



What is the State of Gender Equality in Our Basic Education?



2nd Gender equality in and through education status report

About Usawa Agenda

- Usawa Agenda is a Kenyan-based, African-led CSO operating out of Kenya to impact education justice locally and globally.
- **“Usawa”** is Swahili for **“equity”** and **“equality”**



Our Perspective of Education Systems

**Current state of
education**



**Desired state of
education**



Our Approaches

- Research & assessments
- Communication & engagement
- Coalition & partnership building



Our Scope

Overview (June–July 2025)

- Visited **2,056** enumeration areas across all counties
- Visited **41,156** households
- Reached **81,074** children and assessed **49,835** eligible ones
 - Children aged **10–15 years** (in and out of school)
 - Learners in **Grades 3–9**, up to **17 years**
- **School Coverage**
- Visited:
 - **1,527** public and private primary and comprehensive schools
 - **1,194** public and private senior schools
- Interviewed **all school heads and principals**
- Collected KCSE examination results and entry marks for over **137,000**, 2024 candidates from the sampled senior schools
- To answer the question:
 - **What is the state of Gender Equality in our Basic Education?**

This report spotlights 4 policy statements from education & training sector gender policy 2015



- Policy statement 1.1:
 - Expand access to a gender sensitive and responsive quality education.
- Policy statement 3.1:
 - Provide equitable resources, opportunities and participation for all learners regardless of age, gender, culture and disability.
- Policy statement 7.2:
 - Enhance gender equality and gender responsiveness in governance, management and research in the education sector.
- Policy statement 7.8:
 - Ensure gender balance in deployment of teachers and instructors at all levels.

KEY FINDINGS



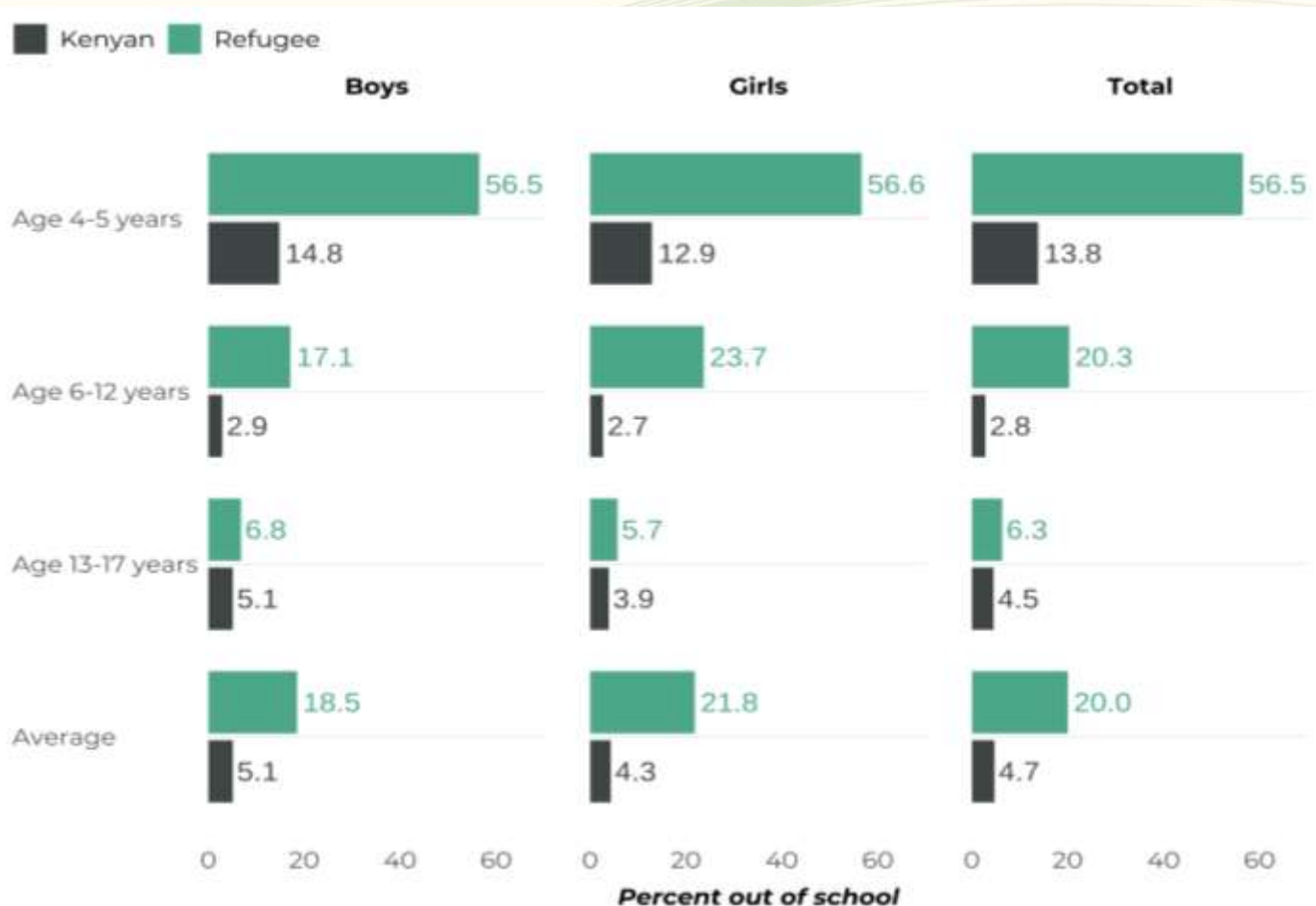
Key facts on the status of gender equality in education in 2026



- No child is more disadvantaged than a girl out of school — an out-of-school teenage girl is 12 times as likely as her in-school counterpart to suffer early pregnancy
- Children in female-headed households are more likely to be out of school.
- The teaching profession becomes more male-dominated as one goes up the levels — from 58% female in primary, 51% female in junior school to 43% female in senior school.
- Science and mathematics subjects are dominated by male teachers across the different senior-school gender groups (boy, girl and mixed) schools
- Significant learning resource-gap in favour of boy schools persist at the senior school level.

Access to School

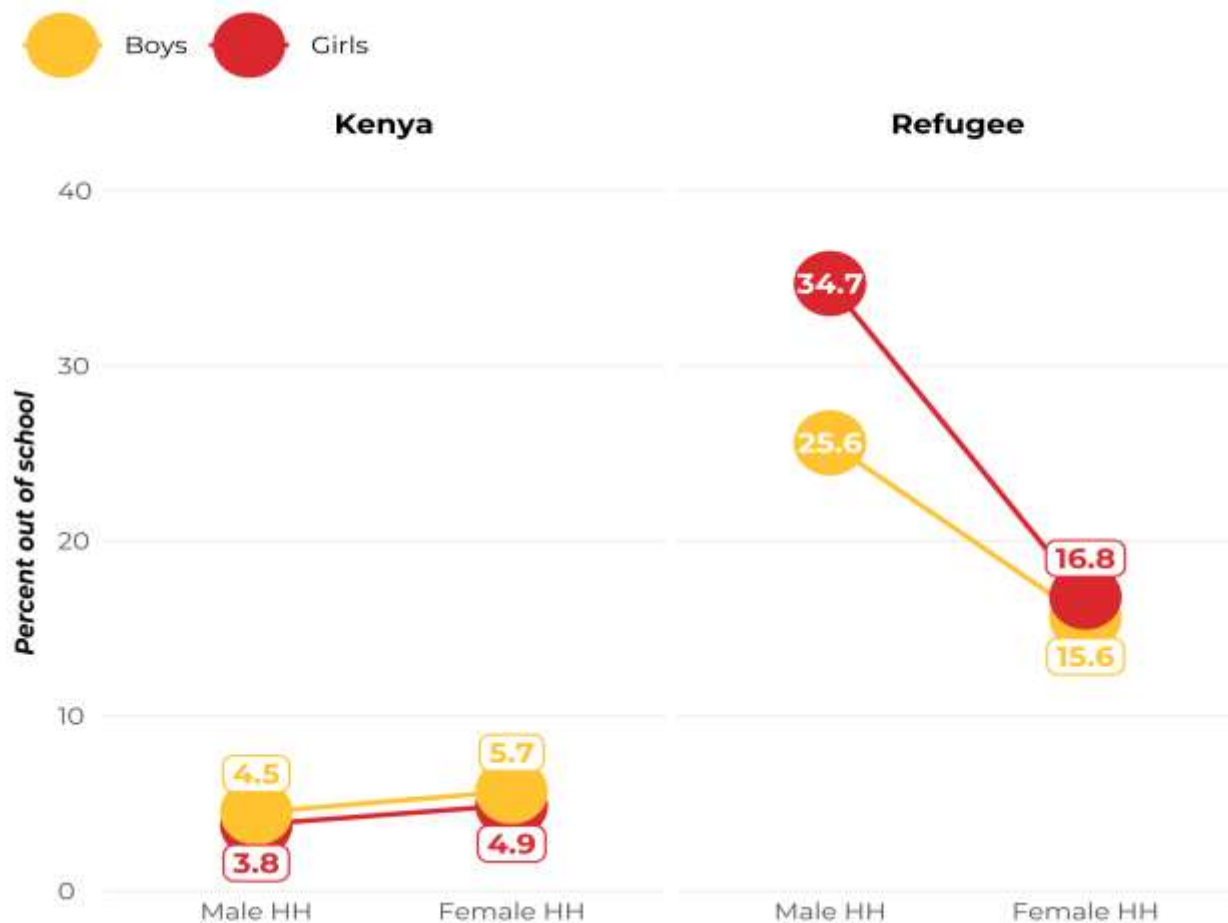
Nationally more boys than girls are out of school



- ...but among refugees, girls are worse off.
- The ages at risk are 4-5 yrs & 13-17 yrs (Kenyan) while for refugees are 4-5 yrs & 6-12 yrs)

Fig 1: More boys than girls are out of school except among the refugee communities

Children in female headed households are more likely to be out of school

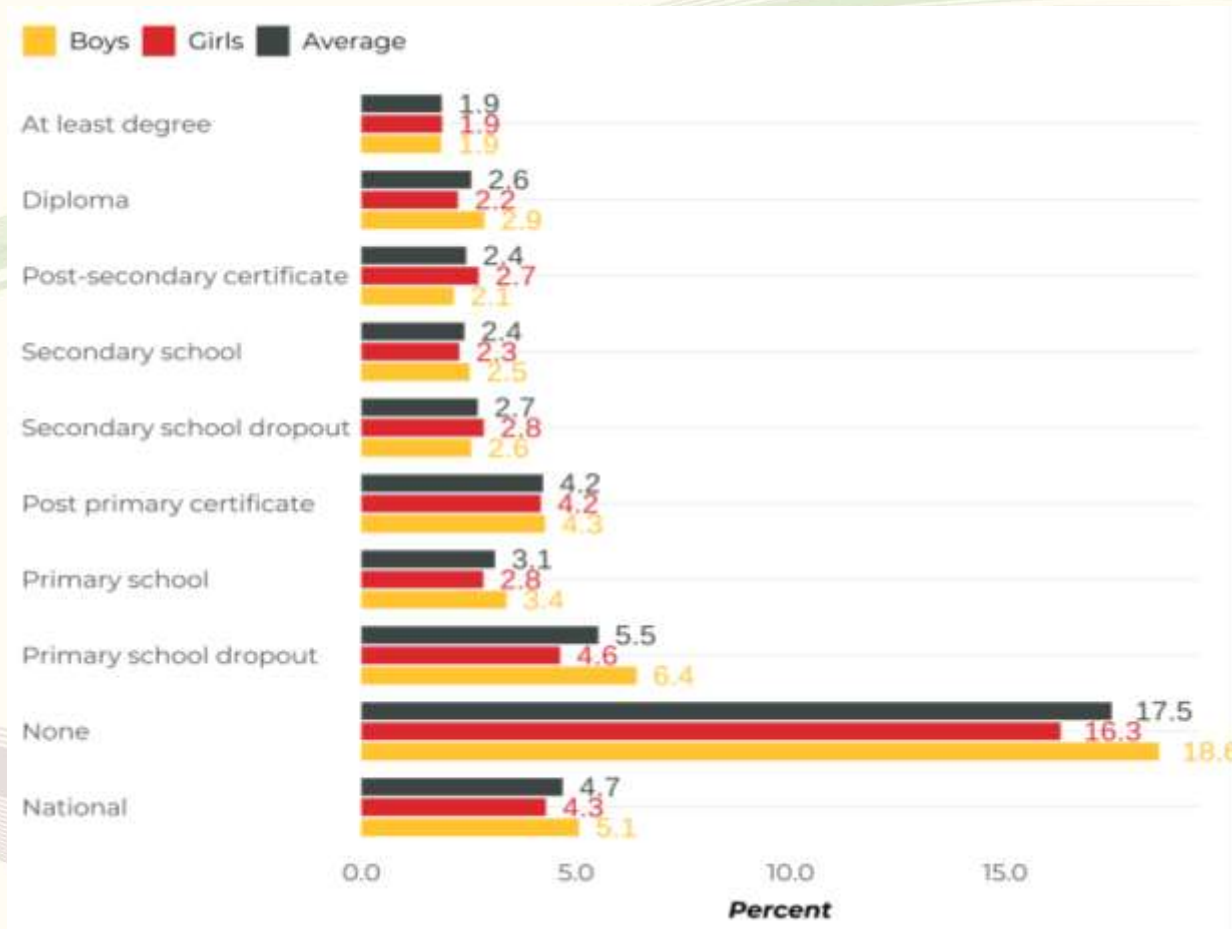


... in refugee communities, children are more likely to be out of school in male-headed households

Education
Justice
for All!

Fig 3: Gendered distribution of School-aged children out of school by residential status of the child

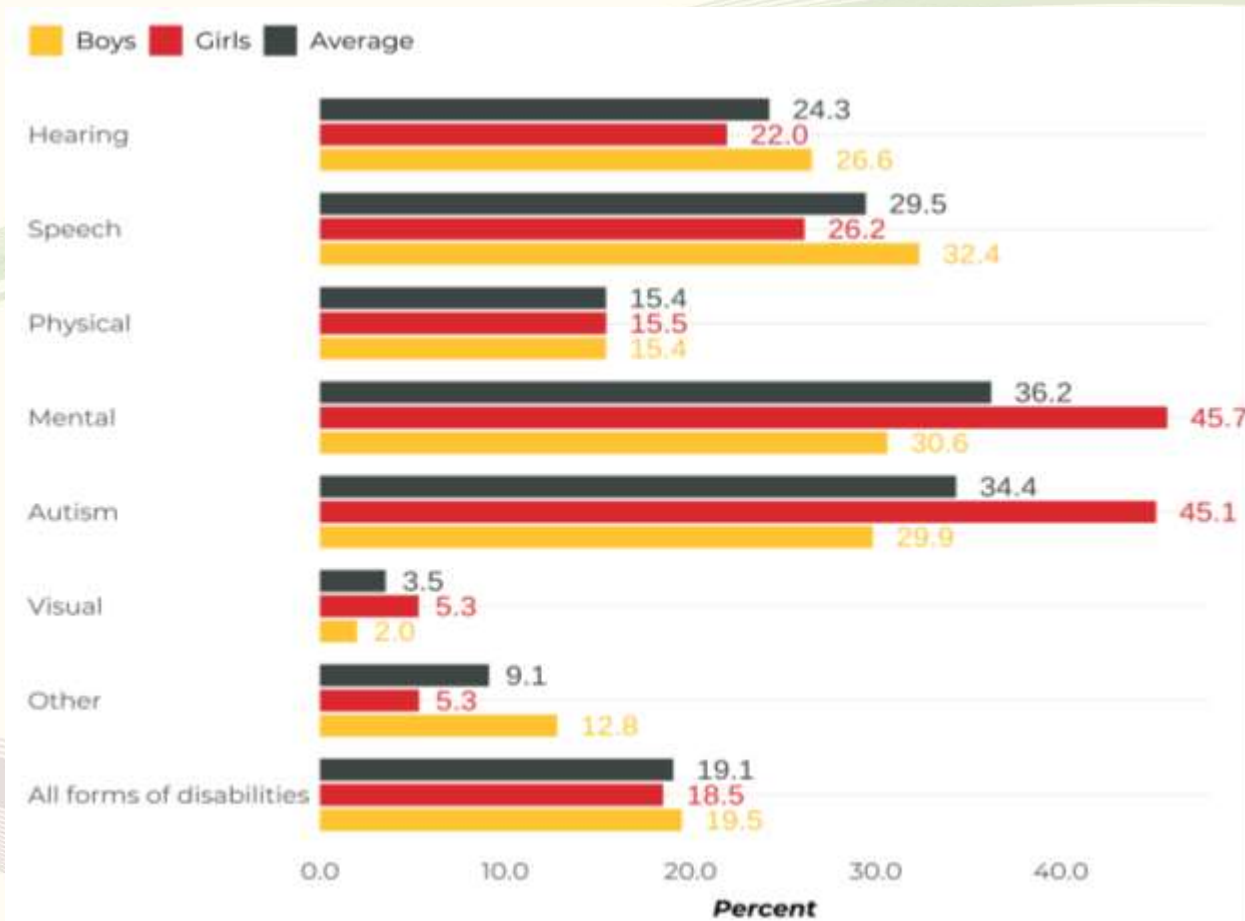
Lack or low education levels among household heads significantly contribute to children being out of school



- A child in a household headed by an adult without formal education is almost 10 times as likely to be out of school as his/her counterpart in a household headed by at least a degree holder.

Fig 4: Distribution of out-of-school children by the education level of the household head and the gender of the child

A child with mental disability is most likely child to be out of school



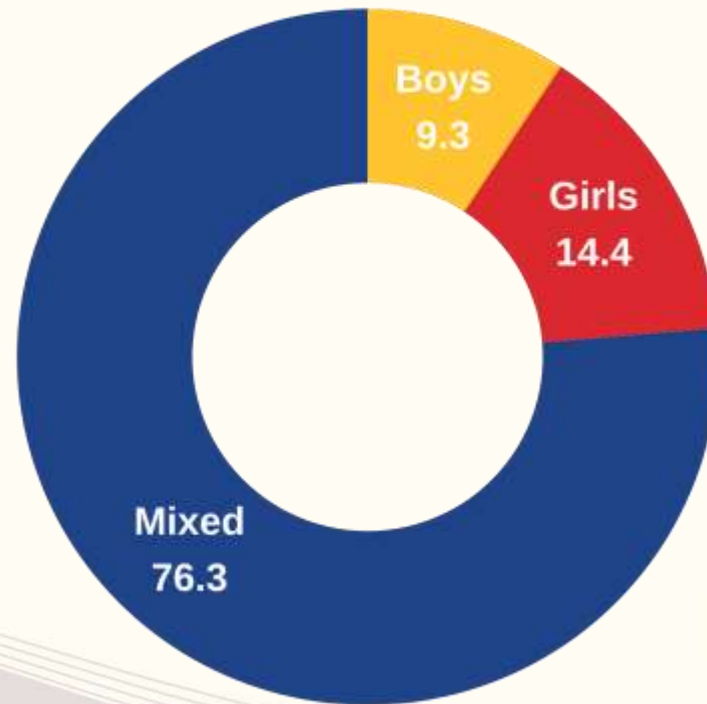
- A boy with any form of disability is marginally (1%) more likely to be out of school than a girl with any form of disability.

Fig 5: A child with mental disability is most likely child to be out of school.

School factors and learning environment

Distribution of senior schools by gender

■ Mixed ■ Girls ■ Boys



Senior boy schools are generally more established than Senior girl schools

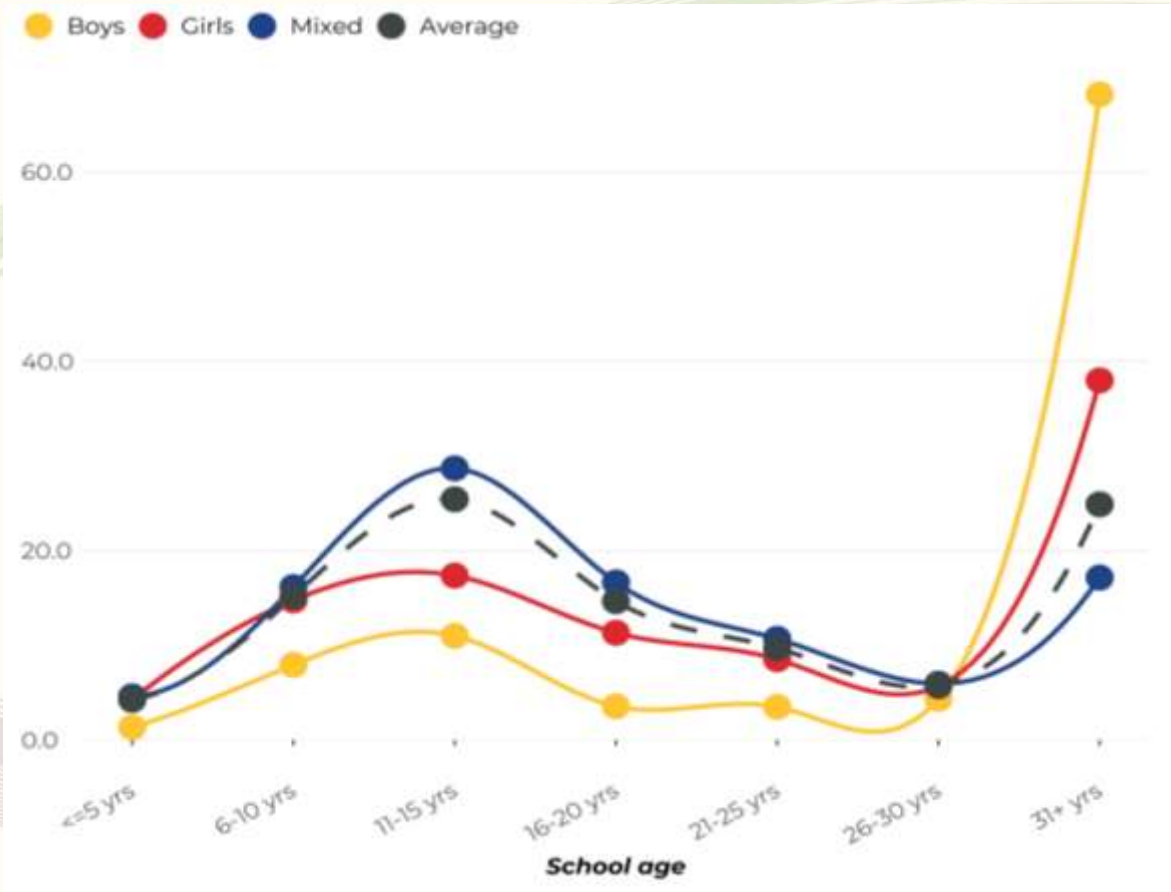
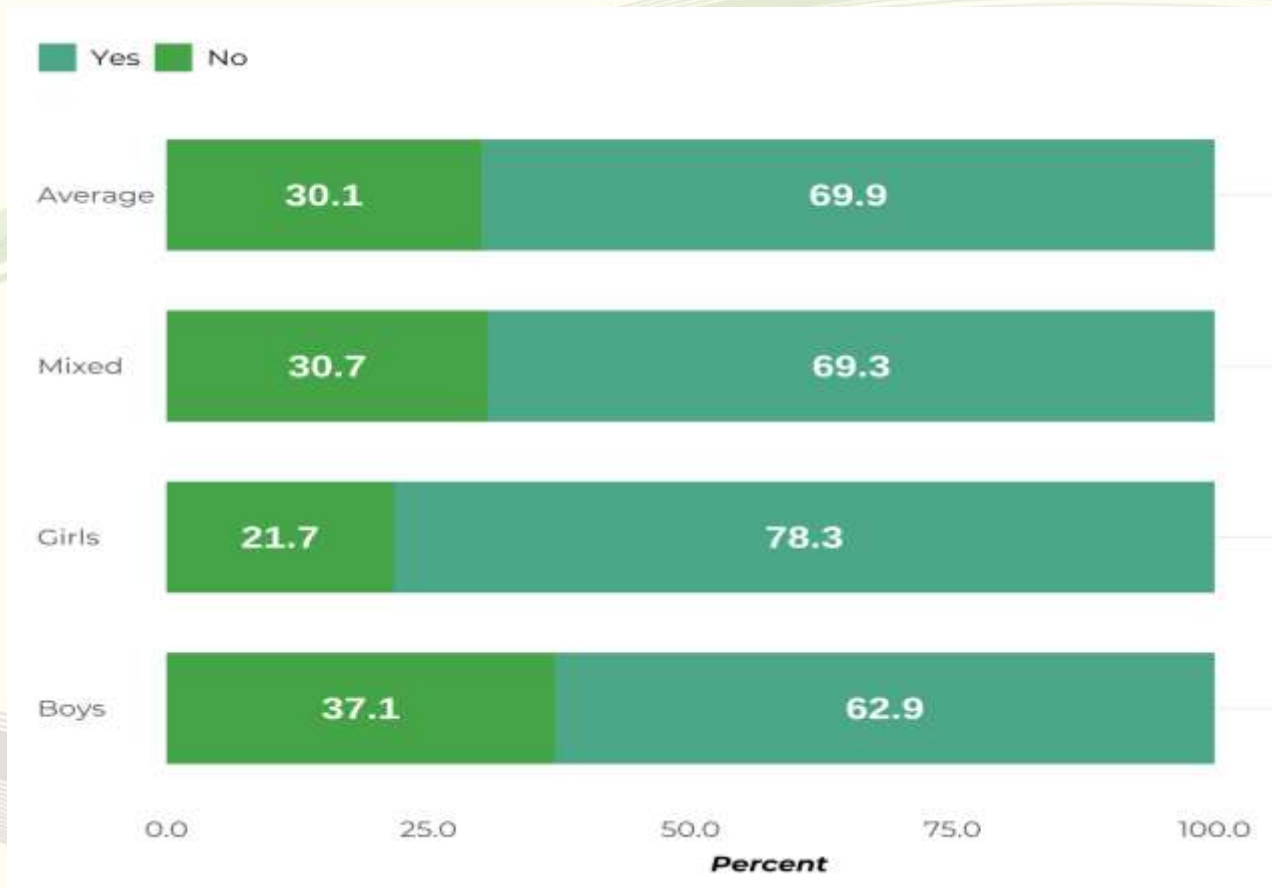


Fig. 7: Distribution of surveyed senior schools by age and gender

- **Boy schools have benefited from decades of established legacy, while girl schools are still catching up**
- 7 in 10 boy and only 3 in 10 girl schools have existed for more than 30 years.
- Less than 2 in 10 senior mixed schools have existed for more than 30 years

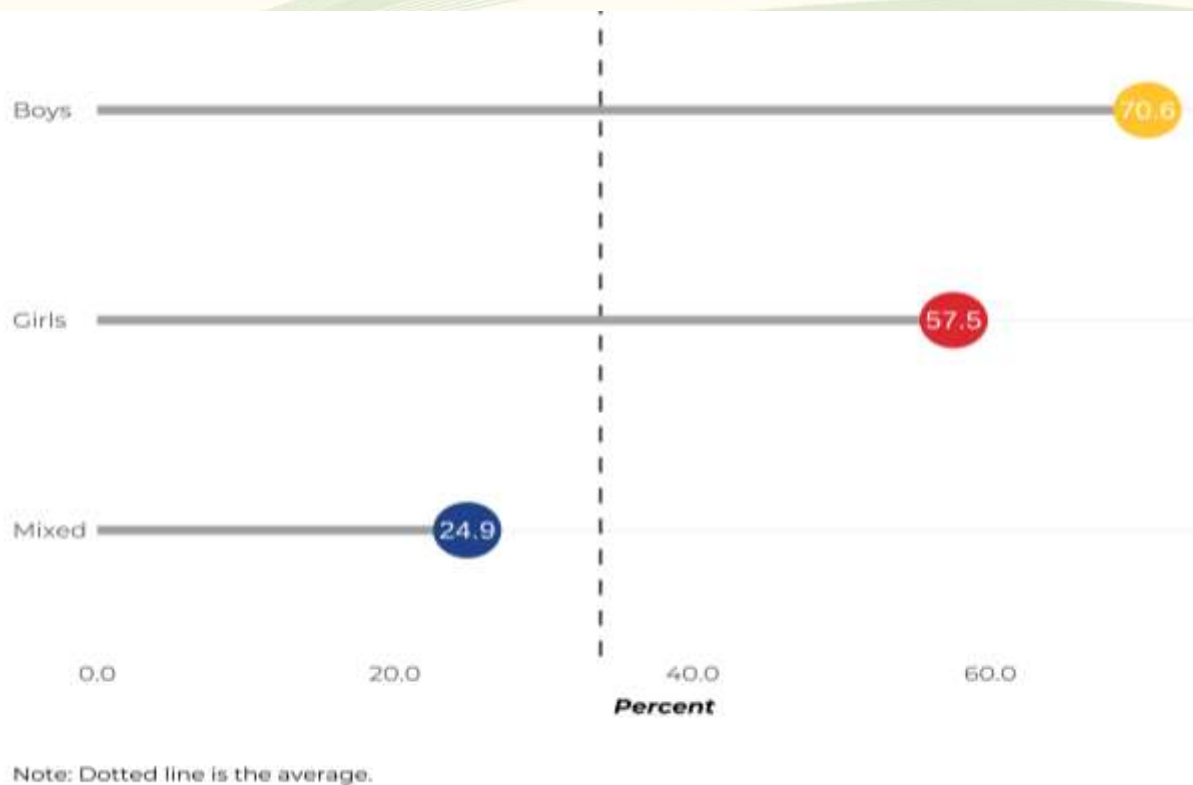
Girl senior schools are more likely to be sponsored by religious institutions than boy senior schools



- Religious institutions are key actors in development and support of the education sector

Fig 8: Distribution of public senior schools by gender and sponsorship status

Boys' senior schools have greater access to computer lessons, providing stronger pathways into digital and STEM skills



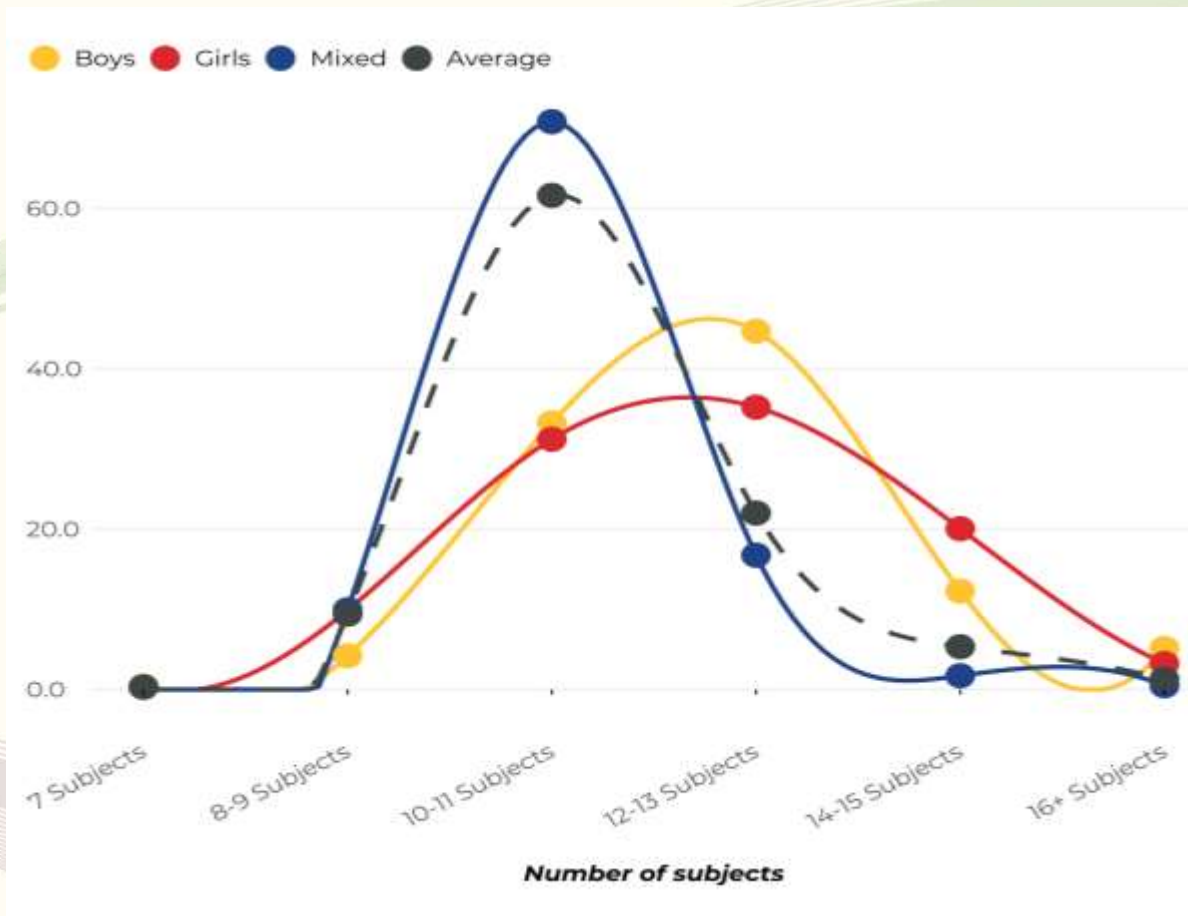
Boy senior schools are:

- 13% more likely to offer computer lessons than girl senior schools;
- almost three times as likely as mixed senior schools to offer computer lessons.

National average is 33.8%

Fig 10: Percentage of senior schools offering computer lessons, by gender

Boy senior schools have a wider range of academic and career options



- Nearly two-thirds of the boy senior schools (62.1%) offer at least 12 examinable subjects compared to 58.5% of girl senior schools and 19% of mixed senior schools that offer the same.

Fig 11: Distribution of senior schools by the number of subjects examined at KCSE level and gender

Boy Senior Schools are more likely to own science laboratories than girl & mixed schools

Laboratory type	School gender			Average
	Boys	Girls	Mixed	
Chemistry	61.8	48.2	21.8	29.3
Biology	53.4	40.4	14.6	21.9
Physics	58.7	40.4	15.4	23.0
Multi purpose	60.4	67.1	76.0	73.2
Mobile laboratory	1.5	2.7	1.9	2.0
Others	48.1	44.5	19.5	25.7

- A boy senior school is about 13% more likely than a girl senior school, and almost three times as likely as a mixed senior school to own a chemistry or a biology laboratory.

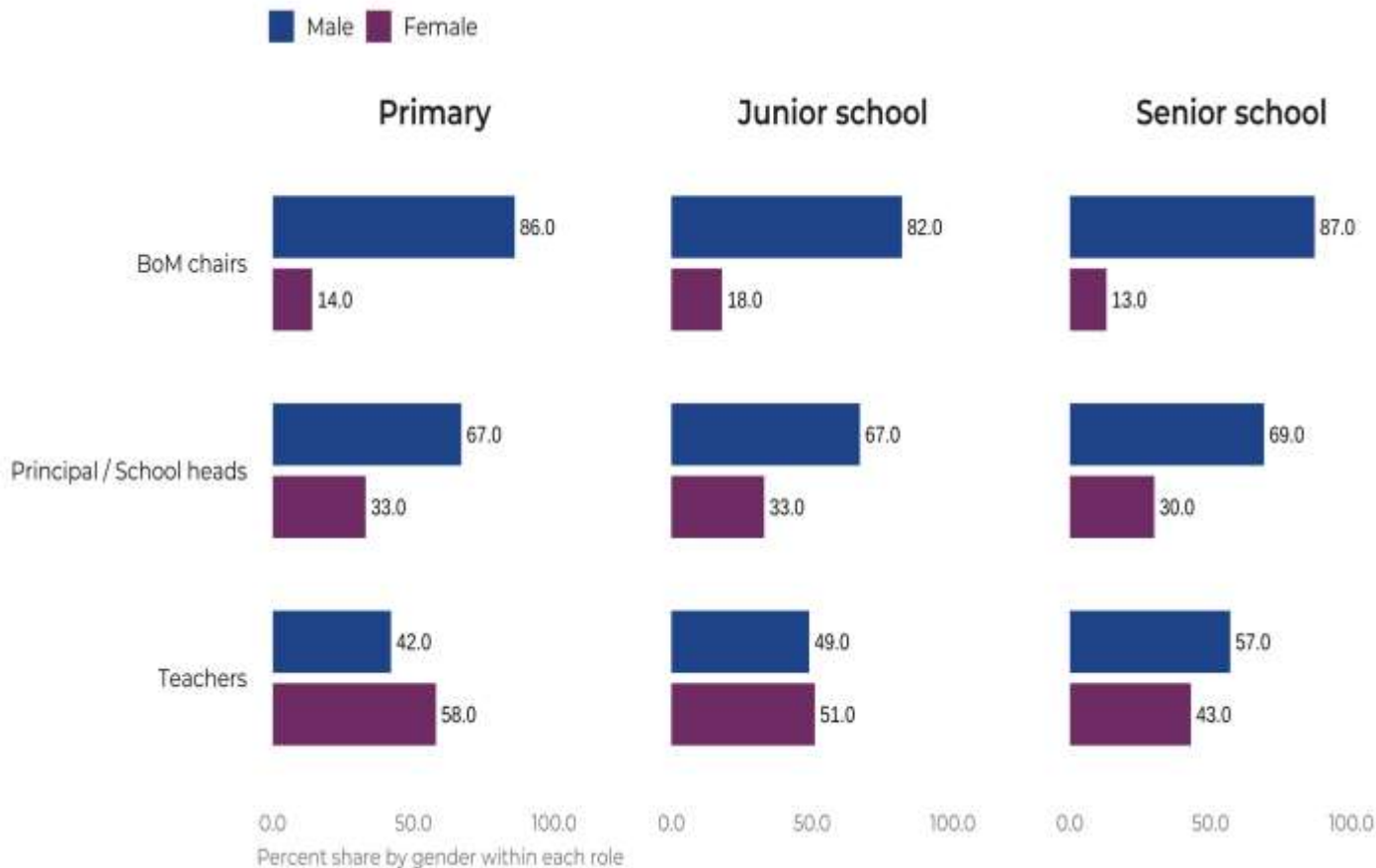
Table 1: Senior schools with laboratory types by school gender

Generally, boy senior schools are better equipped with learning facilities than girl and mixed senior schools

School Facility/Service	School gender			Average
	Boys	Girls	Mixed	
Enough text books	84.8	78.8	73.5	75.3
Administration block	89.3	89.3	77.0	79.9
Dining hall	78.7	71.0	31.6	41.7
Playground	95.7	85.0	72.7	76.6
Provide e-learning options	30.2	32.7	13.0	17.4
Offer computer lessons	70.6	57.5	24.9	33.8
Adequate dormitory space	84.1	79.8	86.8	84.5
Library	65.4	50.4	32.2	37.9
Library with online resources	21.4	30.1	12.7	17.4
Learners without proper school uniform	58.4	42.8	70.8	65.6

Table 2: Senior schools providing the above learning facilities and services by school gender

Girls have diminishing access to female role models as they progress to higher levels of education



- Women teach across all levels of schools, but men lead the schools.
- The gender of teachers shifts in favour of men as one goes up the levels.

Fig 15: Distribution of public-school teachers, headteachers (HTs) and Boards of Management (BoM) chairpersons by gender and school level

Senior school board management leadership is predominantly male even in girl schools

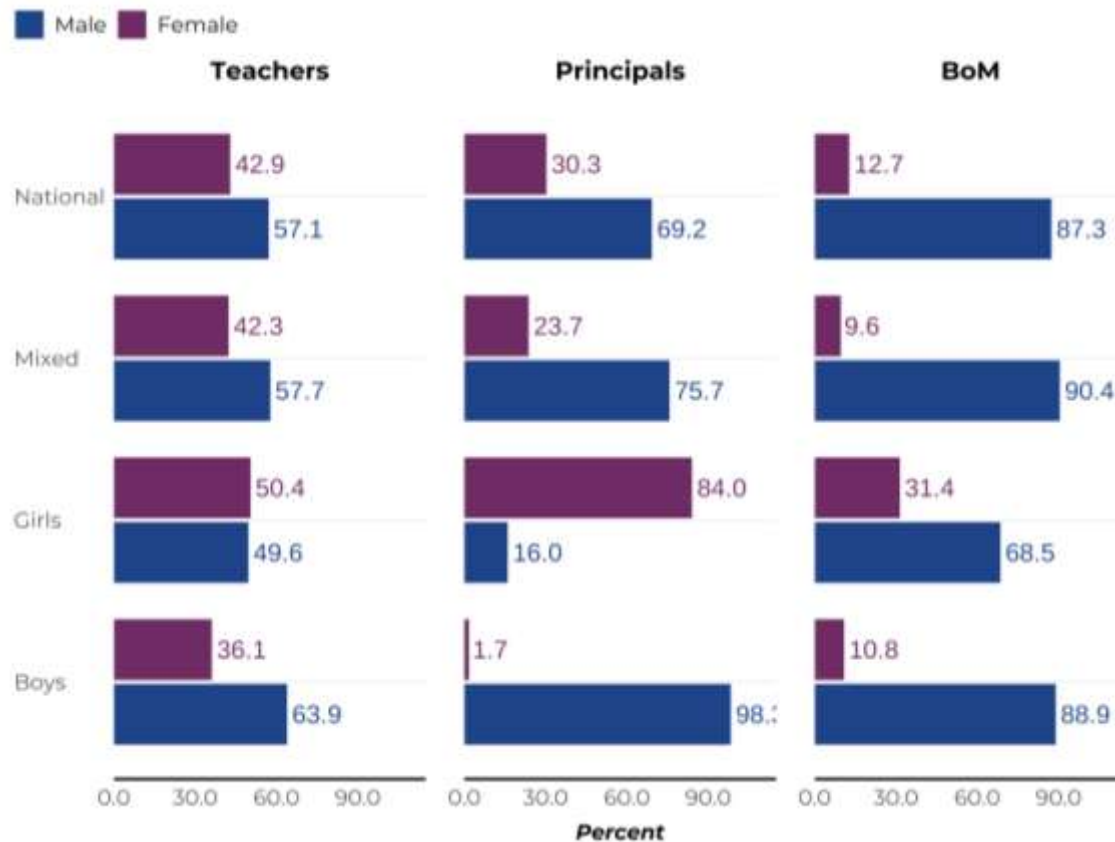


Fig 16: Distribution of public senior school teachers, principals and Boards of Management (BoM) chairpersons, by gender and school gender

- Women are under-represented in the leadership of senior schools, except for girl schools where women are 84% of the school heads.
- Even for girl schools, only 31 in 100 of their BoM chairpersons are women.

Distribution of public senior-school principals and Board of Management (BoM) chairpersons by gender and school gender

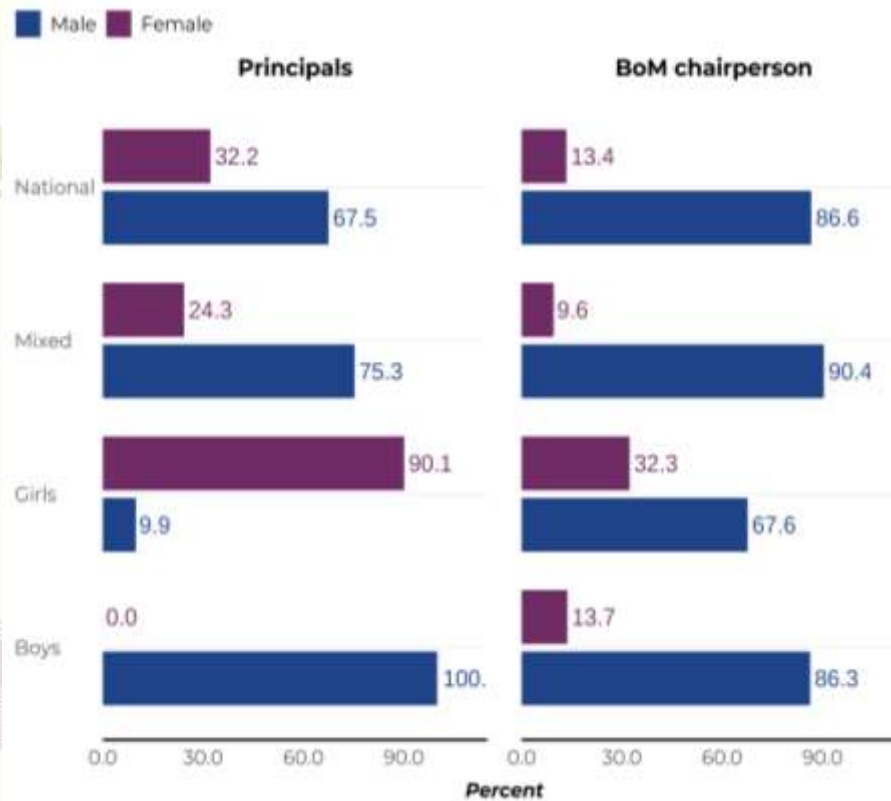


Fig 17: Sponsored schools

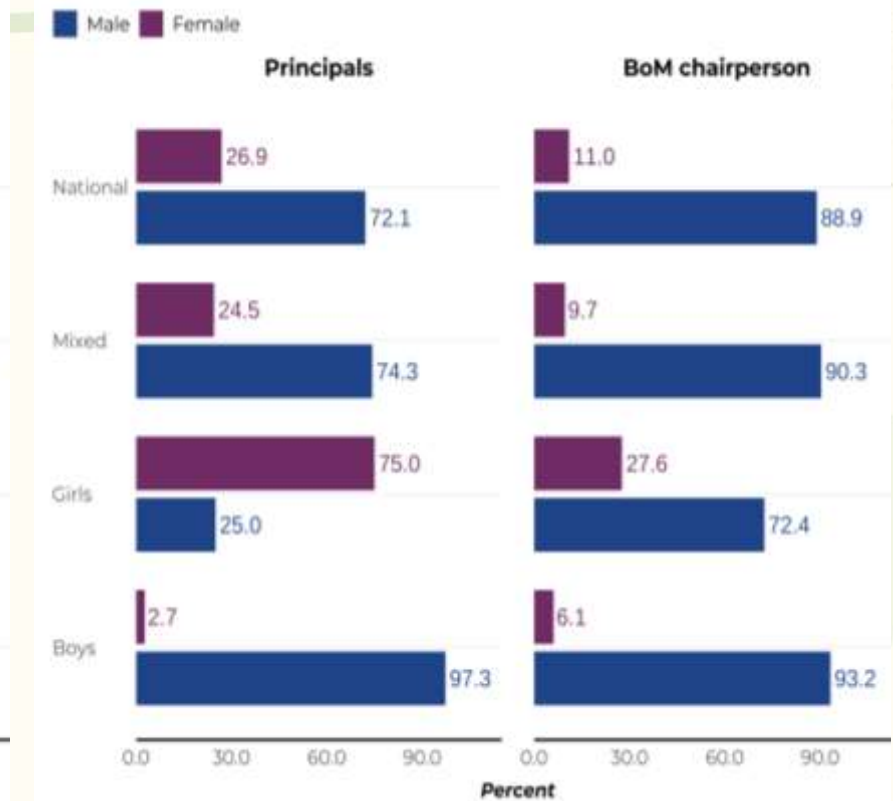


Fig 18: Non-sponsored schools

Generally, boy senior schools have higher average numbers of STEM teachers than girl and mixed senior schools

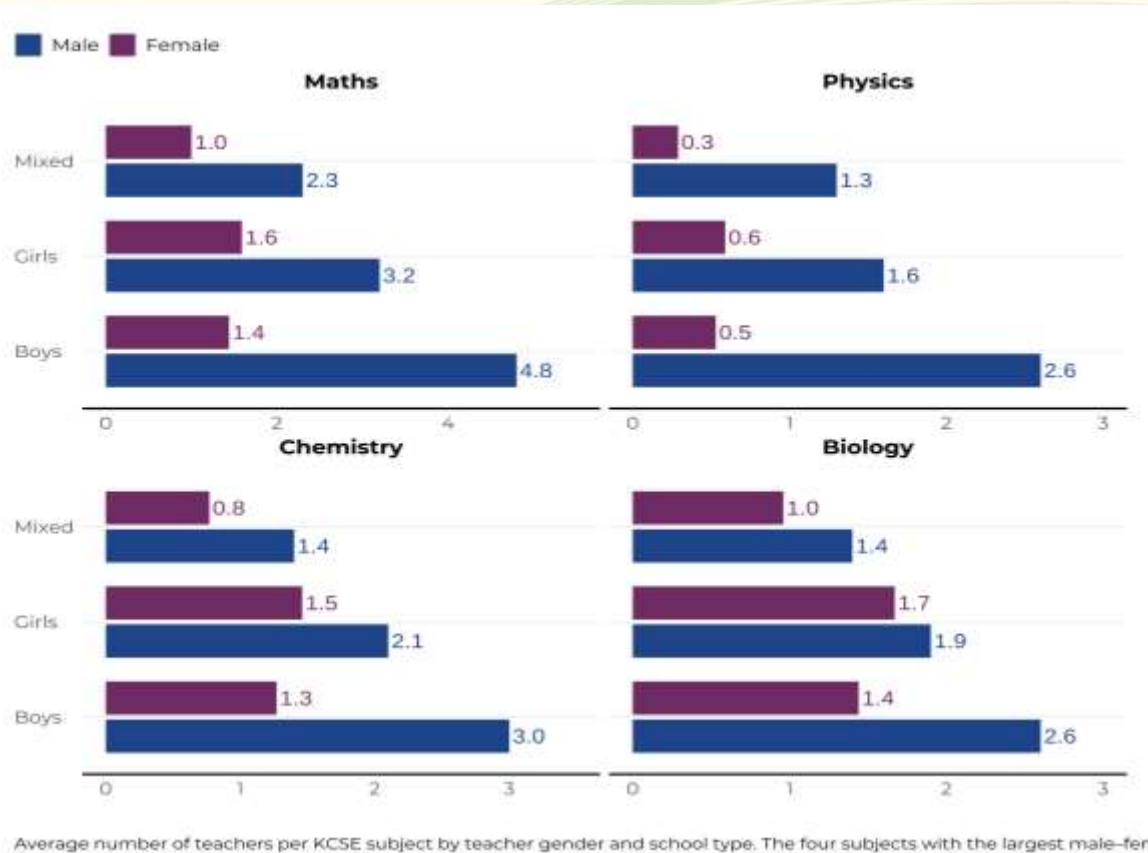
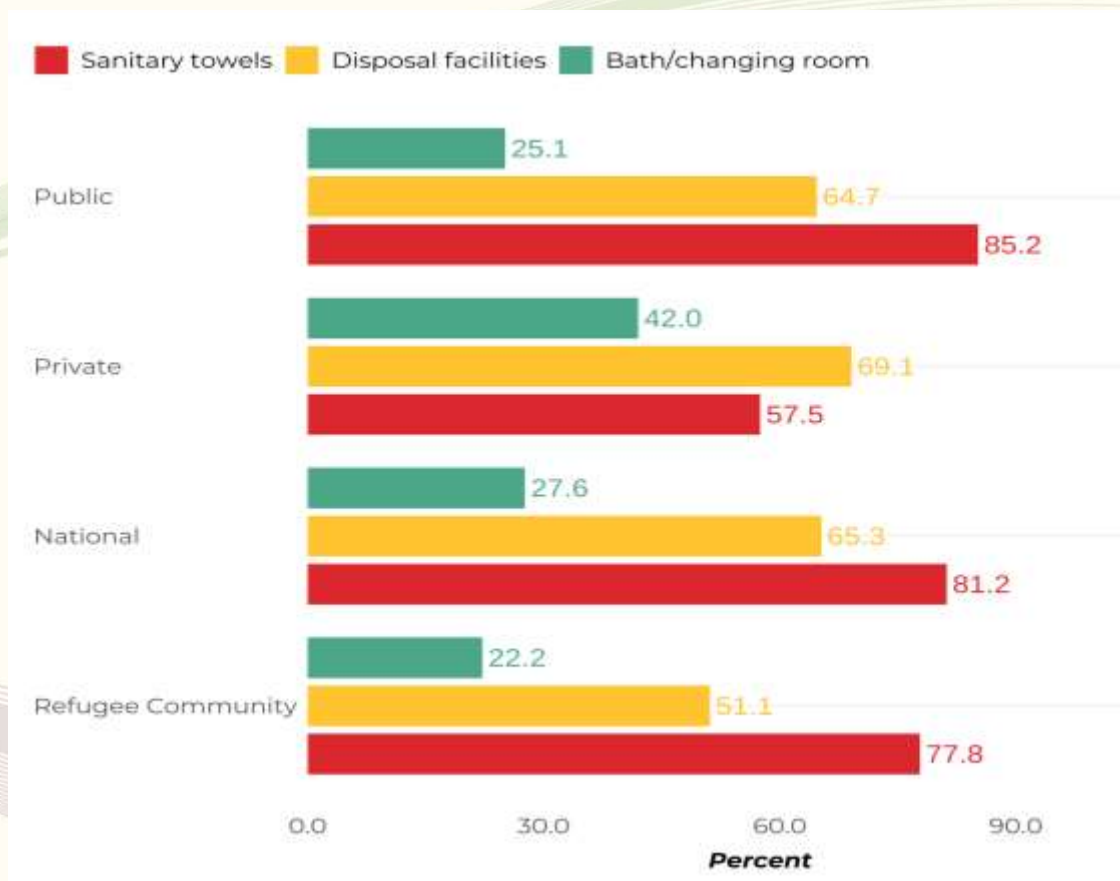


Fig 19: Average number of teachers per KCSE examined STEM subject, by senior school gender

- STEM subjects are dominated by male teachers
- Boys enjoy comparatively stronger support in STEM pathways

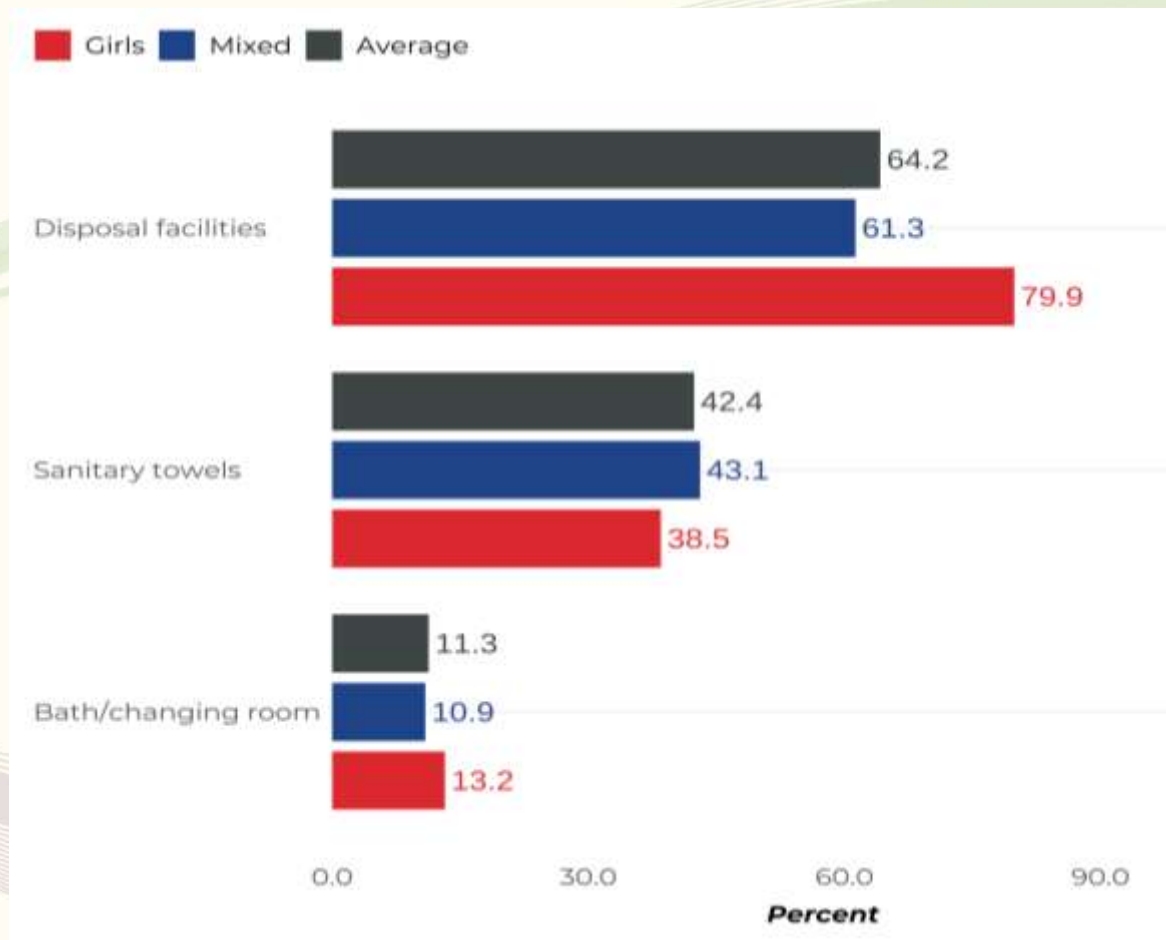
Primary schools provide sanitary towels but girls lack changing rooms



- Limited access to basic hygiene facilities may compromise girls' comfort, dignity, attendance, and overall participation in learning as they progress through school

Fig 20: Primary schools provide sanitary towels but girls lack changing rooms

Few senior schools provide menstrual hygiene facilities/services



... Girl schools are more likely than mixed schools to provide bath/changing rooms and disposal facilities, while mixed schools are more likely to provide sanitary towels

Fig 21: Few senior schools provide menstrual hygiene facilities/services

Across all school types, genders and locations more learners share one toilet than recommended

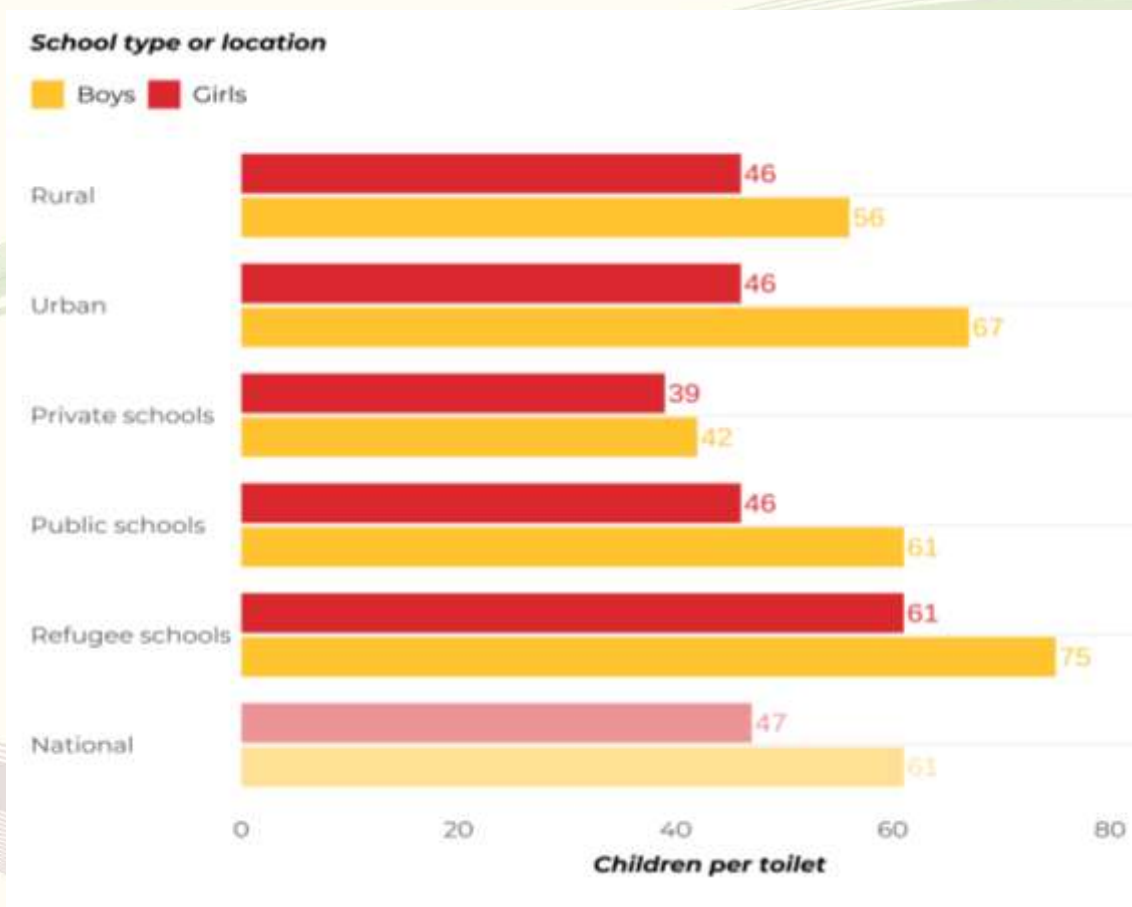


Fig 22: Number of primary school learners using one toilet, by gender, school type and location

- MOE and WHO recommended ratios are ; 30 boys per toilet and 25 girls per toilet
- Inadequate school toilets compromises hygiene, health, dignity, learning continuity

Rift Valley and North Eastern regions have the highest number of learners per toilet

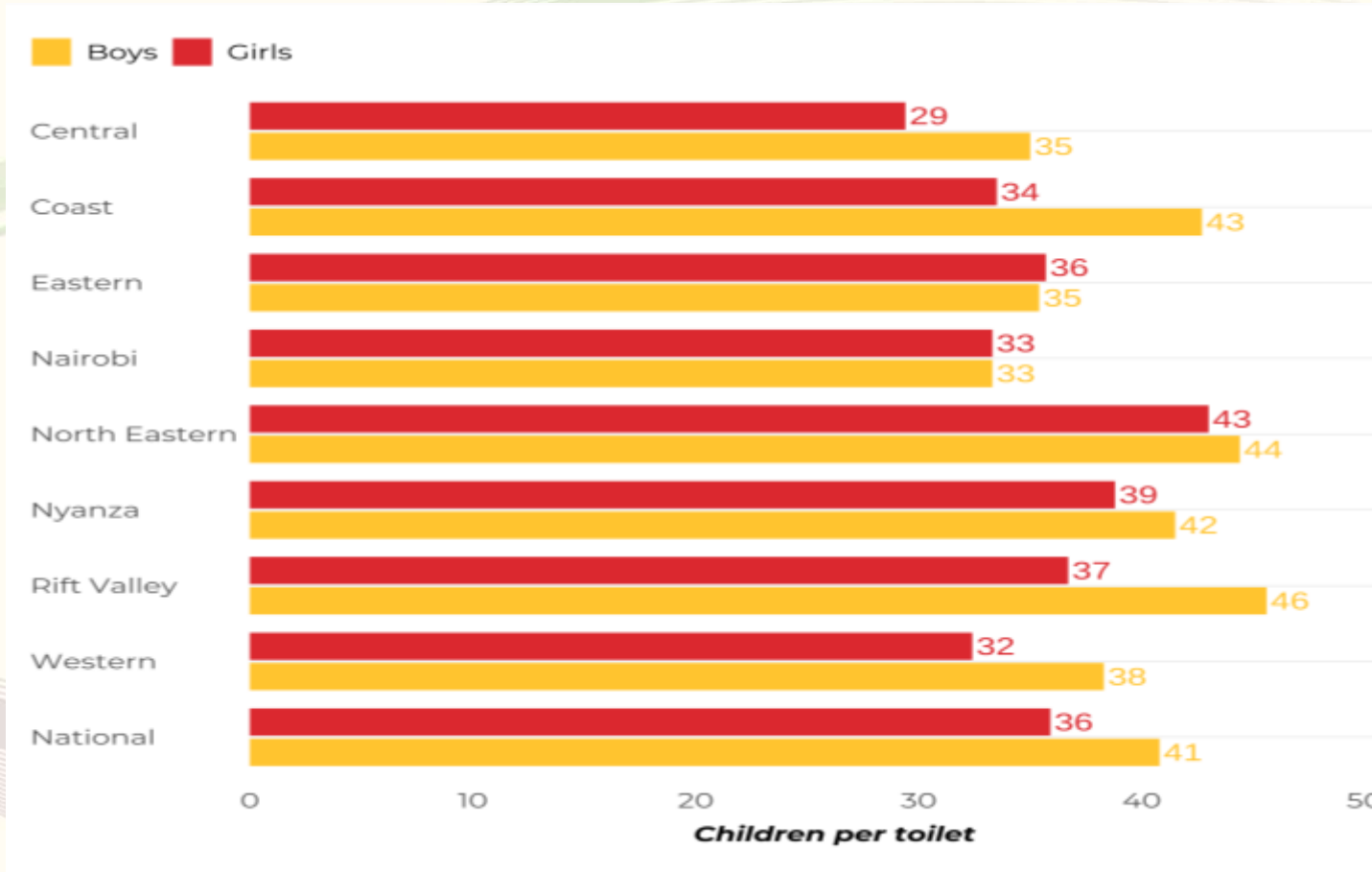
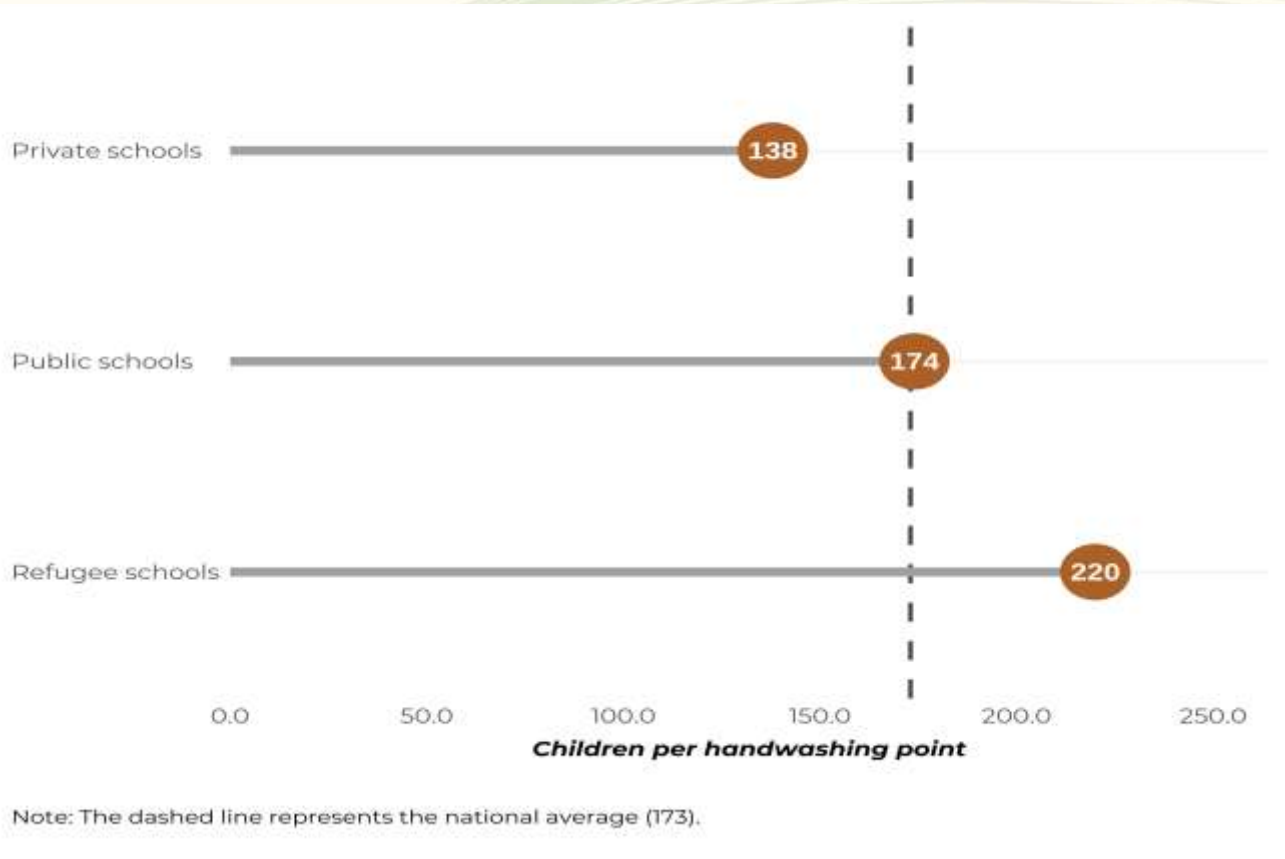


Fig 24: Number of senior school learners using one toilet by gender and region

Private schools have fewer learners sharing a handwashing point than public and refugee community schools



- National average is 173

Education
Justice
for All!

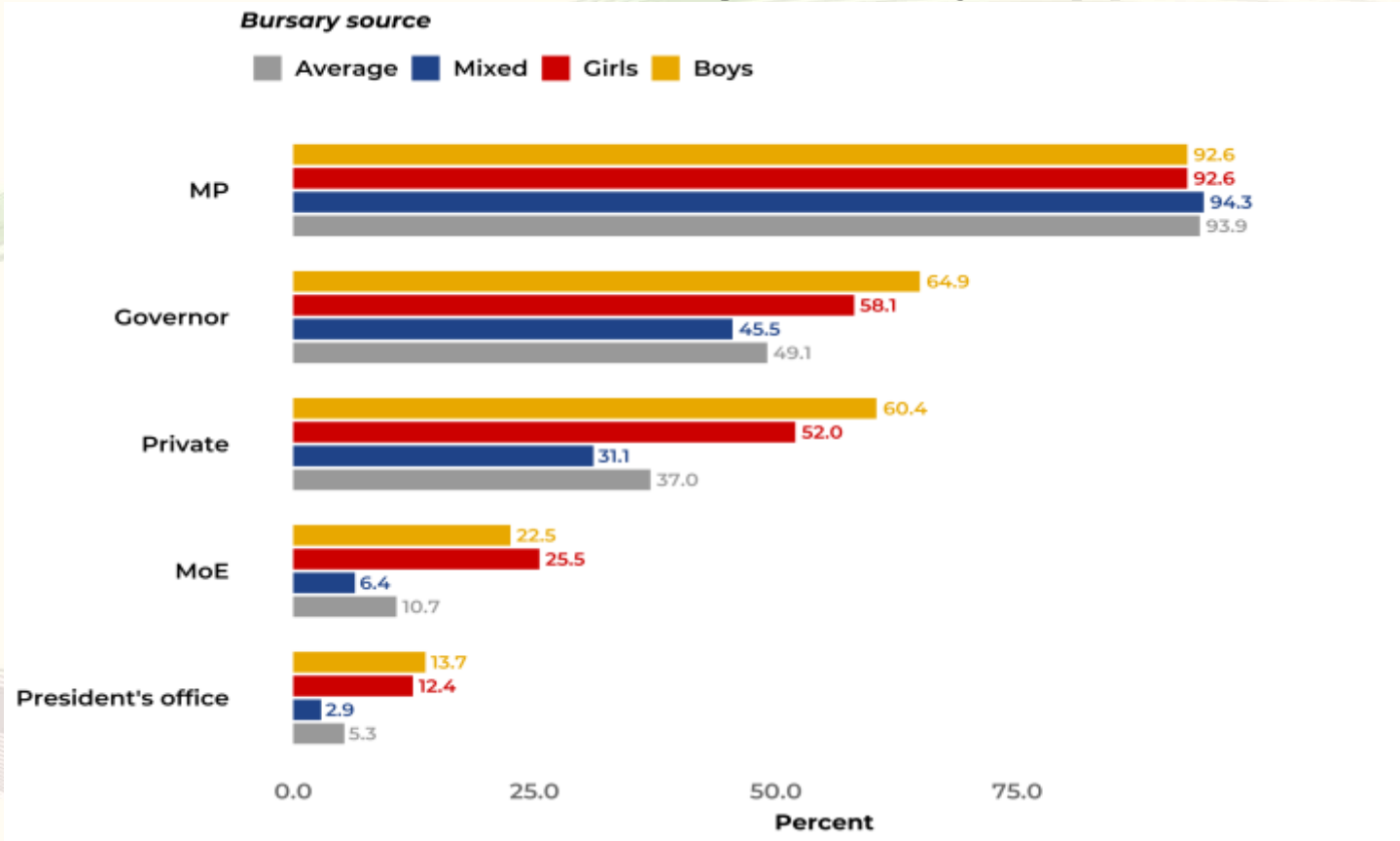
Fig 25: Number of primary school learners using one handwashing point, by school type

A higher percentage of Boy senior schools possess most of the essential ICT resources

ICT resource	School gender			Average
	Boys	Girls	Mixed	
TV	97.6	86.0	60.4	67.5
Radio	54.8	49.6	21.1	28.4
LCD projector	85.3	76.1	47.3	55.0
Mobile phone	63.1	66.8	36.7	43.5
VCD	26.9	31.1	14.5	18.0
Tablets	10.7	11.0	8.1	8.7
Teacher digital devices	41.5	48.1	28.5	32.5
Operational computer lab	66.0	58.6	23.1	32.2

Table 3: Senior school possession of ICT resources by school gender

Across different bursary sources, more Boy Senior schools than girl and mixed schools have learners receiving bursary support



.....except for the MOE, which favors girl schools.

Fig 26: Percentage of senior schools with learners who received bursaries, by school gender and bursary source

An out-of-school girl is over 12 times as likely as her in-school counterpart to fall victim to teenage pregnancy.

Child's age (years)	In-school	Out-of-school	Total
Age 13	0.6	2.4	0.7
Age 14	0.6	3.9	0.7
Age 15	1.2	6.4	1.5
Age 16	1.1	22.2	2.5
Age 17	2.3	14.9	4.0
Average	1.0	12.2	1.5

Table 4: Teenage pregnancy rates for in-school and out-of-school girls in Kenya

Nationally, 51.2% of the teenage girls who become pregnant while in school return to school after child birth

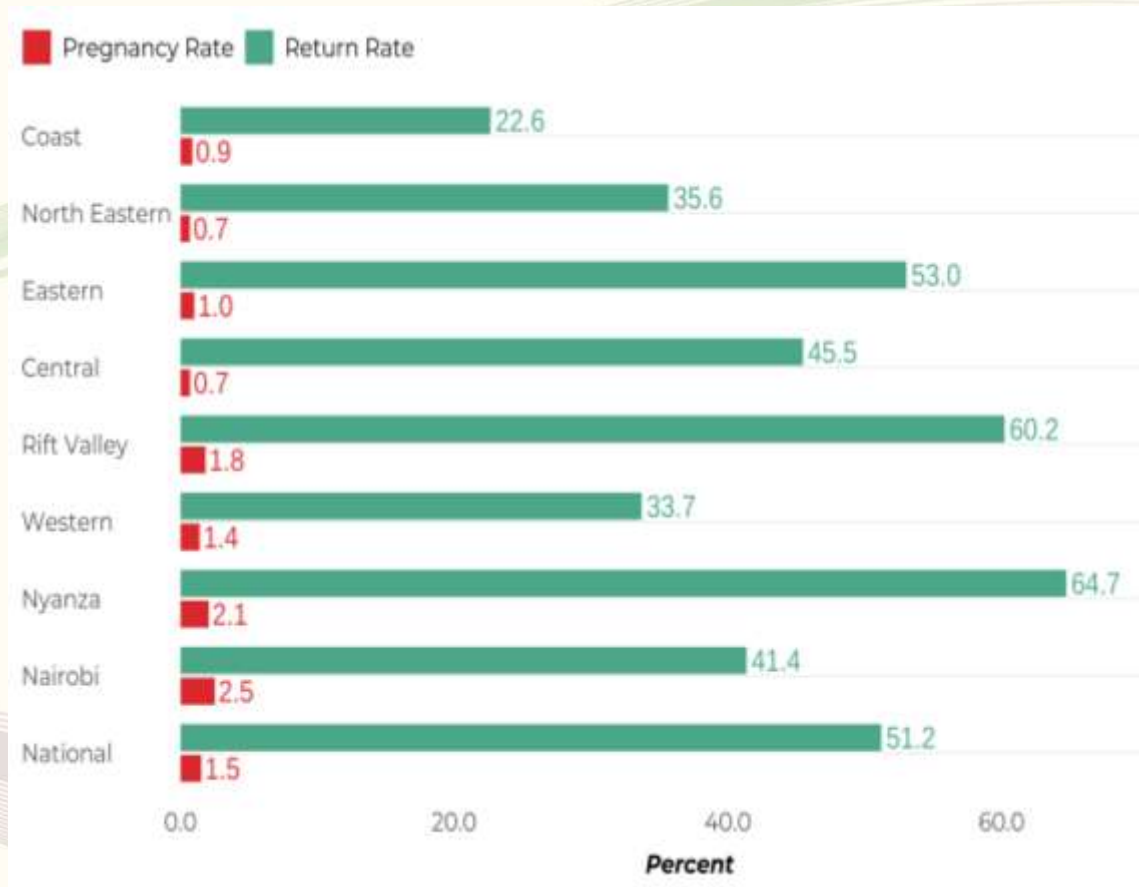


Fig 28: Reported cases of teenage pregnancy and school return rate, by region

- 1.5% teenage girls were reported pregnant in the year preceding the study-nationally.
- Just half of the girls returned to school.



Majority of the learners affected by teenage pregnancy are in Junior School

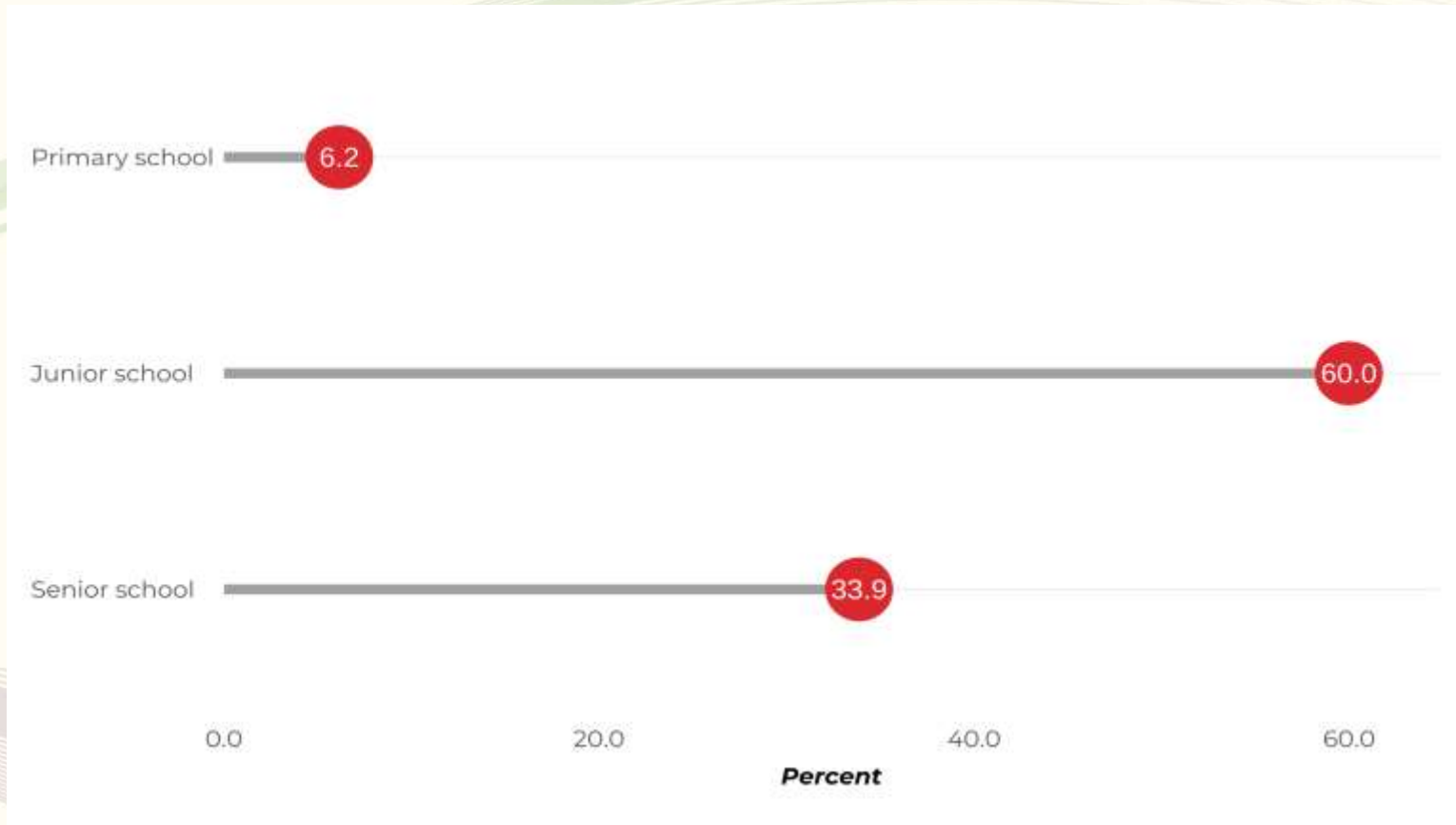


Fig 29: Percentage distribution of pregnant learners, by school level

Rift Valley region has the highest rate of pregnancy while central region has the highest return to school rates

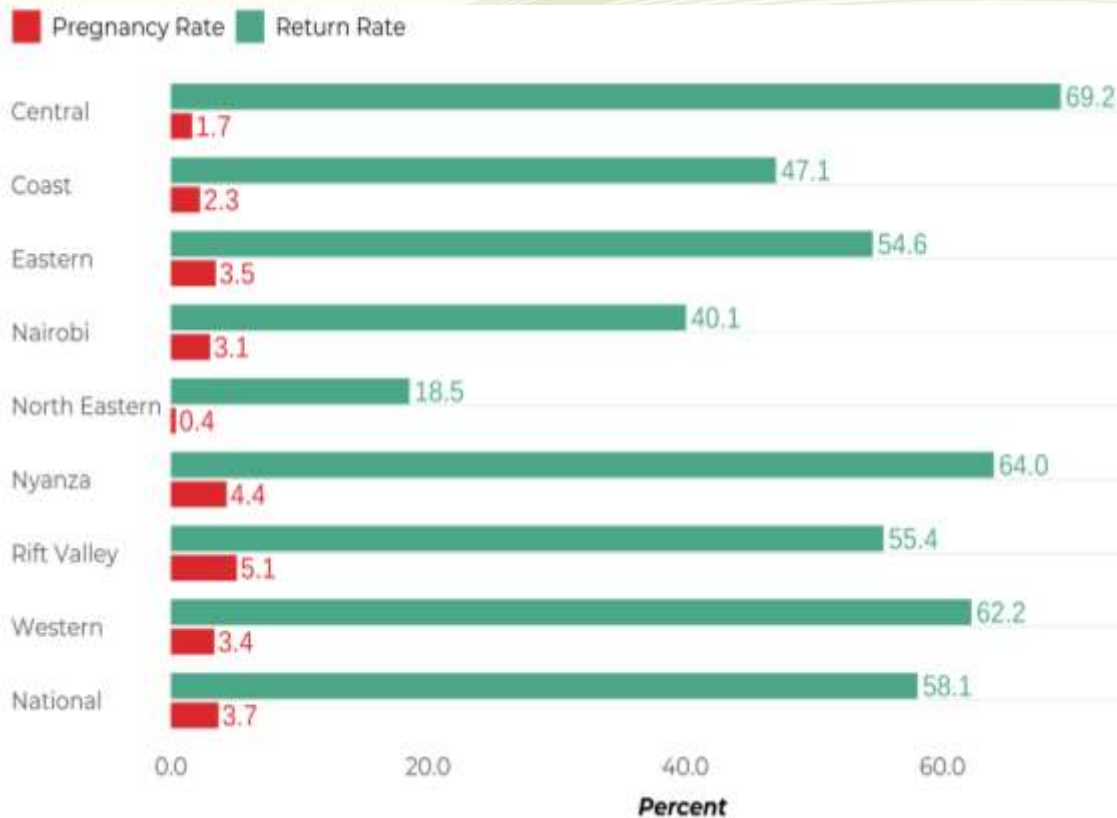
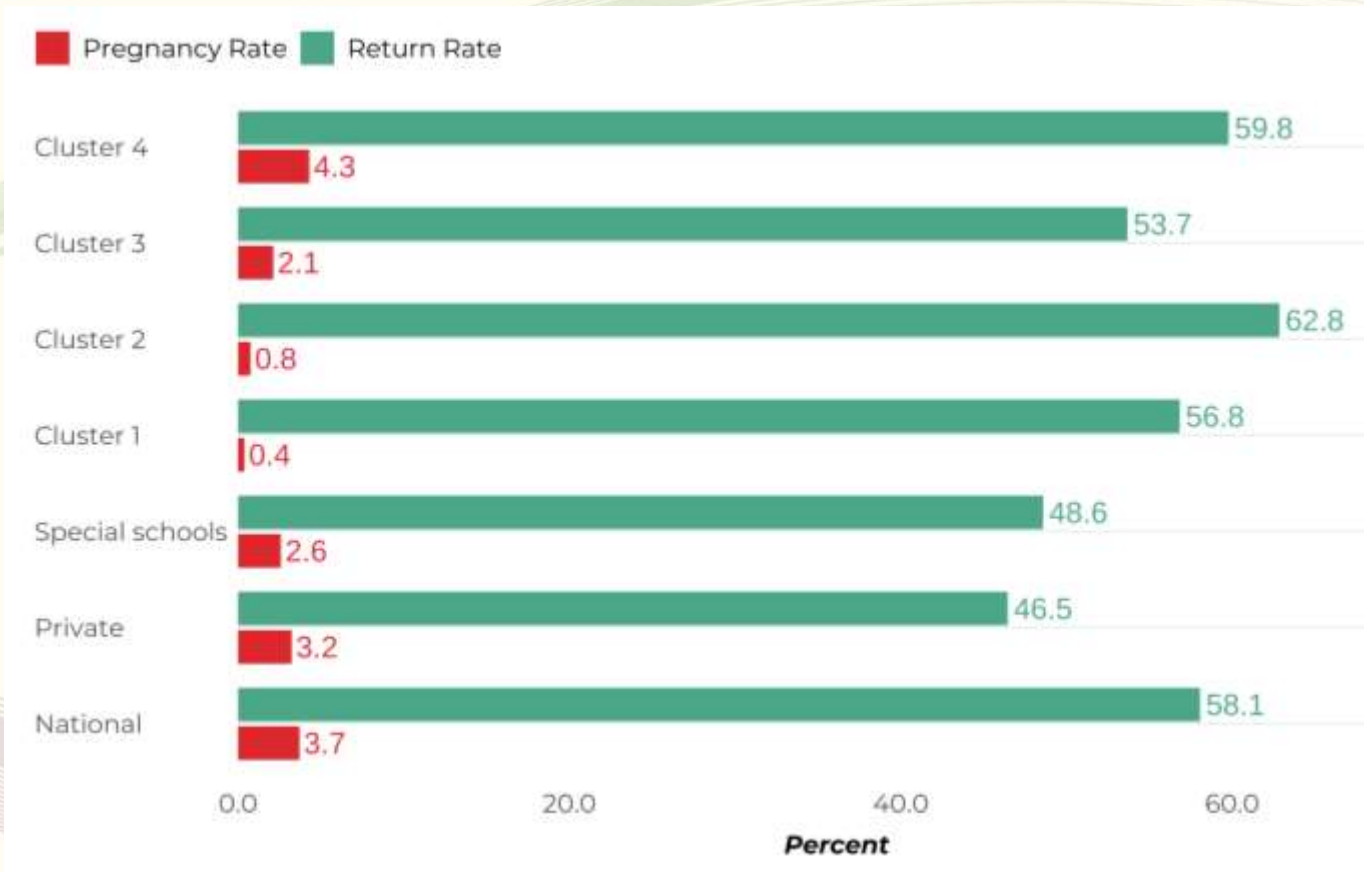


Fig 31: Reported pregnancy rates among senior school learners and school return rates, by region

The national

- pregnancy rate in senior schools is higher than that reported at the household level (3.7%)
- and return to school rate after child birth is also higher (58.1%)

Teenage pregnancy prevalence is highest among girls in cluster 4 schools



- A girl in a cluster 4 school is 10 times as likely to fall victim to teenage pregnancy than her counterpart in a cluster 1 school.

Fig 32: Teenage pregnancy and senior school return rates by school category

Stigma is still the main obstacle to many victims of teenage pregnancy returning to school

Challenge	Percentage
She has to fend for the baby/Overwhelmed by parental responsibilities	29.6
Stigma	45.2
Lack of support by parents to take her back to school	15.2
Nearby schools not willing to admit her	1.1
Parents unwilling to let her return to school	5.1
Lack of a caregiver for the baby	13.6
Teenage mother wants to nurse her baby	18.4
Other	7.6

Table 5: Why victims of teenage pregnancy struggle with returning to school

Lack of parental support is the biggest challenge most senior schools' management face in trying to keep victims of teenage pregnancy in school

Challenge	School category (%)						Average (%)
	Cluster 4	Cluster 3	Cluster 2	Cluster 1	Special schools	Private	
Unsupportive parents	40.0	28.4	27.1	23.3	15.2	31.6	36.9
Unsupportive community	6.6	7.8	2.9	1.7	0.0	11.4	6.8
Stigma	27.6	39.7	35.6	58.8	36.5	34.2	30.3
Negative attitude	8.6	9.5	2.9	3.3	31.6	5.3	8.6
Other	17.2	14.7	31.6	13.0	16.7	17.5	17.5

Table 6: Challenges faced by senior school management in supporting teenage pregnancy victims to remain in school, by school category

Stigma is the biggest challenge for principals of girl schools while lack of parental support is the biggest challenge for principals of mixed schools

Challenge	School gender (%)		Average (%)
	Girls	Mixed	
Unsupportive parents	30.1	38.2	36.9
Unsupportive community	3.1	7.5	6.8
Stigma	39.1	28.6	30.3
Negative attitude	6.5	8.9	8.6
Other	21.2	16.8	17.5

Table 7: Challenges faced by senior school management in supporting teenage pregnancy victims to remain in school, by school gender

Counselling is the most preferred mode of support to victims of teenage pregnancy returning to school in both girls & mixed schools

Measure	School gender (%)		National (%)
	Girls	Mixed	
Counselling	55.3	54.2	54.4
Remedial classes	0.7	0.8	0.8
Admit them back to school	32.4	31.3	31.5
Provide time to attend to the baby	3.2	6.5	5.9
Other	8.4	7.2	7.4

Table 8: Measures instituted by senior schools to support victims of teenage pregnancy's learning continuity by school gender

Senior boy schools recorded a higher number of KCSE candidates than girl and mixed senior schools

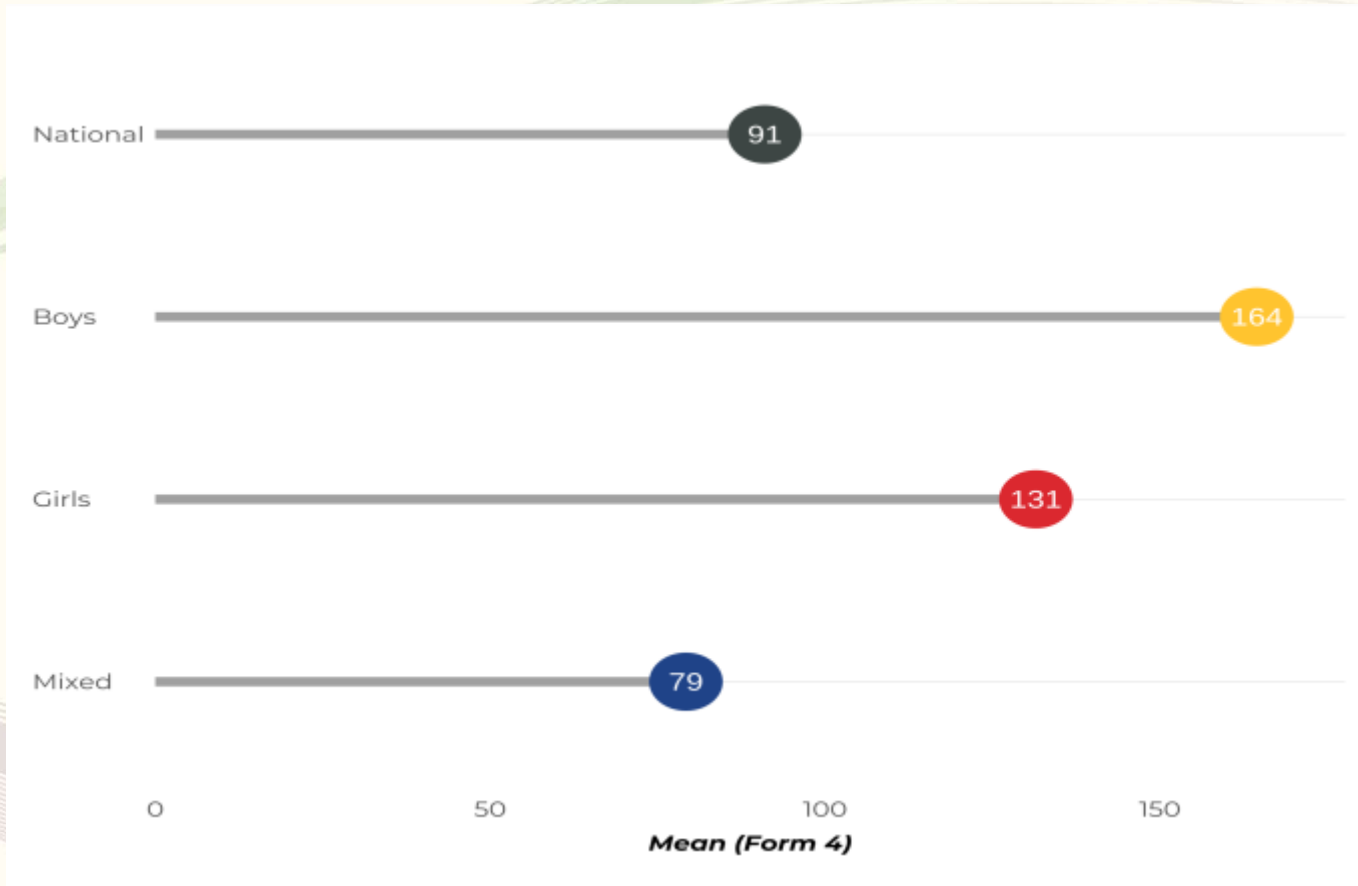
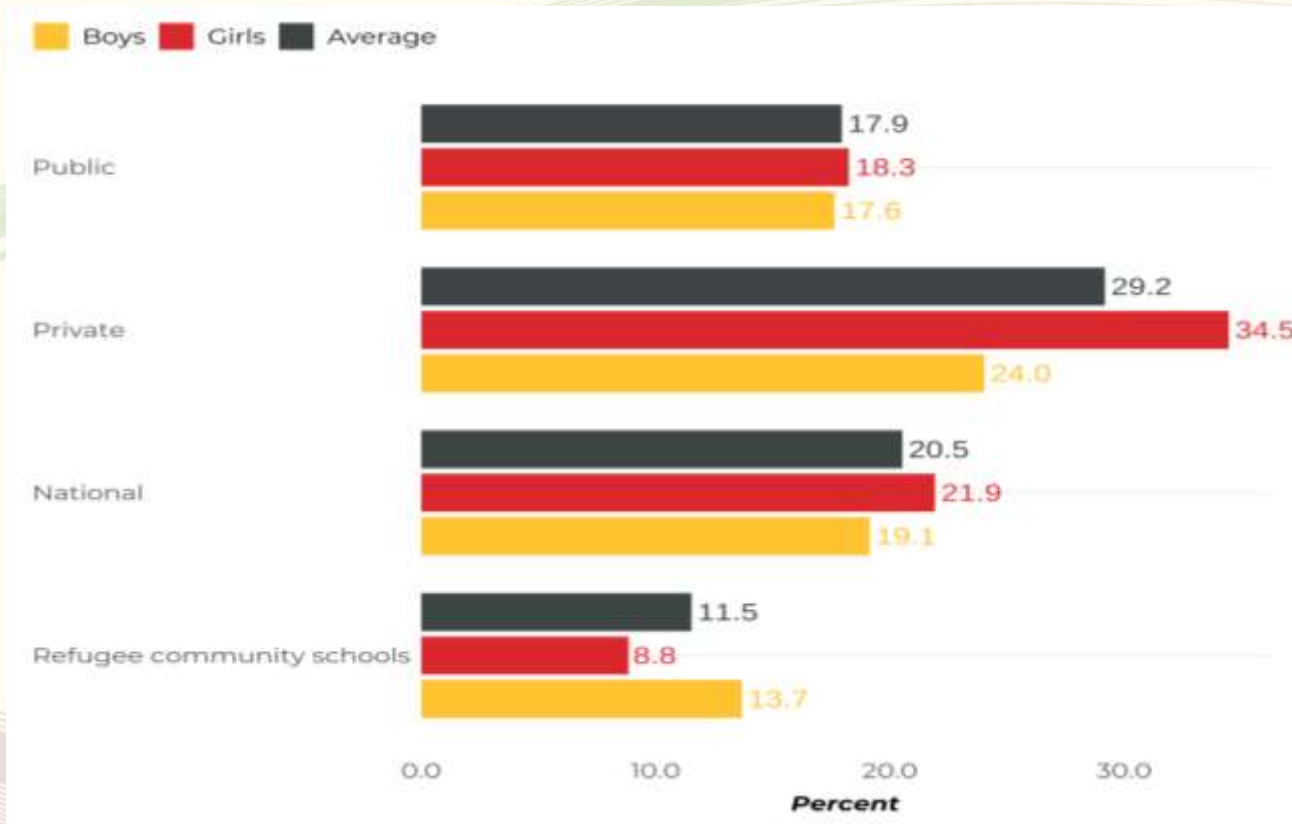


Fig 27: Average number of 2024 KCSE candidates, by school gender

LEARNING OUTCOMES



Grade 4 girls generally outperform their male counterparts in Foundational literacy and numeracy



.....in a Grade 3 appropriate English story reading for comprehension and solving a Grade 3 Numeracy problem

- Boys perform better than girls in refugee schools

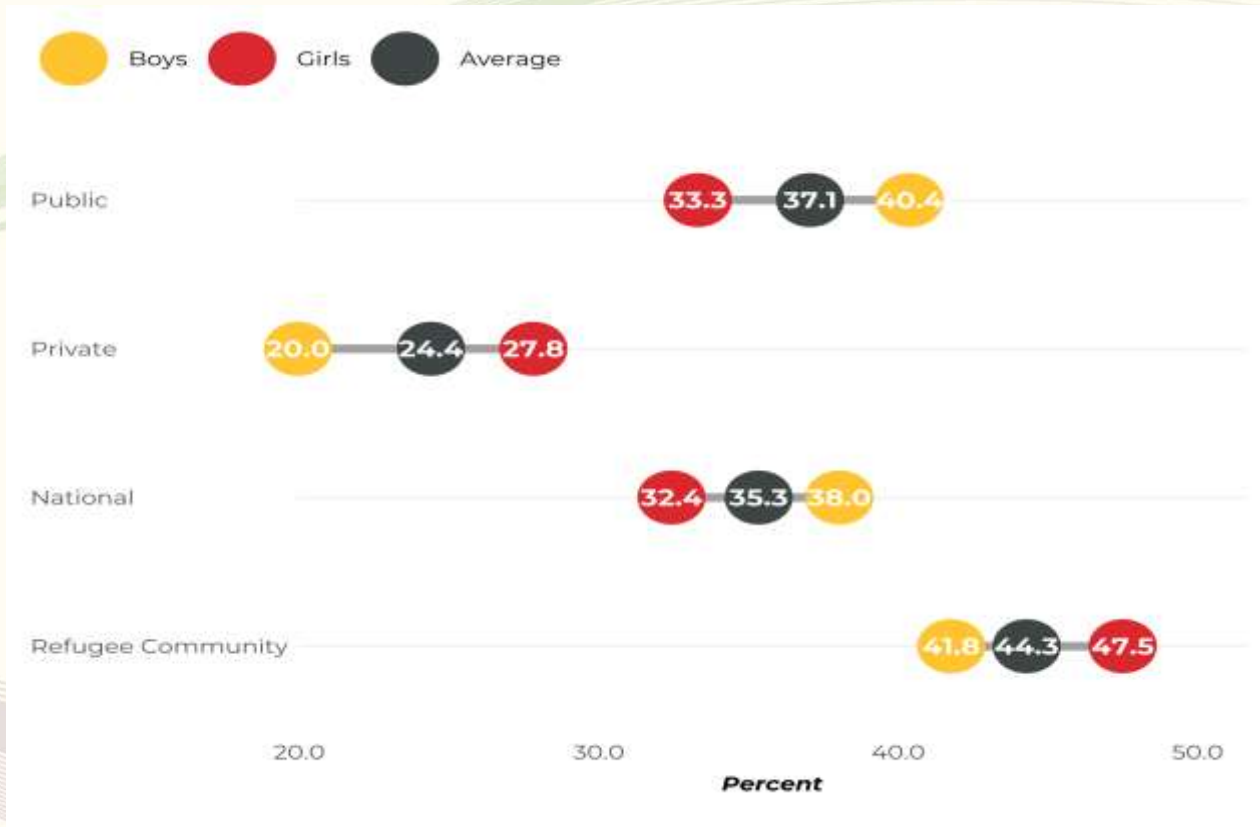
Fig 31: Gender-disaggregated analysis of Grade 4 learners' ability to both solve a Grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem and read for comprehension a Grade 3 appropriate English story by type of school attended school

Grade 4 girls outperform their male counterparts in across geographies in English and Mathematics proficiency



Fig 35: Gender-disaggregated analysis of Grade 4 learners' ability to both solve a Grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem and read for comprehension a Grade 3 appropriate English story by location of residence

More Grade 6 boys than girls are unable to read for comprehension a Grade 3 appropriate English story



- For private and refugee school learners the gender gap is reversed

Fig 36: Gender-disaggregated analysis of Grade 6 learners' ability to read for comprehension a Grade 3 appropriate English story, by type of school attended

Across geographies, more Grade 6 boys than girls are unable to read for comprehension a Grade 3 appropriate English story

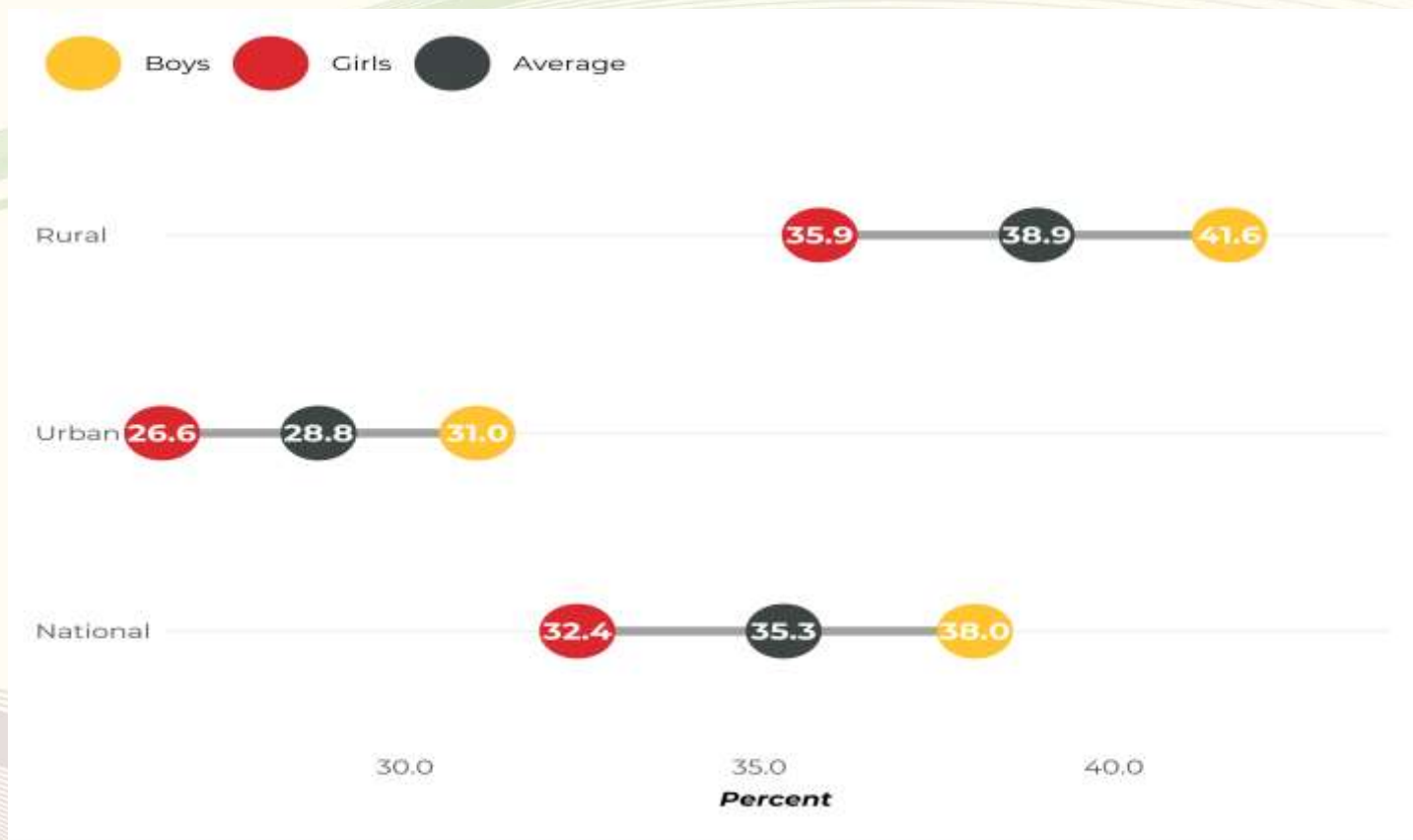


Fig 37: Gender-disaggregated analysis of Grade 6 learners' ability to read for comprehension a Grade 3 appropriate English story, by location of residence

INEQUALITIES AND THEIR GENDER-RELEVANT MARKERS



Regression results of child-level learning outcomes on household factors

- A girl's odds of achieving better learning outcomes in **numeracy** and **English** literacy are **28% and 25%** respectively higher than a boy's odds.
- A child whose mother has a university degree or higher has more than double the odds of achieving **better learning outcomes in numeracy** and **English** literacy than his/her counterpart whose mother has at most primary education.

THANK YOU!

