

Each Learner Counts: Evidence on Improving Learning Outcomes in Kenya



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Introduction

Since 2018, organizations from the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) have implemented evidence based interventions to hasten the skilling of basic literacy and numeracy competencies. This booklet shares evidence from 8 programs that collectively reached 24,151 children across 213 schools located in 12 Counties. The key message is that it is possible to support a significant number of learners lagging behind to acquire basic skills within a short period. For instance, evidence from Zizi Afrique shows that more than half of the learners participating in the program could read a grade 2 level story in only 30 days.

Key facts from Implementation

1. Despite huge input investments in education, the needle has not moved.

In Bungoma, only 43% of children in grade 3-5 were able to read a grade two level text in 2018 as compared to 50% in 2015.

2. Low competency levels affect boys and girls in almost equal measure

Of all the learners in the program in Turkana, Bungoma and Tana River, there were 52% boys and 48% girls.

3. In numeracy, PLACE VALUE stands out as the biggest challenge.

In Turkana, Bungoma and Tana River, 79% of all learners in the program struggled with addition and subtraction with regrouping (39% addition and 40% subtraction)

4. Within at least 30 days of intervention, it is possible to significantly increase the ability of learners to read and reason with numbers.

In only 30 days, 59% of learners in Turkana were supported to acquire numeracy skills



Curriculum Equity Program

2019
Evidence

An analysis of Kiswahili reading levels in which 1,020 learners in grade 1-3 were reached from 34 schools across 7 counties.

Learners who could read a grade 2 level text in Kiswahili in regular schools

Only **three** out of **ten** in Kajiado & Migori



Only **two** out of **five** in Tana River



One out of **two** in Nairobi & Tharaka Nithi



Learners who could read a grade 2 level text in Kiswahili in special needs schools

Only **three** out of **ten** in Isiolo



Only **two** out of **five** in West Pokot





Accelerated Learning Program

2018/19
Highlights

We identify children at risk of being left behind in Turkana, Bungoma and Tana River Counties and support them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

At the end of 30 Days...

One out of two children could read a grade 2 level story



Three out of five children could do grade 2 basic math



Number of schools

60

Grades

3 - 5



Total number of learners reached

7,394



Number of learners supported

**4,526
(61%)**



Number of learners who could read a grade 2 level story

**2,403
(53%)**



Improving Pastoralist Children's Education Outcomes

The overall goal of the program is to attain universal literacy levels among the Kajiado Pastoralist children.

At the end of 30 Days...

Two out of three children could read a grade 2 level story



Number of schools

15

Grades

4 - 5



Total number of learners reached

936



Number of learners supported

436

(47%)



Number of learners who could read a grade 2 level story

291

(67%)



WOMEN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS OF KENYA
Linking Research to Advocacy and Action

Opportunity Schools

2019
Highlights

The program aims to improve learning outcomes for increased enrollment, attendance, progression and completion in Kajiado County.

At the end of 30 Days...

Two out of five children could read a grade 2 level story



Number of schools

20

Grades

4 - 5



Total number of learners reached

2,078



Number of learners supported

**1,864
(90%)**



Number of learners who could read a grade 2 level story

**746
(40%)**

The program supports pastoralist children especially girls to complete primary education and acquire critical skills by strengthening support systems both in and out of school in Marsabit County.

At the end of 30 Days...

Three out of seven children could read a grade 2 level story



Number of schools

12

Grades

3 - 6



Total number of learners reached

1,075



Number of learners supported

1,075
(100%)



Number of learners who could read a grade 2 level story

460
(43%)



Catch up program

2018/19
Highlights

The Catch up program was designed to improve learning outcomes across all grades in Laikipia North.

At the end of 30 Days...

Three out of **four** children could read a
grade 2 level story



Number of schools

27

Grades

4 - 7



**Total number of
learners reached**

7,500



**Number of learners
supported**

**1,442
(19%)**



**Number of learners
who could read a
grade 2 level story**

**1,082
(75%)**

Our aim is to lift those at the bottom of the pyramid to acquire basic reading skills in Migori County.

At the end of 10 Days...

Two out of five children could read a grade 2 level story



Number of schools

5

Grades

4 - 5



Total number of learners reached

450



Number of learners supported

260

(58%)



Number of children who could read a grade 2 level story

104

(40%)



**PACEMAKER
INTERNATIONAL**

2019

Highlights

Teaching at the Right Level

The program focused on improving literacy levels of children within selected schools in Nairobi County through student fellows.

At the end of 10 Days...

Two out of five children could read a grade 2 level story



Number of schools

40

Grades

4 - 5



Total number of learners reached

3,698



Number of learners supported

**3,506
(96%)**



Number of learners who could read a grade 2 level story

**1,402
(40%)**

Evidence Implications

1. *Focus on competencies, not just content:* At the foundational level, children will learn best from *'where they are'* rather than *'where they ought to be'*. The Primary focus should be on understanding which competencies learners need to acquire, their current levels and thereafter challenge them to move towards the desired levels.
2. *Start with the Language the learner has Competency in:* Learners come to class endowed with language abilities that are rarely tapped on to build a foundation for learning. In homogeneous environments where learners are only exposed to one language since birth, deliberate efforts to promote a smooth transition from home to school is necessary. One strategy that worked in the program was use of teacher assistants with local language competencies, as some learners could only communicate in their first language.

'Mwalimu akiongea siskii' translated as 'I have trouble hearing what the teacher says' was one learners' response to the question on whether he had hearing difficulties. It later turned out that this learner 'could not understand' the language of the teacher in class. He interpreted this as difficulty in hearing on his part.

3. *Assessment for learning:* Assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning is the way to go. The teacher is central to assessment, and if equipped with simple tools, teachers can determine where each child is on the scale of acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy. Such information helps them *'plan'* for the individual learner's needs.
4. *Retooling teachers:* Teacher support needs to focus on practical classroom strategies centred on the child. Majority of trained teachers are well equipped with content, however strategies of delivery need strengthening. Instituting a support structure that stresses on how children learn will yield a more responsive teaching force.

...before I joined this program, I couldn't read but now, I can read and write.... Learner, Bungoma, 2019

...my child can now read and form words...Parent, Bungoma 2019

...because of ALP, absenteeism cases have reduced significantly...Head Teacher, Bungoma,2019

..With the skills I gained, I can identify learners who are struggling and support them better...Teacher Assistant, Turkana, 2020

....program has benefitted those lagging behind in normal lessons. Our regular teachers have also benefitted. We have encouraged the regular teachers to adopt that model...Head Teacher, Bungoma,2019

