Zizi Afrique Foundation

# The Status of Junior Schools in Kenya

## Policy Learning for Universal Secondary Education (PLUS) Technical Research Report

## 2024

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **BOM** | Board of Management |
| **CBC** | Competency-Based Curriculum |
| **EA** | Enumeration |
| **FLANA** | Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment |
| **JS** | Junior School |
| **KEPSHA** | Kenya Primary School Heads Association |
| **KICD** | Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development |
| **KNEC** | Kenya National Examinations Council |
| **MoE** | Ministry of Education |
| **NPA** | National Parents Association |
| **PTR** | Pupil Teacher Ratio |
| **PWPER** | Presidential Working Part on Education Reforms |
| **TSC** | Teacher Service Commission |

# Acknowledgement

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**Partnerships for collective impact:**

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Photo Credit: ALiVE Think Aloud Assessment ,Kamahindu Primary School-Kiambu County

# Executive Summary

In 2023, the pioneer Competency Based Curriculum grade joined Junior Secondary (JS). The transition unlocked the second level of the education system and involved more than 1.25 million pupils, who had sat for the first Kenya Primary School Education Assessment in late 2022. At first, there was confusion and split strong opinions on where to domicile JS. However, with the coming of the new government and recommen dations from PWPER, a decision was made to domicile Junior Schools (JS) in primary schools.

The previous government had settled to domicile JS in the traditional secondary school and had extended investments to prepare them for a double transition. Therefore, the shift to domicile JS in primary schools caught them unprepared with various concerns from education stakeholders on the adequacy and capacity of teachers, management, learning and financial resources and responsibilities of parents and stakeholders, among others. The need for evidence was thus urgent.

Thus, to generate evidence on the state of JS schools, Zizi Afrique Foundation partnered with Usawa Agenda to conduct the first nationally representative research – that included both public and private schools. The research leveraged the Usawa Agenda Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment that covered all 47 counties in Kenya. The JS component reached 1,559 schools (92.7% of them being public). The goal was to generate evidence on what was happening within JS, six months after the transition and to also explore any emerging inequalities to inform programming and decision-making for inclusive and equitable JS. The findings of the study are stratified by county and school type.

## Key Results:

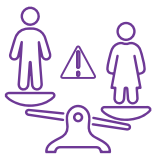
### Results 1


The majority of school heads in public JS had **at least a degree (60.8%)** and also trained in education management (72.3%) and were more experienced, making them suitable to manage schools

### Results 2

**More than three in every four students** in public primary schools transited to a JS school located within the same school. The public JS schools also attracted learners from other schools, as demonstrated by increased enrolment in grade 7 in selected counties.

### Results 3



**There is near gender parity at the national level**, however, this shifts in favour of girls in Mombasa, Kirinyanga and West Pokot and favour of boys in Mandera, Garissa and Wajir.

### Results 4

**On average junior schools had two teachers employed by Teachers Service Commission (TSC)** and one intern as compared to five in private JS. The teacher distribution was skewed and in favour of less marginalized countries.

Results 5

***7 in every 10*** public schools had a BOM, compared to five in every 10 in private schools and schools made variations on school uniforms for JS to be different from the host primary school.

Results 6

**Less than 10% of public JS** had a functional laboratory and pre-technical room or even separate toilets dedicated to the JS, and this differed significantly by county.

Results 7

While learning is supposed to be taking place, **only 45% of private and 28% of public JS** schools had learning materials for all learning areas.

Results 8


Schools rely on capitation to maintain the learners in school. There are still delays in releasing capitation with only **31% having received their second tranche**. Even amongst those that had received the capitation, there were deviations based on location with less than 10% of schools in Kisumu, Narok and Mandera counties having received the second tranche while more than 7 in 10 schools in Nyeri, and Baringo counties had already received it.

Results 9

Despite the government extending capitation to JS, public schools were still charging levies that led to students out of school on **average by 5 days.**

These results highlight emerging inequalities JS. In 2023, one year into JSs, the schools were not fully prepared to deliver learning due to lack of adequate teachers, learning materials and key infrastructure. This calls for the government to put in measures to deploy resources such as teachersthat meet the minimum curriculum establishment and learning materials as well as construction and equipping key infrastructure such as laboratories for inclusion and equitable provision of education at this level.

# Introduction 1

Kenya is in the process of implementing various Education reforms, with the most recent being the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms recommendations. For 32 years, Kenya implemented the 8-4-4 system, and moved to the 2+6+3+3+3, in 2017 (Inyega et al., 2021; Kavua, 2020). The older system had been criticized for being too academic oriented, not growing holistic learners and characterized by high-stakes examinations (KICD, 2016; Milligan, 2017). Guided by the vision of nurturing every learner's potential and focusing on character development, patriotism, citizenship, and inclusivity, the CBC is taunted as shifting focus to the acquisition of competencies and skills, necessary for the 21st century and allowing students to choose their pathways (Republic of Kenya, 2019).

The reforms have largely emphasized a learner-centred approach, vocational and technical education, and a continuum of education from early childhood development to the tertiary level (Ogutu, 2017). Potent challenges are evident in the implementation of CBC, including access, equity, quality, relevance, availability of educational resources, and efficiency in managing them, ineffective assessment strategies, inadequate funding, teacher shortages, unclear understanding of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), and insufficient teaching and learning facilities (Kavua, 2020).

In 2023, seven years into the implementation of the CBC program the pioneer CBC grade transitioned into Junior Schools (JS), unlocking the second level of the system. The transition involved 1.25 million pupils, who had sat for the first Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA) in 2022. This was a big moment for Kenya, with far-reaching decisions made at the time by the new government to domicile JS in primary schools informed by draft recommendations of the PWPER.

The domiciling of JS in primary schools was a departure from the previous government that had invested in existing secondary schools (e.g. building classrooms) to accommodate the double transition. Unlike primary schools, secondary schools are better resourced with facilities like laboratories essential for the successful implementation of JS. The decision came at a point when primary schools were not ready to host JS other than having one vacant classroom. This saw MoE embark on a journey to assess all primary schools in early 2023 – both private and public - on their readiness to host JS. By the end of the exercise, the majority of private schools especially the low cost private schools that are common in urban areas and some public primary schools were not accredited to host JS due to insufficient minimums like playgrounds, classrooms, and qualified teachers.

Despite the transition taking place, education stakeholders were concerned about the capacity and adequacy of teachers, availability of facilities like laboratories and pre-technical rooms, the availability of learning materials and the lack of clarity on financing and the roles of parents (M'mboga, 2021). Six months into JS, the need to examine the status of JS to inform critical decisions and better learning experiences for learners is not only critical but urgent. Zizi Afrique therefore partnered with Usawa Agenda to include a research agenda on JS in its national assessment (FLANA, 2023). The objective was to assess the status of JS schools in Kenya and unearth any emerging inequalities.

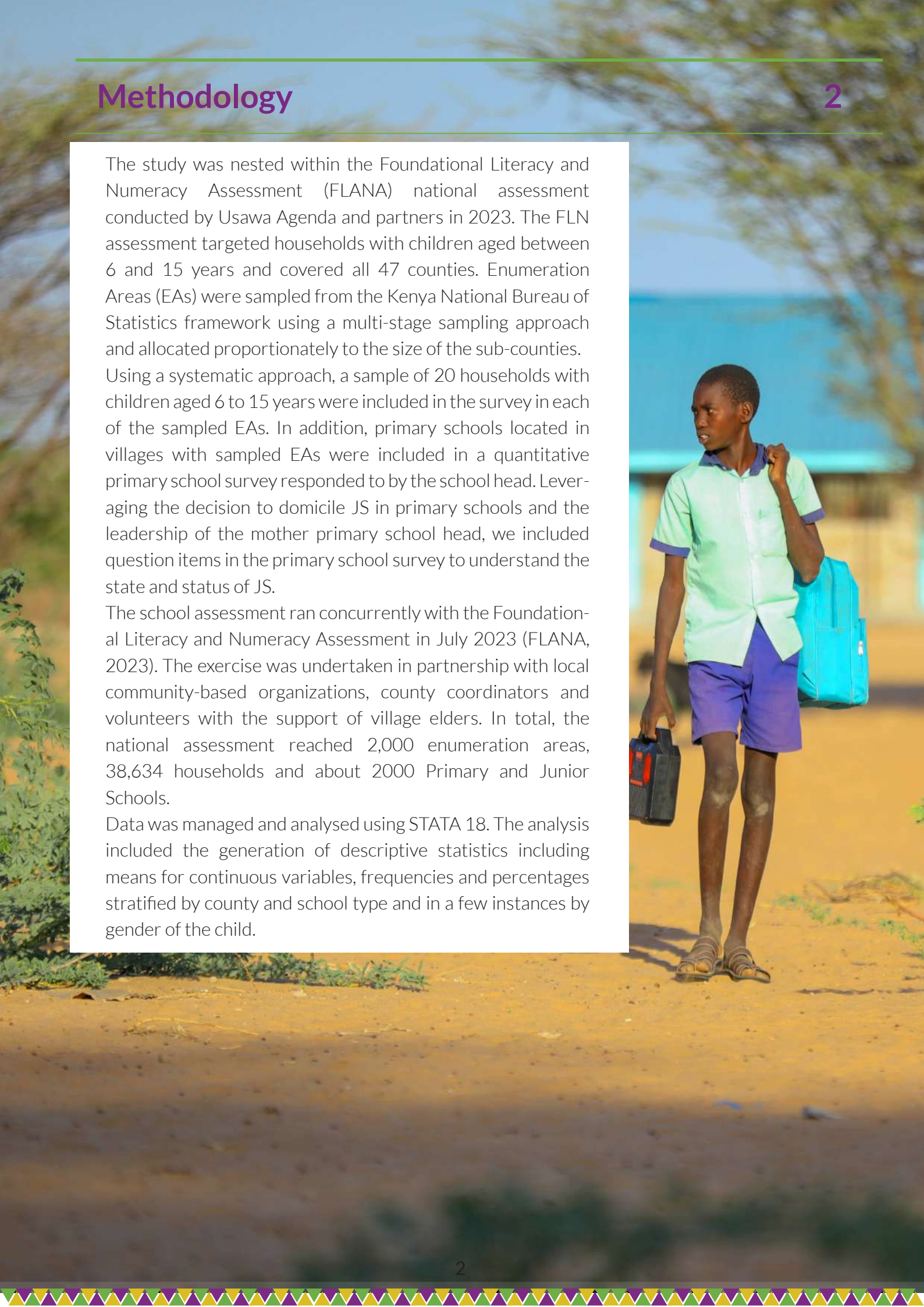
# Methodology 2

The study was nested within the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA) national assessment conducted by Usawa Agenda and partners in 2023. The FLN assessment targeted households with children aged between 6 and 15 years and covered all 47 counties. Enumeration Areas (EAs) were sampled from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics framework using a multi-stage sampling approach and allocated proportionately to the size of the sub-counties.

Using a systematic approach, a sample of 20 households with children aged 6 to 15 years were included in the survey in each of the sampled EAs. In addition, primary schools located in villages with sampled EAs were included in a quantitative primary school survey responded to by the school head. Leveraging the decision to domicile JS in primary schools and the leadership of the mother primary school head, we included question items in the primary school survey to understand the state and status of JS.

The school assessment ran concurrently with the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment in July 2023 (FLANA, 2023). The exercise was undertaken in partnership with local community-based organizations, county coordinators and volunteers with the support of village elders. In total, the national assessment reached 2,000 enumeration areas, 38,634 households and about 2000 Primary and Junior Schools.

Data was managed and analysed using STATA 18. The analysis included the generation of descriptive statistics including means for continuous variables, frequencies and percentages stratified by county and school type and in a few instances by gender of the child.



# Findings 3

## 3.1 Background Characteristics

### The proportion of primary schools with JSS:

The survey reached schools located in all 47 counties. During the survey, 1794 primary schools (88% public and 12% private) were reached. The majority of the surveyed public primary schools (91%) had a Junior School (JS) wing, compared to only 53.7% of the private primary schools. Nairobi had the highest proportion of private JS (35.7%), followed by Mombasa (23.3%), Kiambu (20.5%) and Narok (18.2%). Unlike Narok, the other counties with a large proportion of private JS, especially Nairobi and Mombasa are urbanized, and characterized by a high proportion of private schools (Wamalwa & Burns, 2018).

### Category and gender of JS:

The majority of JS schools, both public and private were day schools (93% in public and 74% in private) and of mixed gender (Table 1). About one in every four private schools were either providing full boarding facilities (1.8%) or mixed day and boarding (24.6%).

Table 1: Category and gender of JS by type

| | Public | | Private | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category | N | % | N | % |
| Day | 1,341 | 92.80 | 84 | 73.68 |
| Boarding | 11 | 0.76 | 2 | 1.75 |
| Day and boarding | 93 | 6.44 | 28 | 24.56 |
| | | | | |
| Gender | | | | |
| Boys | 10 | 0.69 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Girls | 14 | 0.97 | 1 | 0.88 |
| Mixed | 1,421 | 98.34 | 113 | 99.12 |

### Gender of school heads:

The study sought to understand the characteristics of the school heads (Table 2). The heads were managing both the primary and JS sections. In public JS, seven in every 10 (69.8%) school heads were male; the proportion was slightly higher in private schools (76%).

### Training of school heads:

Regarding teacher training, on the one hand, the majority of school heads in public JS had either a diploma (33.4%) or at least a degree (60.8%) – including 14.9% who had attained either a Masters degree or PhD. On the other, the majority of the school heads in private JS (40.4%) had a diploma as the highest level of teacher training and a further 30.7% had at least a degree. The study also shows that over 70% of the school heads in both public and private schools heads participated in education management training in the last two years preceding the study.

Teacher training and knowledge on education management is important, especially in the wake of CBC, characterized by debates on the minimum qualifications for school heads. Domiciling of JS in primary schools and the expectations of graduate teachers at this level could call for school heads to at least hold a degree as a minimum for them to manage both primary and Junior schools. Further, knowledge of education management is underscored to lead to positive

learning outcomes and cultures that promote efficiency and learning within the school (Javornik & Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, 2023).

Table 2: School head characteristics

| | Public | | Private | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender* | N | % | N | % |
| Male | 1,008 | 69.76 | 87 | 76.32 |
| Female | 437 | 30.24 | 27 | 23.68 |
| Education | | | | |
| P1 certificate | 71 | 4.91 | 32 | 28.07 |
| Diploma | 482 | 33.36 | 46 | 40.35 |
| Bachelor's degree | 677 | 46.85 | 26 | 22.81 |
| Master's degree | 186 | 12.87 | 9 | 7.89 |
| PhD | 16 | 1.11 | 0 | - |
| Other | 13 | 0.90 | 1 | 0.88 |
| Management training | | | | |
| No | 400 | 27.68 | 26 | 22.81 |
| Yes | 1,045 | 72.32 | 88 | 77.19 |
| Mean age in years* | 50.06 (6.82) | | 38.80 (9.26) | |
| Years as a school head | | | | |
| Overall* | 9.37(7.18) | | 5.61(4.53) | |
| In the current school | 4.08(3.89) | | 4.33(4.1) | |

**Age of school head:**

Overall, school heads in public JS were much older with an average age of 50 years (ranging from 25 to 62 years), compared to those in private JS with an average age of 39 years. However, the age of school heads in private varied significantly, ranging from 25 to 75 years.

**Experience of school head:**

School heads in public JS were also more experienced compared to those in private schools. That is, heads in public JS had on average served about 9 years as school heads compared to about 6 years among those in private schools. However, they seemed to have on average spent about four years in their current school – irrespective of the school type.

## 3.2 Enrolment And Transition

In 2023, Junior Schools had only one grade (grade 7), consisting of the first cohort of learners to transition under the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). The study compared enrolments for grades 6, 7 and standard 8. This helped to understand whether the transition to JS created shifts in some schools and counties. Further, transition to JS within the same school was explored by seeking information from the school heads to approximate how many of their learners had moved to grade 7 within the same school and whether they also enrolled learners from other neighbouring schools.

Table 3 shows the average class sizes for the participating schools stratified by gender and school type. Overall, public JS have more students than private schools. Unlike in public JS, grade 7 enrolment in private schools was slightly reduced, with an average of 31 learners compared to 34

in grade 5 and 38 in standard 8. The public JS are characterised by large standard deviations, indicating that some schools had huge enrolments compared to others.

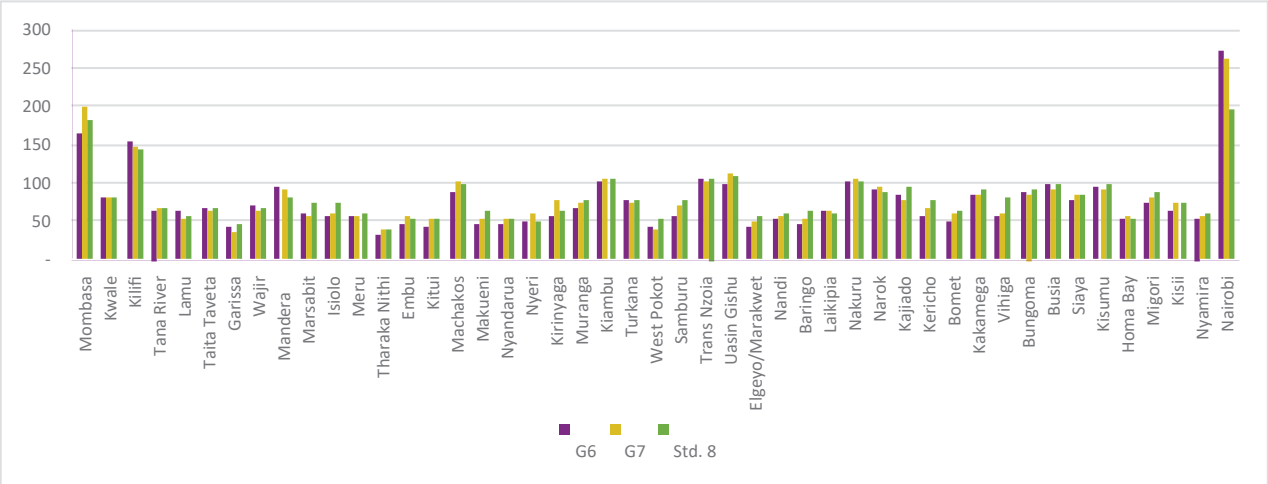
Table 3: Enrolment by class and school type

| | Public | | Private | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class** | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| **Grade 6** | | | | |
| Male | 37.07 | 33.41 | 17.81 | 12.11 |
| Female | 36.18 | 40.03 | 16.78 | 11.63 |
| Total | 72.93 | 71.24 | 34.45 | 22.87 |
| **Grade 7** | | | | |
| Male | 38.58 | 35.37 | 15.74 | 13.18 |
| Female | 37.88 | 36.40 | 15.57 | 14.47 |
| Total | 76.22 | 70.50 | 31.24 | 27.18 |
| **Standard 8** | | | | |
| Male | 39.82 | 37.62 | 19.58 | 15.51 |
| Female | 38.83 | 34.60 | 18.18 | 13.94 |
| Total | 78.29 | 68.68 | 37.67 | 28.50 |

Statistics by county show that enrolment in grade 7 in two counties – Nairobi and Mombasa increased significantly than in standard 8 and some instances than grade 6 (Figure 1). In the other counties, the increase in enrolments is as anticipated and does not show huge differences between the grades. Among private schools, other than six counties (Kajiado, Siaya, Kiambu, Kitui, Tana River and Wajir), which showed slight increases in enrolments in grade 7, the rest had on average 11 learners fewer in grade 7 when compared to standard eight. This indicates possible movements between schools during the JS transition window, particularly into public schools.

The average class sizes in grade 7 were large in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kilifi with on average 260, 197 and 146 students respectively, while Garissa with 35, Tharaka Nithi with 38 and West Pokot with 51 had the lowest average class sizes.

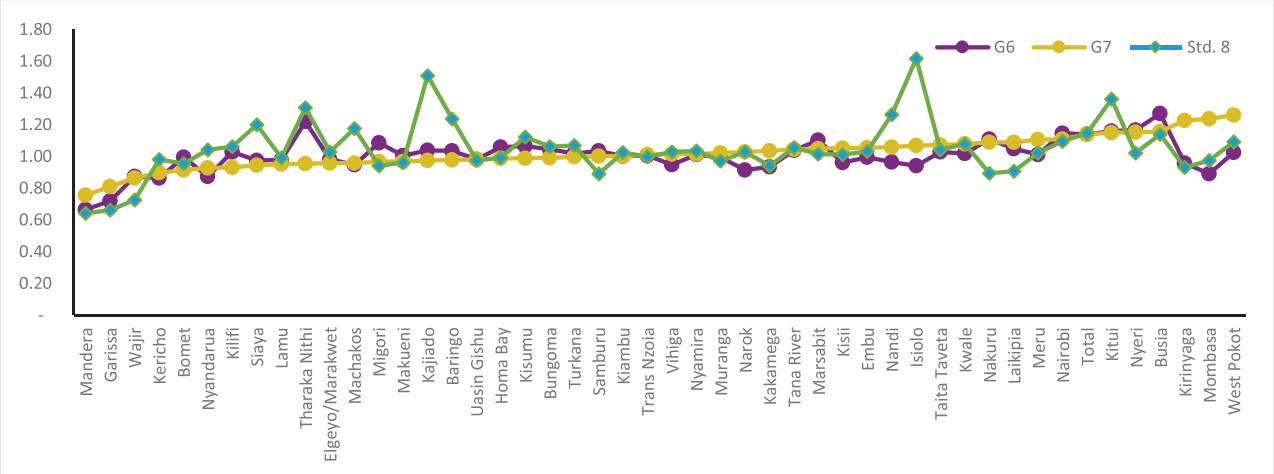
Figure 1: Average enrolment in public schools by county and class




Gender parity index (GPI): This is measures in terms of the ratio of female to male students. We find a GPI of 1 in the overall, meaning an equal number of boys and girls were enrolled in grade 7 (Figure 2).

The GPI in Figure 2 is sorted based on grade 7, which is of interest in this study, and shows significant differences across the counties. Counties with an index of above 1 imply more girls are enrolled than boys, while below 1 indicates more boys than girls. Mandera, Garissa and Wajir have the lowest GPI, indicating more boys are enrolled in grade 7 than girls, which is consistent with GPI for grade 6 and standard 8. These findings imply that national averages mask sub-national averages that are critical to realising inclusive and equitable education through targeted interventions.

figure 2: Gender parity index by county



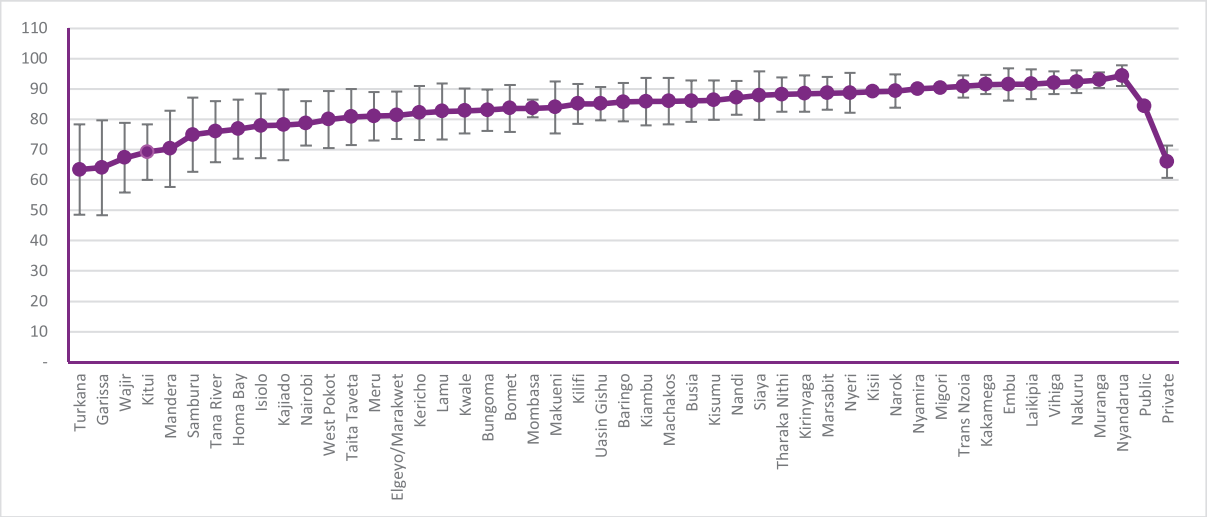

## Transition from primary to junior school:

To examine transition, school heads were asked to estimate the proportion of the students who transitioned to JS grade 7 from primary grade 6 from the same school (Figure 3). Overall, 84.3% and 66.0% of the students in public and private primary schools transited to a JS located within the same primary school, respectively. In terms of the counties, counties in the arid and semi-arid had the lowest proportion of students utilising JS in the same school, with Turkana, Garissa, and Wajir having the lowest reported transitions. However, counties in the central region had higher transitions into JS within the same public primary schools, with Nyandarua, Muranga and Nakuru topping.

It is however important to note that this data does not necessarily speak to non-transition and that those who did not transit within the same school may have moved to other schools. Movements to other schools during the transition period could be informed by several factors including family choices, accreditation of schools to host a JS, and perceived quality among others. This is confirmed by 85.3% and 88.6% of school heads who admitted that they attracted learners from neighbouring schools into their JS.

All the public schools in Mombasa and Nairobi were reported to have attracted learners from nearby schools, validating the spike in enrolment in grade 7 in the two counties. The two counties are characterized by a considerable proportion of low-cost private schools that were unlikely approved to host JS, and this could have triggered movement into available public JS (Wamalwa & Burns, 2018).

Figure 3 Transition to JS in the same mother primary school

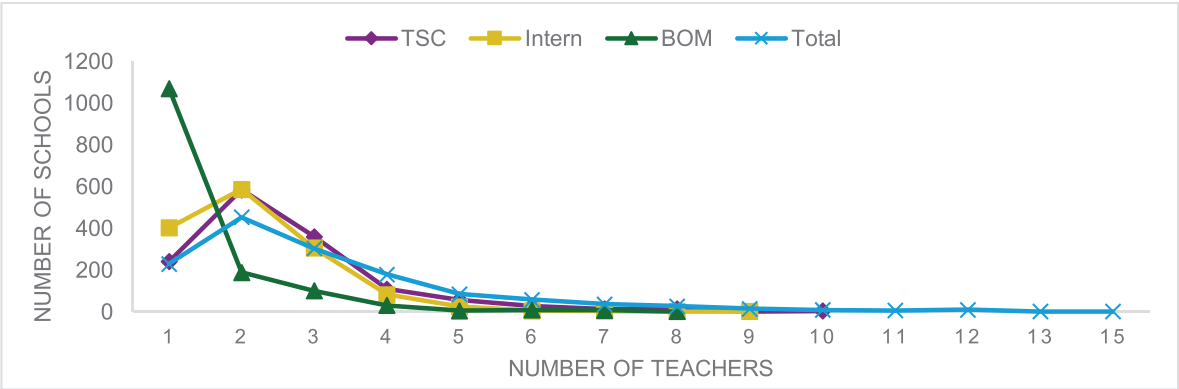



## 3.3 Teachers

### Distribution of teachers:

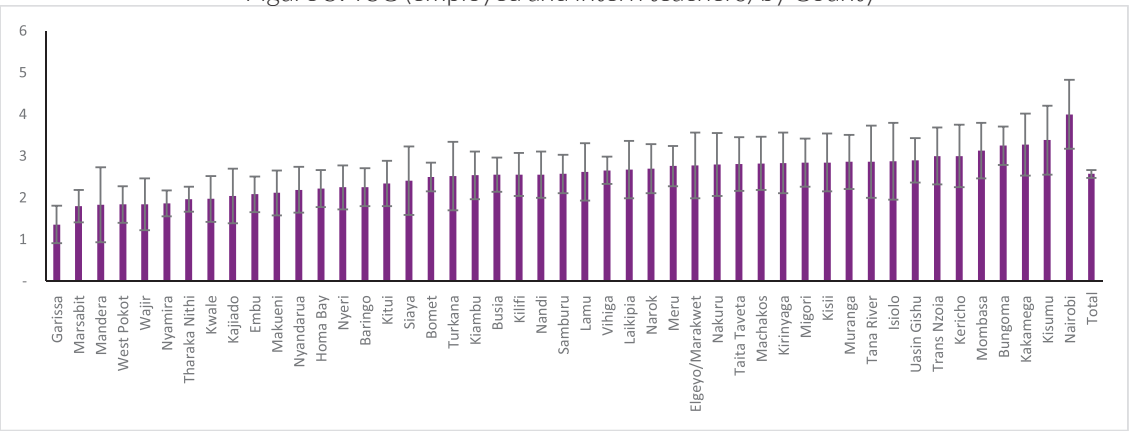
The survey sought to understand the number and distribution of teachers in JS. In public JS, this was examined by seeking information on the number of teachers employed by TSC either fully or as interns as well as those employed through the Boards of Management (BOM). Figure 4 shows the distribution of teachers in terms of their numbers and school. The majority of public JS had at least two teachers posted/employed by TSC, while almost one-half of the schools had at least two intern teachers. Moreover, all public JS had at least one BOM teacher (1070 out of 1445 public JS); about 3% of the schools had employed more than 3 BOM teachers.

Figure 4: Distribution of teachers by employment status in public JS



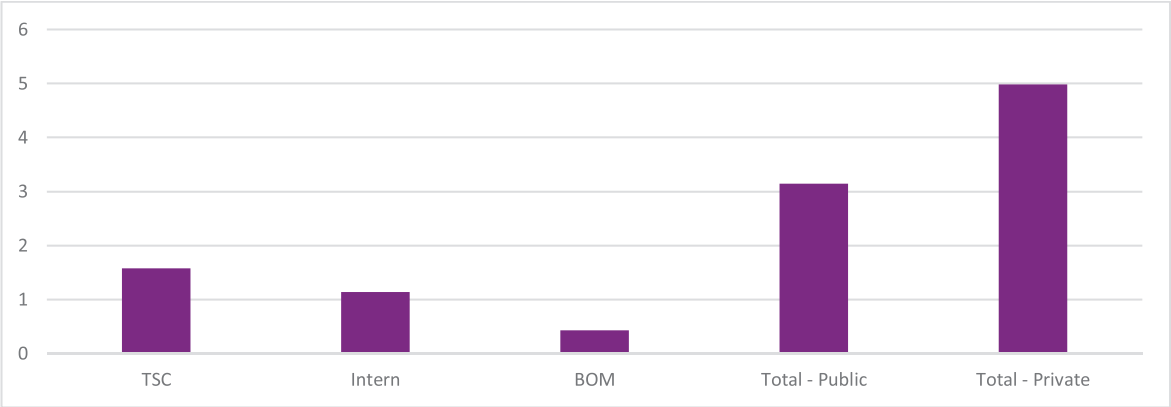

There are apparent differences in the distribution of teachers by geographical location (Figure 5). The counties in the north of Kenya, had on average less than two TSC-employed or intern teachers, as compared to an average of at least three teachers in Nairobi, Kisumu, Kakamega and Bungoma.

Figure 5: TSC (employed and intern teachers) by County




Public JS had on average less than 3 TSC/Intern teachers against all the learning areas, and this increased to an average of 3 teachers when BOM teachers are included (Figure 6). This is unlike private JS which had an average of 5 teachers per school.

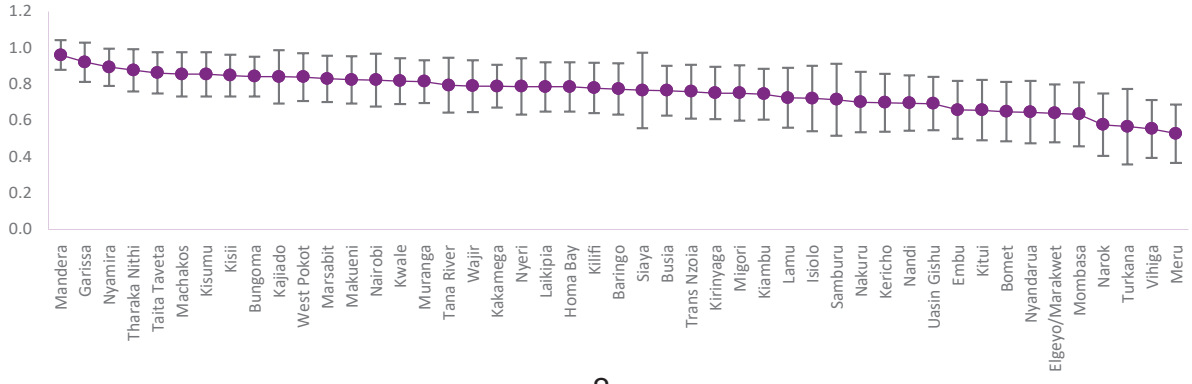
Figure 6: Average number of teachers in public and private JS




Further sharing of teachers between the JS and mother primary schools was explored (Figure 7). Overall, 75.6% of the public JS shared teachers with the mother primary schools. However, sharing of teachers with the mother primary school was more common in private schools (at 84.2%) than in public JS (at 74.9%). Counties with fewer JS teachers from TSC were likely to report sharing the teacher resources with their mother primary school; thus, acting as a mitigation measure for continued learning.

These results show inadequacies in staffing of JS schools, particularly the public ones. The content at this level is technical and certain learning areas may require specialized teachers. For instance, those handling languages may not have the capacity to teach pre-technical learning areas. Thus, students are likely to be exposed to insufficient learning and also an increased workload for teachers who have to handle several learning areas, which may be beyond their capacity.

Figure 7: Sharing of teachers with primary school (public schools)

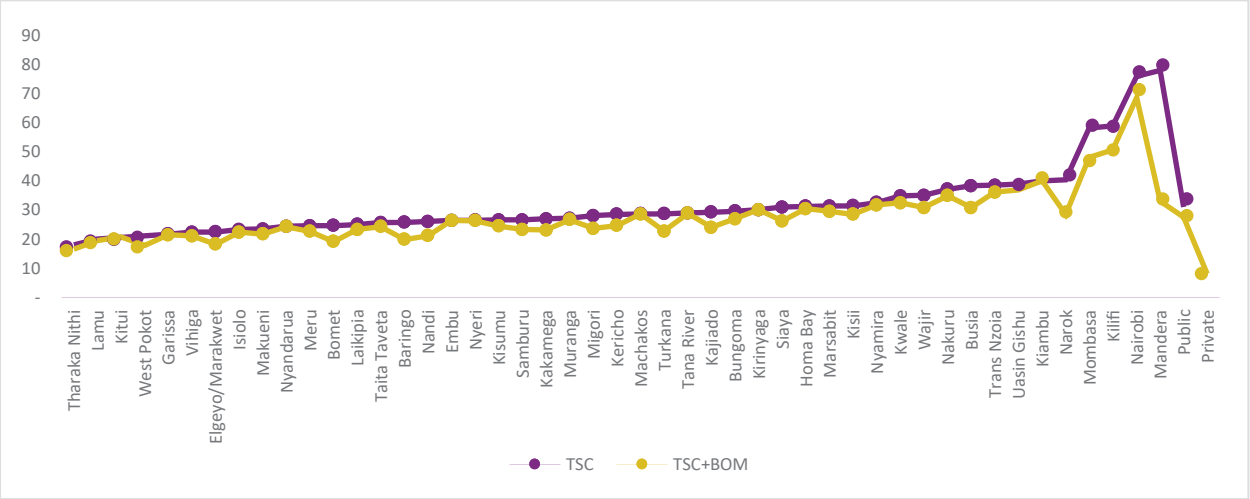


## Student-teacher ratio:

Figure 8 shows pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) in public JS and overall, for both private and private schools. This is a very crude measure given the presence of only one grade in 2023. The ratio considers only teachers dedicated to the JS and excludes those shared with the mother primary school. Two ratios are computed for public JS, the first when considering TSC teachers (both intern and those fully employed by TSC), and the second includes BOM teachers.

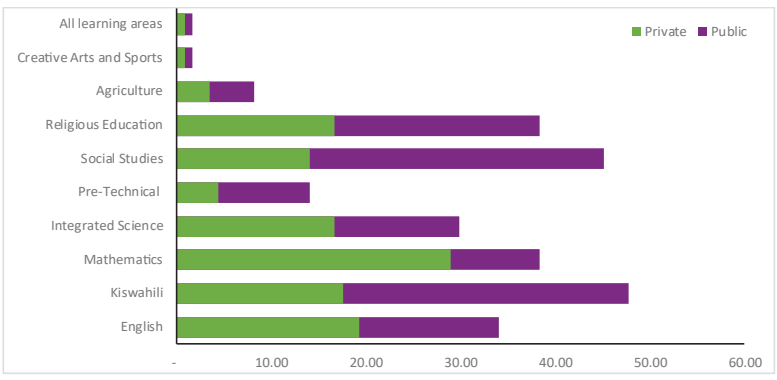
Overall, PTR in private JS is low, with an average of eight learners per teacher, unlike in public JS where the PTR is 31 and 28 when considering TSC teachers or the total teaching force respectively. Mombasa, Kilifi, Nairobi and Mandera have the highest PTR, which reduces significantly with the inclusion of BOM teachers. Counties with low PTR appeared to have employed few BOM teachers. However, it is important to note that at the time of this survey, JS had only one grade and thus the ratio is anticipated to change significantly with the coming of grades 8 and 9.

Figure 8: Pupil teacher ratio in public JS by county (overall for private)




Despite PTR being low and sharing resources with the mother primary schools, it is not clear how the JSs are managing curriculum establishment to have adequate teachers who are skilled enough to cover all the learning areas. This is because some learning areas like pre-technical require teachers with the prerequisite knowledge and pedagogies to teach such content. Thus we tried to examine the subject combination of teachers to establish learning areas that may not be well represented (Figure 9). Overall, less 2% of the public JS had teachers converign all learning areas. Creative arts, agriculture and pre-technical learning areas were hugely understaffed across both public and private JS. Despite public schoos having on average fewer teachers, they were able to teach more learning areas than in private JS, and this is attributed to sharing of teacher resources with the mother primary school.

Figure 9: Availability of teachers per learning area, by school type



## 3.4 Governance and Decision-making

### Boards of Management (BOM):

Seven in every ten public JS had a duly constituted and functional BOM in 2023. The expectation as per the MoE guidelines was that JS would have an interim board, though this would overlap with that of the primary school given joint administration under the same head. In contrast, only four in every ten private JS reported having a BOM. While the presence of BOM is not a requirement in private schools, it is interesting to note that several public JS were functioning without a duly constituted BOM as per the Basic Education Act (2013) and guidelines issued by the MoE. The first year under CBC transitions required various actions and decisions and thus presence of BOM was critical. Unlike in private schools, where the school management can make unilateral and key decisions including financial, and infrastructural development and investment in learning and teaching materials and engagement with parents, in public JS, such responsibilities are delegated to the school head and BOM. The public primary school head was also doubling as the head of the JS.

### Variations between JS and host primary school:

To accommodate learners and ensure a smooth transition and differentiation between the mother primary school, the study sought to understand the decisions that JS made concerning school uniforms and personal grooming. All schools (both public and private) made decisions on school uniforms for learners in JS, by opting for variations from that of the mother primary school. Moreover, the majority of the schools, especially those in rural settings, also made decisions for JS learners to wear shoes to school as a requirement and not option.

It is a common practice, and not a requirement for learners, particularly those in rural primary schools not to wear shoes in school. So, such decisions mean a change of practice, more so for rural populations and come with a cost. However, the decisions were critical for identity and also to address the social, mental, and psychological expectations of learners, who initially thought they would join the typical secondary schools. Decisions on person grooming particularly growing and or plaiting hair for JS students were also explored and the findings were that about half of the public JS (53.4%) allowed learners to grow/plait their hair, while 66% in private schools.

## 3.5 Infrastructure and learning resources

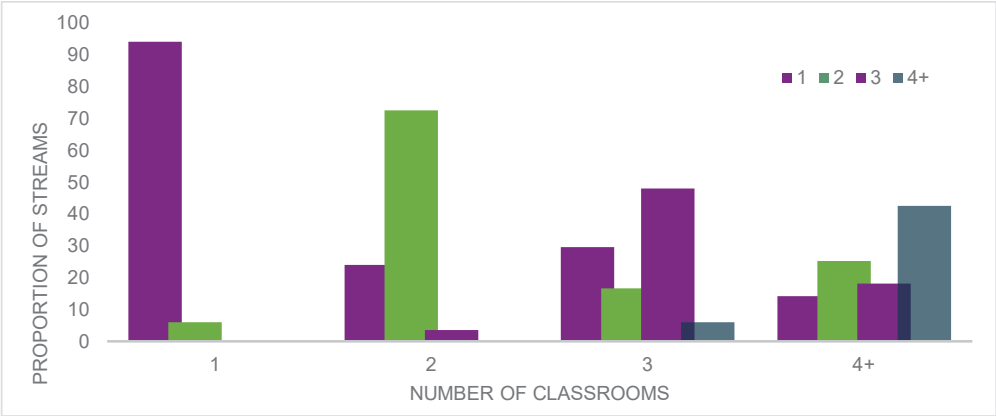
### Classroom:

Figure 10 shows the average number of available classrooms in public JS contrasted against the number of streams in grade 7 in 2023. In the majority of the public JS, the number of streams was equivalent to the available number of classrooms. For instance, 94.1% of JS with a single stream had only one classroom, the same case for 72.6%, 47.9% and 42.5% of schools with two, three, and four streams.

There are however instances where the classrooms available are not enough to accommodate or match the number of streams. For instance, 5.9% of public JS with more than one stream had only one classroom available for use. Similarly, 5.9% of some schools had more than four streams and only three classrooms available.

However, some schools had more classrooms than required at the time of the survey. For instance, we find that 24% of public JS with a single stream had two (one extra classroom) classrooms available for use. Similarly, 29.6% and 16.6% of some JS had either a single or double stream, yet they had three or more classrooms available for use. While these results may highlight excess facilities within the schools, it is likely in the coming years such facilities will be strained as more grades and learners join JS. Unlike in the public JS, 85% of the private JS were single streamed, with 46% of them having more than one classroom available for that single stream.

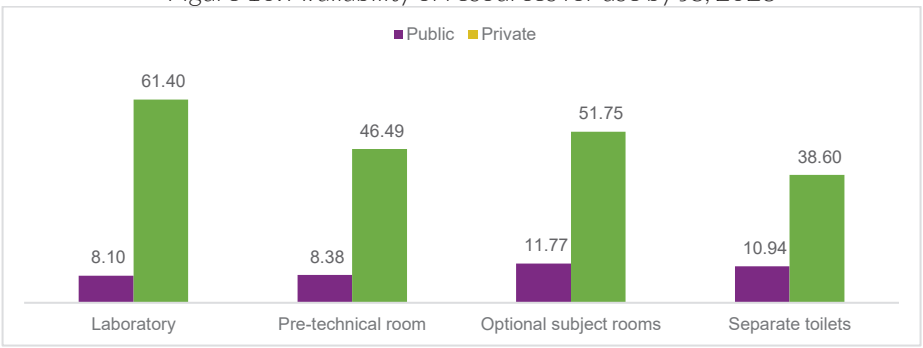
Figure 9: Number of classrooms against streams in grade 7 in 2023




## Learning resources:

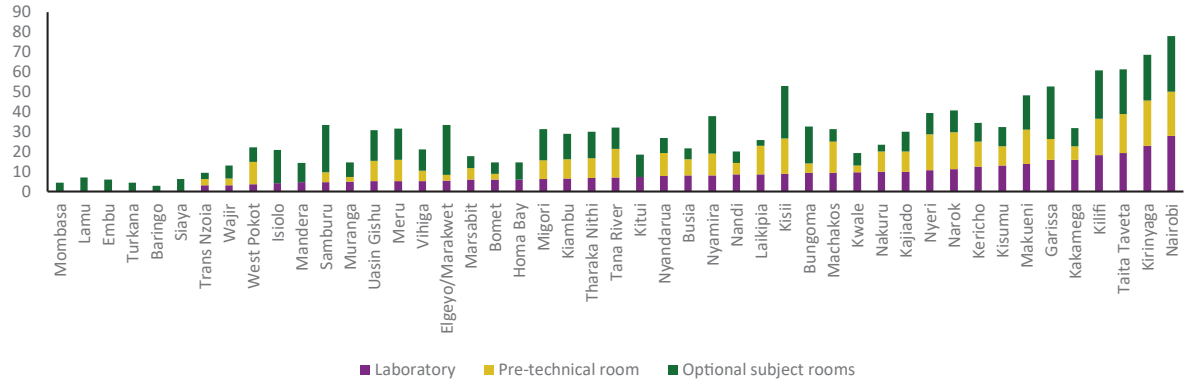
Private JS were more prepared in terms of putting in place the resources required for the operationalization and learning within the JS. By 2023, only 8.1% and 8.4% of the public JS had a laboratory and a pre-technical room for use by learners as compared to 61.4% and 46.5% in private ones respectively. Moreover, 38.6% of private schools had separate toilets dedicated to the JS students, unlike 10.9% of public JS. While the spirit of hosting JS in primary schools is to promote sharing of facilities, the primary schools themselves do not require facilities necessary to JS – such as laboratories – and thus realising such aspirations calls for investments in key resources to facilitate learning at this level.

Figure 10: Availability of resources for use by JS, 2023




There are apparent differences in the availability of resources in public JS by county as shown in Figure 12. Counties in the north, and selected ones from central and west of Kenya seemed to be less prepared as compared to Nairobi and Kirinyaga counties.

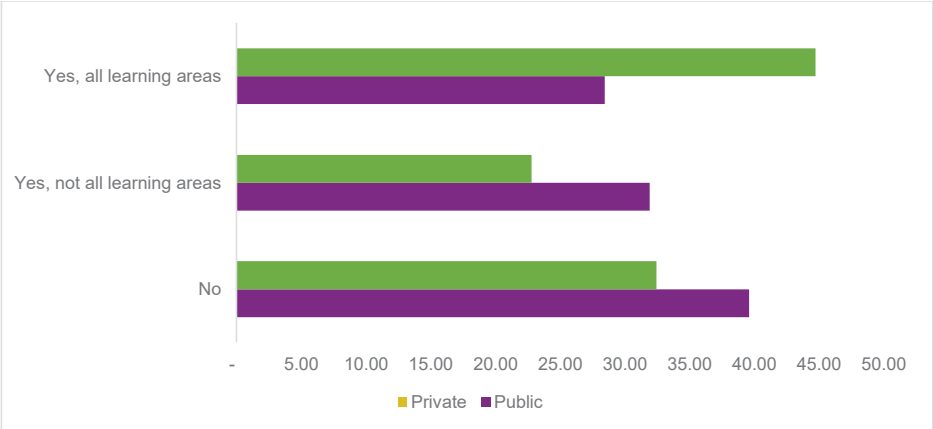
Figure 11: Availability of functional resources within JS by county, 2023




## Availability of learning materials:

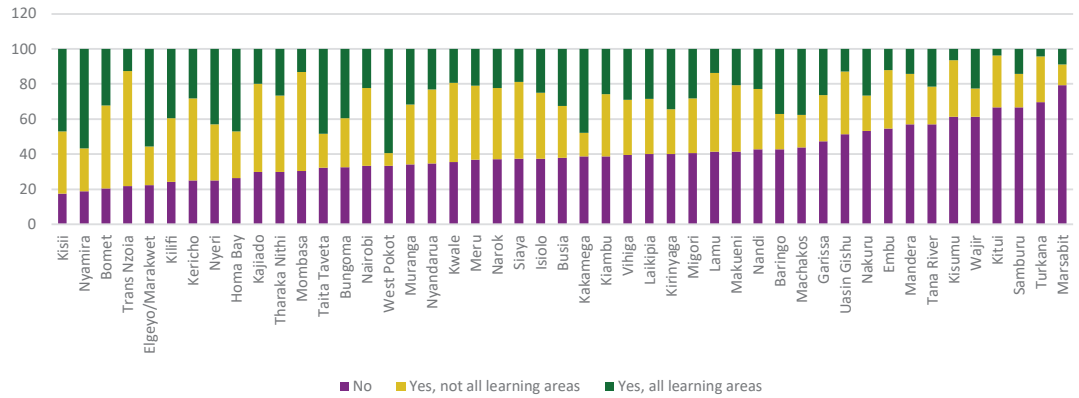
While a considerable number of schools had learning materials for all learning areas (28.4% public and 44.7% private), it is important to note the majority had either none or the materials were available for some learning areas. Specifically, three and four in every ten private and public JS reported that they did not have learning materials at all. While the private JSs are supposed to procure their learning materials, for the public, it is through the capitation grant, with the Ministry of Education procuring centrally and distributing to schools.

Figure 12: Learning materials by school type, 2023




The availability of learning materials differed by county. Nearly six in every 10 schools in Wajir, Kitui, Samburu, Turkana and Marsabit counties had not received any learning materials on one hand. At least half of the schools in Elgeyo Marakwet, Nyamira, Kakamega and West Pokot among others had received learning materials for all areas on the other. While the reasons for differences in distribution by county is not clear, it is likely that by the time of the survey, some counties had not received their materials from the government. It is important for the government to consider distributing adequate materials for all learning areas and to all counties at once and without delays.

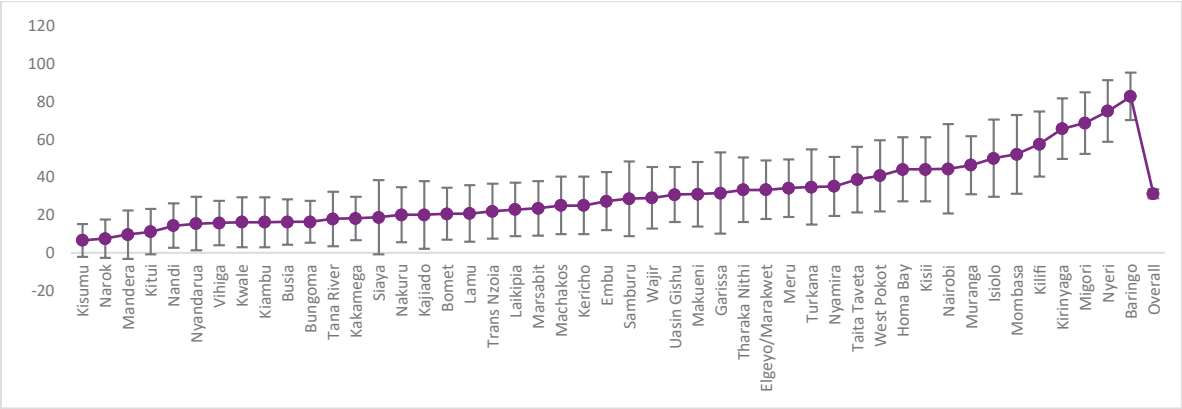
Figure 13: Learning materials in public JS by county, 2023




## Capitation:

The study took place towards the end of the second term in 2023. Following this, we sought to understand whether schools had received their second disbursement from the government through the Ministry of Education. While in the overall, 31.2% of the public JS had received their second disbursement, we note a high variability in reporting of capitation by counties. For instance, while less than 10% of schools in Kisumu, Narok and Mandera reported to have received their second disbursement, over seven in every ten schools in Nyeri and Baringo had.

Figure 14: Second financial disbursement to JS in 2023




## 3.6 Cost in Junior Schools

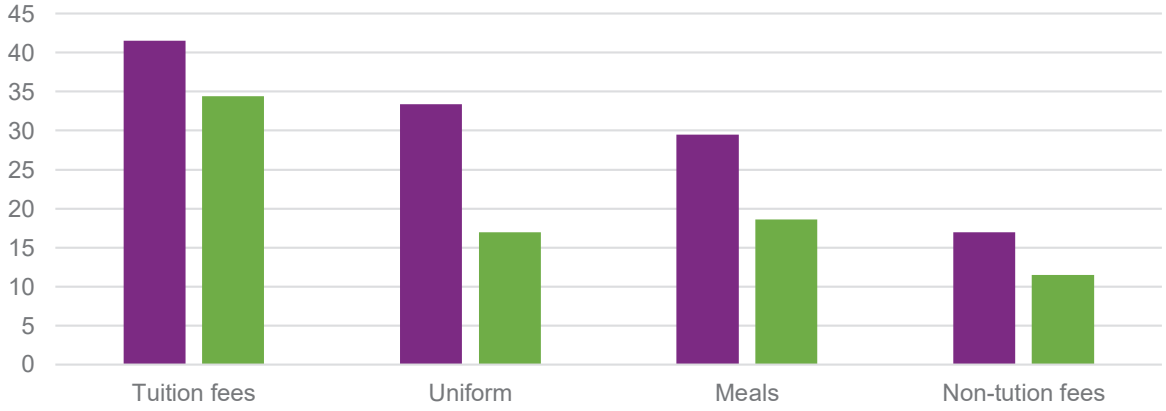
In addition to the school survey, we reached to 2,241 (91.7% enrolled in public JS) students through a household survey and explored cost of schooling. The focus was to understand associated costs of enrolling in a JS. Specifically, we sought to understand whether the JS were any fees and the indirect schooling costs such as uniforms and school meals.

Through the Ministry of Education, the government has allocated capitation for each student in JS. The funding from 2024 includes a fixed equal amount that goes to every school to meet other costs such as electricity, internet, and postage. The allocation per child - per capita - is anticipated to cater for the tuition fees and running of the school including assessment, writing materials and supplementary reading materials. However, most of the JS have adopted the provision of school meals and also adjustments to school uniforms. School meals and uniforms

are not catered for under the capitation and thus households are expected to bear the cost. The results show that on average students in public JS in the first term of 2023 acquired and/or paid about KShs. 3,300 for school uniforms, KShs. 1,800 for meals and KShs. 1,500 for other indirect costs. In addition, some households reported paying tuition fees for their children, particularly those in boarding public schools at an average of Kshs. 4,500. As expected, the charges in private JS are higher, to the tune of an average of Kshs. 15,500 charged as tuition, Kshs. 5,400 and Kshs. 4,200 towards catering for school uniforms and meals, respectively. The cost of private JS varied significantly between schools, which could be attributed to the quality and nature of the private school parents chose to utilize.

We further explored incidences of sending children home in case of default of payment (Figure 16). Contrary to the expectation, more students in public JS missed schools for non-payment of levies including the lack of the right school uniform than in private JS. Students in public JS missed school by an average of 5 days because of non-payment of school levies, which was one day more than those enrolled in private JS. A small proportion of households (<5%) sought financial support from available sources such as NCDF and Ward bursaries and only 3% of them were successful, which translates to 41% of the applications.

Figure 15: Missed school last term for non-payment of school levies by school type, 2023




Dr. Purity Ngina Perticipating in Think Aloud Assessment:Ngurubani Primary School-Kirinyaga County

# Policy Recommendations 4

## 1 Transition to Junior Schools:

The results show that public schools received learners from – within and outside – leading to increased enrolment in grade 7 in selected counties. In addition, transition to JS was high, underscoring the government decision to domicile JS in primary schools. However, it is imperative to resource public JS to have the capacity to absorb and provide equal and quality learning opportunities for all learners. This is particularly important for urban areas characterised by low-cost private primary schools that did not have the capacity to host JS, forcing learners and parents to seek grade 7 admissions in nearby public JS that were already overpopulated.

## 2 Teachers:

For learning outcomes to be achieved and the quality of education to be sustained there is a need to ensure that teacher distribution is sufficient. Getting it right for JS from the start will help address the perennial imbalances of teacher distribution witnessed in primary and secondary schools.

## 3 Curriculum Establishment:

The average number of teachers in public JS was low for them the bandwidth, skills and competencies needed to deliver in all learning areas. It is therefore important and urgent for the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Teachers Service Commisson (TSC) to establish the minimum number of teachers in a JS and their subject combinations and deploy them if equal learning opportunities and quality of education are to be sustained.

## 4 Sharing of teachers across levels and between schools:

Further, there is an urgent need for policy and guidelines for sharing of teachers between primary and JS and also amongst JS that are proximate to one another, particularly in learning areas that are may require scarce skills.

## 5 Infrastructure and learning materials:

Public JSs are still facing challenges in terms of infrastructure where the classes available do not match the number needed to fully operationalize the JS and the lack of requisite learning resources like laboratories.

Thus, ringfencing funding for constructing and equipping key resources required for learning within JS such as laboratories and pre-technical rooms is urgent. This could be achieved by exploring cost-effective innovations for such facilities, working with local leadership that hold resources such as NCDF and exploiting opportunities for sharing resources between JSs that are close to one another.

## 6 Capitation:

Schools rely on capitation to maintain the learners in school and therefore timely release of the capitation is crucial. The government commit to fully implement the PWPER recommendation for funding schools including JS to make them sustainable and able to put in place the various structures needed for quality learning. In addition, MoE should deter public JS from charging prohibitive levies and other expectations that marginalize children who are already vulnerable and likely to miss on learning.

## 7 Deboarding JSs:

Further, revisit the deboarding policy, especially as guidance to private schools, where almost one in four have a boarding facility. The risk is that children will be withdrawn earlier from families losing the connection between the learner, teacher, and parent, essential for choosing career pathways.

## 8 Gender equity in school leadership:

The majority of schools were male headed, and thus the call to pursue gender equality in the deployment and promotion of head teachers is critical; while also enacting a policy or guidelines to ensure that at least all single-sex schools are headed by same gender.


Parents and learners take a tour in one of the ALP libraries in Tana River County

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