

Original Research Article

Conceptual Framework for Developing a Curriculum that Promotes Diversity and Social Justice in Africa: An Exploration of Competency-Based Curriculum in East Africa

Cornelius Kipleting Rugut (PhD)^{1*} 

¹Department of Professional Studies, Lira University, P.O BOX 1035, Lira, Uganda

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Abstract: Despite growing policy commitments to equality, inclusion, and human rights, many African societies continue to experience persistent challenges such as discrimination, social exclusion, gender inequality, ethnic tensions, and unequal educational opportunities. These challenges highlight the need for educational approaches that promote diversity, social justice, and social cohesion. This study explored the potential of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) to advance diversity and social justice in Africa, with particular focus on East Africa, and developed an African-centered conceptual model to guide curriculum development. The study employed a systematic literature review and qualitative document analysis of curriculum frameworks, policy documents, scholarly literature, and reports from international and regional organizations. The analysis examined contemporary perspectives on curriculum reform, inclusive education, social justice, diversity, and competency-based learning. Findings indicate that diversity and social justice can be effectively integrated into CBC through inclusive curriculum content, learner-centered and transformative pedagogies, values and competency development, inclusive assessment practices, teacher preparation, and community engagement. Based on these findings, the study proposes the African Diversity and Social Justice Curriculum Model (ADSJCM), a conceptual framework comprising six interconnected components designed to support the development of inclusive, equitable, and socially responsive education systems. The study concludes that curriculum reform grounded in African realities and competency-based principles can play a critical role in fostering social cohesion, inclusion, democratic participation, and sustainable development across the continent.

Keywords: Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), Diversity, Social Justice, Curriculum Development, conceptual framework, East Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is one of the most culturally diverse continents in the world. The continent is characterized by a rich multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages, religions, traditions, and social identities. According to the African Union, Africa hosts over 2,000 languages and thousands of cultural communities, making diversity an essential characteristic of African societies (African Union, 2021). While such diversity presents opportunities for intercultural learning, innovation, and social cohesion, it also creates significant challenges related to inequality, discrimination, marginalization, and social exclusion. Many African countries continue to struggle with ethnic tensions, gender inequality, social exclusion, religious intolerance, and xenophobia, all of which hinder the

realization of inclusive and equitable societies (Freude & Waites, 2023).

The persistence of these challenges demonstrates that diversity alone does not automatically lead to inclusion or social justice. In many African societies, deeply rooted cultural practices, social structures, and political systems continue to reinforce discrimination and social inequalities, limiting opportunities for marginalized groups and undermining social cohesion (UNDP, 2024). Although several African constitutions and international human rights frameworks advocate for equality, inclusion, and social justice, implementation at community and institutional levels remains inconsistent. Consequently, there is growing

*Corresponding Author: Cornelius Kipleting Rugut

Department of Professional Studies, Lira University, P.O BOX 1035, Lira, Uganda

dissatisfaction among young people across Africa concerning inequality, exclusion, unemployment, and the lack of social justice within governance systems and social institutions (UNESCO, 2023).

Education is widely recognized as one of the most powerful instruments for transforming society. It equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to promote equity, social cohesion, democratic participation, and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2024). Schools not only transmit knowledge and skills but also shape attitudes, values, beliefs, and social behaviors. Through curriculum design and implementation, education can influence how learners understand diversity, human rights, equity, and social responsibility. Curriculum therefore becomes a strategic tool for promoting social cohesion, tolerance, inclusion, and democratic participation (Meletiadou, 2022). In the African context, there is increasing recognition that education systems must move beyond traditional academic content and intentionally integrate issues of diversity and social justice into teaching and learning processes.

Recent educational reforms across Africa have created opportunities for rethinking curriculum development. One of the most significant reforms is the adoption of Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in several East African countries including Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. CBC emphasizes acquisition of competencies, values, attitudes, and practical skills rather than memorization of content alone (Sifuna & Obonyo, 2019). The curriculum seeks to produce learners who are creative, collaborative, ethical, innovative, and capable of solving real-life problems. Such an approach provides an important opportunity for integrating diversity and social justice into educational practice.

This paper explores how curriculum can be used to promote diversity and social justice in Africa, with a specific focus on Competency Based Curriculum in East Africa. The paper reviews contemporary literature on curriculum, diversity, and social justice; examines the role of CBC in advancing inclusive education; and proposes a theoretical model for developing a curriculum that promotes diversity and social justice in Africa.

Problem Statement

Despite policy commitments to equality, inclusion, and human rights, many African countries continue to experience persistent challenges such as ethnic tensions, gender inequality, discrimination, social exclusion, and unequal access to educational opportunities. These challenges undermine social cohesion, democratic participation, and sustainable development, yet education systems have often focused more on academic achievement than on nurturing the

values, competencies, and attitudes necessary for promoting diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

The implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in East Africa presents a significant opportunity to address these challenges through learner-centered and values-based education. However, there remains limited scholarly guidance on how diversity and social justice can be systematically embedded within curriculum design and implementation in African contexts. Furthermore, many existing curriculum theories and models originate from Western contexts and may not adequately reflect Africa's unique cultural, historical, social, and developmental realities. This study therefore seeks to develop an African-centered conceptual model to guide curriculum development that promotes diversity and social justice in Africa.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to develop a conceptual model for guiding curriculum development that promotes diversity and social justice in Africa. This was achieved by examining how principles of diversity and social justice can be integrated into Competency-Based Curriculum and by identifying effective pedagogical approaches for fostering inclusion, equity, intercultural understanding, and social responsibility among learners.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing scholarly literature on the topic under investigation. The review followed a structured and transparent process involving the identification of relevant sources, the application of predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the critical appraisal of selected studies. Data were collected through document analysis of publicly available documents, including curriculum frameworks, educational policies, government reports, peer-reviewed journal articles, books, international frameworks, and reports from organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the African Union. Particular attention was given to documents addressing Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), diversity, social justice, inclusion, and curriculum reform in Africa and other global contexts. The document analysis enabled the identification of key themes, trends and best practices relevant to the study.

Conceptualizing Diversity and Social Justice

Diversity refers to the existence of differences among individuals and groups in terms of culture, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, and other social identities. Social justice refers to fairness, equity, inclusion, equal opportunities, and the protection of human rights within society (Bell, 2019). Social justice education seeks to empower learners to recognize inequality, challenge oppression, and contribute toward creating inclusive societies.

Recent scholarship emphasizes that diversity and social justice are interconnected concepts that must be addressed together within educational systems. According to Adams and Bell (2020), diversity without social justice may simply acknowledge differences without addressing power imbalances and systemic inequalities. Conversely, social justice initiatives must recognize cultural diversity in order to avoid imposing uniform solutions that ignore local identities and experiences.

In Africa, diversity is both a source of cultural richness and a potential source of social conflict. Historical factors such as colonialism, ethnic divisions, economic inequalities, and political marginalization have contributed to persistent social injustices across the continent (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Education therefore has an important role in promoting inclusive citizenship, intercultural understanding, and social cohesion.

Curriculum and Social Transformation

Curriculum is not neutral; it reflects societal values, political ideologies, and cultural priorities. Curriculum determines what knowledge is valued, whose voices are represented, and what competencies learners develop (Tai *et al.*, 2022). Scholars increasingly argue that curriculum should serve transformative purposes by addressing social inequalities and preparing learners for democratic participation.

Freire's theory of critical pedagogy continues to influence contemporary discussions on curriculum and social justice. Freire (1970) argued that education should empower learners to critically examine social realities and challenge oppressive structures. Contemporary scholars have expanded this perspective by advocating for culturally responsive curricula, anti-bias education, and inclusive pedagogies (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

According to UNESCO (2022), curriculum reform is one of the most effective strategies for promoting social inclusion because schools provide continuous interaction among learners from diverse backgrounds. Through curriculum, learners can develop empathy, tolerance, collaboration skills, and critical consciousness necessary for peaceful coexistence.

Competency Based Curriculum in East Africa

Competency Based Curriculum has emerged as one of the most significant educational reforms in East Africa. CBC shifts educational focus from content memorization toward development of competencies, values, attitudes, and practical skills required for lifelong learning and societal participation (Sifuna & Obonyo, 2019).

Kenya and Uganda officially implemented CBC in 2017 and 2020 respectively as part of broader educational reforms aimed at producing globally competitive and socially responsible citizens. Rwanda

and Tanzania have also adopted competency-based approaches emphasizing learner-centered education and practical competencies (Mweru, 2020). CBC frameworks in East Africa commonly emphasize communication, collaboration, citizenship, creativity, critical thinking, and digital literacy.

One important characteristic of CBC is its integration of values education and cross-cutting issues. According to Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD, 2023), CBC seeks to nurture values such as respect, responsibility, integrity, patriotism, peace, social justice, and inclusivity. This provides a strong foundation for integrating diversity and social justice into curriculum implementation.

Competency Based Curriculum promotes learner-centered pedagogies, active participation, critical thinking, collaboration, and values education. These characteristics make CBC suitable for addressing cross-cutting social issues such as inclusion, equity, gender equality, peace building, and cultural diversity (Mwang'ombe, 2021). Through carefully designed curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, assessment systems, and school cultures, CBC can help learners develop attitudes and competencies necessary for promoting social justice in African societies.

Diversity and Inclusion in African Education

Recent literature highlights persistent concerns regarding equity and inclusion within African education systems. Despite significant efforts to expand access to education, millions of children across the continent continue to experience educational exclusion due to poverty, disability, gender discrimination, displacement, conflict, and language barriers (UNICEF, 2022). Learners from rural and marginalized communities are particularly disadvantaged, often facing limited access to quality educational resources, qualified teachers, and supportive learning environments. In response to these challenges, inclusive education has become a major policy priority across Africa, guided by international and regional frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), and the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25). These frameworks advocate for equitable access, meaningful participation, and improved learning outcomes for all learners regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.

Promoting diversity and inclusion within African education requires curricula and pedagogical approaches that recognize and value learners' cultural, linguistic, and social identities. Meletiadou (2022) argues that culturally responsive curricula and inclusive teaching practices can enhance learner engagement, improve academic achievement, and reduce discrimination within schools. Given Africa's rich linguistic and cultural diversity, integrating indigenous knowledge systems, local histories, and mother-tongue

instruction into the curriculum can foster a stronger sense of belonging and identity among learners. Such approaches not only make learning more relevant and meaningful but also contribute to the development of inclusive learning environments that respect and celebrate diversity while promoting social cohesion.

Gender equity and disability inclusion remain critical dimensions of social justice in African education. Although substantial progress has been made in improving girls' access to schooling, many continue to face barriers associated with poverty, early marriage, cultural norms, gender stereotypes, and inadequate school facilities (UNESCO, 2023). Consequently, curriculum content and learning experiences must actively challenge discriminatory attitudes and promote gender equality. Likewise, learners with disabilities continue to encounter significant obstacles, including inaccessible infrastructure, insufficient learning resources, limited teacher preparation, and persistent negative societal attitudes (Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2021). The adoption of competency-based and inclusive curricula offers important opportunities to address these challenges through differentiated instruction, flexible learning pathways, and learner-centered approaches that accommodate diverse needs and abilities, thereby advancing educational equity and social justice for all learners.

Incorporating Diversity and Social Justice into the Competency Based Curriculum

The Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in East Africa provides significant opportunities for integrating diversity and social justice into educational systems because of its emphasis on values, competencies, learner-centered approaches, and the real-life application of knowledge. Contemporary curriculum scholars argue that competency-based approaches are particularly suited to fostering equity, inclusion, citizenship, and social responsibility because they focus on developing attitudes, values, and practical skills alongside academic knowledge (UNESCO, 2017; OECD, 2018; Wanjala & Odongo, 2024). Diversity and social justice content can therefore be incorporated into CBC through multiple dimensions, including curriculum content, co-curricular activities, pedagogy, assessment, and school culture (UNESCO, 2021; Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD], 2023).

One important approach is the integration of diversity and social justice themes across learning areas rather than treating them as isolated subjects. Topics such as human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, peace education, cultural diversity, environmental justice, and democratic participation can be embedded within subjects such as social studies, languages, religious education, history, and creative arts (UNESCO, 2016; UNICEF, 2021). For example, literature lessons can include stories from diverse African communities that promote empathy and

intercultural understanding, while social studies can examine issues related to citizenship, equity, and social cohesion. Research indicates that cross-curricular integration strengthens learners' ability to connect academic content with social realities and promotes inclusive citizenship competencies (Banks, 2019; Schweisfurth, 2020).

CBC also allows teachers to use contextualized and experiential learning approaches that expose learners to real societal issues. Community service learning, collaborative projects, debates, and problem-solving activities can help learners engage with diversity and social justice issues in practical ways. Learners can participate in projects addressing challenges such as discrimination, environmental degradation, disability inclusion, or gender-based violence within their communities. Studies have shown that experiential and community-based learning approaches enhance civic engagement, social responsibility, and intercultural competence among learners (Kolb, 2017; UNESCO, 2022; Ngware & Abuya, 2025).

Values education is another important entry point within CBC. East African CBC frameworks emphasize values such as respect, responsibility, integrity, unity, peace, patriotism, and social responsibility (KICD, 2023; National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC], 2020). These values can be linked directly to diversity and social justice by encouraging learners to appreciate differences, reject discrimination, and promote inclusion in their schools and communities. Research suggests that values-based education contributes significantly to the development of ethical citizenship, tolerance, and social cohesion in multicultural societies (Berkowitz & Bier, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

Assessment systems within CBC can also support social justice objectives by moving beyond examination-oriented evaluation toward competency-based assessment. Portfolios, reflective journals, presentations, group projects, and community-based assessments can help learners demonstrate social competencies such as collaboration, empathy, ethical reasoning, and civic participation. Scholars argue that authentic assessment practices provide more equitable opportunities for learners from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate competence compared to traditional high-stakes examinations (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2020; OECD, 2023).

Teacher preparation is equally essential for successful integration. Teachers require training on culturally responsive pedagogy, inclusive education, conflict-sensitive teaching, and facilitation of discussions on sensitive social issues. Without adequate teacher preparedness, diversity and social justice content may remain theoretical and fail to influence learner attitudes and behavior. Research across Africa has

consistently identified teacher competence as a critical determinant of successful CBC implementation and inclusive educational practices (Westbrook *et al.*, 2018; Orodho, 2021; Tadesse & Melesse, 2025).

Finally, school environments themselves should model diversity and inclusion. Schools implementing CBC should create safe and inclusive environments where learners from different cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds feel respected and valued. Inclusive school cultures reinforce the values and competencies promoted within the curriculum and contribute to positive learner outcomes. Evidence from UNESCO and UNICEF studies indicates that inclusive school climates improve learner participation, well-being, and social cohesion while reducing discrimination and exclusion (UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2022; World Bank, 2024).

Teaching Methodologies for Promoting Diversity and Social Justice

Pedagogical approaches play a critical role in translating curriculum goals into meaningful learning experiences. Scholars emphasize that promoting diversity and social justice requires participatory, inclusive, and learner-centered teaching methods that empower learners to engage critically with social realities while respecting diverse perspectives (Freire, 2018; Schweisfurth, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

Collaborative learning encourages interaction among learners from diverse backgrounds and helps develop empathy, teamwork, communication skills, and mutual respect (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Through group discussions, peer learning activities, and cooperative projects, learners can appreciate different perspectives, challenge stereotypes, and develop intercultural competence. Research demonstrates that collaborative learning contributes significantly to social inclusion and positive intergroup relations in diverse educational settings (Johnson & Johnson, 2019; OECD, 2023).

Inquiry-based learning promotes critical thinking and social awareness by encouraging learners to investigate real-world social issues. Learners become active participants in analyzing inequality, discrimination, exclusion, and community challenges rather than passive recipients of information. Studies indicate that inquiry-based approaches enhance learners' problem-solving abilities, civic literacy, and understanding of complex social issues (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2018; UNESCO, 2022).

Transformative pedagogy also emphasizes reflection and dialogue. Drawing on Freirean perspectives, transformative approaches encourage learners to critically examine societal structures and become agents of social change. Teachers facilitate discussions on issues such as gender equality, human

rights, ethnic diversity, inclusion, and social justice while creating safe spaces for dialogue and reflection (Freire, 2018; Mezirow, 2018; Andreotti, 2021).

Experiential learning approaches such as community service, service learning, role play, simulations, and project-based learning enable learners to engage directly with diverse communities and social issues. Such experiences help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical social responsibility. Research demonstrates that experiential learning strengthens civic engagement, empathy, leadership skills, and commitment to social justice among learners (Kolb, 2017; Eyler & Giles, 2019; UNESCO, 2022).

Digital technologies also provide opportunities for promoting diversity and inclusion. Online collaborative platforms, multicultural digital resources, virtual exchanges, and assistive technologies can support inclusive learning environments when appropriately implemented (Tai *et al.*, 2022). Emerging evidence suggests that digital learning tools can enhance access, participation, and representation of marginalized learners while promoting intercultural understanding and global citizenship competencies (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2024; Mukama & Waweru, 2026).

Conceptual framework for Developing a Curriculum that Promotes Diversity and Social Justice in Africa

Building on the key themes emerging from the systematic literature review and document analysis presented in the preceding sections, this study proposes an African Diversity and Social Justice Curriculum Model (ADSJCM) as a framework for developing a curriculum that promotes diversity and social justice in Africa. The model integrates competency-based education, inclusive pedagogy, African philosophies, and transformative learning principles. It consists of six interconnected components, which are elaborated in this section, as follows.

1. Inclusive Curriculum Content

Curriculum content should intentionally integrate issues related to diversity, equity, human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, peace education, environmental justice, and intercultural understanding. African history, indigenous knowledge systems, and local cultural experiences should be represented positively within learning materials. Curriculum developers should ensure balanced representation of diverse communities and avoid stereotypes or exclusionary narratives. Learners should engage with contemporary social issues affecting African societies while developing critical thinking and ethical reasoning skills.

2. Learner-Centered and Transformative Pedagogy

Teaching methodologies should promote participation, dialogue, collaboration, inquiry, and reflection. Teachers should create inclusive classrooms

where learners feel respected and valued regardless of their backgrounds. Pedagogical approaches should encourage learners to critically analyze social inequalities and develop solutions for community challenges. Experiential learning, project-based learning, service learning, and cooperative learning should be emphasized.

3. Values and Competency Development

The curriculum should nurture competencies and values necessary for social justice and peaceful coexistence. These include empathy, respect, tolerance, collaboration, ethical leadership, communication, conflict resolution, and civic responsibility. Competencies should be integrated across subjects rather than confined to isolated lessons. Assessment systems should evaluate not only academic knowledge but also social and ethical competencies.

4. Inclusive Assessment Systems

Traditional examinations often emphasize memorization and may disadvantage learners from marginalized backgrounds. Inclusive assessment systems should incorporate diverse assessment methods such as portfolios, projects, presentations, reflective journals, peer assessment, and performance-based tasks. Assessment should recognize diverse learner strengths

and provide opportunities for demonstrating competencies in multiple ways.

5. Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Teachers are central to successful curriculum implementation. Teacher education programs should prepare educators to address diversity, inclusion, and social justice within classroom practice. Professional development should focus on culturally responsive teaching, inclusive pedagogy, conflict-sensitive education, and differentiated instruction. Teachers should also develop critical self-awareness regarding their own biases and assumptions.

6. Community and Policy Support

Curriculum reform requires support from governments, communities, religious institutions, and civil society organizations. Community participation helps ensure that curriculum reforms remain culturally relevant and socially accepted. Policies should promote equitable resource distribution, inclusive school environments, and protection of learner rights. Collaboration between schools and communities can strengthen social cohesion and reinforce inclusive values beyond classrooms.

The six components are illustrated in figure 1.1

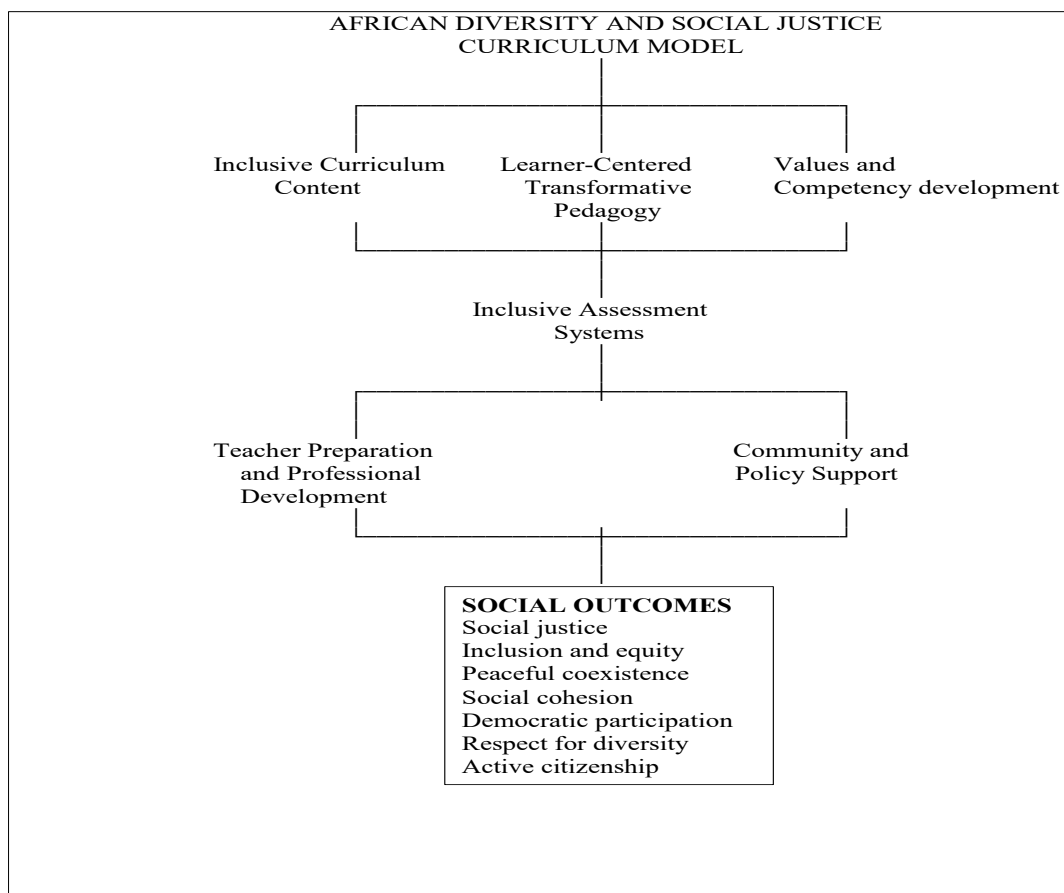


Figure 1.1: African Diversity and Social Justice Curriculum Model (ADSJCM): A Conceptual Framework for Developing a Curriculum that Promotes Diversity and Social Justice in Africa

Implications of the Model for East Africa

The African Diversity and Social Justice Curriculum Model (ADSJCM) has significant implications for curriculum reform and Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) implementation across East Africa. The region is characterized by rich cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity, but it also faces persistent challenges related to social inequalities, ethnic tensions, political instability, displacement, poverty, gender disparities, and unequal access to quality education. Countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi continue to address issues of social cohesion, inclusion, and equitable educational opportunities within increasingly diverse societies. Meanwhile, South Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo face additional challenges arising from prolonged conflict, insecurity, forced migration, weak educational infrastructure, teacher shortages, and large populations of internally displaced persons and refugees. These challenges often undermine efforts to provide inclusive, equitable, and quality education and can limit the development of competencies necessary for peaceful coexistence, active citizenship, and sustainable development. The ADSJCM responds to these realities by providing a comprehensive framework that embeds diversity, social justice, peacebuilding, human rights, inclusion, and intercultural understanding within curriculum content, pedagogy, assessment, and school culture.

The model offers practical guidance for policymakers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and schools seeking to strengthen learner-centered and competency-based education throughout East Africa. By integrating inclusive curriculum content, transformative pedagogy, values education, culturally responsive teaching, and community participation, the model can help learners develop competencies such as empathy, respect for diversity, critical thinking, conflict resolution, ethical leadership, civic responsibility, and collaborative problem-solving. These competencies are particularly important in societies seeking to promote national unity, social cohesion, democratic participation, and economic transformation. Furthermore, the model supports regional and continental aspirations articulated in the African Union Agenda 2063, the East African Community education agenda, and Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education. By providing a contextually relevant African framework for curriculum development, the ADSJCM can assist East African countries in designing education systems that not only improve academic outcomes but also prepare learners to address contemporary social challenges, contribute to peaceful and inclusive societies, and participate effectively in an increasingly interconnected regional and global environment.

Recommendations

Curriculum developers and education ministries across Africa should systematically integrate

diversity and social justice themes across all learning areas rather than treating them as stand-alone topics. Issues such as human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, peace building, environmental justice, intercultural understanding, and democratic citizenship should be embedded within curriculum content, learning resources, and co-curricular activities. Such integration will enable learners to develop a deeper understanding of social realities while fostering respect for diversity and commitment to equitable societies.

Secondly, governments and educational institutions should strengthen teacher preparation and continuous professional development on diversity, inclusion, and social justice education. Pre-service and in-service teacher training programs should equip teachers with competencies in culturally responsive pedagogy, inclusive education, conflict-sensitive teaching, differentiated instruction, and facilitation of dialogue on sensitive social issues. Well-prepared teachers are essential for translating curriculum intentions into meaningful classroom practices that promote inclusion and social cohesion.

Schools implementing Competency-Based Curriculum should also adopt learner-centered and transformative pedagogical approaches that actively engage learners in addressing real-world social challenges. Approaches such as inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, project-based learning, service learning, and community engagement should be emphasized because they encourage critical thinking, empathy, problem-solving, and civic responsibility. These pedagogies can help learners become active participants in promoting social justice within their communities.

Assessment systems should be reformed to recognize and evaluate social, ethical, and civic competencies alongside academic achievement. Education systems should expand the use of portfolios, reflective journals, presentations, community projects, peer assessment, and performance-based tasks to provide learners with multiple opportunities to demonstrate competencies related to collaboration, ethical reasoning, leadership, intercultural understanding, and social responsibility. Inclusive assessment practices can contribute to greater equity and learner participation.

Governments and development partners should invest in creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that accommodate learners from diverse backgrounds, including girls, learners with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced learners, and marginalized communities. This should include improving school infrastructure, providing assistive technologies, expanding digital access, developing inclusive learning materials, and strengthening policies that protect learners from discrimination, exclusion, and violence. Inclusive

school environments are necessary for achieving the goals of diversity and social justice education.

Finally, policymakers, curriculum agencies, researchers, and regional educational bodies should adopt and further validate the African Diversity and Social Justice Curriculum Model (ADSJCM) as a framework for curriculum reform and educational planning. Future empirical studies should test and refine the model across different African contexts to establish its effectiveness in promoting inclusion, social cohesion, peace building, and equitable educational outcomes. Such research will strengthen the evidence base for developing curriculum frameworks that are responsive to Africa's unique cultural, social, and developmental realities.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that curriculum can serve as a powerful instrument for promoting diversity, inclusion, social justice, and social cohesion in Africa. Drawing on contemporary literature and the ongoing implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in East Africa, the study established that diversity and social justice can be effectively integrated through inclusive curriculum content, learner-centered pedagogies, values education, inclusive assessment practices, teacher preparation, and community engagement. To address the limited availability of contextually relevant curriculum frameworks, the study proposed the African Diversity and Social Justice Curriculum Model (ADSJCM), which provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for curriculum development grounded in African realities and aspirations. The model offers practical guidance for policymakers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and schools seeking to nurture learners who are empathetic, socially responsible, critically aware, and committed to peaceful coexistence. Ultimately, the study argues that embedding diversity and social justice within curriculum reform is essential for building inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies and for preparing future generations to contribute meaningfully to Africa's social, economic, and democratic transformation.

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