



Inclusive Futures

Promoting disability inclusion



Promoting inclusive early childhood development in Kenya: baseline results

The Ministry of Education in Kenya and a consortium of international development organisations have developed an intervention project to promote disability-inclusive practices in early childhood development and education (ECDE) in Kenya. The project aims to improve learning and development of children attending pre-school classes in three areas of the country. Here are the results of baseline data collection in these areas.

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What did we do in this study?

We interviewed parents of children in their first year of pre-primary education (called PP1 in Kenya). Our goal was to:

- Determine the proportion of children who experienced functional difficulties
- Assess the early learning and development of these children
- Explore relationships between early learning and development and functional difficulties



Where did we do it?

We collected data from children enrolled in pre-primary education in schools in peri-urban and rural Homa Bay County and in Kakuma, Turkana County. A total of 18 schools, six in each area participated in the study.

As the contexts of these areas are very different, we do not recommend comparing results across the three geographies.



How did we do it?

In each school, we identified 40 to 60 children starting PP1 at the start of the 2021 and 2022 academic years. Please note, the school calendar in these years was adjusted due to the COVID -19 pandemic.

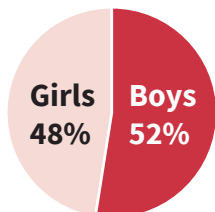
We asked each parent questions about their socio-demographic status, and their child's functional difficulties using the Washington Group/UNICEF Child Functioning Module.

Each child was then assessed using the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) tool, developed by Save the Children. This play-based assessment took approximately 40 minutes per child and was adapted to meet the needs of children with functional difficulties.

Key findings

Homa Bay, peri-urban

Participants



502 children participated in the study: **263 boys** and **239 girls**. The median age of children was 5 years, ranging from 3 to 7 years.

Prevalence of functional difficulty

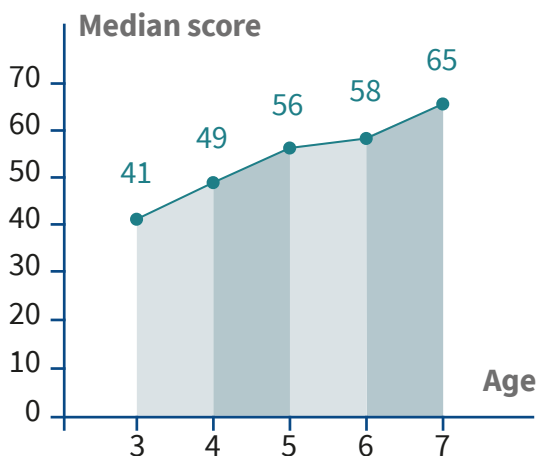
23% of children had at **least one functional difficulty** and **7%** had **more than one** type of difficulty. Functional difficulties were more common among older children:

- **33%** of children aged **5-7 years** had **at least one difficulty**. The most common difficulty was accepting change (14%).
- **10%** of children **aged 2-4 years** had **at least one difficulty**. The most common difficulty was controlling behaviour (5%).

Early learning and development scores

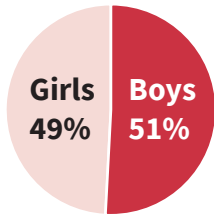
The **median IDELA score** was **52** out of 100. The score increased with child age.

After taking age into account, there was no difference in early learning and development between boys and girls or between children with and without functional difficulties.



Homa Bay, rural

Participants



579 children participated in the study: **295 boys** and **284 girls**. The median age of children was 4 years, ranging from 3 to 9 years.

Prevalence of functional difficulty

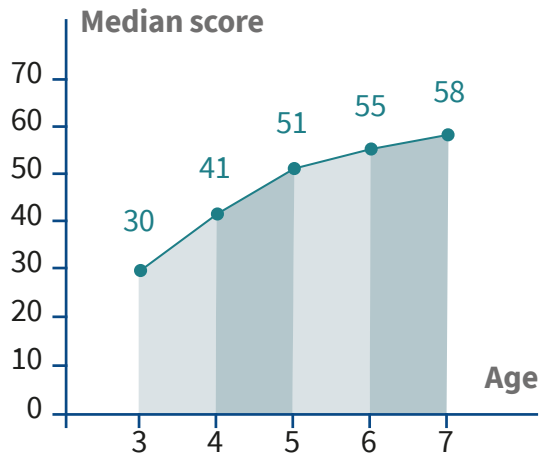
18% of children had **at least one functional difficulty** and **8%** had **more than one** type of difficulty. Functional difficulties were more common among older children:

- **25%** of children **aged 5-9 years** had **at least one difficulty**. The most common difficulty was remembering (9%).
- **14%** of children **aged 2-4 years** had **at least one difficulty**. The most common difficulty was communication (4%).

Early learning and development scores

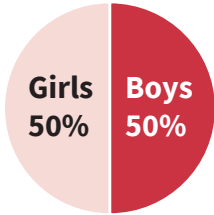
The **median IDELA score** was **45** out of 100. The score increased with child age.

After taking age into account, there was no difference in early learning and development between boys and girls or between children with and without functional difficulties.



Kakuma

Participants



675 children participated in the study: **340 boys** and **335 girls**. The median age of children was 4 years, ranging from 2 to 8 years.

Prevalence of functional difficulty

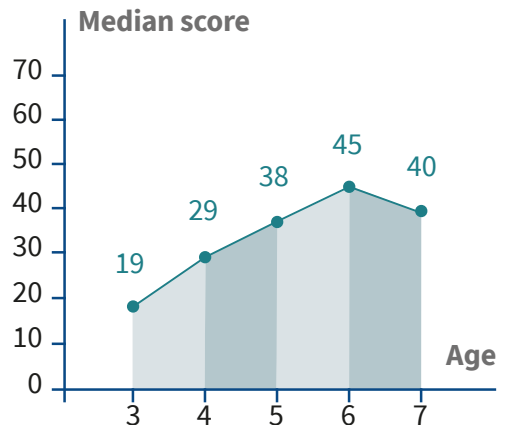
9% of children had **at least one functional difficulty** and **3%** had **more than one** type of difficulty. Functional difficulties were more common among older children.

- **18%** of children **aged 5-8 years** had **at least one difficulty**. The most common difficulty was anxiety (6%).
- **4%** of children **aged 2-4 years** had **at least one difficulty**. The most common difficulty was mobility (1%).

Early learning and development scores

The **median IDELA score** was **31** out of 100. The score increased with child age.

After taking age into account, there was no difference in early learning and development between boys and girls. **However, children with functional difficulties scored significantly lower than those without.**



Implications

Data shows that many children attending preschool in project areas experience functional difficulties. This highlights the **importance of ensuring that ECDE services are adapted to children's needs, and that teachers have appropriate skills and resources** to support inclusive early learning and development.

Based on the data we collected, we did not find any significant difference in early learning and development between boys and girls. However, there were differences between the study areas, with children in the Kakuma area having lower scores than those in Homa Bay. **The ECDE services in the Kakuma area should be given particular attention** and additional resources to ensure that children have an opportunity to catch up with their peers living in other parts of Kenya.

This work shows that **most children with functional difficulties (91%) can be assessed using a standardised assessment with appropriate adaptations**. This is encouraging, as children with functional difficulties are often excluded from such assessments. Further research will support strengthened adaptations and even higher levels of inclusion.

This data provides initial levels of early development and learning, prior to the initiation of project interventions. This will be compared to endline data to assess the impact of the project.

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