ARE OUR CHILDREN LEARNING?

Literacy and Numeracy in Kenya

2014
FACT 1  LEARNING LEVELS ARE STATIC

NATIONALLY, ONLY 3 OUT OF 10 CHILDREN IN CLASS 3 CAN DO CLASS 2 WORK, THE SAME AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS.

Although 9 out of 10 CLASS 8 CHILDREN CAN DO CLASS 2 LEVEL WORK, THIS STILL MEANS THAT 1 OUT OF EVERY 10 KENYAN CHILDREN ARE COMPLETING PRIMARY SCHOOL WITHOUT HAVING FULLY MASTERED CLASS 2 SKILLS.

FACT 2  MORE PUPILS AND TEACHERS ARE IN SCHOOL DAILY

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL ON THE DAY OF UWEZO’S VISIT IS HIGH, AT 91%.

GIRLS ATTEND SCHOOL MORE REGULARLY THAN BOYS, ESPECIALLY IN UPPER PRIMARY.

TEACHERS’ DAILY ATTENDANCE IS ALSO HIGH, AT 88%.

FACT 3  THE NUMBER OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IS INCREASING GRADUALLY

In 2013, 10% of children aged 6-13 were out of school.

Slightly more boys than girls aged 6-13 were out of school but these differences are unlikely to be statistically significant.

Most of the out of school children were found in arid counties such as Baringo and West Pokot, and urban districts with large slum populations, such as Nairobi North.

FACT 4  GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES PERSIST

Arid districts have much lower learning levels than urban and agriculturally rich rural districts.

FACT 5  MORE CHILDREN AGED 3-5 YEARS ARE ENROLLING IN PRE-SCHOOL

Many children do attend pre-school, in total 64% of children aged 3-5 are enrolled.

However, 21% of children in primary school had never attended pre-school.
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ALTHOUGH 9 OUT OF 10 CLASS 8 CHILDREN CAN DO CLASS 2 LEVEL WORK, THIS STILL MEANS THAT 1 OUT OF EVERY 10 KENYAN CHILDREN ARE COMPLETING PRIMARY SCHOOL WITHOUT HAVING FULLY MASTERED CLASS 2 SKILLS.

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FACT 5

Most of the out of school children were found in arid counties such as baringo and west pokot, and urban districts with large slum populations, such as Nairobi North.

Although, just under 6 out of 10 children aged 6 to 16 can read a Class 2 Kiswahili story. Just over 2 out of 6 Class 3 children can read a Class 2 Kiswahili story while in the same class, 1 out of 6 cannot read a Kiswahili word. In Class 8, 4 out of 100 children cannot read a Class 2 Kiswahili story.

Numerically, more than 5 out of 10 children aged 6 to 16 can read a Class 2 level English story. Only 3 out of 10 Class 3 children can read a Class 2 level English story and 1 out of 6 children in the same class cannot read an English word. In Class 8, 4 out of 100 children cannot read a Class 2 English story.

Numerically, 5 out of 10 children aged 6 to 16 can do Class 2 division. Only 3 out of 10 children in Class 3 can solve a Class 2 division problem. In the same class, 1 out of 10 children cannot recognize numbers between 11 and 99. By the time children reach Class 8, 1 out of 10 still cannot solve Class 2 division.
Although Nyeri was the strongest county in Kenya in terms of learning outcomes, performance was still poor. In addition, a Class 3 child in Nyeri is close to six times more likely to be able to do Class 2 work than a child in Mandera. Nyeri was the top county in English reading and division. A total of 6 out of 10 Class 3 pupils could read English and do division at Class 2 level. The top county in Kiswahili reading was Kajiado where 6 out of 10 Class 3 pupils were able to read at Class 2 level.

Uwezo also collected rich data on the quality of school facilities and whether children and teachers were attending school. In terms of facilities:

- In Nairobi, almost all schools (96%) provided clean drinking water.
- In Isiolo, almost all schools (95%) provided sanitary towels to girls.
- Isiolo was also the county in which the highest portion of schools provided training for teachers who teach students with special needs, but this was generally low at 19%
- Almost all the schools assessed in Mombasa (96%) provided in-service training for Class 2 teachers.

In terms of enrolment and attendance:

- Murang’a had the lowest number of out of school children, 1 out of 100 children of school age were not in school.
- In Elgeyo Marakwet, almost all enrolled pupils (96%) were in school during the Uwezo visit.
- Similarly in Mombasa, 9 out of 10 teachers were in school on the day of the Uwezo visit.
- Kisii was the best performing county for the number of young children in pre-school; 8 out of 10 children aged 3-5 were in pre-school.
- In terms of parents attending meetings at schools, Nyeri was again the front-runner with 8 out of 10 parents attending school meetings.
- Teacher absenteeism from school has significantly reduced between 2011 and 2013 from 16% to 12% nationally, but there is variation between counties.

Note: Data from Kirinyaga are not available and are not presented here