THE JSE REPORT

Status of Junior School Education (JSE) Report

Facts and figures for just education transformation in Kenya and beyond!

1st Status of Junior School Education Report | 2026

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Foreword

It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Usawa Agenda, to present this inaugural **Status of Junior School Education (JSE) Report 2026**. This report provides an important national evidence base on the implementation of, and learners' experiences in, Junior School (Grades 7–9), drawing on data from the 2025 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA).

Junior School is not a footnote in Kenya's Competency-Based Education reform; it is one of the most consequential transitions our children will make. It is where the foundations laid in Grades 1 to 6 are meant to be tested, deepened, and built upon, and where learners begin to discover their talents and chart the pathways that will shape their futures. Getting this transition right is not optional. It is the difference between a generation of confident, competent young Kenyans and one that is quietly left behind.

The findings present a mixed picture. While access to Junior School is high, with 96 in every 100 children aged 12–17 in school, and enrolment in Grades 7–9 is close to gender parity, significant inequalities persist in affordability, school resources, teacher deployment, and foundational learning outcomes. Most concerning is the fact that many learners progress through Junior School without the foundational literacy and numeracy competencies needed to support their learning at this stage. Substantial disparities by gender, location, school type, region, and vulnerability also persist.

At Usawa Agenda, we believe that evidence must do more than describe the state of education; it must help catalyse action. We hope this report will support policymakers, parents, education sector leaders, teachers, development partners, communities, civil society organisations, private sector actors,

and other stakeholders to identify where the greatest challenges lie and strengthen the policies and investments needed to ensure that every learner, regardless of circumstance, has a just opportunity to learn and thrive.

I commend the Usawa Agenda team, government officials, partners, school leaders, teachers, communities, volunteers, parents, and, most importantly, the thousands of children who participated in the assessment. Their collective contribution has made this evidence possible. We remain committed to working with all stakeholders to translate evidence into meaningful improvements in Kenya's education system.

Dr. Henry Kilonzo

Chairman, Board of Directors
Usawa Agenda

Acknowledgement

The completion of this report brings to fruition the dedicated efforts of a wide range of people including Usawa Agenda staff, volunteers, consultants and many different partners. We wish to acknowledge everyone who offered his or her time, expertise and resources to support the successful implementation of the 2025 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA) in Kenya. Our sincere apologies in advance for not being able to mention everyone by name. The following, however, stand out in their unique contributions to the 2025 assessment:

- **The Usawa Agenda founders**, Dr. Martin Ogola and Dr. Everline Wanzala, we cannot thank you enough for your steadfast support and stewardship.
- **The Usawa Agenda board members:** Dr. Henry Kilonzo (Chairman), Prof. Gituro Wainaina, Mr. Naman Owuor, Ms. Florence Syevuo, Dr. Wilson Wasike, Mrs. Esther Wairimu and Ms. Ashina Mtsumi, thank you for great leadership and support.
- **The Usawa Agenda Secretariat:** Emmanuel Manyasa, Zachary Kwena, Celina Mutie, Carol Onsomu, Stephene Maende, Robin Toskin, Wilson Shiroya, Boaz Ochi, Cycus Barasa, Brenda Onyango, Esther Gad, Lucky Nzioki, David Lutta, Catherine Peter, Claudia Lagat, Faith Atieno, Fred Ogachi, Edwin Kibet, Whitney Candice, and Vivian Akinyi, thank you for unrivalled dedication.
- **The Usawa Agenda Consultants:** Peter Courtney, William Odidi and Dr James Ciera, thank you for your invaluable contributions.
- **The FLANA 2025 Test Panellists:** Kennedy Kyeva, Vincent Oketch, Grace Mwathe and Fredrick Maoga, we cannot thank you enough.
- **The 50 County Partners** who gave their time to work with village elders and volunteers to ensure that we reached all the selected schools, villages and households, thank you.
- **The 54 trainers** who committed their time and expertise to enhance the village coordinators and volunteers' capacities to conduct the survey in the most credible way possible, we thank you.
- **The over 2,220 volunteers and village coordinators** who walked from house to house and visited the many primary schools. You are Usawa Agenda's true heroes and heroines and your contribution to promoting education justice in Kenya is invaluable.
- **The over 2,058 chiefs, assistant chiefs and village elders** who patiently walked us around their villages, introducing us to the residents. Without you, we would have been unwelcome strangers.
- **The over 41,156 household heads** who opened their doors to us, disrupted their families' routines to respond to our many questions and

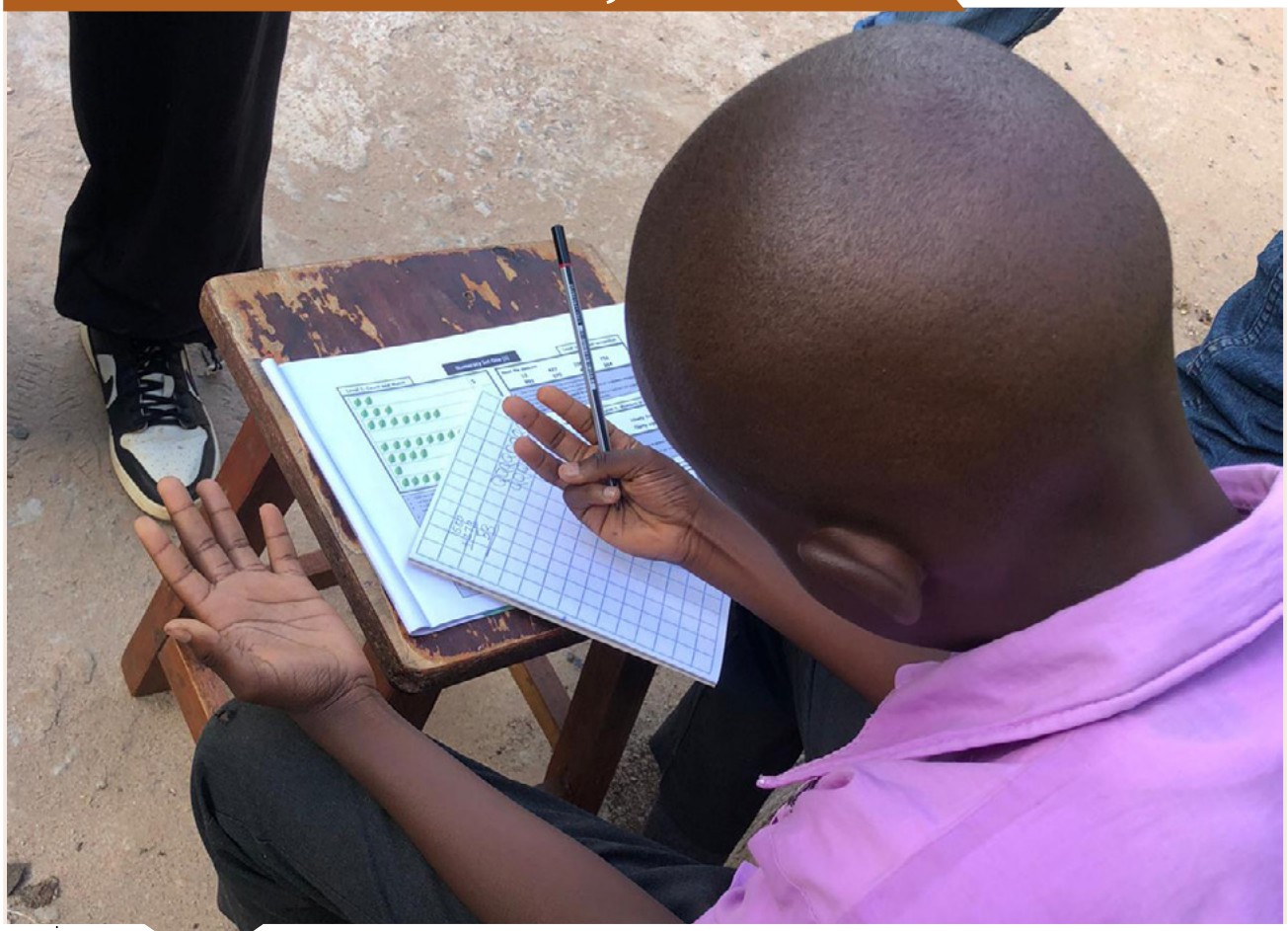
permitted us to assess their children, we cannot thank you enough.

- **The over 49,835 children** who diligently took the tests even when it was difficult. We hope and will continue working to ensure that your struggles lead to transformation of education systems in ways that guarantee you and future generations just access to quality education.
- **The over 1,500 Junior School heads** who welcomed us into your schools to conduct the surveys, took time to answer many questions and walked us around your schools. You are the heroes of transforming education in Kenya.
- **The over 1,038,000 learners** in the schools we visited who endured our prying presence as we observed every corner of your schools and the happenings there, thank you.
- **Our partners:** RELI Kenya, PAL Network, National Parents Association (NPA) and International Rescue Committee (IRC); our partnership truly heralds the future of education research, and policy and practice influencing.
- **We sincerely thank the leadership of the Ministry of Education** both at the national and county levels for the continued and unwavering support to Usawa Agenda activities. We thank the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) for their support in developing and reviewing the tests. We appreciate support in sampling and access to Enumeration Area maps offered by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS).
- **We thank the Department of Family Health, Division of Adolescents and School Health at the Ministry of Health**, represented by Dr. Beatrice Ochieng for support in developing the school health components of the survey tools.
- **We thank the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)** for support in timely authorisation of the survey.
- **We are indebted to the 47 County Commissioners** at whose offices we made our first stops in each of the counties, in some cases requiring security support to proceed with the assessment, and they all came through for us.
- **We thank the Kenya Primary School Heads Association, the Teachers' Service Commission and the teachers' unions**, particularly KNUT for their role in producing and sharing this evidence.
- **Our development partners**, who continue to entrust us with their scarce resources for which many different needs, countries, regions and organisations compete, we would not be here without you. We are humbled by the trust you have in us and are committed to delivering full value for every cent we are entrusted with.

It takes a massive, dedicated team to pull off the FLANA survey from which this ground-breaking **Status of Junior School Education (JSE) Report** is drawn. To all those whose names we couldn't list here, accept our heartfelt gratitude and know that literally, we could not have done it without you.

We continue to be inspired by all who unwaveringly work every day to secure the future of our children and that of the country, and indeed the world, through education. We are inspired even more by those of you involved in small efforts in the villages, in hidden corners of the world and behind closed doors in isolated offices to get all children to school, especially girls and children with disabilities. You may not realise it, but **you are changing the world in profound ways!**

Executive Summary



This is Usawa Agenda's first report dedicated specifically to Junior School in Kenya, drawing on the 2025 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA). Covering Grades 7 to 9 under Competency-Based Education, Junior School serves as the bridge between primary and senior school and is the point at which learners are expected to draw on the foundational literacy and numeracy skills acquired in the early grades as they shape their future senior school pathways. Based on a nationally representative sample of 41,156 households, 1,527 schools, and 49,835 assessed children across all 47 counties and the Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei refugee communities, this report examines five interrelated dimensions of Junior School implementation: participation and attendance, school readiness and affordability, school leadership and staffing, foundational learning outcomes, and equity.

Access to Junior School is high but not universal, and exclusion is concentrated among specific groups. Nationally, 96 in 100 children aged 12–17 years are enrolled in school, with girls marginally more likely to be enrolled than boys. Exclusion is higher among children with disabilities, 17.4% of whom are out of school, rising above 30% among children with autism, mental disabilities, and speech impairments. Exclusion is also higher among children in arid and marginalised counties such as Garissa, where 22.8% are out of school, nearly six times the national average. Children in refugee communities are also more likely to be out of school than the national average. Once enrolled, Junior School attendance is close to gender parity, although absenteeism is markedly higher in refugee community schools (14.1%) than in public and private schools.

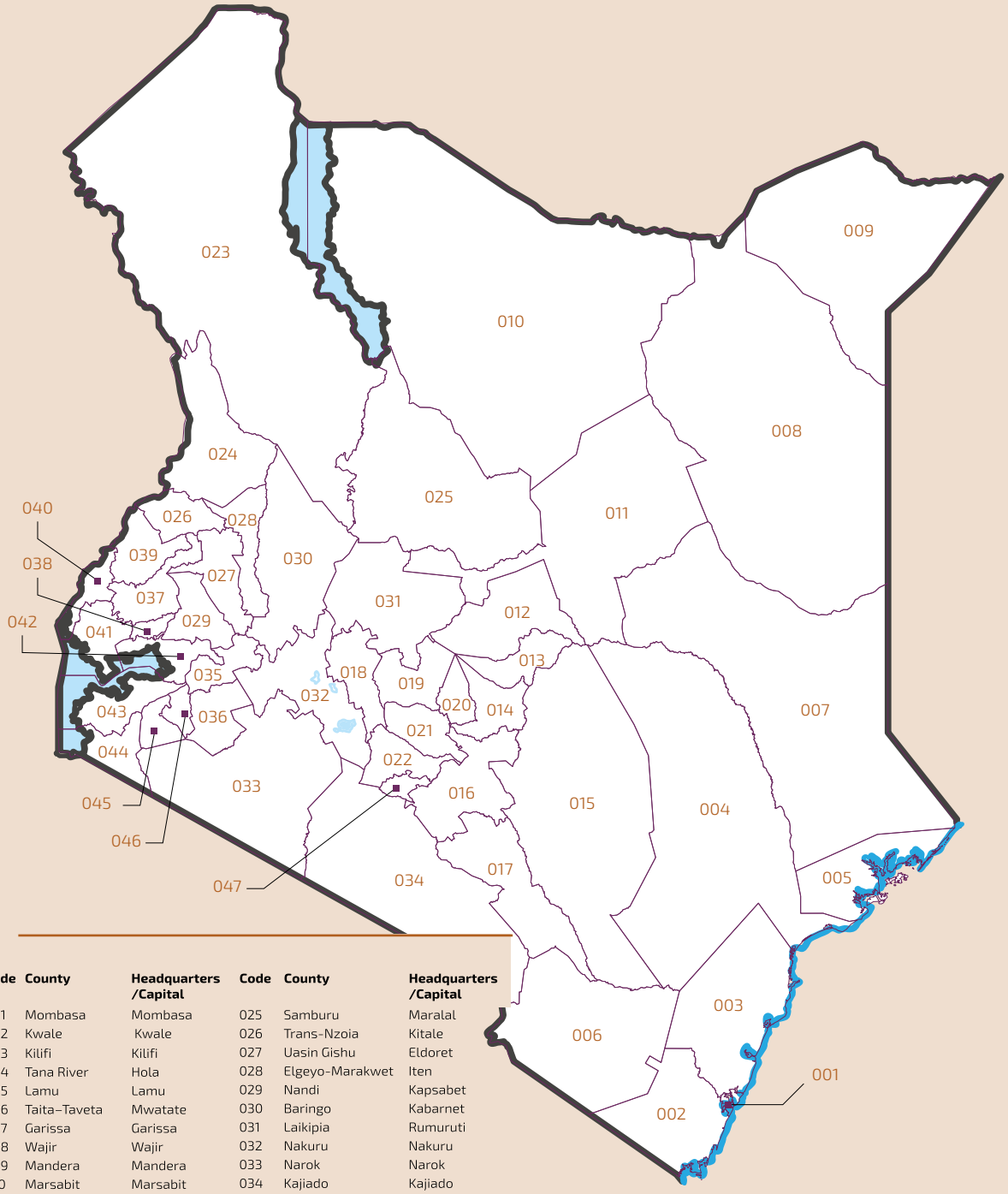
School readiness lags behind enrolment. The estimated cost of joining Junior School ranges from KSh 8,186 in rural public schools to approximately KSh 22,000 in private schools, with school fees representing the largest single cost component. Infrastructure and resource gaps are substantial: only

27.5% of Junior Schools have a functional science laboratory, while 27% have a library. Private and urban schools are better equipped than public and rural schools, with refugee community schools the most disadvantaged of all. Leadership also remains unevenly distributed: men account for 66.1% of Junior School heads nationally, rising to more than 87% in North Eastern, even though the teaching workforce itself is close to gender parity.

Most importantly, a substantial share of learners have progressed through Junior School without mastering the foundational literacy and numeracy competencies that the curriculum assumes they have already acquired. Nationally, 27.3% of Grade 7 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story, while 32.6% cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem. More than 4 in 10 do not demonstrate combined literacy and numeracy proficiency. These gaps persist, although at a reduced scale, into Grade 9, where 29.3% of learners still lack combined proficiency. In both grades, boys, rural learners, and public-school learners consistently underperform their peers, and the gap between the best- and worst-performing regions persists. In Grade 7, for example, 63.9% of learners in North Eastern lack combined foundational literacy and numeracy proficiency, compared with 36.1% in Western. Regression analysis identifies mothers' education, household wealth, and pre-primary enrolment as the strongest predictors of foundational competence, while larger family size, being older for one's grade, and speaking a language other than English at home are associated with lower odds of proficiency.

The evidence shows that the government policies have succeeded in bringing learners into classrooms but have not yet succeeded in ensuring that they learn or that the schools they enter are equally equipped to teach them. Closing these gaps will require simultaneous and coordinated attention to affordability, school infrastructure and learning materials, equitable teacher and school leadership deployment, and targeted support for the regions, schools, and learner groups—particularly rural learners, public-school learners, learners in refugee communities, and disadvantaged boys and girls—who continue to be left behind.

Map of Kenya



Code	County	Headquarters /Capital	Code	County	Headquarters /Capital
001	Mombasa	Mombasa	025	Samburu	Maralal
002	Kwale	Kwale	026	Trans-Nzoia	Kitale
003	Kilifi	Kilifi	027	Uasin Gishu	Eldoret
004	Tana River	Hola	028	Elgeyo-Marakwet	Iten
005	Lamu	Lamu	029	Nandi	Kapsabet
006	Taita–Taveta	Mwatate	030	Baringo	Kabarnet
007	Garissa	Garissa	031	Laikipia	Rumuruti
008	Wajir	Wajir	032	Nakuru	Nakuru
009	Mandera	Mandera	033	Narok	Narok
010	Marsabit	Marsabit	034	Kajiado	Kajiado
011	Isiolo	Isiolo	035	Kericho	Kericho
012	Meru	Meru	036	Bomet	Bomet
013	Tharaka-Nithi	Kathwana	037	Kakamega	Kakamega
014	Embu	Embu	038	Vihiga	Mbale
015	Kitui	Kitui l o	039	Bungoma	Bungoma
016	Machakos	Machakos	040	Busia	Busia
017	Makueni	Wote	041	Siaya	Siaya
018	Nyandarua	Ol Ka u	042	Kisumu	Kisumu
019	Nyeri	Nyeri	043	Homa Bay	Homa Bay
020	Kirinyaga	Kerugoya	044	Migori	Migori
021	Murang'a	Murang'a	045	Kisii	Kisii
022	Kiambu	Kiambu	046	Nyamira	Nyamira
023	Turkana	Lodwar	047	Nairobi	Nairobi
024	West Pokot	Kapenguria			

Introduction

Junior School is a critical stage in Kenya's basic education system. Covering Grades 7 to 9, it provides the bridge between primary education and senior school under **Competency-Based Education (CBE).** At this stage, learners are expected to deepen the foundational competencies acquired in the early grades, engage with a broader range of learning areas, and begin exploring their interests, talents, and future educational pathways.

The successful implementation of Junior School depends on more than simply placing learners in classrooms. Schools require appropriately trained and deployed teachers, adequate classrooms, functional science laboratories, libraries, learning materials, sanitation facilities, effective leadership, and predictable financing. Families must also be able to meet the costs associated with transition and participation. Where these conditions are inadequate, existing inequalities related to gender, place of residence, disability status, school type, region, and refugee status may be reinforced.

The transition to Junior School has therefore raised important questions about school readiness, equity, and learning. These include whether all eligible children are enrolled and attend regularly; whether public, private, rural, urban, and refugee community schools have comparable resources; whether teachers and school leaders are equitably distributed; and whether learners enter and progress through Junior School with the foundational literacy and numeracy competencies required to engage effectively with the curriculum.

This is Usawa Agenda's first report dedicated specifically to Junior School education in Kenya. It establishes an initial evidence baseline on the implementation of Junior School and the experiences of learners in Grades 7 to 9. Drawing on evidence generated through the 2025 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA), the report brings together household-, learner-, and school-level data on participation, school readiness, leadership, staffing, equity, and foundational learning. While the main FLANA report provides a broad assessment of access, learning, and school conditions across basic education, this report presents a focused national picture of Junior School.

a) Objectives and scope

The report examines five interrelated dimensions of Junior School implementation:

1. **School participation and attendance:** enrolment among children aged 12-17 years, out-of-school patterns, learner absenteeism and gender differences in participation.
2. **School readiness and affordability:** the cost of joining Junior School, classroom availability, infrastructure, learning resources, financial disbursement and resource sharing with primary-school sections.
3. **Leadership and staffing:** the gender and experience of Junior School heads, teacher numbers, deployment, and the distribution of teachers by gender and learning pathways.
4. **Foundational learning outcomes:** the ability of Grade 7 learners to read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story, solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem and demonstrate a combination of the two competencies.
5. **Equity and disparities:** differences by gender, rural-urban location, public and private school type, county, region, disability and refugee community status.

KEY FACTS ON JUNIOR SCHOOL EDUCATION IN KENYA

The findings show that access to Junior School is high, but participation, school readiness and learning remain unequal. The most important findings are summarised below.

FACT ONE: 96 in 100 children of Junior School age (12-17 years) are enrolled in school.

FACT TWO: 3 in 10 junior schools have functional science laboratories.

FACT THREE: 3 in 10 Grade 7 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.

FACT FOUR: 1 in 5 Grade 9 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.

FACT FIVE: Learners in public junior schools underperform their private school counterparts in both literacy and numeracy across the grades.

b) School Participation

Most children aged 12–17 years are enrolled in school, with a slightly higher percentage of girls than boys enrolled. The evidence presented in this section highlights this trend and identifies the groups and locations where stronger measures are needed to support school entry, retention, and regular participation among children in this age cohort.

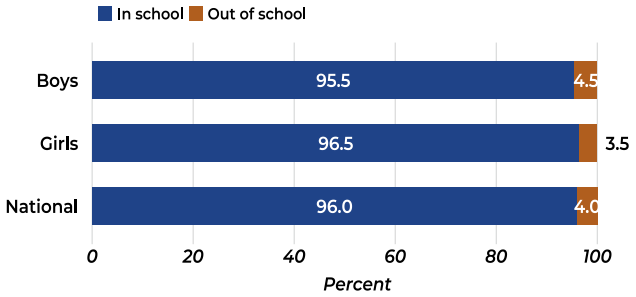


Figure 1: Enrolment is high among children aged 12-17 years

- 96 in 100 children aged 12 to 17 years are enrolled in school.
- Girls are slightly more likely to be enrolled in school than boys, with enrolment rates of 96.5% and 95.5%, respectively.
- The gender gap in school enrolment is 1 percentage point in favour of girls.

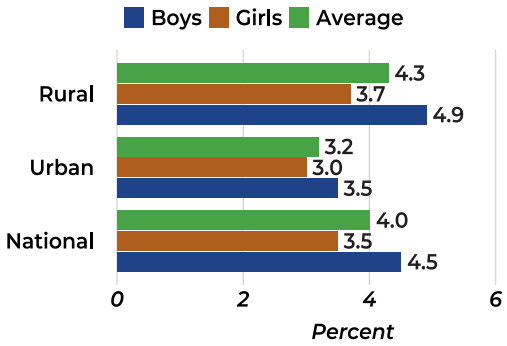


Figure 2: Rural children aged 12-17 years are more likely to be out-of-school than their urban counterparts

- Children aged 12-17 years in rural areas are 1.1% more likely out-of-school than those in urban areas.
- Boys are more likely to be out-of-school than girls in both rural and urban areas.
- Boys in rural areas are 1.4% more likely to be out-of-school than their counterparts in urban areas compared to girls in rural areas who are 0.7% more likely to be out-of-school than their counterparts in urban areas.

Table 1: Most out-of-school children aged 12-17 years are in the Arid and Semi-Arid Counties

County	Out-of-school rate (Percentage)		
	Boys	Girls	Average
Nyeri	1.6	0.8	1.2
Nyandarua	1.7	1	1.3
Makueni	1.9	0.7	1.4
Murang'a	2	1.2	1.7
Nandi	1.7	1.8	1.7
Narok	1.4	2	1.7
Nyamira	1.3	2.1	1.7
Kiambu	2.2	1.5	1.8
Kilifi	1.6	2.3	2
Bomet	2.7	1.5	2.1
Uasin Gishu	1.7	2.7	2.2
Busia	2.7	2	2.3
Nakuru	2.4	2.3	2.3
Elgeyo Marakwet	2.6	2.2	2.4
Migori	3.3	2.2	2.7
Kirinyaga	2.6	3	2.8
Machakos	2.4	3.3	2.8
Taita Taveta	1.7	3.8	2.8
Vihiga	3.7	1.9	2.8
Tharaka Nithi	3.9	1.7	2.9
Kericho	3.6	2.3	3
Kisii	1.9	4.3	3
Kisumu	3.1	2.9	3
Siaya	3.6	2.3	3
Homa Bay	2.6	3.5	3.1
Bungoma	5.1	1.6	3.5
Kakamega	4.4	3.2	3.7
Mombasa	3.9	3.5	3.7
Lamu	4.6	3	3.8
Kwale	4.8	3.2	4
Nairobi	4.3	4	4.1
Embu	2.5	6.8	4.4
Kitui	4.4	4.3	4.4
Laikipia	6.3	2.4	4.6
Trans Nzoia	5.7	4.7	5.2
Wajir	6.1	4.1	5.3
Meru	9.4	3.1	6.4
Kajiado	8.5	4.9	6.8
Isiolo	6.6	8.1	7.4
Baringo	8.8	6.2	7.6
Tana River	9.6	8.4	9
West Pokot	11.3	12.6	11.9
Turkana	20.7	7.8	14.5
Mandera	14	18.9	16.2
Marsabit	20.4	11.5	16.2
Samburu	21	10.7	16.2
Garissa	24.8	19.9	22.8
National average	**4.5**	**3.5**	**4.0**
Refugee community average	**6.0**	**5.6**	**5.8**

- Counties in arid regions have out-of-school rates way above the national average of 4.0%.
- Garissa County has the highest number of out-of-school children, 22.8%, nearly six times the national average.
- Nyeri has the lowest overall rate at 1.2%, with boys (1.6%) and girls (0.8%) both well below national averages.
- In most counties, boys are more likely to be out-of-school, but a few others, girls are more likely to be out-of-school than boys (e.g., Isiolo: girls — 8.1% vs boys— 6.6%; Embu: girls —6.8% vs boys— 2.5%). This suggests localised gendered barriers.
- On average, more children aged 12-17 years in the refugee community are out of school (5.8%) than the national average (4.0%).

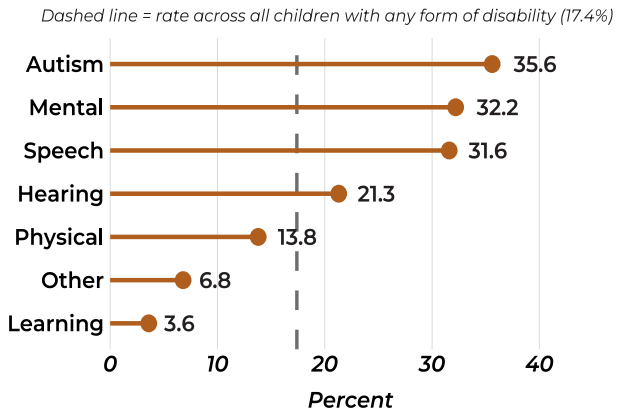


Figure 3: Out-of-school status of children with disabilities aged 12-17 years

- Children with autism are the most likely to be out-of-school (35.6%), followed by those with mental (32.2%) and speech (31.6%) disabilities.
- Approximately 17 in 100 children with any form of disability are out-of-school compared to the national average of 4 in 100 children aged 12-17 years.
- Children with learning disabilities are the least likely to be out-of-school (3.6%).

b) Enrolment and Attendance

Junior School enrolment is close to gender parity nationally. This balance is less evident in refugee community schools, while absenteeism at this level also varies considerably across school types and regions. This section therefore highlights information from the schools on who is enrolled and who attends school regularly.

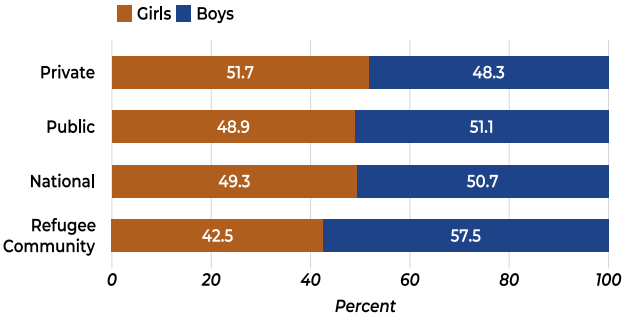


Figure 4: National gender parity contrasts with a wider enrolment gap in refugee community schools

- Gender distribution is nearly balanced nationally, but there are more boys accounting for 50.7% of learners and girls 49.3% unlike in the case of primary where more girls than boys are enrolled.
- Girls slightly outnumber boys in private junior schools, while boys slightly outnumber girls in public schools.
- The widest gender gap in favour of boys is in refugee community schools, where boys account for 57.5% of learners compared to 42.5% girls.

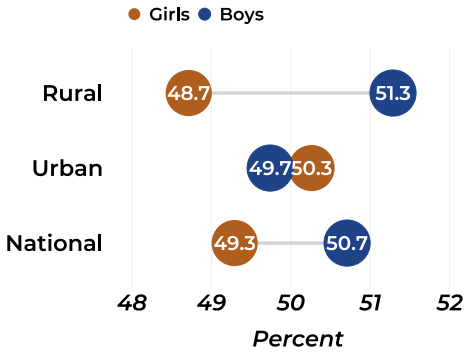


Figure 5: Junior school enrolment is near gender parity in urban areas

- Rural schools have generally more boys than girls, while urban schools have almost equal proportions of girls and boys, but with slightly more girls enrolled than boys.
- A junior school-aged girl in an urban area is more likely to be enrolled in school than her counterpart in a rural area.
- A junior school-aged boy in a rural area is more likely to be enrolled in school than his counterpart in an urban area.

Table 2: Absenteeism is highest in refugee community schools

Region	Girls' absenteeism rate (%)	Boys' absenteeism rate (%)	Overall absenteeism rate (%)
Central	4.1	4.1	4.1
Nairobi	5.1	3.5	4.3
Nyanza	4.8	4.9	4.9
Coast	5.1	5.2	5.1
Rift Valley	4.9	5.4	5.2
North Eastern	6.1	5.1	5.6
Eastern	6	5.8	5.9
Western	5.9	6.4	6.2
National	**5.1**	**5.2**	**5.2**
Refugee community	12.7	14.1	13.4

- Nationally, 5.2% of Junior School learners were absent on the day of the visit, with little difference between boys (5.2%) and girls (5.1%).
- The Western region has the highest absenteeism rate (6.2%) among Junior School learners, while Central region has the lowest rate (4.1%).

- Absenteeism among Junior School learners in refugee communities, at 13.4%, is more than double the national average.

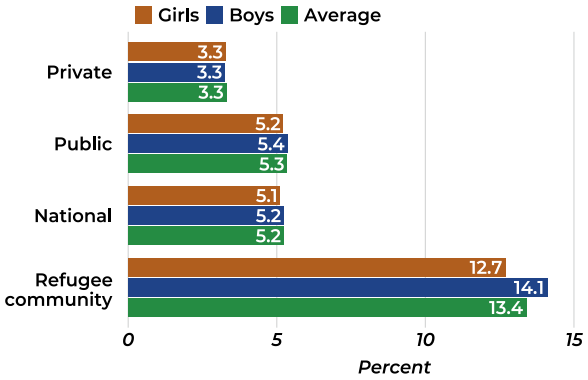


Figure 6: Absenteeism is lowest in private junior schools

- Absenteeism rate is lowest in private junior schools (3.3%) and highest in refugee community schools (13.4%).
- Boys are slightly more likely to be absent from school than girls in public and refugee community schools.
- Absenteeism rate for private schools is the same for boys and girls.

c) School readiness and affordability

The successful transition to Junior School depends on whether families can afford the associated costs and whether schools are adequately prepared to deliver the curriculum. The findings reveal substantial differences in entry costs, classroom capacity, specialised infrastructure, learning materials and financing across school types and locations.

This section highlights these gaps, their implications for the learning opportunities available to learners and potential to reinforce existing inequalities in participation and learning outcomes if not addressed.

Table 3: Joining Junior School costs about twice as much in private schools (Kenya Shillings)

- The estimated cost of joining Junior School is substantially higher in private schools than in public schools.
- Rural private schools have the highest total entry cost, followed by urban private schools.
- Urban public schools have higher entry costs than rural public schools.
- School fees constitute the largest share of the joining cost across all school types and locations.
- The fees and levies charged by different school types across different locations vary greatly from the averages (Standard deviations).

Expense Category	Estimated Public School Joining Cost				Estimated Private School Joining Cost			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
School Fees	3,374	3,167	5,013	5,331	14,592	10,881	13,515	9,804
School Uniform	2,802	1,924	3,674	2,813	4,162	2,878	4,540	3,054
School Meals	1,309	1,530	1,342	1,774	2,185	2,733	2,221	2,578
Other Levies	700	1,391	1,333	2,876	1,285	2,717	1,677	2,883
Total Entry Cost	**8,186**	**4,797**	**11,362**	**7,901**	**22,223**	**14,223**	**21,954**	**14,295**

Table 4: Percentage of schools reporting learning infrastructure and resource availability by location and school type

Indicator	Rural	Urban	Private	Public	Average	Refugee schools
Functional Science lab for Junior School	16.5	45.5	68.8	21.0	27.5	41.9
Has computers dedicated to Junior School	41.5	52.9	79.8	39.0	46.3	27.8
Received/purchased adequate Learning Materials	31.1	39.6	47.9	32.2	34.3	9.3
Received/purchased learning materials but not for all learning areas	36.4	35.9	27.1	37.6	36.2	41.9
Junior School did not receive/purchase adequate learning materials	32.5	24.5	24.9	30.2	29.5	48.8
Junior School received timely financial disbursement	51.1	54.9	.	52.3	52.3	0.0

- Nationally, 28 in 100 junior schools have functional science laboratories, 46 in 100 have computers for learners' use, and 34 in 100 receive adequate learning materials.
- 52 in 100 public junior schools receive timely financial disbursement, with those in urban areas (54.9%) more likely to receive disbursement on time than those in rural areas (51.1%).
- Urban and private junior schools are generally better resourced.
- 69 in 100 and 80 in 100 private junior schools have functional science laboratories and computers for learners' use respectively.
- 21 in 100 and 39 in 100 public junior schools have functional science laboratories and computers for learners' use respectively.
- 46 in 100 and 53 in 100 urban junior schools have functional science laboratories and computers for learners' use respectively.
- 17 in 100 and 42 in 100 rural junior schools have functional science laboratories and computers for learners' use respectively.
- Learning materials are unevenly distributed across locations and school types.
- 9 in 100 refugee community junior schools receive adequate learning materials compared to 32 in 100 public, 48 in 100 private junior schools.

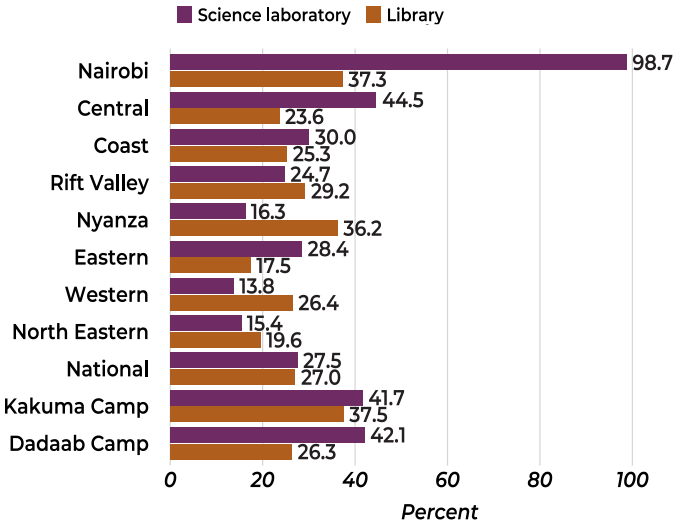


Figure 7: Only Nairobi region has near enough functional science laboratories

- Nationally, only 27.5% of junior schools have functional science laboratories, while 27.0% have libraries.
- Nairobi region has the highest percentage of schools with functional science laboratories (98.7%) and libraries (37.3%), while Western has the lowest percentage of schools with functional science laboratories (13.8%) and Eastern has the lowest percentage of schools with libraries (17.5%).
- The percentages of junior schools in Dadaab and Kakuma camps with functional science laboratories are higher than the national average, while the percentage of Junior Schools in Kakuma with libraries is higher than the national average.

Table 5: Percentage of junior schools with libraries by type and location

School category	Library (%)
Private	43.2
Public	24.5
Rural	22.2
Urban	35.0
National	**27.0**
Refugee community schools	32.6

- Nationally, 27 in 100 junior schools have libraries.
- 32 in 100 refugee community schools have libraries.
- 35 in 100 urban junior schools have libraries compared to 22 in 100 rural junior schools.
- 43 in 100 private junior schools have libraries compared to 25 in 100 public junior schools.

d) School Leadership

Effective school leadership is central to organising teachers, managing resources, and supporting the implementation of the school curriculum. This section highlights the main attributes of school leaders across the country and examines variations in these attributes across regions, locations, and school types.

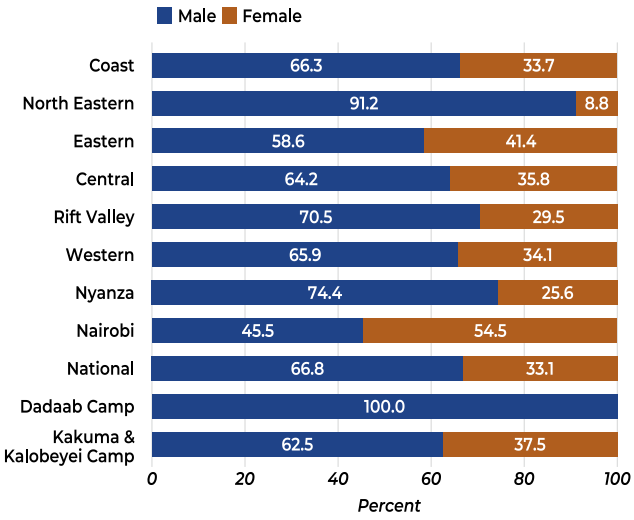


Figure 8: Men dominate Junior School headship in all regions except Nairobi

- Nationally, 7 in 10 Junior School heads are men.
- Nairobi is the only region where women form the majority of Junior School heads (54.5%), while North Eastern has the widest gender gap in favour of men, with 91.2% male and 8.8% female heads.
- Refugee camps also manifest male-domination of Junior School headship, with all Junior School heads in Dadaab and 62.5% in Kakuma and Kalobeyei being men.

Table 6: Most Junior School heads are new to their current institutions

Years of experience	Years served as headteacher at the current school				Total years served as headteacher			
	Private (%)	Public (%)	National (%)	Refugee community schools (%)	Private (%)	Public (%)	National (%)	Refugee community schools (%)
Less than 1 year	5.0	12.8	11.7	20.9	4.1	9.5	8.7	5.0
1-3 years	52.4	50.9	51.1	48.8	30.4	16.7	18.6	18.0
4-5 years	15.2	16.3	16.2	27.9	23.9	18.0	18.8	9.0
6-10 years	14.0	15.1	14.9	2.3	21.3	26.7	25.9	9.0
11+ years	13.3	4.9	6.1	0.0	20.3	29.2	28.0	2.0

- Approximately half of headteachers across all Junior School types have headed their current institutions for 1-3 years.
- Public-school headteachers generally have more leadership experience, with 29.2% having served for over 11 years.
- Refugee community schools have more recently appointed headteachers, with 20.9% serving in their current institutions for less than one year and none exceeding 11 years.

e) Teacher Deployment

Schools require sufficient numbers of teachers with the appropriate subject specialisations as well as an equitable distribution of teachers across schools. This section highlights critical issues related to teacher deployment, shortages, and imbalances that may hinder effective curriculum delivery and learner support.

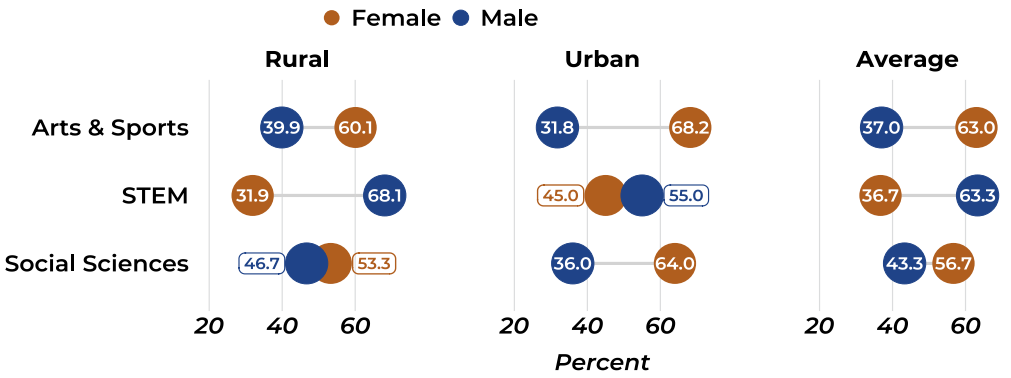


Figure 9: Female teachers dominate in Arts and Sports and Social Sciences, while male teachers dominate in STEM

- Nationally, female teachers dominate the Arts and Sports (63%) and Social Sciences (56.7%) while male teachers dominate STEM (63.3%).
- Urban schools have higher proportions of female teachers than their rural counterparts in all pathway areas— in Arts and Sports (68.2%), in STEM (45%) and Social Sciences (64%).
- In rural schools, the percentage of female STEM teachers (31.9%) is less than a half of their male counterparts (68.1%).
- The gender gap in favour of male STEM teachers is smaller in urban schools.

Table 7: Urban junior schools have more teachers than their rural counterparts

Region	Rural		Urban		Average	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Coast	4	2	7	4	6	4
North Eastern	3	2	6	4	5	3
Eastern	4	2	7	3	5	3
Central	5	2	8	4	6	4
Rift Valley	5	2	7	4	6	3
Western	5	2	6	4	5	3
Nyanza	4	2	7	3	5	3
Nairobi			8	4	8	4
National	**4**	**2**	**7**	**4**	**5**	**3**

- Urban junior schools have more teachers than their rural counterparts, averaging 7 teachers compared with 4 nationally.
- Nairobi schools have the highest average number of teachers (8) while North Eastern schools have the lowest average number of teachers (3).
- Overall, junior schools have an average of 5 teachers.
- Disparities in teacher distribution are wider among urban schools than rural schools across all regions.

Table 8: Teacher numbers vary by school type and region

Region	Public		Private		Average	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Coast	5	2	6	4	6	4
North Eastern	5	1	4	4	5	3
Eastern	7	3	5	3	5	3
Central	8	3	6	4	6	4
Rift Valley	6	3	6	3	6	3
Western	5	3	5	3	5	3
Nyanza	5	4	5	3	5	3
Nairobi	7	3	9	5	8	4
National	**6**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**5**	**3**

- Nationally, public junior schools have slightly more teachers than private schools, averaging 6 teachers compared with 5.
- Nairobi records the highest average number of teachers (8), driven by private schools, which average 9 teachers.
- Central has the highest average among public Junior School teachers (8) while most other regions average 5-6 teachers overall.

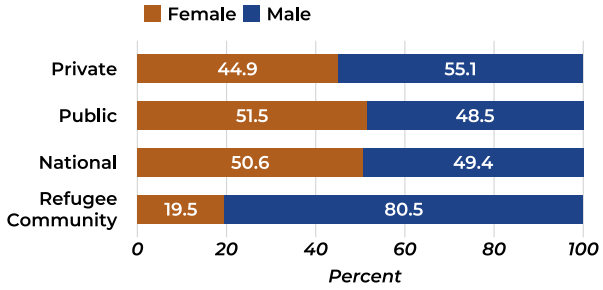


Figure 10: Male teachers dominate private and refugee community junior schools

- Majority of the teachers in private junior schools (55.1%) and refugee community junior schools (80.5%) are male.
- Female teachers slightly outnumber male teachers in public schools at 51.5% and 48.5% respectively.
- Nationally, there is near parity by gender among Junior School teachers, with 50.6% female and 49.4% male teachers.

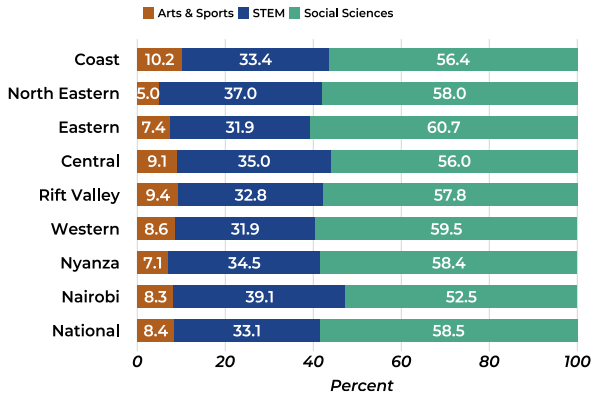


Figure 11: Majority of public Junior School teachers across regions teach Social Sciences

- Social Sciences account for the largest share of Junior School teachers nationally.
- 6 in 10 Junior School teachers are trained in social sciences.
- 3 in 10 Junior School teachers are trained in STEM.
- 1 in 10 Junior School teachers are trained in Arts and Sports.
- The Eastern region has the highest percentage of its Junior School teachers trained in Social Sciences at 60.7%.
- The Nairobi region has the highest percentage of Junior School teachers trained in STEM at 39.1%.
- The Arts and Sports learning areas are the least staffed across the country, ranging from 5% in North Eastern region to 10.2% in Coast region.

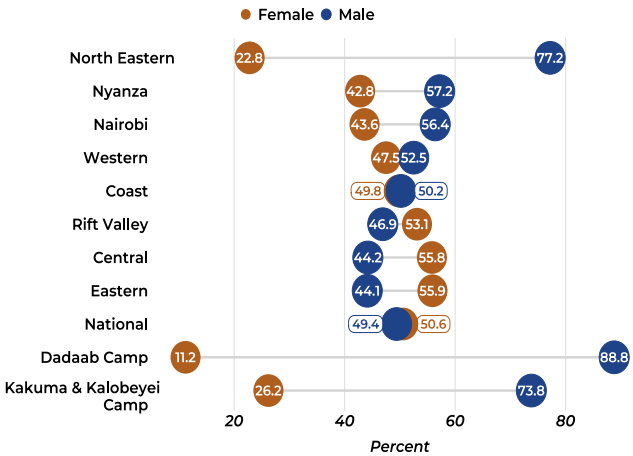


Figure 12: Gender gaps in distribution of teachers vary across regions and refugee camps

- Nationally, the gender distribution of teachers is balanced with 50.6% being female and 49.4% being male.
- Refugee community junior schools are dominated by male teachers.
- 9 in 10 teachers in Dadaab refugee camp are male.
- 7 in 10 teachers in Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee camps are male.
- Regionally, the North Eastern region has the widest gender gap in favour of male teachers with 8 in 10 teachers being male.
- The gender gap is narrowest in Coast region with less than one percentage point difference between male and female teachers.

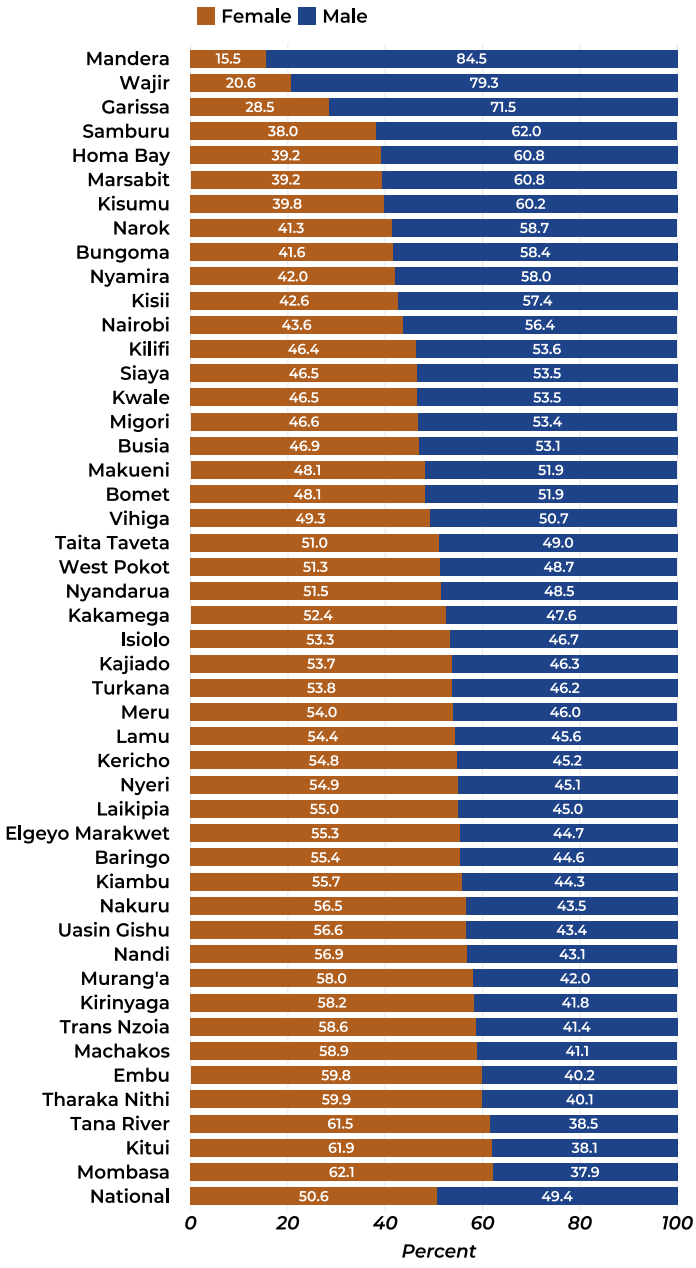


Figure 13: North Eastern counties have the widest gender gaps in Junior School teachers' distribution

- Nationally, the distribution of Junior School teachers is nearly balanced, with 50.6% women and 49.4% men.
- 16 in 100 teachers in Mandera County are female.
- 62 in 100 teachers in Mombasa County are female.

f) Learning Outcomes

Failure to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy in the early grades has enduring effects as children progress through the education system, potentially rendering their time in school a wasteful endeavour with minimal educational value. The results discussed in this section show persistent literacy and numeracy gaps in both Grades 7 and 9, with boys, rural learners, public-school learners, and learners in some regions generally facing greater challenges. This section highlights the scale and distribution of these gaps and demonstrates how deficits in foundational learning continue to affect learners as they advance through Junior School.

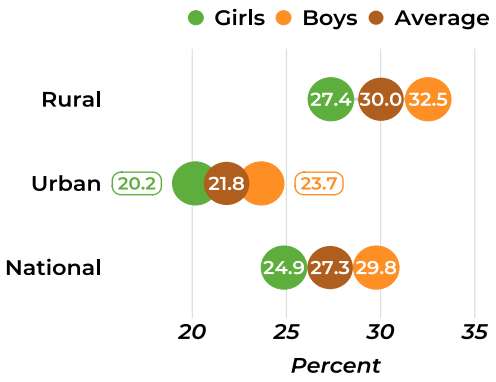


Figure 14: Gender and location-based disparities in foundational literacy achievement among Grade 7 learners

- Nationally, 27 in 100 Grade 7 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 33 in 100 Grade 7 boys in rural schools cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 25 in 100 Grade 7 girls in rural schools cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 30 in 100 Grade 7 rural school learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 22 in 100 Grade 7 urban school learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.

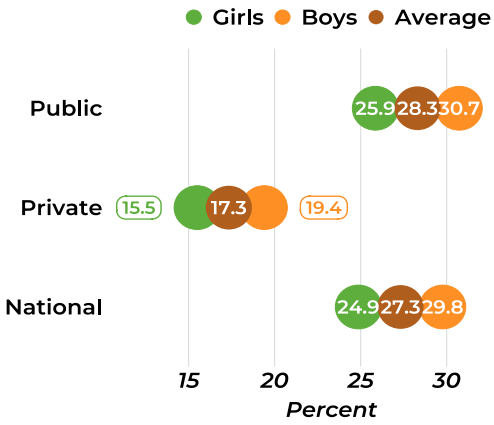


Figure 15: Gender and school-based disparities in foundational literacy achievement among Grade 7 learners

- 28 in 100 public-school Grade 7 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 17 in 100 private-school Grade 7 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.

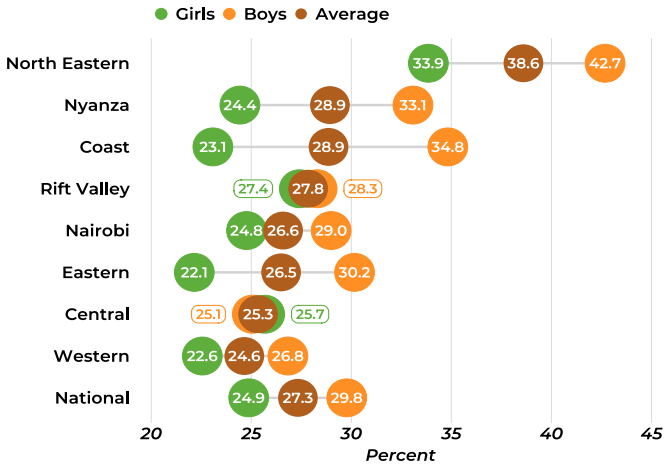


Figure 16: There are glaring regional disparities in Grade 7 learners' achievement of foundational literacy.

- 39 in 100 Grade 7 learners in North Eastern region cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 25 in 100 Grade 7 learners in Western region cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- The widest gender gap in literacy proficiency achievement among Grade 7 learners is in Coast region, while the narrowest gap is in Central region.
- In all regions except Central, fewer girls in Grade 7 are unable to read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story than boys. In Central boys narrowly outperform girls.

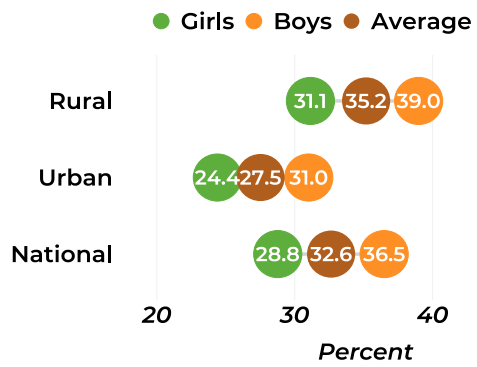


Figure 17: Gender and location-based disparities in foundational numeracy achievement among Grade 7 learners

- Nationally, 33 in 100 Grade 7 learners cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 36 in 100 Grade 7 boys cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 29 in 100 Grade 7 girls cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 35 in 100 Grade 7 rural learners cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 28 in 100 Grade 7 urban learners cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Fewer Grade 7 girls than boys are unable to solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem across both locations.
- The widest gender gap in foundational numeracy achievement in favour of girls is among rural learners.

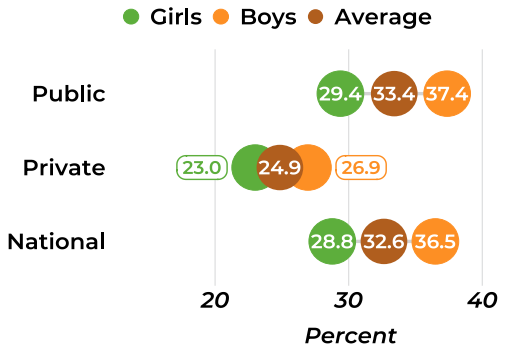


Figure 18: Gender and school-based disparities in foundational numeracy achievement among Grade 7 learners

- 33 in 100 learners in public junior schools cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 25 in 100 learners in private junior schools cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Fewer Grade 7 girls than boys are unable to solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem across both school types.
- The widest gender gap in foundational numeracy achievement in favour of girls is among public-school learners.

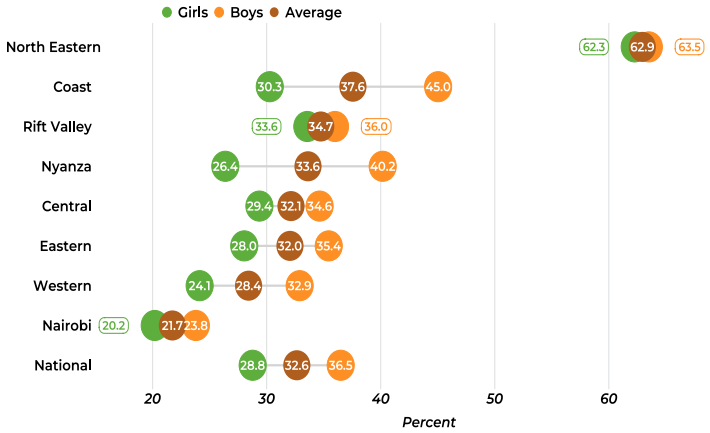


Figure 19: There are glaring regional disparities in Grade 7 learners' achievement of foundational numeracy

- 63 in 100 Grade 7 learners in North Eastern region cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem, nearly double the national average of 33 in 100.
- 22 in 100 Grade 7 learners in Nairobi region cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Girls outperform boys across all regions, with the widest gender gap reported in Coast region and the narrowest gap reported in Nairobi region.

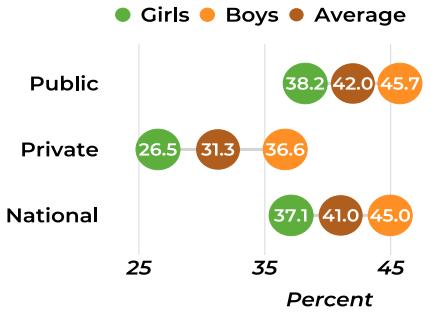


Figure 20: Gender and school-based disparities in foundational literacy and numeracy achievement among Grade 7 learners

- Nationally, 41 in 100 Grade 7 learners cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Public-school learners have a higher proportion lacking both competencies than private-school learners.
- 42 in 100 public school Grade 7 learners and 31 in 100 private school Grade 7 learners cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Grade 7 girls outperform boys in reading for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solving a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem in both school types.

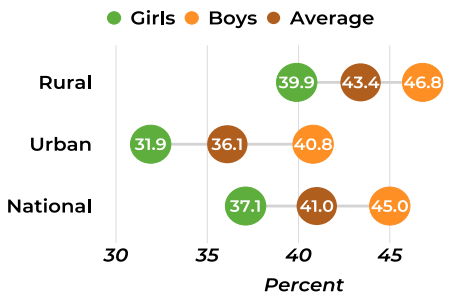


Figure 21: Gender and location-based disparities in foundational literacy and numeracy achievement among Grade 7 learners

- 43 in 100 rural-school Grade 7 learners and 36 in 100 urban school Grade 7 learners cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Grade 7 girls outperform Grade 7 boys in both reading for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solving a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem in both locations.

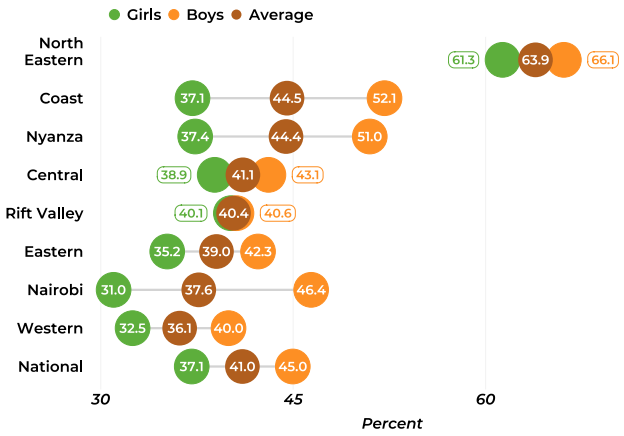


Figure 22: There are glaring regional disparities in Grade 7 learners' achievement of both foundational literacy and numeracy skills

- North Eastern has the highest proportion of Grade 7 learners lacking both competencies.
- 64 in 100 Grade 7 learners in North Eastern region cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 36 in 100 Grade 7 learners in Western region cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Girls outperform boys across all regions, with the widest gender gap in Nairobi region and the narrowest gap in Rift Valley region.

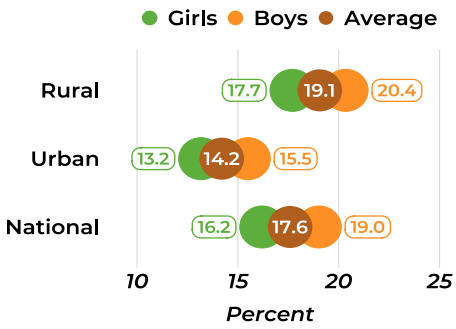


Figure 23: Gender and location-based disparities in foundational literacy achievement among Grade 9 learners

- Nationally, 18 in 100 Grade 9 learners cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 19 in 100 Grade 9 rural Junior School learners cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 14 in 100 Grade 9 urban junior school learners cannot read for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- Girls outperform boys across all geographies.

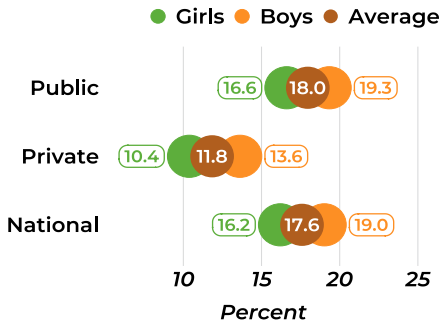


Figure 24: Gender and school type-based disparities in foundational literacy achievement among Grade 9 learners

- 1 in 5 Grade 9 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- Slightly more boys than girls in Grade 9 in both public and private junior schools cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- Fewer Grade 9 learners in private schools (1 in 10) than public schools (1 in 5) cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.

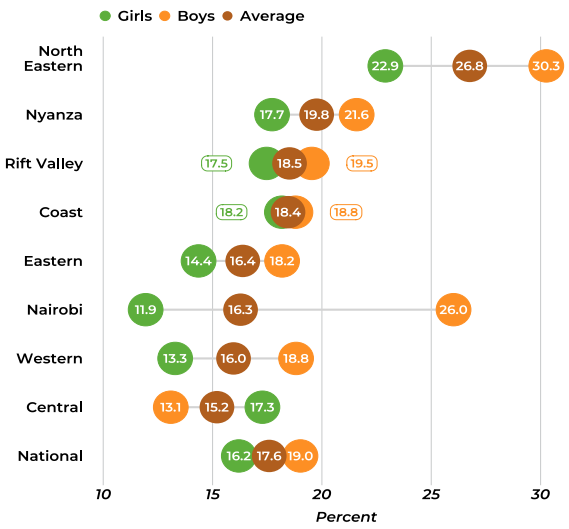


Figure 25: There are glaring regional disparities in Grade 9 learners' achievement of foundational literacy

- Nationally, 18 in 100 Grade 9 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- 27 in 100 Grade 9 learners in North Eastern region cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story.
- Grade 9 girls outperform boys Grade 9 learners in reading with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story across all regions of Kenya except Central.
- The literacy gender gap in favour of girls is widest in Nairobi and narrowest in Coast region.

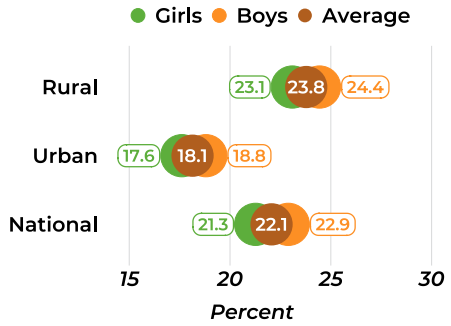


Figure 26: Gender and location-based disparities in foundational numeracy achievement among 9 learners

- The gap in foundational numeracy achievement between junior school learners in rural schools and those in urban schools narrows as they progress through school.
- The gender gap in foundational numeracy achievement between junior school girls and boys narrows as they progress through school.
- 22 in 100 Grade 9 learners cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 24 in 100 Grade 9 learners in rural schools cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 18 in 100 Grade 9 learners in urban schools cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.

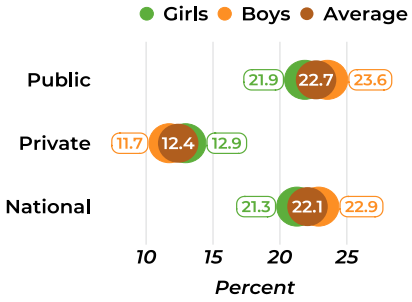


Figure 27: Gender and school type-based disparities in foundational numeracy achievement among Grade 9 learners

- Grade 9 learners in private schools outperform their public-school counterparts in solving a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 23 in 100 Grade 9 learners in public schools cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 12 in 100 Grade 9 learners in private schools cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.

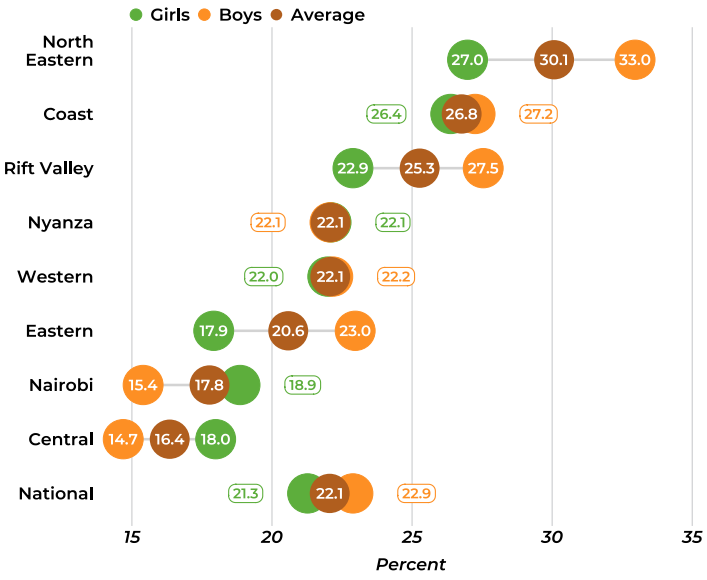


Figure 28: There are glaring regional disparities in Grade 9 learners' achievement of foundational numeracy

- 3 in 10 Grade 9 learners in North Eastern region compared to 2 in 10 in Central region cannot solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Nationally, girls marginally outperform boys in solving a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem, but across the regions the picture is mixed.
- The widest gender gap in favour of girls is in North Eastern region while the widest gender gap in favour of boys is in Nairobi.

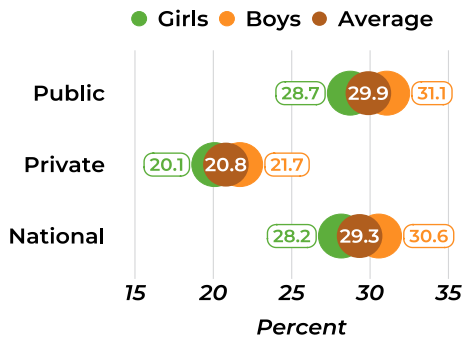


Figure 29: Gender and school type-based disparities in foundational literacy and numeracy achievement among Grade 9 learners

- Nationally, 29 in 100 Grade 9 learners cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 3 in 10 and 2 in 10 Grade 9 learners in public and private junior schools respectively cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Grade 9 girls marginally outperform Grade 9 boys across the school types in both reading for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solving a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.

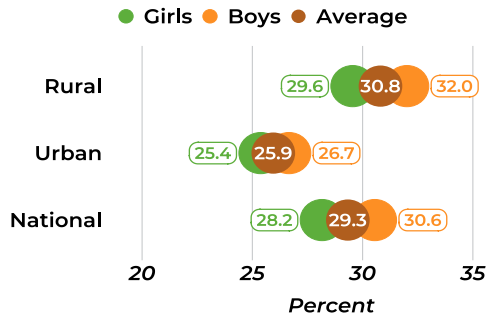


Figure 30: Gender and location-based disparities in foundational literacy and numeracy achievement among Grade 9 learners

- 31 in 100 Grade 9 learners in rural schools cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- 26 in 100 Grade 9 learners in urban schools cannot read with comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solve a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- Grade 9 girls marginally outperform Grade 9 boys across the locations in reading for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solving a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.

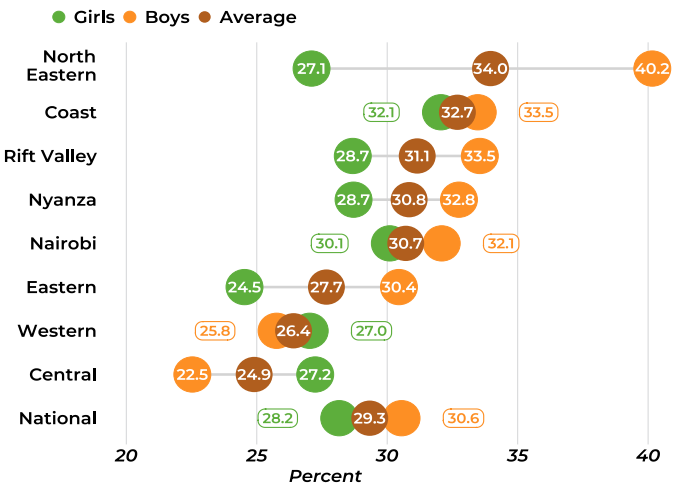


Figure 31: There are glaring regional disparities in Grade 9 learners' achievement of both foundational literacy and numeracy

- North Eastern has the highest proportion of Grade 9 learners lacking both competencies, at 34.0% while Central has the lowest proportion at 24.9%.
- Grade 9 girls outperform Grade 9 boys across all regions except Central and Western in reading for comprehension a Grade 3-appropriate English story and solving a Grade 3-appropriate numeracy problem.
- The widest gender gap is in favour of Grade 9 girls in North Eastern region, while the narrowest gender gap is in favour of Grade 9 boys in Western region.

g) Drivers of Learning

Table 9: Logistic Regression results on foundational literacy and numeracy learning outcomes among Junior School learners

		English				Math			
Variable	**Level**	**Odds Ratio**	**p-value**	**95% CI level**		**Odds Ratio**	**p-value**	**95% CI level**	
Child age		0.94	0	0.93	0.95	0.97	0	0.96	0.98
Grade		1.43	0	1.42	1.44	1.41	0	1.4	1.42
School type (Ref: Public)									
	Private	2.55	0	2.39	2.71	2.4	0	2.27	2.53
	Refugee	1	-	-	-	0.27	0	0.16	0.44
Pre-primary enrolment (Ref: No)									
	Yes	1.2	0	1.16	1.24	1.58	0	1.53	1.64
Household wealth level (Ref: low)									
	Middle	1.05	0	1.03	1.07	1	0.679	0.98	1.01
	High	1.32	0	1.29	1.34	1.23	0	1.21	1.25
Get assisted on homework (Ref: No)									
	Yes	1.21	0	1.19	1.23	1.2	0	1.19	1.22
Household head education level (Ref: Primary & below)									
	Secondary	1.15	0	1.13	1.17	1.03	0	1.01	1.05
	Tertiary	1.27	0	1.23	1.31	1.47	0	1.43	1.52
Mother's education level (Ref: Primary & below)									
	Secondary	1.29	0	1.27	1.32	1.17	0	1.15	1.19
	Tertiary	2.42	0	2.3	2.54	1.3	0	1.24	1.35
Number of children in the household (4-17 years)		0.87	0	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.86	0	0.86
Main Language used at Home (Ref: English)									
	Swahili	0.72	0	0.68	0.76	0.68	0	0.64	0.71
	Mother tongue	0.7	0	0.66	0.74	0.65	0	0.62	0.69

Foundational Literacy Competence:

- **Child age:** Each additional year on the child's age is associated with an approximately 6% decrease in the likelihood of being competent. This suggests that children who are older than expected for their grade tend to be at greater risk of falling behind.
- **Grade level:** Higher grade levels are associated with greater competence. Each additional grade is linked to a 43% increase in the likelihood of being competent in English, suggesting that skills improve as children progress through school.
- **School type:** A child in a private school is 1.55 times more likely to be competent in English than one in a public school. However, the data for refugee schools are insufficient to draw reliable conclusions about English competence in this school type.
- **Pre-primary enrolment:** A child who attended pre-primary school before Grade 1 is 20% more likely to be competent in English than one who did not, suggesting that pre-primary education provides an important early learning advantage.
- **Household wealth:** A child from a middle-wealth household is modestly more likely to be

competent (5% more) than one from a low-wealth household, while a child from a high-wealth household is substantially more likely to be competent (32% more).

- **Homework assistance:** A child who receives help with his/her homework is 21% more likely to be competent in English than one who does not.
- **Household head's education:** A child from a household whose head completed secondary education is 15% more likely to be competent than one from a household whose head has primary education or less. A child from a household whose head completed tertiary education is 27% more likely to be competent.
- **Mother's education:** This is one of the strongest predictors of competence in the study. A child whose mother completed secondary education is 29% more likely to be competent in English, while one whose mother completed tertiary education is 1.42 times more likely to be competent than a child whose mother had primary education or less.
- **Number of children in the household:** The likelihood of competence decreases as the number of children aged 4–17 years in a household increase. Each additional child is associated with a 13% decrease in the likelihood of competence, possibly because household attention and resources are spread more thinly.
- **Language spoken at home:** A child who mainly speaks Swahili at home is 28% less likely to be competent in English than one who mainly speaks English at home, while a child who mainly speaks one's mother tongue is 30% less likely to be competent in English literacy.

Numeracy Competence

- **Child age:** Each additional year on the child's age is associated with an approximately 3% decrease in the likelihood of being competent in numeracy. This suggests that older-than-expected children are somewhat less likely to demonstrate competence.
- **Grade level:** Progression through school is strongly associated with higher numeracy competence. Each additional grade is linked to a 41% increase in the likelihood of being competent.
- **School type:** A child in a private school is 1.4 times more likely to be competent in numeracy than one in a public school. A child in a refugee school is at a substantial disadvantage, being 73% less likely to be competent than one in a public school.
- **Pre-primary enrolment:** A child who attended pre-primary school is 58% more likely to be competent in numeracy than one who did not.
- **Household wealth:** A child from a middle-wealth household show no meaningful difference in numeracy competence from one from a low-wealth household, while a child from a high-wealth household is 23% more likely to be competent.
- **Homework assistance:** Receiving help with homework is associated with a 20% increase in the likelihood of numeracy competence.
- **Household head's education:** A child from a household whose head completed secondary education is 3% more likely to be competent in numeracy, while one from a household whose head completed tertiary education is 47% more likely to be competent than one from a household whose head has primary education or less.
- **Mother's education:** A child whose mother completed secondary education is 17% more likely to be competent in numeracy, while one whose mother completed tertiary education is 30% more likely to be competent than a child whose mother has primary education or less.
- **Number of children in the household:** Each additional child aged 4–17 years in the household is associated with a 13% decrease in the likelihood of numeracy competence.
- **Language spoken at home:** A child who mainly speaks Swahili at home is 32% less likely to be competent in numeracy than one who mainly speaks English at home, while one who mainly speaks one's mother tongue is 35% less likely to be competent.

Overall Findings

Taken together, the results for both models indicate that **mother's education, pre-primary enrolment, and household wealth are among the strongest factors associated with children's competence in foundational literacy and numeracy**. The findings also show that larger household size, speaking a language other than English at home, and being older than expected for one's grade are associated with lower levels of competence.

Private schooling is associated with a substantial advantage in English competence, although this advantage is less clear in numeracy. A child in a refugee community school faces a particularly pronounced disadvantage in numeracy. These findings underscore the importance of addressing both school-level and household-level factors that shape children's learning opportunities and outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

a) Study design and scope

This report is based on a focused analysis of data collected through the 2025 FLANA household and school surveys. FLANA used a cross-sectional, nationally representative design that combined information from households, directly assessed children, and sampled schools. The Junior School analysis draws on relevant sub-samples of children aged 12–17 years who are enrolled in Grades 7–9, as well as schools offering Junior School education. Sample sizes vary across indicators because the analyses are based on eligible respondents and valid responses for each question.

b) Sampling and survey coverage

The sampling frame was based on Enumeration Areas (EAs) developed by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics for the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census. The frame was stratified first by county and then by rural and urban residence. A total sample of 2,058 EAs was allocated across the resulting strata using the square root allocation method, and EAs were selected independently using probability proportional to size. This design ensured national, rural, urban and county-level representation, including adequate coverage of counties with relatively small populations.

In June and July 2025, field teams mapped 2,056 EAs across all 47 counties. The assessment also included EAs in the Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee communities. Within each selected EA, all households were listed and 20 households were randomly selected for participation. Overall, 41,156 households were successfully visited, 81,074 children were reached and 49,835 children met the assessment criteria. The eligibility criteria covered children aged 10-15 years, whether in or out of school, and learners enrolled in Grades 3-9 up to age 17 years.

The school survey followed the household survey. The public or private school serving the largest number of children from each sampled EA was selected, including schools located in neighbouring EAs where applicable. In total, 1,527 schools were surveyed. The schools had a combined enrolment of 1,017,910 learners, including 340,691 learners in Junior School. The present report uses data from schools with Junior School sections and includes refugee community schools as a separate analytical category where relevant.

c) Data collection instruments

Three main sources of data were used. First, the household questionnaire collected information on children's school enrolment, attendance, disability status and selected household characteristics. Second, the school questionnaire, administered primarily to school heads, collected information on Junior School enrolment, learner absenteeism, entry costs, classrooms, infrastructure, learning resources, financial disbursement, leadership, staffing and teacher deployment. Third, eligible children completed direct literacy and numeracy assessments.

The assessment and survey tools were reviewed, pretested and piloted before the main fieldwork. Data were collected electronically using SurveyCTO, allowing built-in validation checks, skip patterns and real-time monitoring. Trainers, county partners, village coordinators and volunteers supported data collection,

while monitoring and process-recheck activities were undertaken to strengthen adherence to the survey procedures and the quality of the submitted data.

d) Measurement of foundational learning

Foundational literacy was measured using a Grade 3-appropriate English story and comprehension questions. A Grade 7 learner was classified as lacking foundational literacy proficiency when the learner could not read and comprehend the story. Foundational numeracy was measured using basic tasks benchmarked at Grade 3 level. A learner was classified as lacking foundational numeracy proficiency when the learner could not solve the Grade 3-appropriate division problem. Combined proficiency refers to a learner's ability to demonstrate both foundational literacy and numeracy competencies.

e) Data preparation and analysis

The data were checked for completeness, consistency and accuracy before analysis. The household, learner and school datasets were cleaned and analysed using Stata. Survey weights were applied so that reported estimates reflect the population represented by the sampling design. The analysis is primarily descriptive and presents percentages, means and standard deviations. Results are disaggregated by gender, rural-urban location, school type, county, region, disability type and refugee community status, depending on the indicator.

To examine the independent associations between learner, household and school factors and Grade 7 learning outcomes, the analytical framework provides for multivariable logistic regression models for literacy, numeracy and combined proficiency. Regression results are presented as odds ratios relative to stated reference categories. An odds ratio above one indicates higher odds of achieving proficiency, while an odds ratio below one indicates lower odds, after controlling for the other variables included in the model. These associations should not be interpreted as proof of causality.

f) Ethical and quality considerations

The assessment was conducted with the relevant national research authorisation and through established community-entry procedures involving county administrators, chiefs, assistant chiefs and village elders. Participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from adult respondents and parents or guardians, and assent was sought from children before direct assessment. Personal information was treated confidentially, and the analysis uses aggregated data to protect the identity of participating children, households and schools.

Appendix 2: Selecting Counties, Villages and Households

The sample for the 2025 assessment was drawn from the 47 Counties that form sampling frame according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS). In 2025 assessment, we included 58 Enumeration Areas drawn from Kakuma and Kalobeyei (Turkana County) and Dadaab (Garissa County) refugee communities. The survey further excluded data from two Enumeration Areas in Isiolo County due to poor data quality issues.

Sample	A national sample of Enumeration Areas (EAs), representative at the county was obtained from all counties
Reached and assessed children; Surveyed schools	81,074 children reached, 49,835 children assessed; and 1,527 schools surveyed
Sampling Enumeration Areas	EAs were sampled in all the counties depending on the population and size
Mapping of Enumeration Areas	All the sampled EAs in the county mapped using maps obtained from KNBS
Household Listing and sampling	All households in each EA were listed, & 20 households sampled by County Co-ordinators (CCs) & Village Co-ordinators (VCs) with the support of village elders & chiefs
Survey exercise	Survey exercise conducted by volunteers with support from VCs and village elders
Survey exercise monitoring	Survey exercise was monitored in all counties
Process Recheck	Process re-check conducted in 10 counties

Appendix 3: Partners who led the assessment exercise across the country

County	Partner(s)
Mombasa	Tubonge Youth Initiative Ccommunity Based Organisation
Kwale	Kwale Youth and Governance Consortium
Kilifi	Wezesha Jamii Community Based Organisation
Tana River	Delta Voices Youth Group
Lamu	Muslim Women Advancement of Right and Protection
Taita/Taveta	Taveta Children Assistant
Garissa	Women Education and Health for Development
Wajir	Jalalaqa Self Help Group
Mandera	Humanitarian International Voluntary Association
Marsabit	Pastoralist Education Smart Adaptation Programme
	Pastoralist Action for Development
Isiolo	Girl Concern Community Based Organisation
Meru	Meru Peace Initiative
Tharaka-Nithi	Chuka Youth Information Centre
Embu	Partners in Art & Contemporary Development
Kitui	Kitui Network for Sustainable Development
Machakos	Tuboreshe Pamoja Community Based Organisation
Makueni	Makueni Youth Network
Nyandarua	Initiative for Cares and Empowerment Support
Nyeri	Inspire Children and Youth Organisation
Kirinyaga	Sagana Disabled People Self Help Group
Murang'a	Go Economic Empowernment Programme
Kiambu	Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO)
Turkana	Alemun Pastoralists Empowerment Programme
	Asegis Community Network

County	Partner(s)
West Pokot	Yangat Community Development Programme
Samburu	Samburu Women Empowerment Integrated Programme
Trans Nzoia	Save Africa Community Based Organisation
Uasin Gishu	Read and Run Community Based Organisation
Elgeyo Marakwet	Logogo Youth Group
Nandi	Kapsoogaa Self Help Group
Baringo	Central Rift Community Development
Laikipia	Pioneer Child Development Programme
Nakuru	Central Rift Community Development
Narok	Enkishon Sidai Africa
Kajiado	Dupoto Emaa Olkejuado Pastoralists Development Organisation
Kericho	Rays of Hope Kenya
Bomet	Kapletundo Community Organisation
Kakamega	Kakamega County Women Empowerment Programme
Vihiga	Magharibi Community Based Organisation
Bungoma	Forum for Art in Community Development
Busia	Butula Neighbours Keeper Education Trust
Siaya	Siaya Muungano Network
Kisumu	Magunga Footsteps Child Support Group
Homa Bay	Victoria Agricultural & Environmental Organisation
Migori	Komotobo Mission Station
Kisii	Vines Kenya
Nyamira	Vines Kenya
Nairobi City	Sifa Children Welfare Association
	Youth Initiative Kenya
	Vision Empowerment Trust

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