ARE OUR CHILDREN LEARNING?

The State of Education in Kenya in 2015 and Beyond

The Fifth Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment Report

This report was written and produced by Uwezo Kenya.

School Lane 22, Westlands. P.O Box 13784-00800 Nairobi
t: +254 715 563720 | +254 786 563722 | e: kenya@uwezo.net | info@twaweza.org
www.twaweza.org | www.uwezo.net
FIVE FACTS ON THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN KENYA

FACT 1
SCHOOL READINESS AMONG CHILDREN AGED UNDER 7 YEARS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL IS LOW AND DISPARATE

Based on regional scores calculated using a composite index of school readiness, children in the North Eastern region are much less ready to attend school than their counterparts in the Central and Nairobi regions.

For example, 16% of children aged 7 years and under in Standard 1 in the North Eastern region were unable to read letters compared with less than 2% of their peers in Nairobi.

FACT 2
ACCESS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL IS HIGH, BUT PROGRESSION THROUGH SCHOOL IS LOW

Nationally, the vast majority (90%) of school-aged children in Kenya are attending school. However, progression through the primary cycle is slow. On average, among children aged 6-13 years, the grade gap—that is, the difference between the expected grade for their age and the grade in which the child is enrolled—is 2 years. For example, the average 13-year-old attends Standard 6 rather than Standard 8.

Fact 3
Adult literacy level in English is low and disparate across the country and by gender

Based on data from the 2013 Uwezo assessment, 45% of mothers could not read a Standard 2 level story in English. Marked regional disparities in illiteracy among mothers were recorded. For example, over 90% of mothers in the North Eastern region (i.e., twice the national average) could not read a Standard 2 level story compared with less than 30% of mothers in Central region.

Fact 4
Gender-based inequalities in learning are almost eliminated, but educational inequalities of opportunity persist

Across the country, more girls are enrolled in school than boys with the exception of the North Eastern region where more boys are enrolled than girls. Girls also progress faster through school than boys. Children from less privileged households are less likely to attend school and to progress in school compared with children from well-to-do households. Children from arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) areas are less likely to attend and progress in school than their counterparts in non-arid areas.

Fact 5
Learning outcomes are low and static

Uwezo data show no evidence of progress over time in the proportions of children who complete the Standard 2 level numeracy and literacy tests. In the 2014 Uwezo assessment, 39% of children aged 7-13 years passed the tests. Similar pass rates were recorded in the three previous rounds: 40% in 2011, 37% in 2012 and 41% in 2013.

Regional disparities in learning outcomes also persist. For example, a child in the Central region is over seven times more likely to have attained a Standard 2 level of literacy and numeracy than a child in the North Eastern region.
Five Facts on the State of Education in Kenya

**Fact 1**
School readiness among children aged under 7 years enrolled in school is low and disparate. Based on regional scores calculated using a composite index of school readiness, children in the North Eastern region are much less ready to attend school than their counterparts in the Central and Nairobi regions. For example, 16% of children aged 7 years and under in Standard 1 in the North Eastern region were unable to read letters compared with less than 2% of their peers in Nairobi.

**Fact 2**
Access to primary school is high, but progression through school is low. Nationally, the vast majority (90%) of school-aged children in Kenya are attending school. However, progression through the primary cycle is slow. On average, among children aged 6-13 years, the grade gap—that is, the difference between the expected grade for their age and the grade in which the child is enrolled—is 2 years. For example, the average 13-year-old attends Standard 6 rather than Standard 8.

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