

**Give A Child Life (GCL) Kenya
Family Assessment Reports:
2010 through 2013**



Give A Child Life
PO Box 554
Silverado, CA 92676
www.giveachildlife.org

Founded in 2007, Give a Child Life (GCL) is dedicated to helping save the lives of infants and toddlers in low-income countries by providing food, medicine, child care, and other vital necessities. The goal is to ensure young children's survival and facilitate physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth. Since 2010, GCL has been targeting an average 17-27 families yearly in Kenya and 40-46 families in El Salvador. All have at least one child under six years old.

This report focuses on Kiandutu, a slum of 40,000 people on the outskirts of Thika, a major city in Kenya. There 25 of the poorest families with young children participate in the GCL group, which meets monthly and offers an array of benefits (child care, preschool, micro-grants, etc.). However, any needy family with young children in Kiandutu can receive emergency food and medicine from GCL. Service delivery is controlled by Kiandutu's village elders, who have lived in the community for decades and know the families seeking help.

Since 2010, GCL has collected 92 detailed annual assessments from the families in its group. Of



these, eight started with GCL in 2010; 12 in 2011; 10 in 2012, and nine in 2013. Families are required to leave the group when they no longer have a young child. Others leave when they move from the area or stop attending meetings. Several have been asked to leave by a majority of other group members because of negative attitudes or behaviors. This type of social monitoring occurs primarily in the group itself with the involvement of village elders. The average GCL family participates a little more than two years.

GCL participants are particularly vulnerable as they are predominately single female parents with limited family support and education. The following report finds:

- **Hunger increases with each additional young child in the family.**
- **Children's hunger decreases with every 100 shillings in additional weekly income.**
- **Children's hunger decreases when young children attend a child care or preschool program.**
- **Family well-being improves with each year of GCL participation.**

WHO ARE THE FAMILIES HELPED BY GCL?



The average mother in GCL has two or more children age six or under and a total of four children under 18. The number of young children in the group each year has varied from 40 to 61. In 2010, 17 family assessments were completed; 25 in 2011; 22 in 2012 and 28 in 2013. The data set includes 92 assessments collected from 50 families over four years. The table below indicates the years of participation:

Number of years of GCL participation	Number of families
4	8 families
3	3 families
2	13 families
1	26 families

While a large percentage of the participants are single, many share rent by living with grown children, relatives or friends when possible.

Year	Average number of adults in home	Percentage of homes with one adult	Average number of children under 18	Average number of children 6 or under	Total no. of children 6 or under
2010	1.6	82%	2.2	2.7	46
2011	1.3	76%	4.0	2.3	59
2012	1.5	59%	4.2	1.8	40
2013	1.5	64%	4.4	2.2	61

GCL parents cover a wide range of ages, with the youngest only 15 and the oldest, 88. There are several sickly grandmothers who have inherited orphaned grandchildren. Living in an urban slum, the families tend to be socially isolated, with about half having no close relative within walking distance and a third having one close relative nearby.

Year	Average age of parent	Lowest age	Highest age	Percent with no close relative in walking distance
2010	35	20	85	47%
2011	36	21	86	52%
2012	34	15	87	50%
2013	40	19	88	57%



All parents in the group work as casual laborers, meaning that they take work wherever they can find it and are paid on a piecemeal basis. Many sell small foodstuffs, such as tomatoes, or other items like shoes imported from China. Or they sell hard boiled eggs or cups of hot coffee. If they have no capital at all, they try to find someone to pay them to wash clothes. Their survival margin is very thin and their work tends to shift with the seasons, as profit margins shrink and other efforts become more appealing. As a result, they

rarely develop competencies and instead drift from one type of work to another. One of the most important items any of them can own is a cell phone....and about a third of the families have managed to secure one.



Year	Average weekly income (\$2 ksh:\$1)	How many days a week does the primary caregiver work?	Percentage of families with cell phone
2010	192/\$2.34	3.70	39%
2011	453/\$5.53	5.04	46%
2012	443/\$5.40	4.32	32%
2013	365/\$4.45	4.32	27%

Analysis of income by how many years a family has participated in GCL indicates that those with the longest participation have higher incomes.

Average weekly income (Kenya shillings)

Just starting	2 years with GCL	3 years with GCL	4 years with GCL
269	420	675	625

The families' homes usually are no more than one small room, about 10' by 10' with a wooden door, mud walls and rusted iron sheet roof. Furniture is sparse, often missing completely. When

a family enrolls in the program, it's not unusual to find everyone sleeping on a pile of dirty clothes and fabrics...with no mattress or blanket.



Weekly incomes hover around 400 shillings (about \$5). Rents average 313 ksh or \$3.81 a month, amounting to about a quarter of the family income. Many families have trouble making their rent payments, with the average family skipping two to three payments a year. Not surprisingly, many families move at least once a year...most likely because of an inability to pay rent. Only about 25% of the families own their homes.

Year	Rents Home	Avg monthly rent (82 ksh:\$1)	How many times in past 12 months have they not paid the rent?	How many times in the past 12 months have they moved?	Home has electricity
2010	71%	309/\$3.77	3.5	0.4	29%
2011	77%	333/\$4.06	2.1	0.7	20%
2012	77%	302/\$3.68	2.0	1.4	22%
2013	67%	307/\$3.74	2.7	1.0	29%

The percentage of families with electricity in their homes is small....fewer than 30%....but increasing. The local government is in the process of installing electricity throughout the slum. However, even if a family has electricity, that doesn't mean they use it. Many never turn on the lights because they can't afford the monthly bill.

Toilets in Kiandutu are scarce. Some public toilets exist, but the largest number of families dig a hole in their yard and use it as a pit latrine.

Year	Use Neighbor's latrine	Pit latrine	Public Toilet
2010	3	12	2
2011	7	9	9
2012	6	12	4
2013	3	15	9

The majority of GCL group members have very limited educations. In working with them to track sales from their small businesses (selling vegetables, eggs, etc.), it was clear that most did not know how to count money or use a ledger book to calculate profits. Rather than asking how much education they had, the assessment asked how well they could read and work with

numbers. Not surprising, most said they could only do either a little. This creates significant challenges in implementing programs, as parents need all information presented in pictures and critical thinking skills are often (but certainly not always) underdeveloped.

Year	How well can the caregiver read? (0=not at all, 1=a little, 2=some, 4=very well)	How well can the caregiver use numbers? (0=not at all, 4=very well)
2010	0.9	0.9
2011	1.2	1.2
2012	1.0	1.0
2013	0.9	0.9

Life is hard for the GCL families. With an average income of about 400 ksh (\$5) a week, most spend almost half their earnings on cooking fuel and water. And prices have been increasing for the past two years.

Year	Fuel Cost Per Week	Average change in fuel cost	Water Cost Per Week	Average change in water cost
2010	152		103	
2011	163	+8%	90	-13%
2012	175	+7%	113	+26%
2013	180	+3%	126	+12%

Most of the families use charcoal for cooking.

Year	Charcoal	Wood	Kerosene
2010	59%	24%	17%
2011	76%	16%	8%
2012	68%	23%	9%
2013	75%	21%	4%

With so much of their small incomes consumed by necessities such as rent, fuel and water, GCL families have little left for child care. Across the four years, parents reported leaving their children alone three to four days a week while they looked for work. In 2010, before GCL started providing child care vouchers, the largest number of mothers asked a neighbor to watch their children. For some, the "babysitters" were children themselves---5, 6, 9 and 11 years old.



In 2011, GCL began providing vouchers to send young children to local child care centers and preschools. This is reflected in "Other" in the table below.

When you leave for work, who watches your young children?

Year	Neighbor	Relative	Friend	Sibling	No one	Other
2010	29%	6%	12%	6%	6%	24%
2011	4%	8%	0%	12%	19%	62%
2012	0%	9%	0%	5%	0%	77%
2013	0%	5%	0%	9%	5%	77%

FOOD SECURITY



In all years the majority of families (65-85%) reported obtaining their food with cash. A small percentage (12% or less each year) reported trading for food and close to half (35-55%) in most years reported receiving food from neighbors. In the last three years (2011-2013), fewer than 12% reported receiving food from relatives. This decreased significantly from 2010, when 24% reported getting food from family members.

How does your family normally get its food? (a family could have multiple responses)

Year	Buys with cash	Trades	Given by neighbors	Given by relatives
2010	65%	6%	41%	24%
2011	65%	12%	35%	12%
2012	86%	9%	36%	9%
2013	82%	5%	55%	5%

Parents were asked yearly to report on a scale of 1 to 5 (5="a lot"), "How hungry are your children?" Children's hunger levels continued to be high in all four years (3.55-4.15) though decreasing overall. **Analysis of variance showed that the decrease in hunger reported by parents was statistically significant.**

How hungry are your children?

Year	How hungry are your children (1=not at all, 5=a lot)
2010	4.40
2011	4.15
2012	3.55
2013	3.95

Families who have participated longer in GCL reported statistically significant lower levels of hunger.

No. of years in GCL	Hunger Rating (1=not at all hungry, 5=a lot hungry)
1st year	4.2
2nd year	4.2
3rd year	2.9
4th year	3.0

In 2010, most families reported having no breakfast and few had dinner. Lunch was the primary meal. The next year, after GCL had started lunchtime feeding programs, some families reported having porridge for breakfast. By 2013, all of the GCL families were eating lunch and dinner. Almost half also had breakfast. Most lunches and dinners consisted of maize and beans or ugali (corn flour) and vegetables. The differences in the percentages of families eating breakfast and dinner from year to year were significant.

Year	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
2010	0%	76%	29%
2011	8%	60%	83%
2012	32%	68%	77%
2013	42%	100%	100%

Families who had been in GCL for two or more years ate significantly more often than those just starting with GCL.

Meals eaten the day before	Just starting with GCL	2 years with GCL	3 years with GCL	4 years with GCL
Breakfast	18%	64%	80%	88%
Lunch	67%	88%	80%	100%
Dinner	49%	96%	100%	100%

The next table shows that over the years, GCL members began having more basic food staples in their homes. Also, the longer the GCL participation, the more likely a family was to have the staples. The differences were statistically significant. The most common foods were maize flour, beans and vegetables. Rice is more expensive.

Which of the following foods do you have in the house?

Year	Maize Flour	Beans	Rice	Vegetables
2010	47%	47%	0%	12%
2011	42%	12%	12%	24%
2012	55%	27%	23%	59%
2013	82%	75%	54%	78%

No. of yrs in GCL	Maize Flour	Beans	Rice	Vegetables
1st year	37%	29%	8%	14%
2nd year	80%	56%	28%	68%
3rd year	70%	30%	50%	90%
4th year	100%	88%	88%	100%

CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

In general, parents reported the children being only a little clean, most likely the result of a lack of water and privacy for bathing. It also is dark in most of the homes, making it difficult to see when washing or cleaning.

Year	How clean are the children (1=very dirty, 3=a little clean, 5=very clean)
2010	3.06
2011	3.46
2012	3.27
2013	3.18



During the first year of GCL’s program activities, all families reported insufficient levels of toys, books, medicine, clothing, food and bedding. From 2011 to 2012, the amount of toys, medicine, food and bedding significantly increased. In 2013, almost half of all families reported sufficient levels of most of these household items.

Do the children have sufficient....?

Year	Toys	Books	Medicine	Clothes	Food	Beddings
2010	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2011	4%	4%	4%	35%	4%	38%
2012	32%	9%	50%	59%	59%	82%
2013	41%	27%	50%	41%	59%	50%

The longer a family had been with GCL, the more likely it was to have the items, especially food and medicine.

Item	Just starting with GCL	2 years with GCL	3 years with GCL	4 years with GCL
Toys	4%	12%	60%	88%
Books	6%	8%	20%	50%
Medicine	6%	12%	100%	100%
Clothing	27%	36%	70%	50%
Food	10%	20%	100%	100%
Bedding	33%	36%	90%	63%

HEALTH

Parents reported generally good levels of health for themselves. On a scale of 1 to 5 (“never sick” to “always sick”) for 2011, 2012 and 2013, parents self-rated their health, on average, at 1.5 (between “never sick” and “hardly ever sick”).

They reported that children’s health has improved since 2010, when it was 2.3 on a five-point scale. From 2011-2013, the rating averaged closer to 2.0.

Year	Parent health status (1=never sick, 5=always sick)	Child health status (1=never sick, 5=always sick)
2010	1.1	2.3
2011	1.5	1.8
2012	1.5	1.9
2013	1.5	2.0



REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF GCL IMPACT

The first regression analysis examined weekly income by the following variables: total number of children in the household, total number of young children, age and marital status of primary caregiver, total number of adults, parent health, length of work week, number of days children were left while the parent went to work, and the number of relatives who lived nearby. The R-squared value indicated that these variables together accounted for 37% of the income variation.

The analysis indicated that the number of days children were left so the parent could work and the number of children under the age of six significantly impacted income levels.

- For every additional day that a parent left young children to work, the parent's income increased approximately 42 shillings (about 50 cents) per week.
- For every additional child under six, the family lost an estimated 54 shillings per week.
- Every relative living within walking distance resulted in approximately 39 more shillings per week in income.

Income increased...

- **for each additional day a parent left home to find work.**
- **for each additional relative living within walking distance.**

Income decreased...

- **with each additional child under the age of six in the family.**

A second regression analysis examined the relationship between reported levels of children's hunger and variations in weekly income, the number of children under the age of six, the number of days a week children were left in the care of others, the number of relatives living nearby, and the total number of adults and children under 18 in the household.

According to the R-squared value, these variables together accounted for 32% of the variation in children's hunger levels. Weekly income, the number of children in the home under the age of six and the number of days children were left while the parent worked, significantly impacted children's hunger.

- **For every extra 100 shillings of weekly income, children's hunger levels decreased by .195 or approximately 20% of a point (on 1-5 scale).** For example, a rating might drop from 3.5 to 3.3, indicating less hunger.
- **As the number of children under the age of six in the household increased, hunger levels rose by approximately 20% of a point (on 1-5 scale).** For example, for every extra child, the rating might increase from 3.5 to 3.7, indicating more hunger.
- For every day a child was left in the care of another, the hunger rating increased approximately 10% of a point (on 1-5 scale). In this case, a rating could rise from 3.5 to 3.6. However, a separate analysis indicated that **if children were taken to a child care facility or preschool (a GCL benefit, but not all families choose it), hunger levels significantly decreased by 64% of a point. So a score of 4.0 would drop to 3.36.**

Children's hunger decreased....

- **with every 100 extra shillings in weekly family income.**
- **when children attended a child care facility or preschool.**

Children's hunger increased when...

- **the number of children age six or under in the household increased.**
- **children were left in the care of another when the parent left to find work.**

