

# **Inclusive Education for Internally Displaced Children in Kenya: Children Perceptions of Their Learning and Development Needs in Post-Conflict Schooling**

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## **Abstract**

The Kenyan society has been characterised by tribal-political-instigated violence since the declaration of multiparty democracy in 1991. The 2007/8 post-election violence (PEV) particularly saw the scattering of families where some children lost months or years of schooling; others were permanently excluded from education, while the participation and achievement of those arriving in school were characterised by complex needs and experiences. This paper aims to analyse literature and report on findings from creative activities with 16 conflict-affected children (9–12 years) regarding their experiences and understandings of inclusive education during their post-conflict school-life. I conducted an intrinsic case study with aspects of ethnography in a postconflict community primary school in Kenya whose majority (71%) pupil population was attributed to internal displacement following the 2007/8 PEV. Children perceived inclusive education in regard to their own learning and development needs as involving access and acceptance in the new school community, social-emotional development, ‘peer-keeping’ and community-consciousness. Whilst valuing their teachers’ pursuit for inclusion-sensitive practices, children’s understanding of their own circumstances resulted in group-made strategies like ‘peer-keeping’ and peer-constructed rules of interaction, helping them negotiate systemic constraints and distortion of values. This study underscores the fundamental role of children in social integration in post-conflict circumstances.

**Keywords:** Kenya, Inclusion, Conflict-affected children, IDPs, Learning and development needs

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