

How We Create Change: Our Principles In Practice

Starting with Data: Evidence that Unlocks Possibility

Collaborating for More and Better Education Evidence

In 2024, Zizi Afrique collaborated with over 10 institutions in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar) to generate research evidence that informs education reforms and inclusion of the most marginalised children which is Zizi Afrique's core mission. These partners helped to shape education choices and decisions across countries, while also enhancing the capacity of young and early-career researchers to synthesise and use evidence.

Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA), Centre for Education Research and Training, University of Malawi, EdTech hub, Essential Basic Services (eBASE) Africa, Cameroon, Kyambogo University, University of Dar es Salaam, Kenyatta University, Uwezo Uganda, Luigi Giussani Foundation, Uwezo Tanzania, Milele Zanzibar Foundation (MZF), Organisation for Community Development (OCODE).

Unlocking Collaboration on Life Skills and Values

Life skills and values - core competencies and values - or social and emotional learning - are central to Zizi Afrique's mission. In 2024, six organizations worked with Zizi Afrique to assess 4,072 adolescents across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The Action for Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) initiative produced new evidence on adolescents' self-awareness, problem-solving, collaboration, and respect, and informed system-level changes in the participating countries.

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My involvement with ALiVE has been beneficial in my work, especially in reporting milestones on targets in SDG 4

Dr. Rosie Agoi, Secretary-General,
Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

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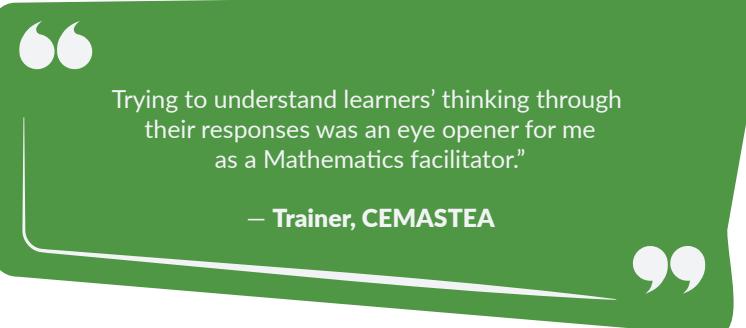
Activating Learning Communities

Zizi Afrique collaborated with eBASE Africa, Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA), and edTech Hub, to map data ecosystems in Cameroon, Kenya, and Malawi to unlock data and data use. The work revealed key gaps in data flow, capacity, and policy, and led to the creation of regional learning communities that link evidence with decision-makers. These communities are already influencing Ministry partnerships in Kenya and have inspired Cameroon to host its first foundational literacy conference - Indaba 2025.

Focusing on Foundational Numeracy

The spotlight on literacy and social emotional learning (SEL) has meant that foundational numeracy has often been overlooked. Zizi Afrique's 2024 collaboration with Centre for Mathematics Science and

Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA), Kenya Primary School Heads Association (KEPSHA), and local education leaders in Bungoma West in Kenya, spotlighted learning gaps in addition and subtraction among Grade 2 and 3 pupils. The research revealed common errors in numeracy and has already triggered exploration into scalable pedagogical solutions.



Watch the story: [YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_0nfa-ALLQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_0nfa-ALLQ)

Engaging Political Actors for Systemic Change

Recognising the influence of political decision-makers, Zizi Afrique responded to a request for support from Hon. Wandeto (MP, Tetu Constituency in Nyeri County, Kenya) to gather and use education data to guide public investments across 76 schools. This catalysed new priorities in foundational learning, parental engagement, and pedagogical support. A parallel effort in Kirinyaga County in Kenya, further strengthened literacy initiatives like 'Napenda Kusoma', improving practices like hands-on teaching, reading time, and individualised support.

From Policy to Practice: Making Systems Work for All Learners

Zizi Afrique's mission goes beyond generating evidence; it is about making that evidence count. In 2024, we helped turn ideas into actions, embedding values and life skills in national curricula, equipping teachers, and ensuring learners - especially those furthest behind - are supported by policies that are grounded in data and responsive to real needs.

Bringing Life Skills and Values into National Curricula

In partnership with six organisations and four national curriculum institutes (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania Mainland, and Zanzibar), Zizi Afrique supported the integration of life skills and values into national learning frameworks. Through a collaboration with a global expert, we strengthened the capacity of 818 government officials (402 men, 416 women), enabling the development of clear definitions and curriculum-aligned skill breakdowns.

In Kenya, collaboration with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) led to enhanced Values-Based Education (VbE) through updated Grade 10 materials; laying the foundation for the piloting of a VbE plan in 2025. We also contributed to the Teacher Education Curriculum Framework, supporting the Kenya Education and Training Policy's broader goals.

In Uganda, work with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNE) prioritised life skills in curriculum and assessment, while new skill structures and progressions were introduced for Primary 6, Senior 1, and Senior 2. In Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, life skills were embedded across curricula and textbooks, with learning activities and assessments designed to nurture creativity and innovation. Both countries have now begun applying the ALiVE approach to skill progression and teacher training.

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We successfully enhanced several learning activities in our textbook to foster creativity and innovation... designed not only to facilitate the reproduction of knowledge but also to cultivate skills and attitudes.”

— **Dr. Fika Mwakabungu,**
Director of Curriculum Training,
Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE)

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Transforming Teacher Education to Nurture the Whole Learner

Zizi Afrique and ALiVE partners worked with five East African universities - Kenyatta, Makerere, Kyambogo, Dar es Salaam, and the State University of Zanzibar - as well as two Kenyan Teacher Training Colleges (Machakos and Eregi). Together, we co-created innovative approaches and drafted three teacher education modules focused on contextualisation, nurturing, and assessment of life skills and values.

“ It enriched my capacity to prepare a 21st-century skills assessment rubric... and showed me that it is possible to assess those skills based on learners' responses.

— **Dr. Maryam Amour Mwinyi, SUZA**

I was exposed to diverse expertise and innovative approaches. It allowed me to contribute and also learn from others, enriching my professional growth.

— **Dr. Cleophilus Mugenyi,
Commissioner, Basic Education, Uganda**

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Taking Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Tools into Classrooms

Following the 2022 ALiVE assessment, Zizi Afrique developed and tested a teacher-led assessment tool for classroom use. Through the ALiVE Academy, we trained eight Master Trainers and launched an open-source platform offering videos, a user manual, and a full repository of tools for assessing adolescents aged 13–17. These resources are now in use by 17 institutions across Africa.

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For years, we told teachers to incorporate these skills, but didn't show them how. Now I can.

— Sophia Amasi,
Curriculum Developer, TIE.

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Supporting Transitions and Career Guidance Through Data

In collaboration with the Directorate of Secondary Education, we supported the implementation of Kenya's 100% transition policy. By co-creating and testing a multi-sectoral approach, some sub-counties saw transition rates increase by more than 30% between 2023 and 2024. The work also informed a revised tool for secondary school selection and jump started development of a national career guidance framework for junior school and pre-vocational learners.

Tackling Intergenerational Inequality: Supporting Adolescent Mothers and Their Children

In partnership with the Ministry of Education and the National Gender and Equality Commission, Zizi Afrique led a unique intergenerational study of adolescent and young mothers in Mombasa, Samburu, and Siaya. Using the nurturing care framework, we explored the needs of mothers' and children's

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Leaders in



(0–3 years) and supported policy dialogue at the county and national level.

This work influenced Mombasa's 2024 County Childcare Facilities Bill and contributed to Samburu County launching new Early Childhood Development (ECD) programming; drawing inspiration from the Smart Start initiative in Siaya County.

“We visited Siaya and saw the power of the first lady's support.
We went home and did the same

— CEC – Education,
Samburu County Government

Equipping Parents to Support Learning

In collaboration with the Regional Education and Learning Initiative (RELI Africa), we developed a Parental Empowerment & Engagement (PE&E) framework that is being trialled in Bungoma, Marsabit, and Kilifi. The framework was shared with over 15,000 school heads at the Kenya Primary School Heads Association (KEPSHA) 2024 annual conference and has already led to the creation of eight practical toolkits to help school leaders strengthen parental engagement in learning.

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Unlocking Youth Potential: From Training to Dignified Work

Zizi Afrique's commitment to foundational learning does not end in the classroom. It extends into real-world opportunities where young people can grow, thrive, and contribute. In 2024, we worked to align training with opportunity; ensuring that what youth learn equips them not just for work, but for dignified lives.



Embedding Whole Youth Development in TVET Curricula

Working with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (TVET-CDACC), the Kenya School of TVET, and industry experts, Zizi Afrique facilitated a review and redesign of the Horticulture Level 3 and 4 curricula, and finalised an Essential Skills curriculum for piloting. These reforms focused on embedding green business skills and aligning TVET with the real competency needs of the agriculture sector.

Through this effort, 50 key stakeholders were equipped with new skills, and implementation began at Bukura Agricultural College, Makueni Agricultural College, and Latia Agribusiness Incubation Centre. These learnings were shared in influential policy spaces, including the 7th Africa Evidence to Action Conference and UNESCO-UNEVOC Africa Skills Week, contributing to broader conversations on employment pathways in environmentally focused sectors across Africa.

Linking Youth to Jobs with Data-Driven Solutions

A persistent challenge is matching skilled youth with meaningful employment. In response, Zizi Afrique partnered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the County Government of Mombasa, Global Development Incubator (GDI), SWAHILIPOT and key Hospitality and Tourism (H&T) sector stakeholders in Mombasa County to pilot a data-led job matching initiative. The pilot involved:

Mapping 1,515 businesses in the food and beverage sector

Identifying 150 job vacancies

Testing the placement of youth in real roles

From this work emerged the need for a predictive Labour Market Surveillance System, designed to connect youth to available vacancies and help employers quickly identify the right talent. The National Sector Skills Committee under the Ministry of Labour has since integrated the tool into the national system, starting with the Hospitality and Tourism (H&T) sector. The platform's long-term vision is to map thousands of employers and use AI to accelerate connections between youth and opportunity.

Securing Political Commitment to Quality Training

Advocating for dignified work also means securing investment in quality training. In 2024, Zizi Afrique engaged the Senate Standing Committee on Education, presenting a memorandum that highlighted eight pressing issues in the TVET space. This resulted in renewed commitment by lawmakers to:

- Strengthen the link between training and employment
- Address persistent imbalances between skills supply and market demand
- Champion the allocation of more resources to improve access and equity in the TVET sector.

