026

The Directorate of Quality Assurance successfully developed and launched its inaugural education report, marking a historic milestone in the directorate's commitment to evidence-based oversight of the education system. As a first-of-its-kind output for the directorate, developing and launching the report generated important institutional learning that must be captured, shared, and acted upon. This brief documents the key lessons emerging from that process with a view to strengthening future report cycles, building internal capacity, and ensuring that what began as an inaugural effort is sustained and improved as a regular institutional function.



Lesson 1: Strategic alignment with high-profile events amplifies impact

Timing the launch of the inaugural report to coincide with the National Education Conference proved to be an effective strategy for maximising its visibility and impact. The conference provided a ready and relevant audience of education stakeholders, offered a credible platform for disseminating the report's findings, and ensured that the report entered the national education discourse at a time of heightened attention and engagement. For an inaugural report, in particular, its association with a prestigious national event helped establish its credibility and underscored its significance to the education sector.

Implication: Future report launches should be planned deliberately around major education sector events to ensure strong initial uptake, media coverage, and stakeholder engagement. The directorate should maintain a forward-looking events calendar and align the report production timeline accordingly. In particular, the report should be disseminated during all subsequent Annual Education Conferences, which HE The President declared would be annual, and promised to prioritise his attendance.

Lesson 2: Anchoring the report in policy mandates strengthens institutional legitimacy

Grounding the inaugural report in the recommendations of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms provided the legal and policy basis necessary for the directorate to justify committing staff, time, financial resources, and institutional effort to the report's development. Without this policy anchor, the report risks being perceived as a discretionary activity rather than a core institutional obligation.

Implication: All future editions of the report should explicitly reference the policy and legal frameworks that mandate its production, including the Presidential Working Party recommendations and any relevant statutory provisions. This framing protects the report from deprioritisation during periods of resource constraint and strengthens the case for sustained investment in its production.

Lesson 3: Capacity gaps in data analysis tools and technical skills must be addressed

The process of producing the inaugural report exposed significant capacity gaps among directorate staff in the software tools and technical skills required for data analysis. These gaps created bottlenecks in the production process and posed a risk to the quality and timeliness of outputs. As the directorate moves from a one-off inaugural effort to a regular reporting cycle, these gaps will become increasingly consequential if left unaddressed.

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Implication: The directorate should conduct a structured capacity assessment to identify the specific software and analytical skill needs of staff involved in the report production cycle. A targeted capacity development plan should follow, prioritising hands-on training in the relevant data analysis tools. Where internal capacity cannot be built quickly enough, the directorate should establish partnerships with technical institutions or individual experts to provide such support during production periods as a transitional measure while internal capacity is being built.

Lesson 4: The data collection to insights pipeline requires strengthening

A weak link was identified in the chain connecting data collection tools to the data itself and ultimately to the insights presented in the report. This gap risks producing reports that are data-rich but insight-poor, or that do not adequately support the conclusions drawn. For an inaugural report, this is an expected and manageable challenge; however, it must be corrected before subsequent editions if the report is to fulfil its intended function of informing education policy and practice.

Implication: The directorate should review and strengthen the alignment between its data collection instruments, the data management system, and the analytical framework used to generate insights. Each stage of the pipeline should be explicitly mapped, with quality assurance checkpoints at each transition point to ensure that what is collected, analysed, and reported is coherent and mutually reinforcing.

Lesson 5: The report needs to be institutionalised

As an inaugural report, the current edition was produced largely through exceptional effort, goodwill, and in some areas reliance on external technical support. While this was appropriate for a first edition, it is not a sustainable model. The report risks remaining a one-off achievement rather than evolving into a reliable, institutionalised product. Without a defined production cycle, a designated responsible officer, formal accountability mechanisms, and dedicated internal resources, sustaining the report over time will depend on individual initiative and external goodwill rather than institutional systems and internal capacity.

Reliance on external partners or consultants for core elements of the report production process introduces fragility into the cycle. If external support is unavailable, delayed, or withdrawn, the entire production process is placed at risk. True institutionalisation requires that the directorate is self-sufficient in producing the report using its own staff, systems, and budget. Reducing and ultimately eliminating external reliance must therefore be treated as an explicit institutional objective, not an incidental outcome.

Implication: The directorate should take four concrete steps. First, identify a regular and predictable month in the calendar year for the report's release, with the coverage period clearly defined and consistently applied. Second, designate a specific officer with formal responsibility for coordinating the report production cycle from data collection through to publication. Third, anchor both the production timeline and the officer's accountability in the annual performance contract to ensure that report production is treated as a measurable institutional obligation rather than an optional output. Fourth, and critically, the directorate must secure a dedicated budget line for report production and include the report in the annual work plan, covering staff time, data collection costs, software licensing, printing, and dissemination. Including the report in the Directorate's annual work plan and budget would be a key step toward ensuring sustainability and strengthening institutional independence. It would reduce reliance on external funding and support the development of the report as a sustained internal function of the Directorate.

Lesson 6: Outputs should be differentiated by audience and purpose

A key structural insight from the inaugural report process is the need to separate outputs by their target audience and intended use, rather than consolidating all findings into a single report. For example, data from classroom observations speaks most directly to teachers and school-level instructional leaders and calls for timely, actionable feedback that enables classroom interventions. Consolidating this data into a general policy report delays its usefulness and dilutes its relevance for the practitioners who need it most. A single consolidated report also makes it harder to communicate clearly to any single audience, as the depth required for policymakers differs significantly from the practical guidance needed by teachers.

Implication: The directorate should develop a differentiated reporting architecture. At a minimum, this should distinguish between a strategic report targeting policymakers and education managers and a practitioner-facing report or brief targeting teachers and school leaders, drawn specifically from classroom observation data and designed for timely instructional intervention. Each output should have its own release timeline calibrated to when it is most useful to its intended audience, and the two streams should be treated as distinct products with their own production and dissemination plans.



Access the report here:

<https://www.education.go.ke/quality-assurance-and-standards>

Authors

Seline Wanjiku and Kenneth Muthomi
Kenneth is a graduate associate at Mizizi