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Strengthening Public ECDE in Kirinyaga County Through Integrated Service Delivery



Figure 1 One of the newly built ECDE Class at Kandongu Primary School

In recent years, public Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centres in Kirinyaga County have undergone significant transformation. Faced with challenges such as inadequate classrooms, limited learning materials, teacher insecurity, and declining parental confidence, the County Government implemented a set of interventions aimed at strengthening service delivery.

Today, over 16,000 learners across 201 ECDE centres are benefiting from improvements in infrastructure, teacher capacity, digital learning, and learner support.

The Intervention:

The County adopted a holistic approach targeting the key pillars of early learning.

- **Infrastructure development**
New classrooms were constructed and existing ones renovated to reduce congestion and improve learning conditions. Furniture, play equipment, water tanks, and learning materials were distributed to centres, creating more child-friendly environments.
- **Teacher employment and capacity building**
A total of 405 ECDE teachers were employed, with many transitioned to permanent and pensionable terms. This move enhanced job security and motivation. In addition, 401 teachers underwent intensive digital literacy training to strengthen technology-enabled instruction.
- **Digital learning introduction**
A pilot digital learning programme was introduced in selected ECDE centres to integrate foundational digital skills into classroom teaching, with plans for scale-up.
- **Learner support measures**
More than 15,000 learners received free school uniforms, reducing financial barriers and encouraging school attendance.
- **Co-curricular development**
Music and drama festivals were supported up to national level, providing learners with opportunities to develop confidence, creativity, and social skills.



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Emerging Results

The coordinated interventions have contributed to measurable improvements in access and service delivery.

- Enrollment increased from 13,280 learners in 2017 to 16,398 learners in 2025, reflecting growing parental confidence in public ECDE centres. Improved classroom environments have enhanced learner participation and comfort, while better-equipped facilities have strengthened the overall learning experience.
- The transition of teachers to permanent and pensionable terms improved morale and stability within ECDE centres. School administrators reported more consistent lesson preparation and stronger classroom management. Digital literacy training has enabled teachers to incorporate technology into teaching, making lessons more interactive and engaging for learners.
- The provision of free uniforms eased the financial burden on families and supported retention, particularly among vulnerable households.
- Co-curricular activities have further contributed to holistic child development, with learners gaining exposure, confidence, and opportunities to showcase talent.

Why the Practice Matters

Kirinyaga County's experience demonstrates that strengthening ECDE requires more than isolated investments. By integrating infrastructure improvement, teacher motivation, digital capacity building, and learner support, the County has enhanced both access and quality in public early learning institutions.

The approach highlights the importance of:

- Investing in teacher security and professional development
- Addressing financial barriers that limit access
- Creating safe, well-equipped learning environments
- Supporting holistic child development beyond academics



Figure 2 A well equipped classroom with adequate infrastructure and space

With continued commitment and sustained funding, the model provides a practical example for other Counties seeking to improve ECDE service delivery.

What initiative has your County taken to improve access to quality early childhood education?

Visit <https://maarifa.cog.go.ke/> to learn more about the successful initiatives on service delivery our Counties are undertaking.



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Compiled by:

Millicent Ngari - Ag. CECM - Education and Public Service

Rose Wachira, OGW - Ag. Chief Officer - Education and Public Service

Lucy Maina - Ass. Director ECDE-Kirinyaga

Jackline Njogu - CECM-Finance and Economic Planning

Millicent Ngari - Ag. CECM Education and Public Service

Mercy Gatabi- Council of Governors, Maarifa Centre