

# ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN KENYA: WHAT ARE THE GAPS?

WINNIE KHAEMBA\*, ANN KINGIRI\*, JOYCE OLENJA\*\*,  
SAM WANGILA\*\*, EMILY NYARIKI\*\*, ANDERSON KIRAITHE\*\*\*  
AND WASHINGTON OLOO\*\*\*

Bridging the Gap Policy Brief 002/2017

## Key policy messages

- 1 Accessibility to education for people with disabilities is currently reflected in policy.
- 2 Inclusivity for people with disabilities appears to be a key consideration.
- 3 National implementation plan and monitoring of education for persons with disabilities (PWDs) is an area of concern.
- 4 Enforcement mechanisms for aspects of education relating to persons with disabilities remain inadequate.
- 5 Budgetary allocation for funding aspects relating to persons with disabilities (PWDs) in education is yet to be fully addressed.

## Overview

The policy analysis was led by ACTS with input from UDPK and UoN, the team started by identifying all the relevant policies in the four policy domains. Under education ten (10) policies were identified out of which four were fully analysed. The remaining six underwent content

analysis for reference to and mention of disability.

The right to education for all citizens is guaranteed under Article 43 (1f) of the Kenya Constitution (2010), which states that 'every person has the right to education'. The introduction of

**Bridging the Gap: Examining disability and development in four African Countries** is a three-year research programme funded by the ESRC/DFID Poverty Alleviation Research Grant programme. The programme is based at the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, University College London. For more information about the programme, visit [gap.leonardcheshire.org](http://gap.leonardcheshire.org). Research in Kenya was conducted by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS); University of Nairobi, School of Public Health (UoN) and the United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK).

\* African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)

\*\* School of Public Health, University of Nairobi (UoN)

\*\*\* United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK)

Free Primary Education (FPE) for all in 2003 and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) for all in 2008 implies that PWDs also have a right to education. Enforcement mechanisms for aspects relating to people with disabilities under this domain are set out in terms of ‘not obstructing’ access to education but do not set out consequences for those who do not take any action.

The education policy makes reference to international conventions that touch on the right to education, which Kenya is signatory to. However, the policy fails to demonstrate how to track progress in implementation of these conventions. Although the Policy Framework for Education and Training, Kenya, 2012 does not

directly define disability, it acknowledges children with special needs/disabilities which includes hearing impairment, visual impairment, mental retardation and physical handicap, learners with autism, gifted and talented, emotional and behavioural difficulties and specific learning disabilities.

The results of secondary data analysis reveal that disabled have less access to education. Persons with physical, mental, speech and hearing disabilities were less likely to attend school as compared to those who did not have disability (p-value<0.05). Disabled males had a higher chance to be currently attending school as compared to their female counterparts (27.1% against 21.4% respectively). They

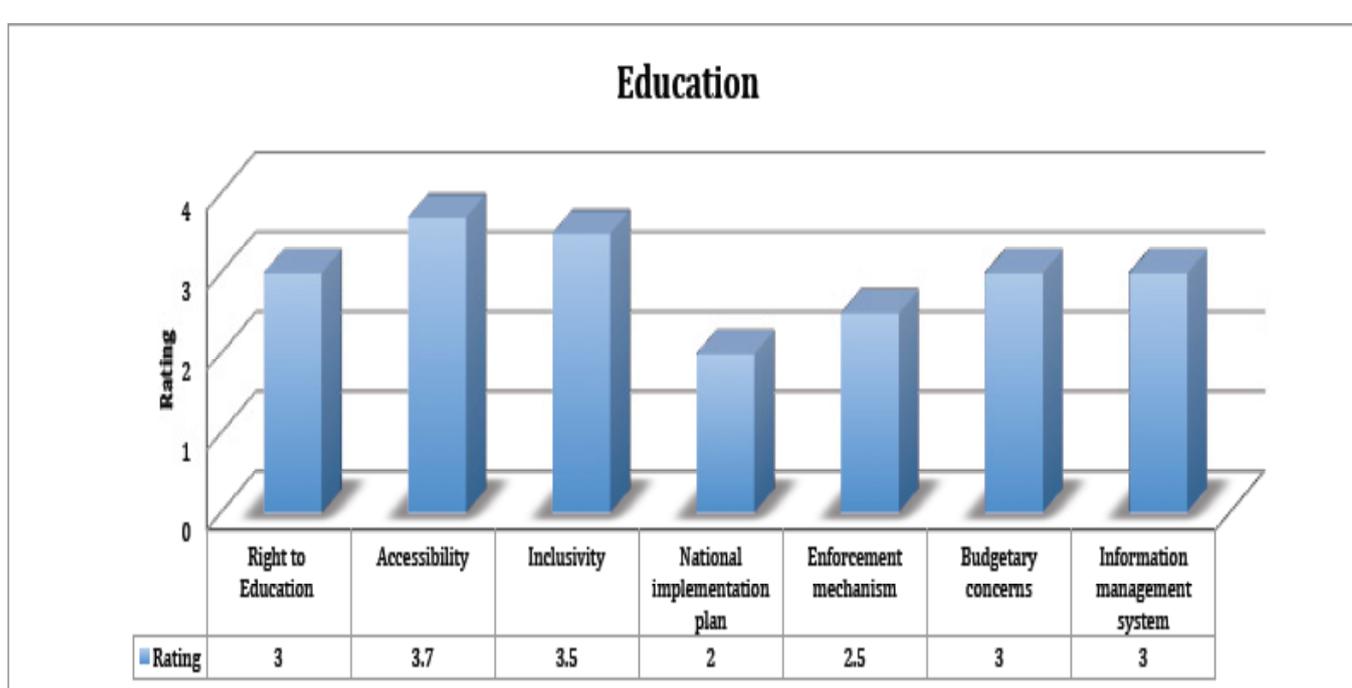


Figure 1: Education Rating

equally had higher chances to have previously attended school than female counterparts (47.6% against 38.8% respectively). A quarter of disabled males were likely not to have ever attended school against two fifths of females (25.3% against 39.8% respectively).

This difference in school attendance was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). Males and females who were not disabled had much higher rates of being currently in school or to have previously been in school as compared to those who are disabled. The abled persons were also less likely to have never attended school as compared to the disabled, sex notwithstanding.

Accessibility, inclusivity and the right to education rank highly in the policy analysis because the education policies are clear about access to education both in terms of physical infrastructure as well as information; about the special needs of PWDs in education and inclusivity of PWDs in all learning institutions. However a national implementation plan is not specific, so are budgetary allocations, enforcement and the information management system, which explains why they rank low.

Overall policy development in the education sector, based on the overall rating is good (3.4). A key area of concern is the implementation of the policies and programmes and enforcement mechanisms with a rating of (2 and 2.5 respectively) as depicted in the figure below. These two domains are instrumental in realizing the other key domains of accessibility and inclusivity. This is also reflected in the perspectives of PWDs and caregivers who decry the limited access to education for persons with disability.

### **Overall rating of policy development in Education (3.4)**

**Key message 1:** Policy mostly addresses physical and informational accessibility for students, parents and teachers in terms of transport, In-

frastructure, assistive devices and materials in braille and sign language and large print. The policy recognizes constitutional provisions on children's right to free and compulsory basic education, including quality services, and to access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society, to the extent compatible with the interests of the person.

**Key message 2:** The policy mentions commitment to ensure inclusive education for learners with special needs and disabilities, integrating special education programmes in all learning and training institutions and ensure that the institutions are responsive to the education of learners with special needs and disability.

**Key message 3:** There is an implementation plan but details on actors, monitoring and budgetary planning are not included. However, it proposes to develop and mainstream standard M&E system, integrated with the national government M&E system.

**Key message 4:** The policy makes reference to the constitution that has set out enforcement mechanisms in terms of 'not obstructing' but not proactively providing and penalising to ensure full implementation of the policy. On international conventions that touch on the right to education, which Kenya is party to, the policy only outlines them but fails to adequately demonstrate how Kenya will measure progress in implementing these conventions.

**Key message 5:** Budget guidelines for learners with disabilities are specified in terms of what has been allocated, which is 0.2% of the education budget, and where the budget should be allocated from, but funding is yet to be addressed through a framework incorporating the financing requirements of special education that is set to be established.

## Recommendations

1. There is need for Enforcement mechanisms and implementation of policies and a robust information management system for education programmes for persons with disability
2. Provide adequate funding for Inclusive education for learners with special needs and disabilities, by establishing appropriate learning programmes that are a suited for each category of disability.
3. At the budgetary level, operationalize this by allocating the funds as well as reduction or subsidy in costs of education to allow all

children with any form of disability to access education

4. Invest in the training of special needs teachers to meet the demand of education for persons with diverse disabilities.

## Further reading

Khaemba Winnie, Kariuki Joan and Kingiri Ann (2016). Bridging the gap on disability policy analysis report.

Wafula Sam, Olenja Joyce and Nyariki Emily (2017). Final Report: Bridging the gap on Disability-Secondary Data Analysis Kenya Report.

*This research has been funded by UKAID from the UK Government. However the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK Government's official policies.*



African Centre for Technology Studies  
ICIPE Campus, Kasarani  
P.O. Box 45917 - 00100, Nairobi, Kenya  
**Telephone:** +254 020 7126895; +254 020 7126890;  
+254 020 7126889; +254 020 7126894  
**Cell Phones:** Airtel: +254 737 916566;  
Safaricom: +254 710 607210  
**Fax:** +254 020 2339093  
**Email:** [info@acts-net.org](mailto:info@acts-net.org)  
**website:** [www.acts-net.org](http://www.acts-net.org)