Zizi Afrique Foundation

ZIZI IMPACT

Issue 10 – April 2025

Greetings from Zizi Afrique Foundation!

As promised in our last edition, 2025 is off to an exciting start, and we are thrilled to share the progress we have made in the first quarter. This year is shaping up to be one of significant growth, and we are excited to take you through some of the key highlights thus far.

First, we have some good news! We are pleased to announce the release of our 2024 Annual Report. We warmly invite you to read about our accomplishments in the past year and discover how we leveraged collaboration to create lasting, collective impact.

In this edition of the newsletter, we share with you how we are influencing government policies with evidence-driven insights and supporting the institutionalisation of proven education models through impactful government and community-led initiatives. We also share updates of our journey towards Organisational Gender Transformation—a key priority for us this year.

Finally, we introduce to you our newest members of staff.

Happy reading!

Sam

Table of Content

1

Celebrating Collective Impact for Africa's Education: Year 2024 in Review

2-3

Outcome 1: Infusing Evidence into Government Policies and Frameworks and Supporting Adoption of Proven Models

- Co-creating the Junior School (JS) career guidance framework with the Government of Kenya
- Advancing foundational numeracy through strategic collaboration in Kenya
- Charting a bold path for life skills and values education across four jurisdictions

4-5

Outcome 2: Scaling Proven Education Models Through Government and Community Leadership

- Securing county government commitment to supporting foundational learning
- Sparking a numeracy movement in Bungoma West Sub-County in Kenya
- Celebrating community champions: Zanzibar's PTAs lead the way in life skills education
- Driving youth employment through industry-aligned training

6

Outcome 3: Laying the Foundation for Organizational Gender Transformation

7

Outcome 4: Informing the Local and Global Education Ecosystem through Research and Evidence

8

Outcome 5: Collaborating for Accelerated CBC Implementation in Kenya

9

New Staff

Celebrating Collective Impact for Africa's Education: Year 2024 in Review

Last year, we deepened our commitment and progress in transforming education systems across Africa. Through powerful partnerships in five countries (Kenya, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania [Mainland and Zanzibar], Cameroon, and Malawi), we advanced the generation of high-quality evidence to improve education outcomes. We supported the use of that evidence to improve policy implementation in foundational learning, helping more children access the education they deserve.

We championed reforms aimed at enhancing training and employment opportunities for youth, ensuring that education leads to meaningful work and brighter futures. We also unlocked the collective power of civil society by forging collaborations that accelerate progress and amplify impact. Through it all, ZAF continued to build a resilient, future-ready organization, one that is positioned to support the education ecosystem for years to come.

Outcome 1: Infusing Evidence into Government Policies and Frameworks and Supporting Adoption of Proven Models

ZAF continued to strengthen its partnership with the respective Ministries of Education (MoEs), their agencies, and other education authorities across the region, ensuring that evidence-based practices and research agendas are integrated to drive systematic change through co-creation.

Co-creating the Junior School (JS) career guidance framework with the Government of Kenya

ZAF's research on career guidance and knowledge of pathways in Junior Secondary schools played a key role in finalising the career guidance framework for junior and pre-vocational schools. This initiative provided evidence to strengthen career readiness for JS learners transitioning to senior schools in the Kenyan Education system.

Read more on Primary to Secondary Transition: Here

Advancing foundational numeracy through strategic collaboration in Kenya

In Q1, a key milestone was achieved through a collaboration with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA). Insights from ZAF's error analysis research have informed CEMASTEA's emerging strategy on foundational numeracy.

For the first time, CEMASTEA is extending its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) teacher development programs to primary school educators.

Notably, progress has been made in establishing an innovation hub for foundational numeracy within CEMASTEA, inspired in part by learnings from a recent South Africa visit. The quarter also saw the birth of a government-led, multi-sectoral numeracy initiative, endorsed by the then Principal Secretary for Basic Education, marking strong government commitment to scaling foundational learning interventions.

Read the ZAF-CEMASTEA Report: Here

Below is a testimonial from one of the CEMASTEA trainers:

"The collaboration with ZAF has been a revelation for CEMASTEA regarding foundational numeracy. In the past, our focus has been on secondary school levels. We have picked this as an area of work and are working to set up an innovation center on foundational numeracy." **Trainer, CEMASTEA**

Charting a bold path for life skills and values education across four jurisdictions

ZAF, in collaboration with its ALiVE partners, convened the ALiVE Summit 2025 with a shared vision: Transforming education systems to fully embrace values and life skills. Held against a backdrop of growing momentum across East Africa, the summit brought together policymakers, educators, and partners from Kenya, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar) for an energising exchange of ideas and commitments.

Throughout the summit, participants reflected on the progress made in embedding life skills into national education frameworks—celebrating achievements, identifying gaps, and learning from each other's experiences.

Key outcomes of the summit included a unified commitment to Phase III of the ALiVE initiative, with a sharpened focus on transforming education systems to ensure life skills and values are not just taught but lived across schools in the region. With stronger collaboration and a clear roadmap ahead, the stage is now set for the next leap forward in preparing young people for life, work, and citizenship.

In addition, ZAF, in collaboration with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), successfully finalized the Values-Based Education materials to be used in a pilot starting in May 2025.

Lastly, the ALiVE open-source platform continues to attract significant interest with over 17 organizations across the continent utilising the open resources to support their work in nurturing and assessing values and life skills.

Outcome 2: Scaling Proven Education Models Through Government and Community Leadership

ZAF's focus on ensuring government and community ownership of interventions has driven the institutionalisation of education reforms, ensuring long-term sustainability beyond ZAF's direct involvement.

Securing county government commitment to supporting foundational learning

After two years of work in supporting foundation learning in Kirinyaga County, Kenya, the county government has pledged its full support for the Napenda Kusoma initiative, marking a significant step forward for foundational learning in the region. Beyond this endorsement, the county government also committed to weaving *Napenda Kusoma* into its broader Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) strategy. This move signals a great buy-in that sets the path towards mainstreaming foundational learning to help children furthest behind learn and thrive.

Sparking a numeracy movement in Bungoma West Sub-County in Kenya

The ownership of the collaborative error analysis work on numeracy in Bungoma West Sub-county has sparked a numeracy movement, resulting in the establishment of the Sub-County Advisory Group to enhance the delivery of foundational learning in partnership with local education stakeholders. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Sub-County Director and Sub-County Director of Education have committed to deploying the tested foundational numeracy tools and approaches across all schools in the sub-county.

Additionally, ZAF supported the creation of a Foundational Learning Community of Practice, bringing together the Ministry of Education (MOE), the TSC, and the Bungoma County Education office to create a sustainable peer-learning model for numeracy. Recognized as a thought leader, ZAF was invited to showcase its numeracy work at the KEPSHA Bungoma West Sub-county stakeholders' meeting, attended by over 500 participants.

Celebrating community champions: Zanzibar's PTAs lead the way in life skills education

In a heartwarming celebration of grassroots leadership, our partner Milele Zanzibar Foundation (MZF) feted 130 Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Champions in Zanzibar for their unwavering commitment to life skills education. These parents and guardians have become powerful catalysts for change, advocating for the importance of values, resilience, and critical thinking in children's learning journeys.

Their recognition is more than symbolic; it affirms the vital role communities play in shaping education from the ground up. By driving life skills conversations at the local level, these champions are proving that lasting transformation begins at home and grows through collective action. This milestone underscores ZAF's belief that empowering communities is key to building education systems that truly prepare learners for life.

Driving youth employment through industry-aligned training

ZAF's research report on in-demand jobs in Mombasa's hospitality and tourism sector brought together key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) trainers, youth, and top county officials who committed to aligning training and operational standards with industry needs. ZAF is currently collaborating with the Ministry of Labour to develop and validate occupational standards for the hospitality and tourism industry as well as supporting the county government to draft the County Vocational Training Bill to guide future job planning.

Outcome 3: Laying the Foundation for Organizational Gender Transformation

The first quarter of 2025 marked a bold and intentional shift for ZAF, one rooted in a deep commitment to becoming a gender transformative organization. This shift is not just about ticking boxes; it is about embedding gender responsiveness into the heart of everything ZAF does.

A significant milestone was the establishment of a dedicated Gender Unit, staffed with three full-time professionals tasked with mainstreaming gender within the organisation and across all our programs. To guide this journey, ZAF brought on board Samya Development Resources Private Limited, a leading gender consultancy, to steer the organization towards meaningful gender transformation. The commitment, however, did not stop at the organizational level. ZAF also played a pivotal role in shaping national dialogue, supporting the formation of a national gender research committee under the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC). This committee, composed of eleven expert members, including ZAF, aims to drive research and policy around gender equity nationwide. Looking ahead, ZAF is laying the groundwork for a Gender Research Fellowship in collaboration with the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA). While the details are still being refined, early discussions point towards a promising partnership that will build a pipeline of gender-focused researchers and thought leaders. This shift is intended to inform how the organization leads, learns, and creates lasting impact going forward.

Outcome 4: Informing the Local and Global Education Ecosystem through Research and Evidence

ZAF has accelerated its efforts in thought leadership regionally and internationally by showing its work and research in various conferences and collaborating with key academic institutions.

ZAF work featured in various conferences

ZAF presented key research findings at the *Utafiti Elimu* Conference 2025 (Zanzibar), opening doors for formal collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Additionally, ZAF staff presented 10 papers at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) 2025, which took place from March 22nd–26th, 2025, in Chicago, IL, USA, contributing to the global education evidence base.

Collaborating with the academic community

ZAF initiated a new research collaboration on life skills and values as part of strengthening the objective on research for and by Africans, involving four East African universities namely, Kenyatta University, Kyambogo University, University of Dar es Salaam, State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) and one Northern University (Universiteit Utrecht, Netherlands). A concept paper has been completed, and one grant proposal was submitted to support this work.

Outcome 5: Collaborating for Accelerated CBC Implementation in Kenya

ZAF formalized collaborations with the Ministry of Education's (MoE) Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) and is at an advanced stage of finalising a partnership with TSC, which will result in strengthened integration of research into policymaking and strengthened capacity in CBC implementation. The partnership with DQAS will strengthen the capacity of officers in quality assurance in the CBC context, review the National Education Quality Assurance and Standards Framework (NEQASF) to align with global standards while also incorporating life skills and values, develop a framework for collecting data and reporting, and create an annual report on Education. The partnership with TSC will pave the way for collaboration in strengthening research on teachers and improving the quality of teacher training (retooling) as a support to CBC implementation.

New Staff

Damaris Ndegwa
Chief Operating Officer

Nancy Mwali
Finance Manager

Mutisya Mulang'a
MEAL Manager

Margaret Wawira
Senior Manager-Executive Director's Office

Dr. Lydia Chege
Manager, FLN Coalitions

Jonah Mbugua
Accounts Assistant

Jenisah Nakishon
HR and Admin Assistant

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