

## School Accessibility and Child Rights Violations in Public Primary Schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya

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### Abstract

This study examined the influence of school accessibility on child rights violations in public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya. Guided by Social Learning Theory and Social Exclusion Theory, the study employed an ex post facto research design to investigate how school accessibility affects learners' rights to education, protection, and participation. A sample of 384 respondents comprising Curriculum Support Officers, head teachers, teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, and Grade Seven pupils was selected using stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Instrument reliability was established using a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .70, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that most learners travelled long distances to school, primarily on foot or by bicycle. Long commuting distances were associated with lateness, absenteeism, fatigue, reduced concentration, unsafe travel conditions, and negative attitudes towards school. Conversely, learners residing closer to school reported better punctuality, more study time, and greater participation in learning activities. The findings indicate that poor school accessibility undermines children's rights to education, protection, and meaningful participation in learning. The study concludes that improving school accessibility is essential for creating child-friendly learning environments and enhancing educational participation. It recommends expanding public primary schools, providing safe transport options, and strengthening child protection interventions. The findings contribute empirical evidence to inform education policy, school planning, and child protection strategies aimed at promoting equitable access to education and safeguarding children's rights in Kenya.

**Key terms:** Child protection, child rights violations, Kenya, public primary schools, school accessibility.

## INTRODUCTION

Despite international and national efforts to safeguard children's rights, many primary school learners continue to experience barriers that undermine their rights to education, protection, and participation. School accessibility, reflected in the distance learners travel to school, travel time, mode of transport, and safety of the journey, remains a significant challenge associated with absenteeism, fatigue, reduced participation in learning, and increased exposure to safety risks (Lanyasunya, 2022; Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023; Muriungi, 2026). These conditions constitute child rights violations because they restrict children's access to education and compromise their rights to protection, participation, and healthy development.

Children's rights are derived from the broader framework of human rights, which recognise the inherent dignity and equal rights of all persons without discrimination (United Nations, 1948). The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises children's rights to survival, development, protection, and participation and identifies education as a fundamental right through which these rights are realised (United Nations, 1989). Contemporary scholarship further emphasises that realising children's rights requires equitable access to safe, inclusive, and supportive educational environments that enable all learners to participate fully in schooling (Macharia et al., 2022; Nunoo et al., 2023).

Despite considerable global progress, socioeconomic inequalities, social exclusion, and unequal access to educational resources continue to limit children's educational participation and well-being, particularly among vulnerable populations (Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023; Zeragaber et al., 2024). In Kenya, although the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Basic Education Act (2013), and the Children Act (2022) guarantee children's rights to protection and free compulsory basic education, empirical evidence shows that inadequate school infrastructure, long distances to school, and unsafe learning environments continue to undermine attendance, participation, and learner's educational experiences (Lanyasunya, 2022; Macharia et al., 2022; Muriungi, 2026).

In Kenya, the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Basic Education Act (2013), and the Children Act (2022)

provide a legal framework for safeguarding children's rights to education, protection, and participation. Despite these legal protections, empirical studies continue to report that many learners experience inadequate school infrastructure, long distances to school, school violence, and unequal educational opportunities that adversely affect attendance, participation, and learners' overall development (Kariuki & Ndani, 2019; Lanyasunya, 2022; Macharia et al., 2022; Opere et al., 2020; Wangamati et al., 2022).

Recent evidence further shows that long commuting distances contribute to absenteeism, learner fatigue, reduced participation in classroom activities, increased dropout risk, and greater exposure to unsafe travel conditions, thereby limiting children's opportunities to fully realise their rights to education and protection (Lanyasunya, 2022; Muriungi, 2026).

The association between school accessibility and child rights violations is underpinned by Social Learning Theory and Social Exclusion Theory. Social Learning Theory posits that children's attitudes and behaviours develop through interaction with their social and physical environments (Bandura, 1977). In the present study, school environments characterised by long travel distances, unsafe journeys, and limited accessibility may discourage participation in learning and foster negative educational behaviours (Bandura, 1977). Social Exclusion Theory further explains that structural barriers can marginalise individuals by restricting their access to opportunities, resources, and meaningful participation in society (Silver, 2019). From the perspective of Social Exclusion Theory, limited school accessibility may marginalise learners by restricting their participation in education and limiting the realisation of their rights.

Existing studies in Kenya have primarily examined school accessibility in relation to educational outcomes such as academic performance, learner retention, infrastructure adequacy, and implementation of inclusive education (Chahilu et al., 2023; Cherotich et al., 2023; Kariuki & Ndani, 2019). Other studies have focused on institutional challenges affecting the implementation of Child-Friendly Schools and child protection mechanisms (Musili, 2023).

However, little empirical research has examined school accessibility from a child rights perspective, particularly how accessibility influences the realisation or violation of children's rights within public primary schools. Furthermore, empirical research on school accessibility and child rights violations in Nyahururu Sub-County remains limited despite geographical and infrastructural challenges that may heighten learners' vulnerability to rights violations. This study therefore examined the influence of school accessibility on child rights violations among learners in public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on school-based determinants of child rights by providing evidence on how school accessibility shapes the realisation of children's rights in educational settings, thereby informing policy and practice to promote safe, inclusive, and child-friendly schools.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Child Rights Violations and Educational Protection

Child rights are grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which recognises children's rights to survival, development, protection, and participation, with education serving as a fundamental mechanism for realising these rights (United Nations, 1989). Despite this international framework, evidence indicates that many children continue to experience violations that compromise their rights to development and meaningful educational participation.

Empirical evidence across diverse contexts consistently demonstrates that child rights violations remain prevalent despite differences in national legal and institutional frameworks. Studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries associate child rights violations with poverty, social exclusion, gender inequality, violence, child labour, armed conflict, and limited access to quality education (Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023; Nunoo et al., 2023; Zeragaber et al., 2024). Although these studies examine different contexts and forms of vulnerability, they converge in demonstrating that inadequate educational protection limits children's participation in school and compromises their rights to development and wellbeing.

Evidence from Kenya reflects similar concerns. Although the country has established comprehensive legal frameworks to safeguard children's rights, empirical studies continue to report physical violence, emotional abuse, bullying, sexual violence, neglect, and other forms of rights violations within school environments (Opere et al., 2020; Wangamati et al., 2022; Musili, 2023). Collectively, these studies suggest that the principal challenge is not the absence of legislation but the inconsistent implementation of child protection measures within schools, resulting in learning environments that may undermine children's rights to education, protection, and participation.

These findings are consistent with Social Learning Theory, which explains that children's behaviours and attitudes are shaped through continuous interaction with their social environments (Bandura, 1977). School environments characterised by violence, intimidation, discrimination, or weak child protection practices may reinforce behaviours that normalise rights violations and discourage meaningful learner participation. While existing research has substantially documented the nature and prevalence of child rights violations in schools, considerably less attention has been given to the school-related conditions that may contribute to these violations. This provides a basis for examining school accessibility as a potential determinant of child rights violations by influencing learners' educational participation, safety, and overall wellbeing.

### School Accessibility and Child Rights Violations

School accessibility is widely recognised as an important determinant of children's educational participation and protection. Beyond facilitating physical access to school, accessibility influences learners' attendance, punctuality, retention, participation in classroom activities, and exposure to environmental and social risks.

Available evidence consistently indicates that school accessibility may be associated with children's educational experiences, although studies emphasise different dimensions of this association. Lanyasunya (2022) and Muriungi (2026) primarily link long distances to school with absenteeism, lateness, learner fatigue, and school dropout, whereas Macharia et al. (2022) highlight the psychological and cognitive

consequences, including reduced concentration, stress, and diminished classroom engagement.

Evidence from Tanzania and Ethiopia further indicates that prolonged journeys to school expose learners to safety risks and reduce meaningful participation in education, particularly among children residing in rural and underserved communities (Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023; Zeragaber et al., 2024). Despite differences in emphasis, the available evidence consistently indicates that poor school accessibility undermines children's participation in education and increases their vulnerability to child rights violations.

These findings are consistent with Social Exclusion Theory, which explains how structural barriers prevent individuals from fully participating in social institutions and accessing available opportunities (Silver, 2019). Within educational settings, long distances and poor accessibility may exclude learners from regular attendance, meaningful classroom participation, and equal educational opportunities, thereby undermining their rights to education, protection, and development. However, existing studies have largely examined school accessibility in relation to attendance, retention, and academic performance rather than its implications for the realisation of children's rights, particularly within public primary schools in Kenya.

## Gender and School Accessibility

Research indicates that school accessibility is experienced differently across genders. Although long travel distances constrain educational participation for all learners, studies consistently report that girls are disproportionately exposed to gender-based violence, sexual harassment, early pregnancy, and school dropout during long and unsafe journeys to school (Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023). Similar findings have been reported in Ghana, where gender-related barriers disproportionately limit girls' educational participation, particularly in rural communities (Nunoo et al., 2023). Despite contextual differences, the reviewed literature consistently indicates that poor school accessibility exacerbates gender inequalities and undermines children's rights to education, protection, and participation.

## Empirical Evidence on School Accessibility and Child Rights Violations in Kenya

Research conducted in Kenya has extensively examined school-based factors in relation to educational outcomes, although the emphases differ. Chahilu et al. (2023), Cherotich et al. (2023), and Kariuki and Ndani (2019) primarily associate school infrastructure, learning environments, and institutional resources with learner participation, retention, and academic performance. In contrast, Musili (2023) focuses on institutional child protection systems and the implementation of Child-Friendly Schools, demonstrating that weaknesses in safeguarding mechanisms compromise learners' safety and wellbeing.

Similarly, regional studies show that poor school accessibility and unsafe learning environments contribute to absenteeism, school dropout, violence, and reduced educational participation (Nunoo et al., 2023; Wangamati et al., 2022). Although these studies differ in their specific focus, they consistently indicate that school environments play a significant role in shaping children's educational experiences and the realisation of their rights.

In summary, the reviewed literature provides substantial evidence on school accessibility, learner participation, and child protection. However, most studies have examined these issues in relation to academic performance, retention, school safety, or institutional effectiveness rather than from a child rights perspective. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence on how school accessibility is associated with child rights violations among learners in public primary schools. This gap is particularly evident in Nyahururu Sub-County, where little empirical research has examined school accessibility as a factor associated with child rights violations. The present study therefore sought to address this gap by examining the association between school accessibility and child rights violations among learners in public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya.

## METHODOLOGY

An ex post facto research design was adopted because the variables of interest had already occurred and could not be manipulated by the researcher



(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design was appropriate for examining the association between school accessibility and child rights violations as they naturally occurred in public primary schools. The study was conducted in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya. The target population comprised 3,709 individuals drawn from 62 public primary schools, including head teachers, teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, Grade 7 learners, and Curriculum Support Officers. At the time of data collection in 2023, Grade 7 learners were still enrolled in public primary schools as the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was being phased in.

The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for large populations.

$$n = (Z^2pq) / d^2$$

Where  $n$  is the required sample size,  $Z$  is the standard normal deviate corresponding to the desired confidence level (1.96 at 95% confidence),  $p$  is the estimated population proportion (0.5),  $q = 1 - p$  (0.5), and  $d$  is the acceptable margin of error (0.05). Substituting these values into the formula yielded:

$$n = [(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5] / (0.05)^2 = 384.16 \approx 384.$$

Accordingly, a sample of 384 participants was considered adequate for the study.

The distribution of the study sample is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample Distribution of Respondents**

| Category                          | Population   | Sample Size | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Head teachers                     | 62           | 11          | 18             |
| Teachers                          | 880          | 88          | 10             |
| Guidance and counselling teachers | 62           | 10          | 16             |
| Grade Seven pupils                | 2,700        | 270         | 10             |
| Curriculum Support Officers       | 5            | 5           | 100            |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>3,709</b> | <b>384</b>  | <b>15.4</b>    |

Source: Researcher (2023).

The study employed stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. Stratified sampling ensured adequate representation of the five participant categories. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers and Grade 7 learners, giving each eligible respondent an equal chance of selection. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, and Curriculum Support Officers because of their administrative responsibilities and involvement in school management and child protection. Grade 7 learners were selected because they possess sufficient cognitive maturity to understand, evaluate, and articulate issues relating to school accessibility and child rights violations. Having been exposed to child rights concepts through the Competency-Based Curriculum, they were considered capable of providing reliable information on the study variables.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires and a semi-structured interview schedule. Separate questionnaires were administered to head teachers, teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, and Grade 7 learners, while Curriculum Support Officers participated in semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires facilitated the efficient collection of standardised data from a relatively large number of respondents while guaranteeing anonymity, thereby encouraging honest responses on the sensitive issue of child rights violations. The interview schedule enabled probing and clarification of responses, generating rich qualitative data to complement the questionnaire findings.

Instrument validity was established through expert review, while reliability was assessed through a pilot study conducted in two public primary schools in neighbouring Nyandarua County. The internal

consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Qualitative findings were used to complement and triangulate the quantitative results by providing contextual explanations and corroborating patterns observed from the questionnaire data. The results were presented in tables and interpreted in relation to school accessibility and child rights violations in public primary schools.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee. At the same time, research authorisation was granted by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and relevant county and education authorities before data collection commenced. Permission to conduct the study was also obtained from the participating schools. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty,

and the confidentiality of the information they provided. Written informed consent was obtained from all adult participants. Because the study involved Grade 7 learners, informed consent was obtained from their parents or guardians, while assent was obtained from the learners before participation. To minimise potential risks, participants were not required to provide identifying information on the questionnaires; interviews were conducted in a private, non-threatening environment, and participants were free to decline any question they found uncomfortable. Completed research instruments were securely stored, findings were reported in aggregate form to protect participants' identities, and the data collected were used strictly for academic purposes.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

School accessibility was assessed using three indicators: distance from home to school, mode of transport, and travel time. These indicators were considered important because they affect learners' punctuality, attendance, participation, safety, and exposure to risks on their journeys to and from school.

### Distance from Home to School

Table 2 presents the distance travelled by learners and teachers to school.

**Table 2: Distance from Home to School Reported by Learners and Teachers**

| Distance to School | Pupils' f (%)     | Teachers' f (%)  |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Less than 1 km     | 31 (11%)          | 3 (3%)           |
| 1–3 km             | 93 (34%)          | 16 (18%)         |
| 4–7 km             | 123 (46%)         | 33 (38%)         |
| 7–10 km            | 21 (8%)           | 29 (33%)         |
| More than 10 km    | 2 (1%)            | 7 (8%)           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>270 (100%)</b> | <b>88 (100%)</b> |

Source: Field Data (2023).

Table 2 shows that the largest proportion of learners (46%) travelled between 4 and 7 km to school, while 8 per cent travelled between 7 and 10 km and 1 per cent travelled more than 10 km. Similarly, most teachers (38%) reported that learners in their schools travelled between 4 and 7 km, while 33 per cent reported that learners travelled between 7 and 10 km. These findings indicate that a considerable proportion of learners

commute relatively long distances to school, which may adversely affect punctuality, attendance, and participation in learning

### Mode of Transport to School

Table 3 presents the primary modes of transport reported by learners and teachers.

**Table 3: Mode of Transport Reported by Learners and Teachers**

| Mode of Transport | Pupils' f (%)     | Teachers' f (%)  |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Walking           | 138 (51%)         | 7 (8%)           |
| Bicycle           | 93 (34%)          | 11 (13%)         |
| Motorcycle        | 33 (12%)          | 34 (39%)         |
| Car/Bus           | 6 (2%)            | 36 (41%)         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>270 (100%)</b> | <b>88 (100%)</b> |

Source: Field Data (2023).

The findings show that walking was the predominant mode of transport among learners (51%), followed by bicycle use (34%). In contrast, teachers mainly relied on cars, buses, and motorcycles. The predominance of walking and bicycle use among learners suggests that many travel to school on modes of transport that may

expose them to fatigue, adverse weather conditions, and other risks.

## Travel Time to School

Table 4 presents the travel time to school reported by learners and teachers.

**Table 4: Travel Time to School among Respondents**

| Travel Time          | Pupils f (%)      | Teachers f (%)   |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Less than 30 minutes | 62 (23%)          | 33 (38%)         |
| 30–59 minutes        | 86 (32%)          | 41 (47%)         |
| 60–89 minutes        | 91 (34%)          | 8 (9%)           |
| 90–119 minutes       | 21 (8%)           | 6 (7%)           |
| 2 hours and above    | 10 (4%)           | 0 (0%)           |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>270 (100%)</b> | <b>88 (100%)</b> |

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 indicates that 34 per cent of pupils spent between 60 and 89 minutes travelling to school, while an additional 12 per cent spent more than 90 minutes commuting. Among teachers, most respondents (47%) reported travel times of between 30 and 59 minutes. These findings suggest that a substantial proportion of learners experienced lengthy daily commutes, which may contribute to fatigue, reduced concentration, lateness, and diminished participation in educational activities. Extended travel times may also reduce study time, increase physical exhaustion, and negatively affect learners' overall educational experiences and the realisation of their rights.

## Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The interview findings corroborated the quantitative results. Curriculum Support Officers consistently reported that long distances, prolonged travel times, and reliance on walking led to fatigue, absenteeism, unsafe travel conditions, and reduced participation in learning activities. As one Curriculum Support Officer

explained: "Many learners travel over five kilometres to school, often leaving home before dawn. They arrive tired, some miss school altogether, and others face unsafe situations on the way. Consequently, long distances affect not only school attendance but also learners' rights to safety, protection, and quality education." (Curriculum Support Officer 1).

The qualitative evidence suggests that school accessibility extends beyond physical access to education and impacts learners' rights to education, protection and participation. The convergence of the questionnaire and interview findings indicates that learners who travel long distances, spend considerable time commuting, and rely primarily on walking are more likely to experience fatigue, lateness, absenteeism, and exposure to other travel-related risks. These factors reduce effective participation in learning and may undermine the realisation of children's rights within the school environment.

These findings are consistent with studies conducted in Kenya and other Sub-Saharan African countries, which report that poor school accessibility contributes to learner fatigue, absenteeism, school dropout, and increased exposure to safety risks, particularly in rural areas (Lanyasunya, 2022; Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023; Muriungi, 2026). The findings also support Social Exclusion Theory, which argues that structural barriers such as poor physical access to schools restrict educational participation and increase learners' vulnerability to exclusion and child rights violations (Silver, 2019).

## Discussion

The findings indicate that school accessibility is closely associated with the realisation of children's rights among learners in public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County. The quantitative findings showed that a substantial proportion of learners travelled relatively long distances to school, relied predominantly on walking and cycling, and spent considerable time commuting. The qualitative findings complemented these results by illustrating how long travel distances and limited transport were perceived to contribute to fatigue, lateness, absenteeism, unsafe travel conditions, and school dropout among learners. Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that school accessibility has important implications for learners' rights to education, protection and participation.

The pattern observed in this study is consistent with evidence from Kenya and other Sub-Saharan African countries. Studies conducted in Kenya have shown that long commuting distances contribute to learner fatigue, irregular attendance, and reduced classroom participation (Lanyasunya, 2022; Muriungi, 2026). Similarly, Msoffe and Mohamed (2023) found that poor school accessibility in rural Tanzania was associated with increased absenteeism and school dropout, particularly among vulnerable learners.

The similarity between the present findings and those reported in Kenya and Tanzania may reflect the predominantly rural nature of these settings, where dispersed settlements and limited transport infrastructure require many learners to travel considerable distances to school. Comparable evidence has also been reported in other studies,

which indicate that prolonged journeys to school expose children to safety risks and create barriers to equitable participation in education (Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023; Zeragaber et al., 2024).

Altogether, these studies demonstrate that inadequate school accessibility remains a persistent challenge affecting children's educational participation across diverse contexts. However, the present study extends previous research by examining school accessibility through a child rights lens rather than solely as an educational issue. Whereas earlier studies have largely focused on educational outcomes such as attendance, retention, infrastructure, and academic performance (Chahilu et al., 2023; Cherotich et al., 2023; Kariuki & Ndani, 2019), the present findings suggest that long travel distances, prolonged commuting time, and reliance on walking are associated with challenges in the realisation of learners' rights to education, protection, and participation.

The qualitative findings provided important contextual explanations for the quantitative results by illustrating how accessibility challenges were perceived to contribute to unsafe travel conditions, fatigue, absenteeism, and school dropout. These findings demonstrate how barriers to school access may hinder the realisation of children's rights.

The interviews with Curriculum Support Officers provided important contextual insights into how school accessibility affected learners' daily experiences. While the questionnaire findings showed that many learners travelled long distances, spent considerable time commuting, and relied on walking or cycling, the interviews explained how these conditions were associated with fatigue, lateness, absenteeism, unsafe travel conditions, and, in some cases, school dropout. These qualitative insights reinforced the survey findings by illustrating how accessibility challenges may constrain learners' participation in education and the realisation of their rights to education, protection, and participation. This was particularly evident in Nyahururu Sub-County, where the experiences reported by Curriculum Support Officers closely reflected the patterns observed in the survey data.



The findings are also consistent with Social Exclusion Theory, which posits that structural barriers may prevent individuals from fully participating in essential social institutions (Silver, 2019). The theory is particularly relevant in Nyahururu Sub-County, where many learners rely on walking over relatively long distances, making physical access to school a significant structural barrier to educational participation and the realisation of children's rights. In the present study, long travel distances, prolonged commuting time, and limited access to safe transport functioned as structural barriers that constrained learners' regular participation in education and increased their vulnerability to child rights violations. These findings suggest that improving school accessibility requires more than increasing school enrolment; it also requires addressing the physical and environmental barriers that limit learners' ability to access education regularly, equitably, and without unnecessary risks.

Overall, the findings suggest that school accessibility should be viewed not only as an educational concern but also as an important child rights issue. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence indicates that long travel distances, prolonged commuting times, and limited access to safe transport are associated with challenges in realising learners' rights to education, protection, and participation. These findings underscore the importance of policies and interventions that improve physical access to schools while simultaneously promoting the realisation of children's rights to education, protection, and participation. By examining school accessibility through a child rights perspective, the present study contributes to the existing literature by broadening understanding of how structural barriers to education may be associated with child rights challenges in public primary schools.

These findings underscore the importance of policies and interventions that improve physical access to schools while simultaneously promoting the realisation of children's rights to education, protection, and participation. By examining school accessibility through a child rights perspective, the present study contributes to existing literature by broadening the understanding of how structural

barriers to education may be associated with children's rights challenges in public primary schools.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that school accessibility remains an important challenge associated with learners' educational participation and the realisation of children's rights in public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya. Learners who travelled long distances to school, particularly those who walked or relied on potentially unsafe modes of transport, experienced challenges including lateness, fatigue, reduced concentration, limited participation in learning activities, and exposure to safety risks. In contrast, learners residing closer to school generally reported better punctuality, increased study time, improved concentration, and greater participation in learning activities. Overall, these findings suggest that improving school accessibility is important for promoting learners' rights to education, protection, and participation.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on child rights and education by providing empirical evidence that school accessibility should be understood not only as an educational concern but also as a child rights issue. The integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence provided a more comprehensive understanding of how accessibility challenges are associated with learners' participation in education and the realisation of their rights. Furthermore, the study extends existing evidence by examining school accessibility through a child rights lens in public primary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, where empirical research from this perspective has been limited.

**Recommendations:** Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

Priority should be given to improving school accessibility through coordinated policy and institutional interventions. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with county governments and other stakeholders, should expand public primary schools in underserved areas and strengthen transport and infrastructure systems to reduce excessive travel distances and reduce travel-related risks faced by learners. At the school level, administrators should

reinforce child-friendly practices by strengthening guidance and counselling services and implementing supportive measures for learners affected by long commuting distances rather than punitive responses to lateness or absenteeism. These interventions have the potential to enhance learners' participation while promoting their rights to education, protection, and participation.

Future research should build on the present findings by employing longitudinal or analytical research designs across diverse geographical settings to examine further the association between school accessibility and the realisation of children's rights.

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