

THE FLANA REPORT 2024

Eastern Region Edition

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Usawa Agenda,
22 School Lane, Westlands,
P.O. Box 2907, 00606,
Nairobi.

Tel: +254 114 209 420;
Email: info@usawaagenda.org
Website: www.usawaagenda.org

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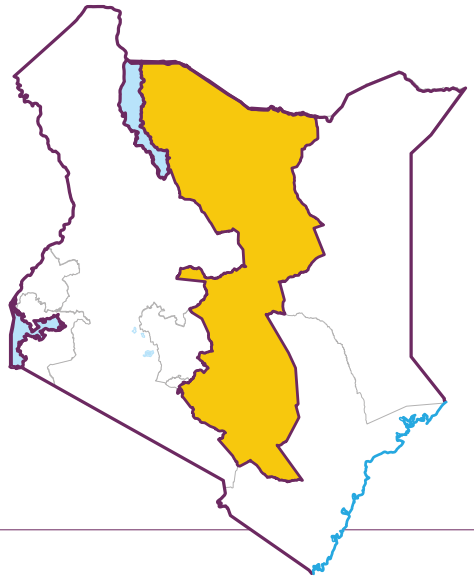

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Foreword



The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA) 2024 Report for the Eastern Region is a gem for actors in education space and decision-makers. The findings of the FLANA 2024 Eastern Region Report, offer important insights into the learning levels among children of school-going age in the region. The findings also highlight the main drivers of learning outcomes and inequalities in the education sector — home and school factors. The highlighted factors include access to school, pre-school participation, absenteeism from school, school health indicators, gender, school leadership and parental opinions on Competency –Based Curriculum (CBC).

The report, which features the findings based on the data collected from the eight counties of the Eastern Region namely; Marsabit, Isiolo, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Embu, Kitui, Machakos and Makueni makes for a compelling read. The study was part of the broader survey conducted in all the counties across the country in June/July 2023.

The 2013 report by UNESCO notes that access to schooling is not enough on its own, rather "education needs to be of good quality so that children actually learn". The FLANA 2024 Eastern Region Report thus highlights those dynamics including the challenges facing the children with disabilities aged 4-15 years both in rural and urban settings of Eastern Region.

Reading the report, even if fleetingly, unveils as an apt decision-making tool as it presents the facts in a neutral way to enable a sober discussion of the factors holding back the attainment of quality education for all learners in the region. County and regional/county-level national government education officials will find this report very useful in decision-making. It highlights intra-regional, inter-regional and cross-county differences in the quality of education infrastructure, staffing and school attendance. In the report also, it is apparent that there is under-representation of women in primary school leadership both in Boards of Management and school headship. These are all factors that drive learning outcomes and within the purview of these officials to influence for the benefit of the children of this region.

School managers and teachers will find in the report areas that call for their attention if they are to achieve their set goals towards the achievement of quality education. For instance, it highlights gaps in foundational literacy and numeracy learning

outcomes between learners enrolled in public schools and those in private schools. The children in public schools underperform those in private schools. It also highlights similar gaps between children in rural schools and those in urban schools, with those in rural schools underperforming their counterparts in urban schools.

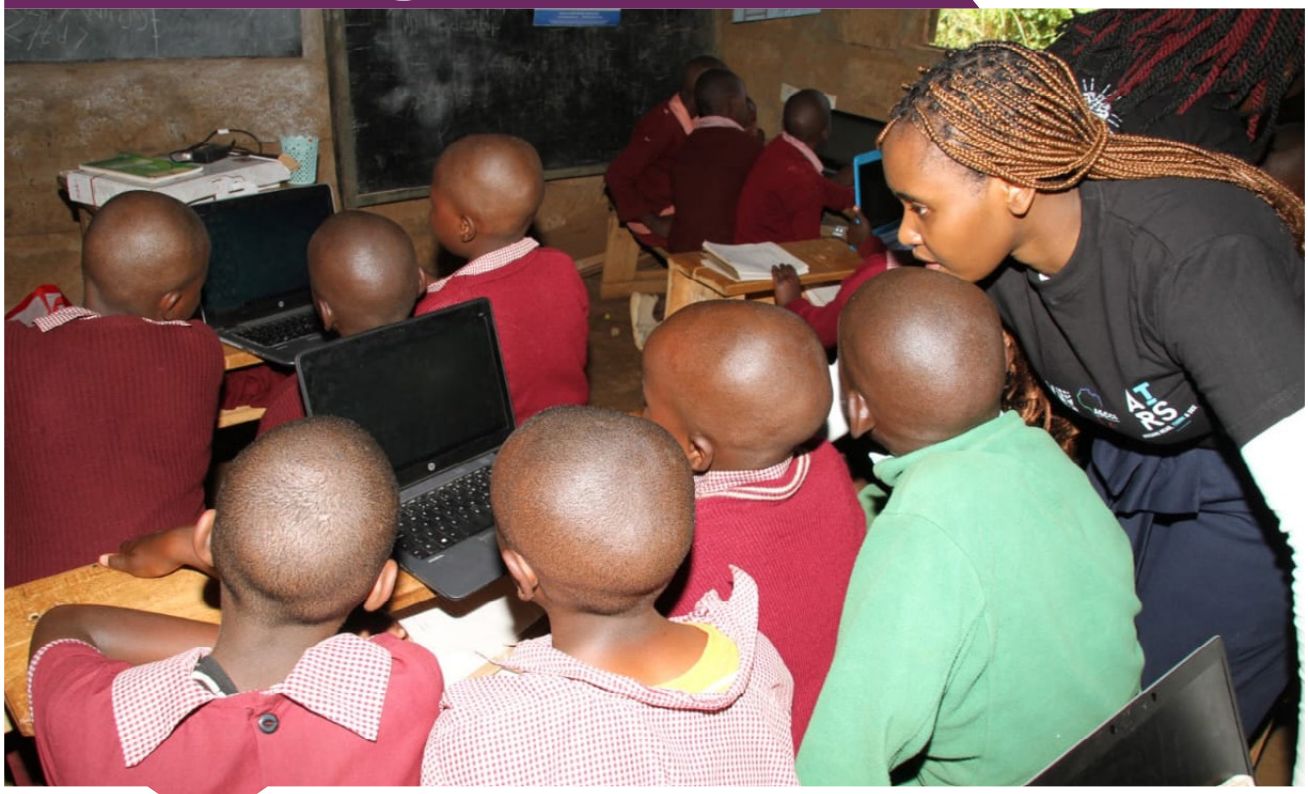
Parents, community members and their organised groups, as well the local leadership will find this report helpful as it points out some of the gaps at the household and community levels that contribute to the undesirable levels of learning outcomes. For instance, the region has generally underperformed the nation on many important indicators such as enrolment rate, school dropout rate, percentages achieving the desired levels of learning outcomes, to mention but a few. These are issues that should galvanise the local communities and their leadership into action to shift the state of affairs for the benefit of the children of the region and for the region's long-term development.

I, therefore, invite everyone in Eastern Region with the evidence herein to inform their own positions and seek collaboration with all relevant actors to work on improving the learning outcomes of our children. As Usawa Agenda, we also want to learn from you so that we can do better in advancing the education justice for all children in this region and the country.



Emmanuel Manyasa, PhD
Executive director, 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 2023 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA) in the Eastern Region. 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 2023 assessment from which this report is generated:

- **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:** Mr. Henry Kilonzo (Chairman), Prof. Gituro Wainaina, Mr. Naman Owuor, Ms. Florence Syevuo, Dr. Wilson Wasike, Mrs. Esther Wairimu, Ms. Joy Claudia Anami (has since transitioned from the board) and Ms. Ashina Mtsumi.
- **The Usawa Agenda Secretariat:** Emmanuel Manyasa, Stephene Maende, Boaz Ochi, Cycus Barasa, Brenda Onyango, Esther Gad, David Lutta, Catherine Peter, Faith Atieno, Carol Onsomu and Fred Ogachi.
- **The Usawa Agenda Consultants:** Wilson Shiroya, Dr. Zachary Kwena, Habil Ondiek and Edwin Kibet.
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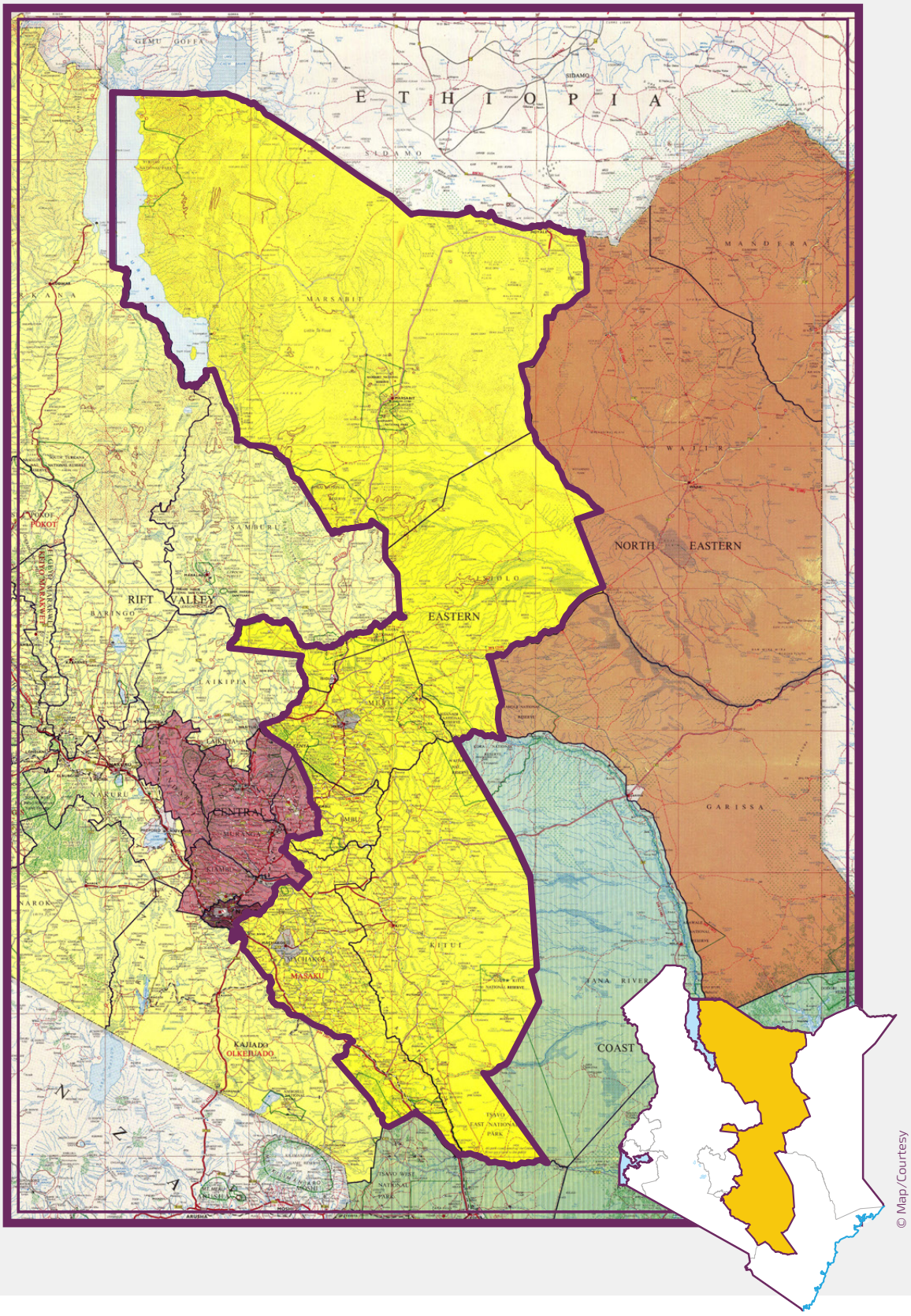
- **The 9 County Partners**, Nachamai Self Help Group and Pastoralist Action for Development (Marsabit), Garba Tulla Collaborative Initiative SHG (Isiolo), Meru Peace Initiative (Meru), Chuka Youth Information Centre (Tharaka-Nithi), Partners in Arts & Contemporary Development (Embu), Kyeni Kya Waasya Women Group (Kitui), Youth for Sustainable Development (Machakos), and Makueni Youth Network (Makueni), who worked with village elders and volunteers to ensure that we reached all the selected schools, villages and households.
- The 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.
- The over 350 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 and beyond is invaluable.

- The over 325 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 6,348 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 5,830 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 321 primary school headteachers, who welcomed us into your schools to conduct the surveys, took time to answer many questions and walk us around your schools, you are the heroes of transforming education in Kenya.
- The over 133,497 pupils in the schools we visited who endured our prying presence as we observed every corner of your schools and the happenings there, thank you.
- **To our partners:** RELI Kenya, Zizi Afrique Foundation, PAL Network, National Parents Association (NPA) and Kenya Primary School Heads Association (KEPSHA) our partnership truly heralds the future of education research, and policy and practice influencing. We also thank the Teachers' Service Commission and the Teachers Unions, especially KNUT for their role in producing and sharing this evidence.
- 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 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 National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI), for support in timely authorisation of the survey.
- We are indebted to the County Commissioners and Sub-county Commissioners at whose offices we made our first stops in the Counties, in some cases requiring security support to proceed with the assessment, and you all came through for us.
- Thank you, Dr. James Mbugua, for burning your midnight oil to ensure the data was analysed in time to produce the report, and the editorial and design teams led by Robin Toskin and William Odidi respectively, for meticulously delivering this report, we thank you for your great efforts.
- **To our development partners** (Imaginable Futures, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund and Echidna Giving), who continue to entrust us with your 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. 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 know, but you are changing the world in profound ways!

Map of Kenya

Extract Map:
Eastern Region of Kenya



© Map/Courtesy

Introduction



The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA) Report 2024 Eastern Region Edition is a first of its kind produced by Usawa Agenda. It comes on the back of the national FLANA 2023 Report released in February this year, which affirmed an issue that we have surfaced over the years; inequity in access to quality education that is embedded in systemic injustices.

Over the years, we have asked the question; Are ALL Our Children Learning?

From the findings, there is a discernible undesirable pattern of who accesses and benefits from quality education replicated in Eastern Region with varying levels in the counties — Marsabit, Isiolo, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Embu, Kitui, Machakos and Makueni. This report provides a realistic outlook of the status of schooling and learning in the said eight counties.

The survey reported here assessed the ability of children to read and comprehend English and complete basic numeracy tasks, set at grade three level. Like the national FLANA Report, the Eastern Region report presents learning outcomes of learners in grade four who were expected to have completed the grade three level work by the time of the assessment, as well as grade six, who were completing primary education.

The report also highlights both home and school factors that influence learning. It underscores observable inequalities and reckons with the underlying drivers of the observed learning outcomes and their distribution. The findings of the report reveal low and inequitable learning outcomes in the region and expose the drivers of both the low levels and their distribution.

These inequalities are seen in differential access to quality education for children with disabilities, from diverse geographies — rural and urban, gender, different household income cohorts, attending different types of primary schools — private versus public, and residing in different counties in the region. The report further presents inter-county comparisons of the learning outcomes among the four counties in the Eastern Region, as well as inter-region comparisons of the learning outcomes among the eight regions of Kenya.

These differential access to quality education happens in spite of the structural changes that followed the promulgation of the new Constitution of Kenya in 2010 in which:

1. Basic education became a constitutional right through the provisions of Article 53(1);

2. The provision of education became a shared function between the National and County governments (Schedule IV of the Constitution); and
3. The Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) was established as an independent Constitutional Commission with the mandate of among other things to:
    a. Ensure that teachers comply with the teaching standards prescribed by the Commission;
    b. Manage the payroll of teachers in its employment;
    c. Facilitate career progression and professional development for teachers in the teaching service including the appointment of headteachers and principals;
    d. Monitor the conduct and performance of teachers in the teaching service;
    e. Recruit and employ registered teachers; and
    f. Assign teachers employed by the commission for service in any public school or institution.

TSC's assigning/staffing function and how it is exercised has emerged as one of the critical components that adversely impact the learning outcomes of many learners. Inequalities in teacher distribution across the country, within counties and especially between rural and urban areas is highlighted as one of the challenges and drivers of inequitable learning outcomes.

How we conducted the research

In June/July 2023 we visited all the counties in Kenya, including the eight in this region namely; Marsabit, Isiolo, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Embu, Kitui, Machakos and Makueni. We worked with 54 trainers, 51 partner organisations and 51 county coordinators to deploy over 1,996 volunteers, 1,953 village elders, 227 village coordinators, with the support of chiefs and assistant chiefs to cover 1,996 enumeration areas. We visited 38,634 households spread across the four counties, reached 59,201 children and assessed 39,298 of them, who met the criteria (age 6-15 years). We visited 1,813 primary schools (a mix of public and private) and assessed their facilities, personnel, leadership, enrolment levels and performance in the 2022 national examinations (KCPE). These schools had a combined learner population of 1,041,627 out of which 888,321 learners were enrolled in the primary and junior school sections, while 153,306 were enrolled in the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) section.

In this region, we visited 325 villages spread across the regions as follows: Marsabit, 39, Isiolo, 33, Meru 43, Tharaka-Nithi 40, Embu, 42, Kitui, 44, Machakos, 42 and Makueni,42. We assessed 5,830 children spread across the counties as follows: Marsabit (951), Isiolo (785), Meru (734), Tharaka-Nithi (439), Embu (477), Kitui (1053), Machakos (683), and Makueni (708). We also visited 321 primary schools 37 in Marsabit, 34 in Isiolo, 42 in Meru, 39 in Tharaka-Nithi, 43 in Embu, 41 in Kitui, 42 in Machakos, and 43 Makueni, which together had 133,497 pupils.

While research findings continually show that indeed most children are enrolled in school, a significant number of them are not learning. Many of those completing primary education are unable to read a basic text. The Eastern Region is not insulated from these challenges as this report shows.

KEY FACTS ON LEARNING IN EASTERN REGION

FACT ONE: 32.9% of learners completing primary education in Eastern Region could not read and comprehend a grade 3 appropriate English story!

FACT TWO: In Eastern Region, a child with disability in a rural area was four times as likely to have never enrolled in school as his/her counterpart without disability.

FACT THREE: Women are under-represented in the management of primary schools in Eastern Region; only 16.3% of Board of Management chairpersons and 39% of head teachers in the region were female.

FACT FOUR: ASALs Counties in the region, namely; Isiolo and Marsabit had among the worst percentages of out of school children in the whole country.

Key Findings

Access to school

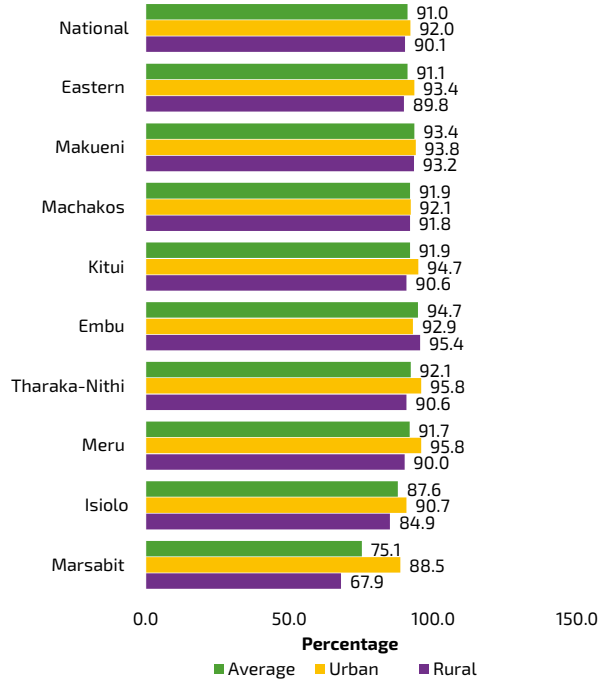


Fig. 1: Percentage of children aged 4-15 years enrolled in school by county and location of residence

- Nationally, 90.1% of children aged 4-15 years in rural areas and 92% in urban areas were enrolled in school.
- In Eastern Region enrolment in rural areas was 89.8%, while enrolment in urban areas was 93.4%.
- Embu County had the highest school enrolment of children aged 4-15 years in rural areas at 95.4% in the region.
- Marsabit County had the largest enrolment gap between rural areas (67.9%) and urban areas (88.5%).

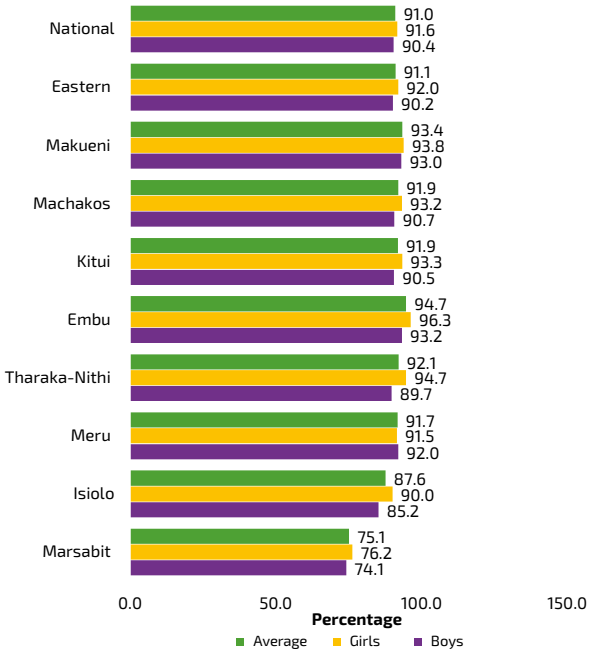


Fig. 2: Percentage of children aged 4-15 years enrolled in school by county and gender

- Nationally, 90.4% of boys and 91.6% of girls aged 4-15 years were enrolled in school.
- The Eastern Region had a marginally higher enrolment for girls (92.0%) compared to boys (90.2%).
- Embu County had the highest enrolment for both boys (93.2%) and girls (96.3%) in the region.
- Marsabit County had the lowest enrolment rate for both boys (74.1%) and girls (76.2%).

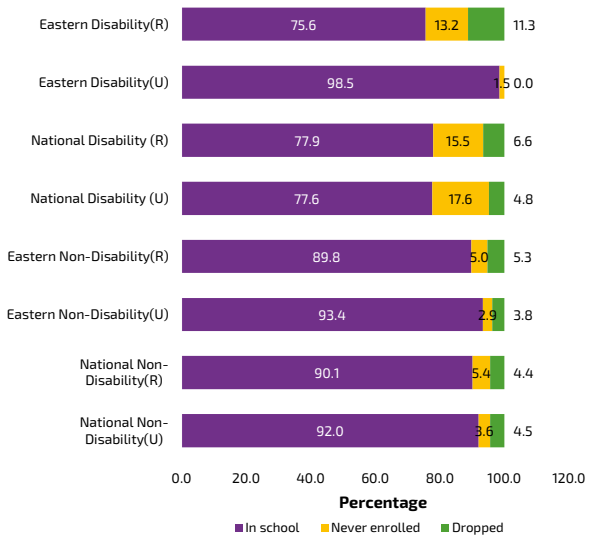


Fig. 3: **Enrolment status of children with disabilities age 4–15 years and their non-disability counterparts by location of residence (U=Urban, R=Rural)**

- Nationally, a child with disability in an urban area is four times as likely to have never enrolled in school as his/her counterpart without disability.
- In Eastern, a child with disability in a rural area is two and half times as likely to have never enrolled in school as his/her counterpart without disability.
- A child with disability in a rural area in Eastern Region is twice as likely to drop out of school as his/her counterpart without disability.

Out of School Children

Table 1: **Percentage of school-aged children out of school by county and gender**

County	Boys			Girls			All		
	Out of school	Never enrolled	Dropped out	Out of school	Never enrolled	Dropped out	Out of school	Never enrolled	Dropped out
Marsabit	25.9	20.9	5.0	23.8	16.9	6.8	24.9	18.9	6.0
Isiolo	14.8	10.8	4.0	10	6.3	3.7	12.4	8.6	3.8
Meru	8.1	3.9	4.2	8.5	3.0	5.5	8.3	3.4	4.8
Tharaka-Nithi	10.3	7.3	3.1	5.3	3.7	1.7	7.9	5.5	2.4
Embu	6.8	4.1	2.7	3.7	0.4	3.4	5.3	2.3	3.0
Kitui	9.5	3.9	5.6	6.7	1.9	4.8	8.2	3.0	5.2
Machakos	9.3	3.4	6.0	6.8	1.8	5.0	8.1	2.6	5.5
Makueni	**7**	**3.5**	**3.5**	**6.2**	**1.8**	**4.4**	**6.6**	**2.7**	**3.9**
Eastern	**9.8**	**5.2**	**4.7**	**8**	**3.2**	**4.8**	**9.0**	**4.2**	**4.7**
National	**9.6**	**4.9**	**4.7**	**8.4**	**4.2**	**4.2**	**9.0**	**4.6**	**4.4**

- Nationally, 9% of all school-aged children, 9.6% of boys and 8.4% of girls aged 4-15 years were out of school.
- 4.9% of boys and 4.2% of girls never enrolled in school nationally.
- The Eastern Region had out-of-school rates of 9.8% for boys and 8% for girls.
- School dropout rates are slightly higher for both boys and girls than the national averages.
- Marsabit County had the highest percentage of out of school children (almost three times the national average), in the region followed by Isiolo County.
- Marsabit County also had the highest school dropout rate in the region followed by Kitui County.
- In all the counties in the region except Meru, there were more boys than girls out of school.

Table 2: Percentage of out of school children aged 4-5 years; and 6-15 years by county and gender

County	Percentage of out of school children aged 4-5 years			Percentage of out of school children aged 6-15 years		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
Marsabit	43.1	38.6	40.8	23.6	20.9	22.3
Isiolo	25.7	21.7	23.7	12.8	7.9	10.4
Meru	15.1	12.0	13.6	7.0	7.9	7.5
Tharaka-Nithi	15.2	0.0	7.6	9.6	6.2	7.9
Embu	22.6	2.6	12.6	3.3	3.9	3.6
Kitui	16.0	12.1	14.1	8.3	6.0	7.2
Machakos	16.0	11.8	13.9	8.4	6.1	7.3
Makueni	19.2	26.2	22.7	5.4	3.8	4.6
Eastern	**18.6**	**14.7**	**16.7**	**8.5**	**7.0**	**7.7**
National	**17.2**	**14.8**	**15.2**	**8.4**	**7.4**	**7.9**

- In Eastern Region, 8.5% of boys and 7.0% of girls of primary school age were out of school, while for preschool-aged children, the rates were 18.6% for boys and 14.7% for girls.
- In Eastern Region, 4.8% of boys and 4.1% of girls of primary school age were out of school, while for preschool-aged children, the rates were 9.5% for boys and 9.6% for girls.
- The out-of-school rates for 4-5 age group in Eastern Region were higher than the national average and a slightly lower than the national average for primary age group.
- Marsabit County had the highest out-of-school rates for both cohorts of learners with the 4-5 years olds' out of school rate at 40.8%.

Preschool Participation

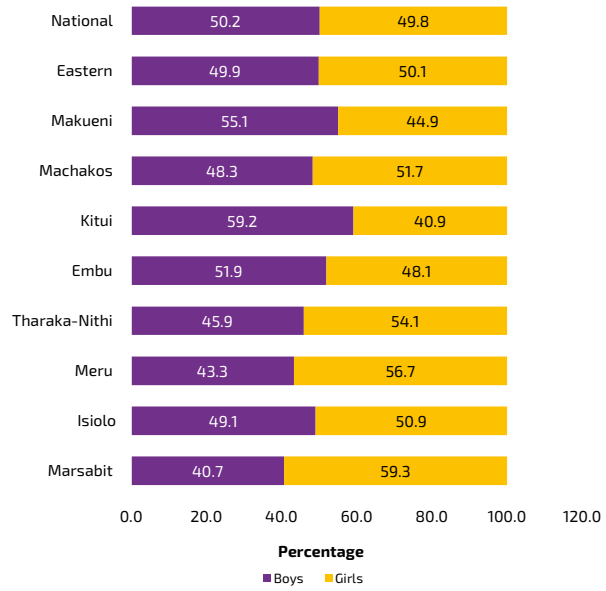


Fig. 4: Percentage of children enrolled in ECDE by county and gender

- Nationally, there was near gender balance in the enrolment in preschool with boys at 50.2% and girls at 49.8%.
- The Eastern Region mirrors the national trend, with preschool boys at 49.9% and girls at 50.1%.
- Kitui County had the highest percentage of the children enrolled in ECDE being boys at 59.2%.
- Marsabit County had the highest percentage of the children enrolled in ECDE being girls at 59.3%.

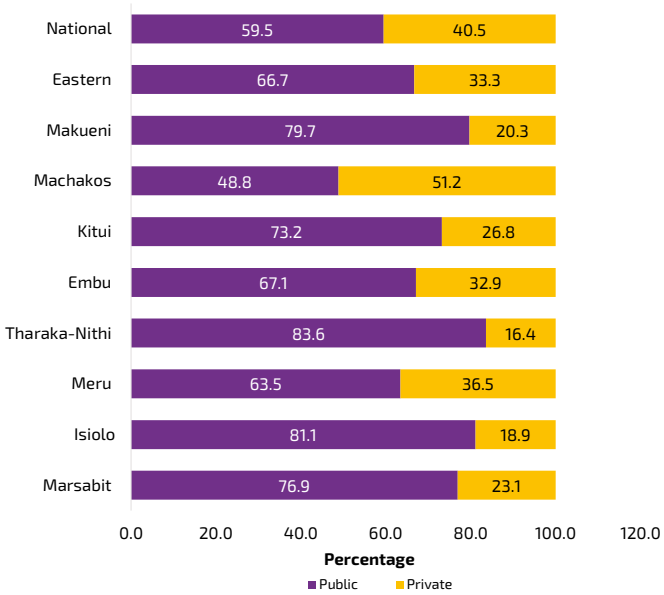


Fig. 5: Percentage of children enrolled in ECDE by county and type of centre attended

- Nationally, 59.5% of the learners in preschool were enrolled in public ECDE centres while the remaining 40.5% were in private ECDE centres.
- In Eastern Region, 66.7% of the learners in preschool were enrolled in public ECDE centres while 33.3% were in private ECDE centres.

- Tharaka-Nithi County had the highest percentage of their preschool learners, 83.6%, enrolled in public ECDE centres.
- Machakos County had the highest percentage of its preschool learners enrolled in private ECDE centres in the region at 51.2%, which was higher than the national average.

School Attendance

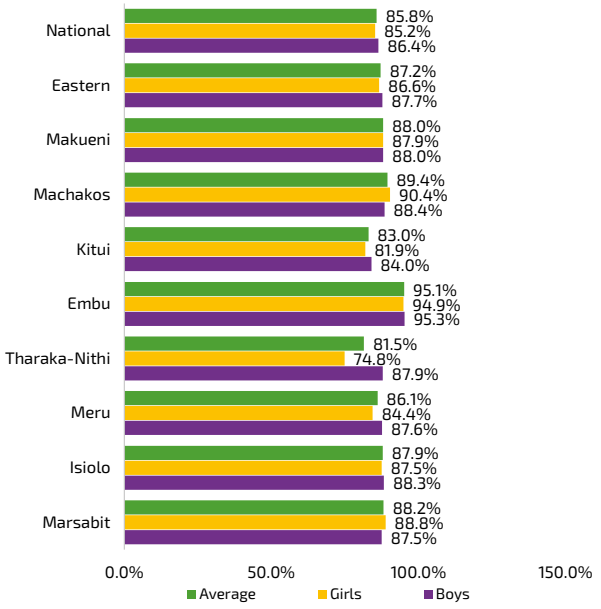


Fig. 6: School attendance by county and gender

- Nationally, 14.2% of learners were absent from schools on the day of the survey; absenteeism was slightly higher among girls (14.8%) than boys (13.6%).
- Eastern Region had a marginally lower school absenteeism rate (12.8%) than the national average (14.2%).
- School absenteeism in the Eastern Region was higher among girls (13.4%) than boys (12.3%).
- Tharaka Nithi County had the highest absenteeism rate of 18.5% of leaners on the day of the survey. It also had the highest absenteeism rate (25.2%), among girls in the region.
- Embu County had the least absenteeism rate, with an average of 4.9% of learners being absent on the day of the survey.

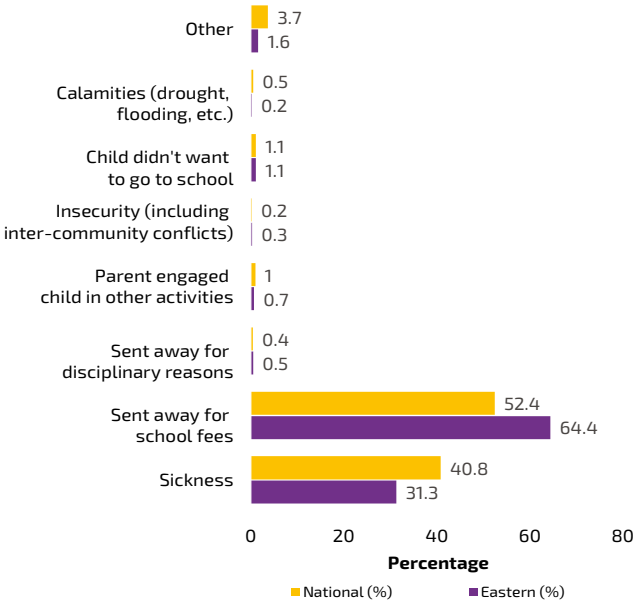


Fig. 7: Most mentioned reasons for school absenteeism among learners

- Nationally, the most mentioned reason for school absenteeism was being sent away for school fees (52.4%), followed by sickness (40.8%).
- 64.4% of learners who were absent on the day of the survey in the region had been sent away for school fees/levies.
- Sickness accounted for 31.3% of absenteeism cases in the Eastern Region.

School factors impacting learning outcomes

Table 3: Average primary school class size and teachers/stream ratio

County	Average Class Size	Teachers/Stream Ratio
Marsabit	41	0.91
Isiolo	40	1.34
Meru	31	0.99
Tharaka-Nithi	24	1.03
Embu	32	1.10
Kitui	28	0.92
Machakos	40	1.14
Makueni	28	1.00
Eastern	**32**	**1.02**
National	**41**	**0.99**

- The average class size in the Eastern Region was 32 learners per stream, while the national average was 41 learners.
- The teacher/classroom ratio was 1.02, marginally better than the national average (0.99).
- Tharaka-Nithi County had the smallest average class size at 24 learners, while Marsabit County had the largest average class size at 41 learners.
- Isiolo County had the highest teacher/classroom ratio in the region at 1.34, whereas Marsabit County had the lowest ratio at 0.91.

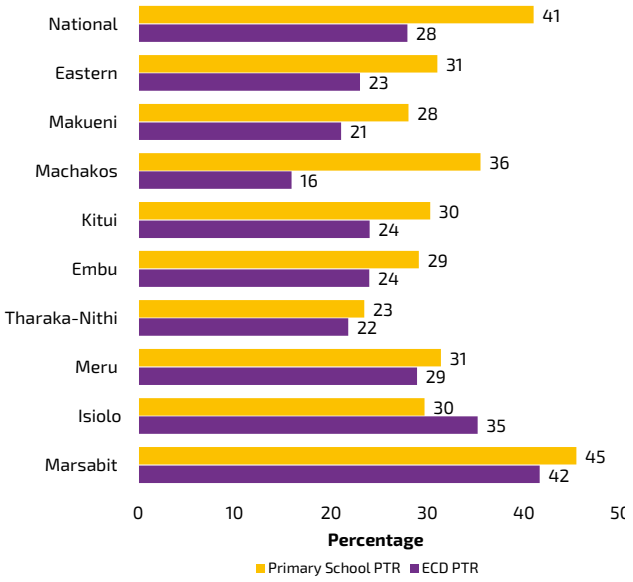


Fig. 8: Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR) by county and level of school

- Nationally, the Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR) was 28:1 for ECDE and 41:1 for primary school.
- The Eastern Region had an ECDE PTR of 23:1 and a primary school PTR of 31:1, which are better than the national averages.
- Machakos County had the best ECDE PTR at 16:1, for early childhood education.
- Marsabit County had the worst PTR at both ECDE (42:1) and primary school (45:1) levels, exceeding the national averages for both levels.

Home and social factors impacting learning outcomes

Table 4: Percentage of pregnant girls who returned to school after delivery

County	Number of pregnancy cases reported	Percentage of pregnancy cases across counties	Number of girls who returned to school after delivery	Percentage of girls who returned to school
Marsabit	88	4.0	28	31.6
Isiolo	68	3.1	27	40.0
Meru	585	26.6	117	20.0
Tharaka-Nithi	217	9.9	135	62.4
Embu	125	5.7	29	23.1
Kitui	844	38.2	230	27.3
Machakos	49	2.2	0	0.0
Makueni	226	10.3	38	17.0
Eastern	**2,203**	**100**	**605**	**27.5**
National	**19,230**		**8,168**	**42.5**

- Only 27.5% of the school girls reported pregnant in the region in the one year to the survey returned to school after giving birth.
- Machakos County contributed the least to the regional teenage pregnancy burden (2.2%), but had zero percent return rate to school.
- Kitui County contributed the most to the cases of pregnancies reported in the region at (38.2%) followed by Meru County at 26.6%.
- Tharaka Nithi County had the highest return to school rate for girls who were reported pregnant, with more than half (62.4%) of the reported cases returning to school. This rate is one and half times the national average and more than double the regional average.

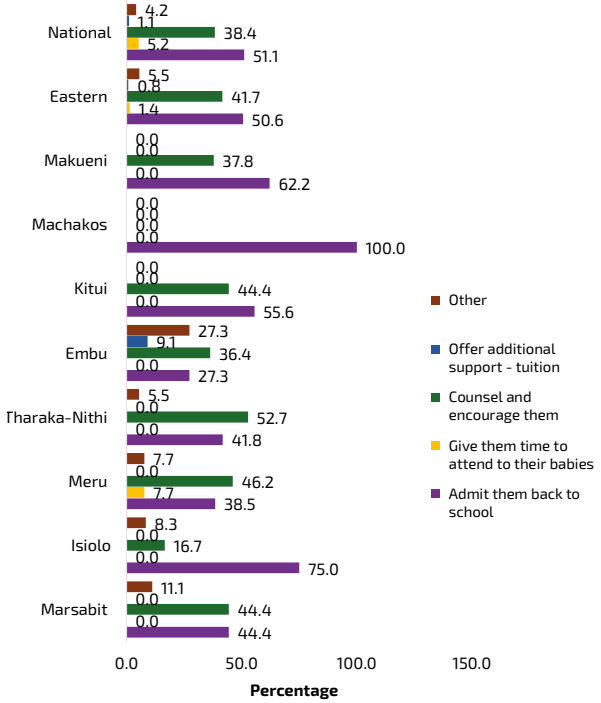


Fig. 9: School heads' opinion on the support measures to be given to pregnant girls and those with babies

- 51.1% and 43.7% of school heads nationally and in the region respectively identified implementation of return to school policy as one of the key support measures that should be extended to pregnant girls and those with babies..
- 41.7% of school heads in the region wanted counselling services extended to pregnant girls.
- All school heads in Machakos County (100%) and the majority in Isiolo County (75%) identified readmission to school as the most important form of support to pregnant girls and teenage mothers.
- Readmission to school was the most preferred form of support to pregnant girls/ teenage mothers in all counties in the region except Tharaka-Nithi and Meru.

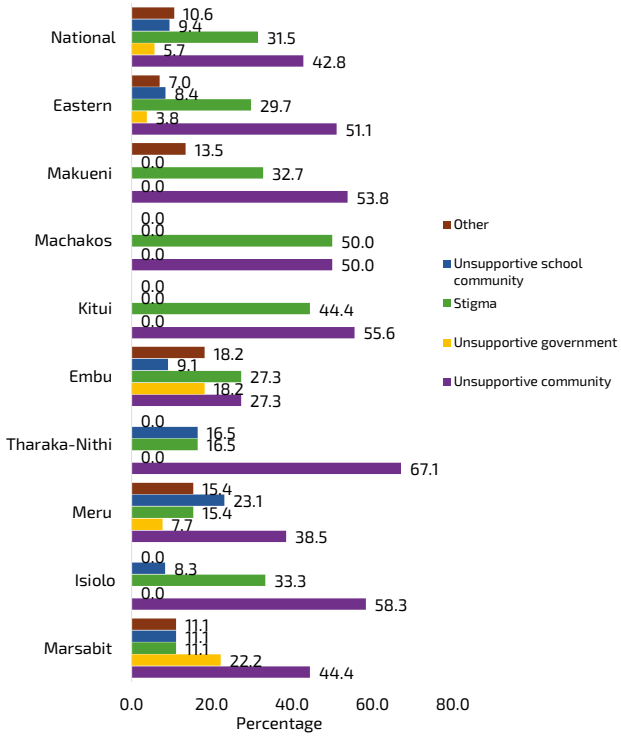


Fig. 10: Main challenges school managers face in supporting pregnant girls/teenage mothers in school

- 51.1% of school heads in the region identified unsupportive community as the main challenge they are facing in supporting pregnant girls/teenage mothers to continue with their education.
- 29.7% of school heads in the region reported stigma as a major challenge they are facing in supporting pregnant girls/teenage mothers to continue with their education.
- School heads in Tharaka-Nithi County cited the main challenges to be unsupportive community (67.1%), while those in Machakos County indicated stigma (52.6%) to be the main challenge in supporting teenage mothers in school.
- Unsupportive community was identified as the main challenge in all counties except in Machakos County where school heads were divided 50:50 between unsupportive community and stigma as the main challenges.

Table 5: Learning conditions in schools by County

County	Percentage of schools with a case of children learning in the open	Percentage of schools with a case of shared classrooms	Percentage of schools with a case of children sitting on the floor	Percentage of schools without a playing field	Percentage of schools without school library	Percentage of schools not fenced
Marsabit	10.5	10.5	10.5	12.6	63.0	10.5
Isiolo	14.0	11.6	11.6	32.6	81.4	27.9
Meru	0.0	2.4	2.4	11.9	78.6	9.5
Tharaka-Nithi	0.0	2.3	0.0	22.2	80.1	11.6
Embu	0.0	9.8	2.0	15.8	79.1	11.8
Kitui	5.2	2.6	5.2	26.7	89.0	10.5
Machakos	3.9	9.9	7.9	34.1	77.8	15.8
Makueni	2.7	8.0	0.0	15.0	80.1	33.0
Eastern	**3.4**	**6.2**	**4.2**	**22.8**	**81.0**	**16.0**
National	**5.9**	**9.8**	**8.4**	**22.3**	**74.3**	**12.1**

- 81% of schools in the region did not have a school library, which is higher than the national average.
- 22.8% of schools in the region did not have a playing field for learners.
- Isiolo County had the highest percentage of schools (11.6%) with at least a case of children sitting on the floor. It also had the highest percentage of schools (14%) with at least a case of children learning in the open.
- Makueni County had the highest percentage of schools that were not fenced at 33% against the national and regional averages of 12.1% and 16% respectively.

School health and safety concerns

This section provides an analysis of health and safety concerns in the region based on the government standards and guidelines. Some of the emerging gaps are highlighted.

Table 6: Percentage of schools that provide the following health services by location and school type

County	Average distance to the nearest health facility	Percentage of schools providing psychosocial support	Percentage of schools with a sick bay/clinic	Percentage of schools linked to a health facility	Percentage of schools with feeding programme
Marsabit	3.6	11.3	53.8	32.8	64.3
Isiolo	5.1	.	39.5	0.0	72.1
Meru	3.4	0.0	57.1	2.4	64.3
Tharaka-Nithi	2.6	50.0	53.7	4.5	62.4
Embu	3.9	0.0	29.5	3.9	47.0
Kitui	3.9	38.2	36.7	9.4	49.8
Machakos	3.8	37.4	35.8	16.3	62.2
Makueni	5.3	50.0	35.6	2.3	60.5
Eastern	**4.0**	**32.1**	**40.4**	**8.6**	**58.1**
National	**3.3**	**37.2**	**9.1**	**60.4**	**64.1**

- Schools in Eastern Region had an average distance of 4 kms to the nearest health facility.
- Tharaka-Nithi County had the shortest average distance of 2.6 kms, while Makueni County had the longest average distance of 5.3 kms to the nearest health facility.
- Tharaka-Nithi and Makueni counties had the highest percentage of their schools providing psychosocial support (50%), which is above the regional and national averages of 32.1% and 37.2%, respectively.
- Isiolo County had the highest percentage of the schools (72.1%) with feeding programmes.
- 40.4% of schools in the region reported providing psychosocial support, while 58.1% of the schools had a school feeding.

Table 7: Sources of drinking water by county

County	Borehole	Well	Rain water	Piped water	Water vendors	River
Marsabit	23.1	8.4	58.0	6.3	2.1	2.1
Isiolo	34.9	0.0	7.0	46.5	7.0	4.7
Meru	14.3	0.0	7.1	71.4	2.4	4.8
Tharaka-Nithi	4.5	0.0	2.3	84.2	0.0	9.0
Embu	8.5	0.0	3.9	83.7	2.0	2.0
Kitui	18.4	2.6	48.6	26.1	1.6	2.6
Machakos	46.3	2.0	17.7	14.2	16.0	3.9
Makueni	39.5	8.0	26.8	12.7	2.3	10.7
Eastern	**26.1**	**2.8**	**24.7**	**36.3**	**5.0**	**5.1**
National	**28.5**	**4.5**	**18.8**	**38.0**	**4.1**	**6.2**

- Rainwater usage was more prevalent in Eastern Region at 24.7%, than the national average of 18.8%.
- The region had an average school connectivity to piped water at 36.3% against the national average of 38%.
- Borehole usage was highest in Machakos County at 46.3% and lowest in Tharaka-Nithi County at 4.5%.
- Rainwater usage was highest in Marsabit County at 58%, significantly above both regional and national averages.
- Tharaka-Nithi County had the highest school connectivity to piped water at 84.2% while Marsabit County had the lowest at only 6.3%.

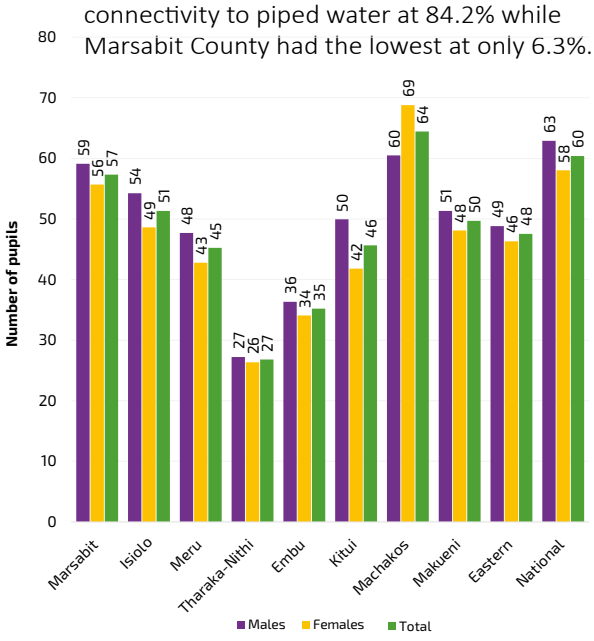


Fig. 11: Number of pupils using one toilet by county and gender

- On average, 48 pupils use 1 toilet in the Eastern Region, with 49 boys and 46 girls per toilet.
- The national average is 60 learners per toilet; 63 boys per toilet, and 58 girls per toilet.
- Isiolo County had the highest number of pupils

sharing a single toilet at 51 on average; with 62 boys and 52 girls per toilet.

- Tharaka-Nithi County had the lowest pupils/ toilet ratio with 27 pupils using 1 toilet; 27 boys per toilet and 26 girls per toilet.

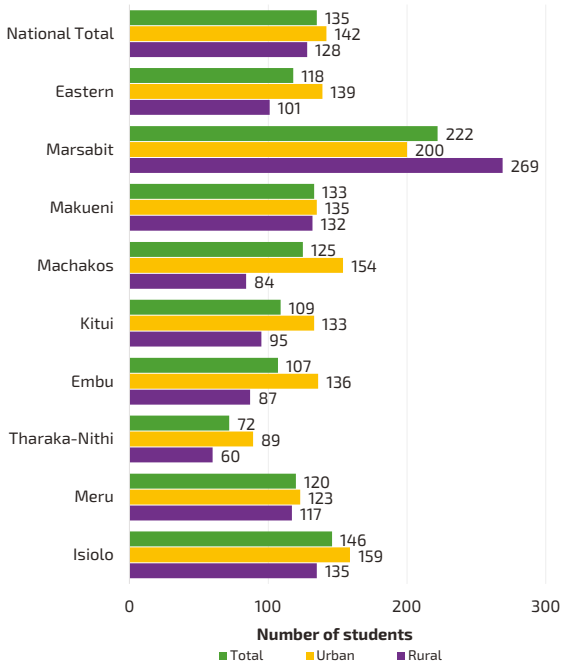


Fig. 12: Number of pupils using one handwashing point by location of the school

- Nationally, there were 135 learners sharing one functional handwashing point.
- The average number of learners per functional handwashing point in the Eastern Region was 118.
- The average number of pupils per handwashing point in urban schools in Eastern Region was 139, which is below the national average of 142.
- Marsabit County had the highest average with 222 pupils per handwashing point; 269 in rural schools and 200 in urban areas.
- In all counties in the region, except Marsabit, urban schools had higher numbers of pupils per handwashing point than rural schools.

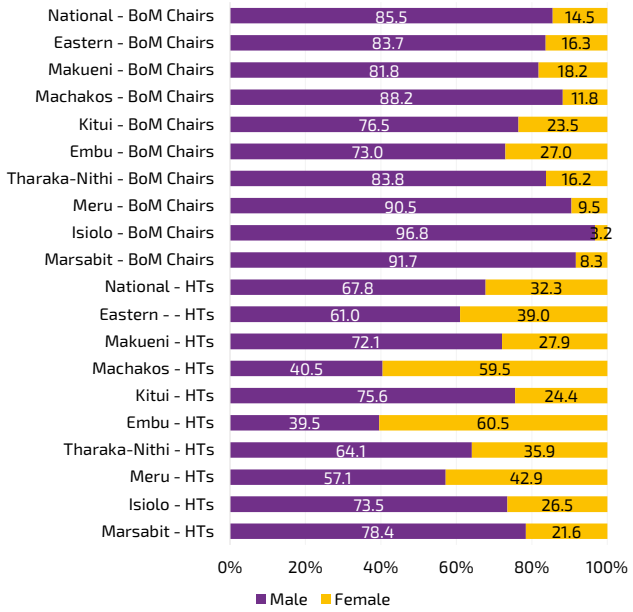


Fig. 13: Distribution of School Heads (HTs) and Boards of Management (BoM) chairpersons by county and gender

- Women are overly under-represented in the management of schools.
- Embu and Machakos counties were the only ones with more than 50% of school heads being women.
- The region had marginally better representation of women in both the school headship (39%) and BoM chairpersonship (16.3%) than the national averages of 32.5% for school headship and 14.5% for BoM chairpersonship respectively.
- Only 3.2% of the BoM chairpersons in Isiolo County were women.

Parental views on the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)

Parents expressed diverse opinion on the CBC at the national and regional level.

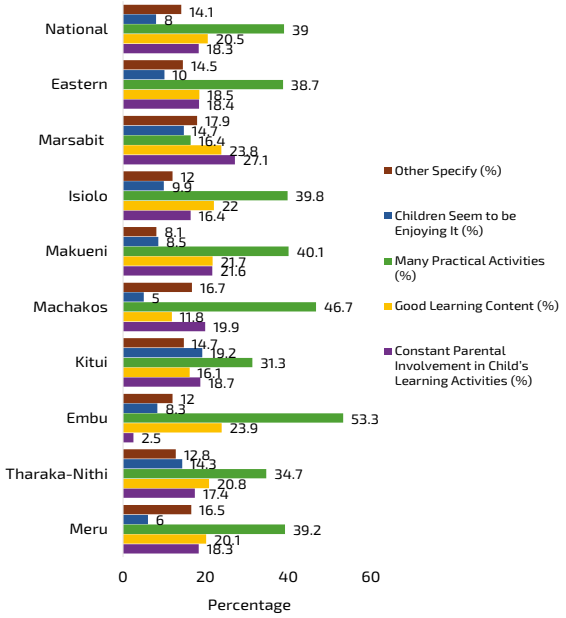


Fig. 14: Parental opinion in support of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC)

- Nationally, 39% of parents expressed support for CBC because of the many practical activities; 20.5% liked CBC because of good learning content while 18.3% supported it because of constant parental involvement in children's learning activities.
- In Eastern, 38.7% of the parents supported CBC for its many practical activities, followed by good learning content at 18.5%.
- The level of support for CBC among parents and the reasons for its support varied across counties, but in all of them, like in the case elsewhere in the country, was CBC's many practical activities.
- In Embu County, 53.3% of parents valued practical activities in CBC, which is above the national average of 39%.
- Marsabit County was the only one whose majority of parents' support for CBC was more because of another reason other than practical activities. 27.1% of Marsabit County parents supported the CBC for its constant parental engagement.

Table 8: Parental opinion against the CBC

County	Constant parental involvement in child's learning activities	Too much learning content	High cost of learning materials	Too many practical activities	Children are burdened with homework	It attempts to teach everything	Haphazard implementation	Other
Marsabit	12.6	11.3	56.5	7.6	3.6	3.8	0.1	4.5
Isiolo	15.9	6.0	55.9	8.5	6.4	3.1	1.3	3.0
Meru	12.3	3.9	72.8	3.3	3.0	0.4	0.4	3.8
Tharaka-Nithi	17.7	5.9	60.6	2.8	3.6	1.7	1.3	6.4
Embu	6.1	5.6	60.5	6.9	3.9	1.3	2.2	13.6
Kitui	14.7	5.7	71.7	2.8	2.2	0.8	1.0	1.2
Machakos	7.3	3.5	78.5	2.7	2.2	1.3	0.6	4.0
Makueni	10.6	3.4	80.4	2.2	0.6	0.4	0.6	1.8
Eastern	**11.5**	**4.9**	**71.5**	**3.7**	**2.7**	**1.1**	**0.8**	**3.9**
National	**9.8**	**6.8**	**69.1**	**5.1**	**2.9**	**1.0**	**1.5**	**3.9**

- 71.5% of parents in Eastern Region didn't like CBC because of the high-cost of learning materials compared to 69.1% nationally.
- Makueni County led the way in the region with the highest percentage of parents (80.4%) opposed to the cost of materials while Isiolo County had the least percentage of parents (55.9%) identifying the high cost of CBC as a burden.
- 11.5% of parents in the region expressed dissatisfaction with CBC due to constant parental involvement in the children's learning activities.

Table 9: Parental views on how to make CBC better

County	Lower the cost to parents	Reduce learning areas	Minimise homework given to children	Post enough teachers to schools	Communicate better with parents	Others
Marsabit	63.3	6.3	6.7	12.2	7.5	4.1
Isiolo	60.9	9.8	18.8	5.5	3.4	1.7
Meru	81.7	3.4	3.8	4.6	2.9	3.7
Tharaka-Nithi	76.4	4.5	3.8	7.4	2.1	5.9
Embu	68.0	4.1	2.8	9.5	4.2	11.4
Kitui	81.1	5.1	3.7	4.7	2.7	2.8
Machakos	78.9	3.3	3.2	6.5	4.1	4.0
Makueni	92.5	2.9	0.6	2.9	0.0	1.0
Eastern	**79.1**	**4.2**	**4.0**	**5.8**	**3.1**	**3.8**
National	**74.9**	**5.4**	**3.9**	**8.6**	**3.1**	**4.2**

- A majority of the parents in the region, 79.1%, wanted the cost incurred by parents on purchasing learning materials lowered.
- 5.8% wanted the TSC to post enough teachers to schools.
- Marsabit County had 12.2% of their parents suggesting the need to post more teachers.
- Makueni County registered the highest percentage of parents (92.5%) who wanted the cost incurred by parents on purchasing learning materials lowered followed by Meru (81.7%) and Kitui (81.1%).
- A significant percentage of parents (18.8%) in Isiolo County wanted the amount of homework given to children minimised.
- This demand is shared with parents in other parts of the country.

Learning Outcomes

This section presents findings of the learning assessment, highlighting learning levels of all the children enrolled in grade 4 and those completing primary (grade 6). Analysis was done across type of school enrolled in, location of school enrolled in (urban versus rural), and inter-county comparison.

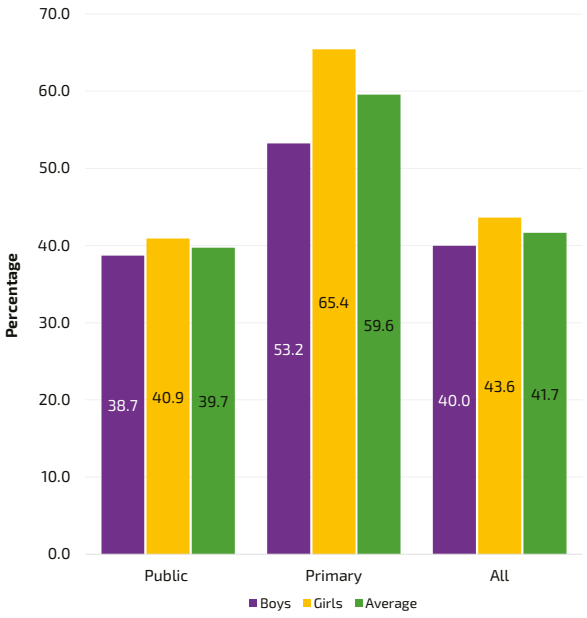


Fig 15: Percentage of grade 4 learners who at least met expectations in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story by gender and school type

- Grade 4 Learners in private schools outperformed their counterparts in public schools in the region in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story.
- Grade 4 girls outperformed their male counterparts in the region across both categories of schools in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story.
- Overall, 41.7% of grade 4 learners in the region could read and comprehend a grade 3 appropriate English story.

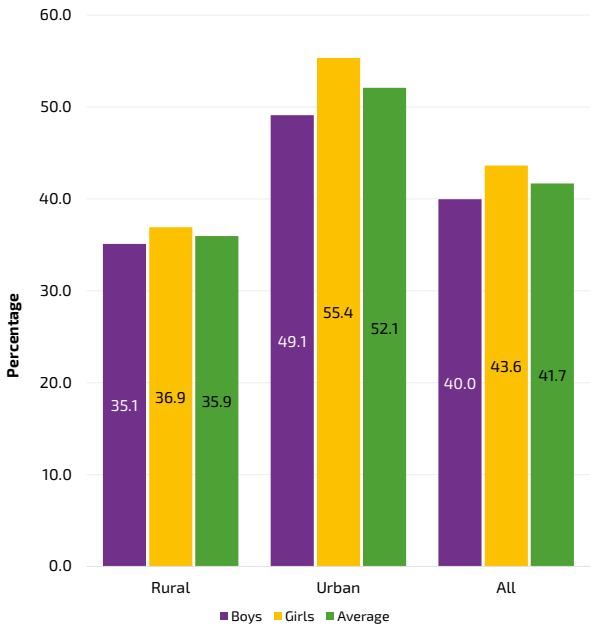


Fig. 16: Percentage of grade 4 learners who at least met expectations in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story by gender and location of residence

- Grade 4 learners in urban areas outperformed their rural-area counterparts in the region in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story.
- Grade 4 girls outperformed their male counterparts in the region across both locations of residence in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story.

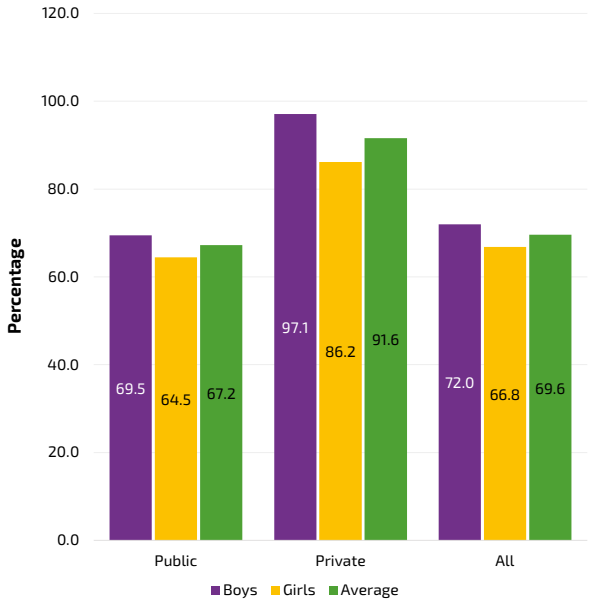


Fig. 17: Percentage of grade 4 learners who at least met expectations in solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem by gender and type of school attended

- Generally, grade 4 learners performed better in numeracy than they did in literacy across board.
- Grade 4 learners in private schools outperformed their counterparts in public schools in solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem.
- Grade 4 boys outperformed their female counterparts across both categories of schools in solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem.
- Overall, 69.6% of grade 4 learners in the region could solve a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem.

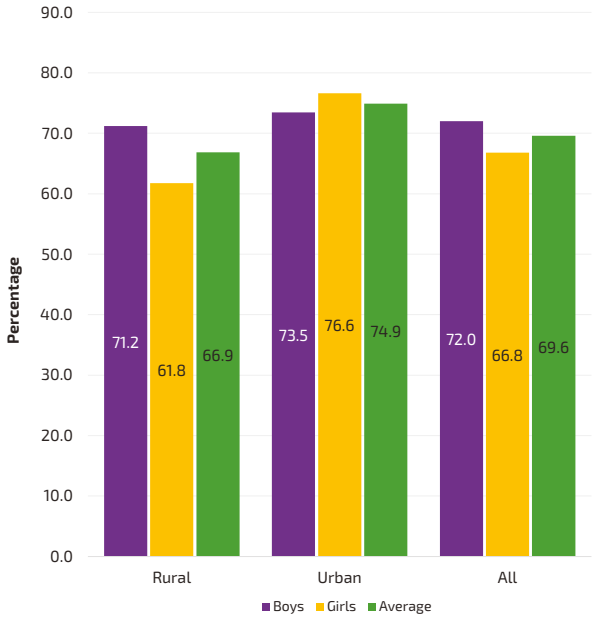


Fig. 18: Percentage of grade 4 learners who at least met expectations in solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem by gender and location of residence

- Grade 4 learners in urban areas outperformed their rural-area counterparts in the region in solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem.
- In urban areas, girls performed better than boys, with 76.6% of girls at least meeting expectations compared to 73.5% of boys.
- In rural areas, boys performed better than girls, with 71.2% of boys at least meeting expectations in solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem compared to 61.8% girls.

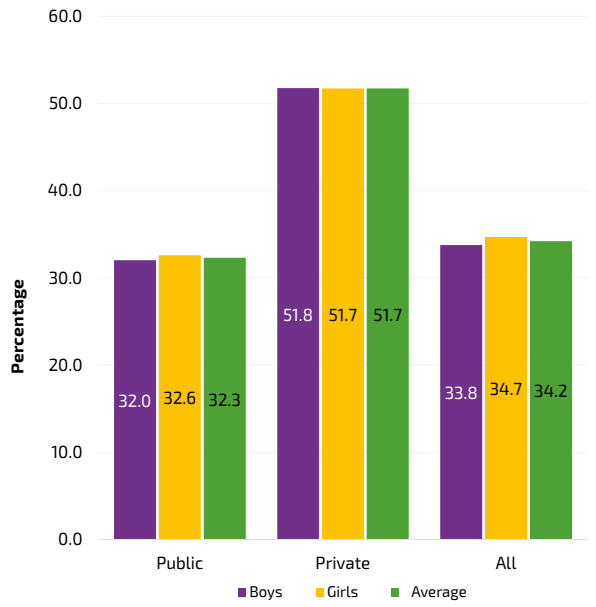


Fig. 19: Percentage of grade 4 learners who at least met expectations in both reading a grade 3 appropriate English story and solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem by school attended and gender

- Grade 4 learners outperformed their public-school counterparts in both reading a grade 3 appropriate English story and solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem.
- There was near gender parity in performance among grade 4 learners across the two school categories.
- Overall, only 34.2% of grade 4 learners could both read and comprehend a grade 3 appropriate English story, and solve a grade 3 appropriate division problem.

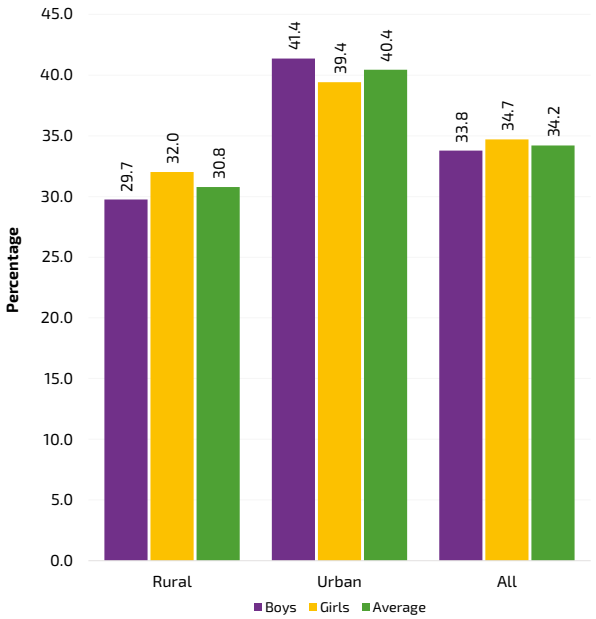


Fig. 20: Percentage of grade 4 learners who at least met expectations in both reading a grade 3 appropriate English story and solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem by location of residence and gender

- Grade 4 learners in urban areas were more likely to meet expectations in both reading a grade 3 appropriate English story and solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem than their rural counterparts.
- Grade 4 boys in urban areas performed slightly better than their female counterparts girls in both reading a grade 3 appropriate English story and solving a grade 3 appropriate numeracy problem, with 39.4% of girls meeting expectations compared to 41.4% of boys.
- In rural areas, grade 4 girls outperformed their male counterparts, with 32% of girls meeting expectations in both literacy and numeracy compared to 29.7% of boys.

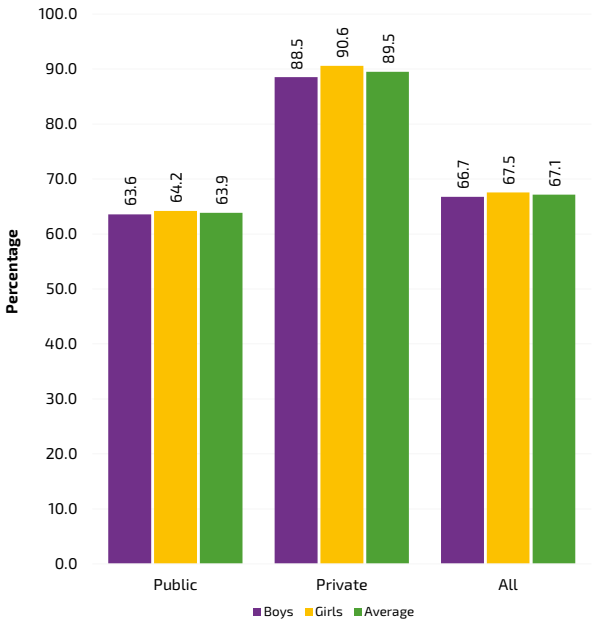


Fig. 21: Percentage of grade 6 learners who met expectations in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story by gender and school attended.

- Grade 6 learners in private schools in the Eastern Region outperformed their public-school counterparts in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story.
- There was near gender parity in the likelihood to read and comprehend a grade 3 appropriate English story among grade 6 learners in both categories of schools.
- Overall, only 67.1% of grade 6 learners in the region could read and comprehend a grade 3 appropriate English story. This means that 32.9% of learners completing primary education in the region could not read and comprehend a grade 3 appropriate English story!

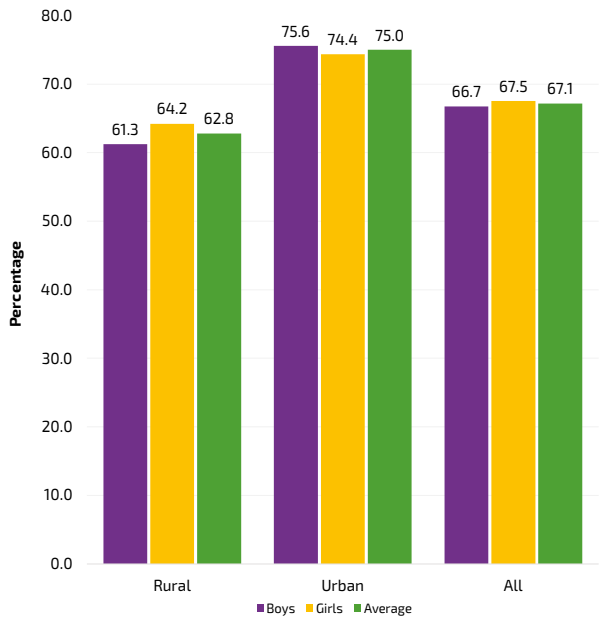
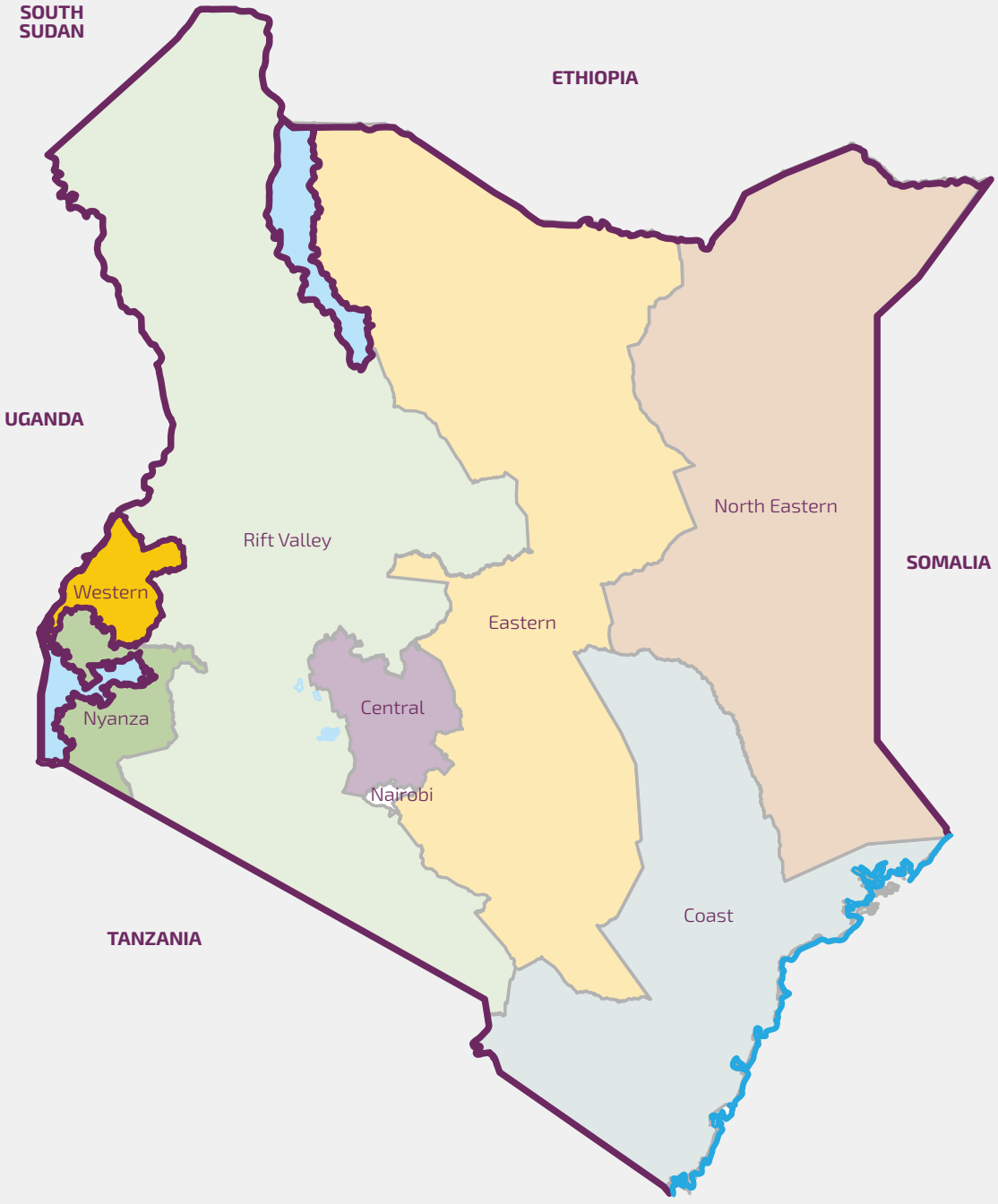


Fig. 22: **Percentage of grade 6 learners who met expectations in reading a grade 3 appropriate English text by gender and location of residence**

- Grade 6 learners in urban areas slightly outperformed their rural counterparts in the region in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story.
- In Eastern Region, grade 6 girls in rural areas performed slightly better than boys, while in urban areas, grade 6 boys performed slightly better than girls in reading a grade 3 appropriate English story.

Map of Kenya


SOUTH SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
UGANDA
SOMALIA
TANZANIA
Rift Valley
North Eastern
Western
Eastern
Central
Nyanza
Nairobi
Coast

Notes

Contacts

Usawa Agenda,
22 School Lane, Westlands,
P.O. Box 2907-00606,
Nairobi.

Tel: +254 114 209 420
Email: info@usawaagenda.org
Website: www.usawaagenda.org

