

# Disability-Inclusive Education and Employment: Understanding the Context in Kenya



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**Recognizing barriers to the inclusion of young people with disabilities in education and employment, a landscape report on Kenya was developed by the International Centre for Evidence on Disability at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Nairobi, in partnership with Mastercard Foundation. This brief summarizes trends related to employment and education for young people with disabilities from the report.**

## Key Findings

- Kenyan policies on disability inclusion in education and employment are strong, but implementation gaps hamper progress.
- Specific challenges in education include limited funding for tuition and assistive technologies and underfunding of Educational Assessment and Resource Centres.
- Challenges in employment include failure to meet disability employment quotas in government and financial constraints in agricultural activities.
- Promising initiatives include soft skills and IT training, work placements, and the introduction of Augmentative and Alternative Communication in some schools.
- There is also a need for monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms for disability-related policies.
- Disability disaggregated data on education and employment indicators are needed

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## The Kenyan Context in Brief

**2%** of Kenyans have disabilities according to the 2019 census, but this is likely an underestimate.

**38%** of the country's population of 53 million people are under the age of 14 years old.

Up-to-date data on school attendance and employment among people with disabilities in Kenya are lacking, with the most recent data on education and training coming from 2009.

## Recent Policies Support Disability Inclusion, and Existing Ones Are Being Revised

In 2003, the Government of Kenya adopted the Persons with Disabilities Act. Article 54 of the Constitution, updated in 2010, has specific provisions for people with disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) is in the process of being replaced by the Persons with Disabilities Bill (2021), to ensure the law is consistent with the UNCRPD and the Constitution. The government has also recently established a National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities and a Cash Transfer program for Persons with Severe Disabilities which aims to increase access to education and work.

- Disability discussed in the Constitution
- Standalone Policy on Disability
- Disability discussed in National Development Plan (missing data)
- People with disabilities have a right to employment, free from discrimination
- Reasonable workplace accommodations for disability (missing data)
- Quotas in contracts or jobs or incentives for employing people with disabilities
- Legislation enshrining right of people with disabilities to equal access to education
- Access to inclusive education, including provisions required for specialised education

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## People with Disabilities Continue to be Excluded from Education and Employment



Up-to-date national survey data on disability education and employment in Kenya are lacking. However, data from the 2009 census found that people with disabilities were less likely to have completed primary school compared to their peers without disabilities (44% versus 60%) and less likely to have completed secondary school (17% versus 27%) than their peers without disabilities.



Data from the 2009 census found a slightly higher proportion of youth with disabilities were not in education, employment or training (20%) compared to youth without disabilities (15%). The 2015/2016 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey reported that over half of people with disabilities had 'difficulties engaging in economic activities'.

### Key challenges include...



Failure to meet the 5% disability employment quota at the government level.



Difficulties financing agricultural activities among people with disabilities.



Exclusion of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities from inclusion initiatives.



Weak and under-funded Educational Assessment and Resource Centres.

### Education, employment, and training disparities between people **with** and **without** disabilities (%).

20 15

Not in education, training or employment

27 17

Completed secondary school

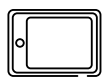
60 44

Completed primary school

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## Initiatives to Promote Disability Inclusion for Youth Include...



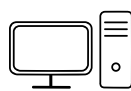
The recent introduction of Augmentative and Alternative Communication in Kenya, which can now be trialled in schools.



Educational and vocational opportunities of girls with disabilities, improving transition through education pathways.



Soft skills training to prepare youth with disabilities for the labour market.



Promoting training in IT and digital skills for people with disabilities.



On-the-job training and job placements for workers with disabilities.



Private sector networks for disability inclusion in the workplace.

## Opportunities to Strengthen Practice and Research Insights are Clear

- Integrate people with disabilities into government-level decision-making positions.
- Increase funding for disability-inclusive programmes, including capacity-building for the National Council of Persons with Disabilities and OPDs, who are well-placed to support policy implementation and monitoring.
- Improve awareness on disability-inclusive education and employment practices.
- Increase access of people with disabilities to agricultural funds and opportunities, including land ownership, seed and fertiliser, and where possible, guaranteed markets.
- Collect, analyse, and make available, reliable disability-disaggregated data on education and employment to assess extent of disability-inclusion.

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## Acknowledgements and References

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**Data sources:** The report upon which this brief is based drew on: a rapid online literature review to identify relevant policy and programs regarding disability and inclusion of youth with disabilities in education and employment; in-depth qualitative interviews with key informants in Kenya; the 2009 Population and Housing census; and the 2015/2016 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey.

**Notes:** All graph figures are rounded up to the nearest whole numbers. Estimates should be interpreted with caution and considered as indication of trends rather than precise estimates. Reasons for this caution include challenges with disability measurement in surveys and small sample sizes. Further data and references are available in the full report. Image credit: Desola Lanre-Ologun via Unsplash



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