



Press Release
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Teachers are unevenly distributed in favor of urban and agriculturally rich areas Uwezo at Twaweza finds that 8% of Class 8 children cannot do Class 2 work

Nairobi, 15 December 2016: In its sixth year of assessing children's basic literacy and numeracy skills, Uwezo continues to find that children are not learning as they should be. On average, 30 out of 100 Class 3 pupils can do Class 2 work, while 8 out of 100 pupils in Class 8 cannot.

In addition, the Uwezo data highlight some critical issues in terms of teacher distribution. Teachers are critical to learning and the recent findings confirm that lower pupil-teacher ratios have a strong effect on learning.

- The teacher/classroom (stream) ratio is low. On average, there were 12 teachers for every school with 10 classrooms (streams).
- This ratio declines when only Teachers Service Commission (TSC) teachers are accounted for to 11 TSC teachers for every school with 10 classrooms (streams).
- Counties with the best teacher (TSC teachers) to classroom (stream) ratio (12 teachers for 10 classrooms/streams) were Kirinyaga, Kiambu, Embu, Nakuru, Nairobi, Kisii and Baringo.
- Counties with the worst teacher (TSC teachers) to classroom (stream) ratio (6 teachers for 10 classrooms/streams) were Mandera and Garissa.
- On average, 12 out of 100 teachers were absent from school on the day of the visit. This is worse than was reported in 2014 where there were 9 out of 100 teachers absent on the day of visit.

The Uwezo data also highlight challenges in regards to the implementation of policies around early childhood education (pre-primary).

- Only 4 out of 10 pre-primary teachers are trained.
- 3 out of 10 children are in primary school at the wrong age; 13% are aged 2-3 years while 21% are aged 6 or over.
- Half of pre-primary teachers (46%) are hired by county governments despite the lack of a clear policy on who is responsible for hiring these teachers.

These findings, released today by Uwezo at Twaweza, are from the sixth national learning assessment conducted between October and November 2015. Uwezo partners tested over 130,000 children, aged 6 to 16, from all 47 counties in the country. Data were collected from more than 4,500 schools and 69,000 households. The report, ***Are Our Children Learning?***, examines three interconnected challenges in education: learning outcomes and what drives them, teachers and access to pre-primary, and primary education.

In terms of learning outcomes, the findings continue to be sobering.

- **Kiswahili, pupils who can read a Class 2 story:** 5 out of 10 in Class 3 (46%) and 97 out of 100 in Class 8
- **English, pupils who can read a Class 2 story:** 4 out of 10 in Class 3 (40%) and 96 out of 100 in Class 8
- **Numeracy, pupils who can solve Class 2 division:** 5 out of 10 in Class 3 (47%) and 95 out of 100 in Class 8 pupils

Gender

Generally, girls had better learning outcomes than boys

Pupils who can read a story or do division at Class 2 level

- Class 3 Kiswahili: boys 42%, girls 50%
- Class 3 English: boys 36%, girls 43%
- Class 3 Numeracy: boys 45%, girls 49%

Socioeconomics

Generally, pupils from wealthier households had better learning outcomes than pupils from poorer households.

Pupils who can read a story or do division at Class 2 level

- Class 3 Kiswahili: poor 35%, non-poor 55%
- Class 3 English: poor 28%, non-poor 49%
- Class 3 Numeracy: poor 40% 45%, non-poor 54%
- All three subjects (Kiswahili, English and Numeracy): 25% of Class 3 children in government schools can do Class 2 work compared to 51% in private schools.

Location

Generally, pupils in urban areas had better learning outcomes than their peers in rural areas.

Pupils who can read a story in both languages and do division at Class 2 level

- All three subjects (Kiswahili, English and Numeracy): rural 25%, urban 41%
- All three subjects (Kiswahili, English and Numeracy): Nyeri 52%, Wajir 10%

These differences disappear by the time children reach Class 8 but this could be because Uwezo test are set at Class 2 level.

Uwezo also tested the effect that different characteristics had on children's likelihood of learning. Learning outcomes appear to be strongly associated with many fixed characteristics:

- Girls are 16% more likely to have better learning outcomes than boys.
- Pupils in private schools are twice as likely to have better learning outcomes than those in public schools
- Children from non-poor households are 30% more likely to have better learning outcomes children from poor households
- Children who attended urban schools registered significantly higher learning levels than those who attended rural schools.

Policy-makers can take heart from the strong statistically significant link between teacher distribution and learning: the higher the teachers/classroom ratio the higher the learning level achieved.

The results are largely positive in terms of access to education.

- On average, 93.5% of children aged 6 to 16 were enrolled in primary school. This varies very little between genders, and between urban and rural areas.
- On average, 6% of 6-16 year olds have never enrolled in school. This varied little between boys and girls. But only 4.3% of urban children have never been enrolled in school compared to 6.3% in rural areas.
- On the day of the visit, 15 out of 100 pupils were absent from school.

"In the sixth year of our assessment, our largest ever, Uwezo continues to show high rates of enrollment into schools or access to education, but low learning outcomes. In addition, variations by gender, location and wealth continue to exert a strong effect on learning levels. The good news is

that these data show a strong connection between teacher distribution, as demonstrated by teacher to classroom (stream) ratio, and learning outcomes. If the government can work towards more equitable distribution of teachers, with particular preference given to the disadvantaged arid, rural and poverty-stricken areas, we can stem the current trend of stagnating outcomes that entrench existing inequalities” said Dr Emmanuel Manyasa, Country Manager for Uwezo Kenya.

Dr John Mugo, Director of Data and Voice at Twaweza commented *“These Uwezo results present sobering insight as we begin our journey towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Education is the backbone of a developed society. Moving forward, we have an opportunity in the ongoing curriculum and education reform in Kenya. Priority must be made to investing in proven interventions that improve learning. Even so, the persistent inequalities in geographic location and household wealth demand urgent affirmative action. Children in arid areas must be provided with more and better teachers, and greater support for poorer households must be offered, so that every Kenyan child attending school today, can also learn.”*

The Uwezo learning assessment is conducted in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Children aged 6 to 16 were assessed in basic literacy and numeracy using a test based on the Class 2 curriculum. Uwezo aims to create a national dialogue about education, learning outcomes and policy priorities. In Kenya in 2015, data were collected by 9,100 volunteers who were supervised by 459 village coordinators. The village coordinators were overseen by 153 district coordinators while the assessment was monitored by 20 regional coordinators.

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For more information:

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Notes to editors

- The full report is available on <http://www.twaweza.org/>
- **About Twaweza**
Twaweza means “we can make it happen” in Swahili. Twaweza works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. We have programs, staff and offices across all three countries, and a world respected practice of learning, monitoring and evaluation. Our flagship programs include *Uwezo*, Africa’s largest annual citizen assessment to assess children’s learning levels across hundreds of thousands of households, and *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa’s first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership.