

# Give A Child Life (GCL) Kenya

## Family Assessment Report: 2010 and 2011

In March 2011, GCL staff completed detailed assessments with 19 families in Kiandutu, the major slum in Thika, Kenya, where GCL works with children age six and under. The families belong to the GCL Group, which started informally three years ago, with GCL's commitment to provide emergency food and medicine to young children in life-threatening situations. Over time, the program has slowly evolved as relationships with village elders and community leaders strengthened and extensive cooperation developed. Highlights of the past few years include:

### Report highlights

- From 2010 to 2011, the average income of families helped by GCL increased from about **\$2 a week to \$6 a week.**
- Average weekly earnings, minus basic costs for cooking fuel, water and rent, went from a deficit of 152 shillings a week (about \$2 US) in 2010 to a **surplus** of 153 shillings in 2011.
- The percentage of parents describing their children as "very hungry" went from more than half the families to **fewer than a quarter** after GCL started feeding programs in 2011.
- The percentage of children **who ate twice or more a day increased from 18% to 63%** over the year.
- Material conditions in the homes improved. In 2010, none of the children had enough blankets or clothes. The next year, a half dozen did.
- After GCL started providing child care, the average number of days a week a parent worked increased from 4.2 to 4.6.
- From 2010 to 2011, the number of children rated as "clean" or "very clean" **increased 83%.**



GCL's CEO, Deborah Johnson, with the village elders

The GCL Group meets one Saturday a month; however, village elders serving as outreach workers meet with individual mothers daily. The GCL program manager or coordinator visit the children and families at least once a week.



Currently GCL provides:

- a. Five day a week feeding programs for infants and young children
- b. Five day a week preschool/nursery care for children 3 to 6.
- c. Emergency meals to families who have nothing to eat
- d. Medicine and medical care for children when needed
- e. Interactive play activities for parents and young children
- f. Math and accounting training for women running small businesses
- g. Crisis support in desperate situations.

This report documents the results of detailed family assessments completed by GCL members in June 2010 and March 2011. In 2010, the group had 17 members; the next year, it had 19. Seven members were new. It should be noted that about three-quarters of the women served by GCL were single or widowed. The average mother had two children under the age of six.



*The GCL group after a meeting.*

### ***Education and income levels of parents***

The children's parents had low education levels. In 2010, more than half had never been to school. In 2011, that number dropped to 26%. However, 52% had less than a high school education. Asked how well they could read and do math, 63% of the group members reported their abilities were very limited.

In 2010, the average parent income was 204 shillings a week (\$2.50). The next year, the average income more than doubled to 474 shillings a week (\$5.80) (*using an exchange rate of 82 shillings= \$1 US*). Possibly related to the income increase is the fact that once GCL started providing five day a week child care, the number of parents who went to work five or more days a week increased from 3 in 2010 to 11 in 2011.

Average weekly income	2010 Number of parents	2011 Number of parents
0	1	1
100	2	
140	1	
150	3	2
180	1	
200	5	1
260		1
300	2	2
400		1
500		2
600		3
700	1	5
950		1
<b>Average income</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>474</b>



*Mothers and children at a GCL meeting*

## Basic Needs

Among the essentials needed by every family in Kiandutu are water and fuel for cooking. The largest number of families relied on charcoal and the percentage increased from 2010 to 2011.

Fuel type used	2010 Number	2010 Percentage	2011 Number	2011 Percentage
Charcoal	10	59%	14	74%
Wood	4	24%	3	16%
Kerosene	3	17%	2	11%

In 2010, families spent from 90 to 300 shillings a week on fuel (average=151), and from 21 to 250 shillings a week on water (average=104). In 2011, weekly fuel costs ranged from 50 to 270 shillings (average=163) and weekly water costs 30 to 120 shillings (average=83). Given the average income, food and water expenses alone used up all of the typical family income in 2010. But in 2011, the expenses amounted to about half the income.

Item	2010 Number	2011 Number
Average weekly income	204	474
Average weekly fuel cost	151	163
Average weekly water cost	104	83
Balance	-51	+228



GCL staff help mothers keep track of ledgers for their small businesses.

## Hunger and Food

The majority of families bought their food. But many also relied on the generosity of neighbors or relatives.

Gets food from...	2010 Number	2011 Number
Buy with cash	11	15
Trade	1	2

Gets food from...	2010 Number	2011 Number
Neighbors give food	7	4
Relatives give food	4	2

When asked how hungry their children were, parents responded on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1=not at all and 5=a lot. In 2010, 53% described their children as very hungry. **In 2011, only 26% did so.**

Children's hunger	2010 Number	2010 Percentage	2011 Number	2011 Percentage
1=not at all	0			
2	0			
3	2	12%	4	21%
4	6	35%	10	53%
5= a lot	9	53%	5	26%
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.4</b>		<b>4.05</b>	



**In 2010, the average child in a GCL family had 1.1 meals per day. In 2011, this increased to an average of 1.8 meals per day.** Most of the meals consisted of ugali, a Kenyan staple made from cornmeal, water and salt. One serving has 294 calories, including 62 grams of carbohydrate and 6.6 grams of protein. When they can, mothers add vegetables, usually spinach, to increase the nutritional value.

In 2010, none of the children had eaten breakfast the day before the parents completed the survey. In 2011, two children had eaten breakfast.

Overall, of the 17 families in 2010, 12% (n=2) of the families had eaten nothing the day before the survey; 71% (n=12) had eaten only one meal and 18% (n=3) had eaten twice. In 2011, after GCL started feeding programs, the situation improved dramatically. Only 5% (n=1) had nothing to eat the day before; 27% (n=5) had eaten one meal, and **68% (n=13) had eaten two or more meals.**

Number of meals per day	2010 Number	2010 Percentage	2011 Number	2011 Percentage
0	2	11%	1	5%
1	12	71%	5	27%
2	3	18%	11	58%
3	0		1	5%
4			1	5%



A girl in GCL's Young Children Feeding Program.

The assessment asked mothers to estimate how much of various foods they had at home. While no home had a refrigerator or storage capacity, it is common for families to store dry goods in plastic buckets and other containers. The mothers reported that they had:

## 2010

MAIZE FLOUR	BEANS	RICE	VEGETABLES
None	None	None	None
None	None	None	None
1 small bowl	1scoop	None	None
None	Not enough	None	None
1 small bowl	None	None	Not enough
None	None	None	None
1 small bowl	None	None	None
1 small bowl	Not enough	None	None
1 small bowl	Not enough	None	None
None	None	None	None
None	Not enough	None	Not enough
None	None	None	none
1 small bowl	None	None	None
1 small bowl	1 scoop	None	None
None	None	None	None
None	1 scoop	None	None
1 small bowl	1 scoop	None	None
<b>8 of 17 had one small bowl of maize flour; 9 had none.</b>	<b>4 had 1 scoop of beans; 4 had not enough and 9 had none.</b>	<b>No one had rice.</b>	<b>Two had a few vegetables.</b>

## 2011

MAIZE FLOUR	BEANS	RICE	VEGETABLES
	None	None	None
None	A little	None	None
A little maize flour	None	None	A little
None	None	None	None
1 packet	None	None	1 head cabbage
None	None	None	None
None	None	None	None
None	None	A little	None

MAIZE FLOUR	BEANS	RICE	VEGETABLES
A little maize flour	None	A little	None
1 small bowl	1 scoop	None	None
A little maize flour	None	None	None
None	1 scoop	None	None
A little maize flour	None	A little	None
None	None	None	None
None	None	None	None
None	None	None	None
A little maize flour	None	None	A little
A little maize flour	None	None	A little
A little maize flour	None	None	A little
<i>9 of 19 had one small bowl of maize flour; 9 had none.</i>	<i>3 had 1 scoop of beans; 16 had none.</i>	<i>3 had a little rice; 16 had none.</i>	<i>Five had a few vegetables.</i>

The number of families with a little rice and a few vegetables increased from 2010 to 2011, but not much. GCL families live day to day, with no emergency supplies, but village elders ensure that emergency food is available as needed.



## ***Child Care Practices***

In 2010, parents left children to go to work an average of three days a week. But they worked an average of four days a week, indicating that many either took children to work or worked at home. The number of parents who left children five or more days a week increased from 3 in 2010 to 11 in 2011. This could be because of five day a week day care provided by GCL.

<b>Number of days</b>	<b>2010 Number of days per week parent leaves children</b>	<b>2010 Number of days per week parent works</b>	<b>2011 Number of days per week parent leaves children</b>	<b>2011 Number of days per week parent works</b>
0	2	1	2	2
1	2	1	1	1
2	1	2	1	1
3	2	2	3	3
4	2	2	1	2
5	1	1	2	1
6	1	3		1
7	1	3	9	8
N/A	5			
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.6</b>

Prior to GCL providing child care, working parents most often either asked a neighbor to look in on their children or locked them in the home (which was often dark). In 2011, because of GCL's help, the majority of children were in preschool/nurseries (see Other below).

<b>Person watching child for caregiver</b>	<b>2010 Number</b>	<b>2011 Number</b>
Neighbor	5	1
Day care	4	
Friend	2	
Relative	1	2
Older child	1	2
No one	1	2
Other		13





Regarding personal hygiene, GCL staff in 2010 rated the children on average as between "a little clean" and "clean." Conditions improved in 2011, when five children were rated as "very clean."

<b>How clean are the children?</b>	<b>2010 Number</b>	<b>2011 Number</b>
Very dirty=1	0	1
Dirty	2	3
A little	6	4
Clean	6	6
Very clean=5	0	5
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>3.58</b>

In 2010, none of the children had sufficient toys, books, clothes, food, blankets or medicine. The next year, six children had enough blankets and five had enough clothes. One reason is that GCL provided every child in the program with a pair of sturdy leather shoes.

### ***Health Status***

In 2011, 14 of the 19 parents (74%) reported that they were never sick. Only one mother was "sometimes sick". The rest were "hardly ever sick." The mother who reportedly an occasional illness was HIV-positive. The other parents reported that when they were sick, it was most often with a cold or cough.

In general, the parents evaluated their children as pretty healthy, with only about a quarter "sometimes sick." As with the parents, the most frequent illnesses among the children were coughs and colds. A handful of children had malaria.

It was unfortunate that the assessment form did not include diarrhea or stomach problems. "Other" was checked almost as often as colds and most likely, illnesses related to digestion were marked in this category. GCL will correct this in the next assessment.

### ***Other information***

In 2010, 12 of the 17 families rented their homes; only five owned them. Rents varied from 300 to 700 shillings monthly, with an average of 404 shillings. In 2011, six of the 19 families owned their homes. Rents varied from 0 to 800 shillings monthly, with an average of 300 shillings.

Of the 12 families who rented in 2010, 11(92%) had skipped two or more rent payments in the previous 12 months. Two families had not made any payments. Five had skipped four to six payments and four had missed two or three. In 2011, of the 13 renters, seven (54%) had missed two or more rent payments. Only one family didn't make any payments.

The 2010 transiency rate was relatively low, with 13 families (76%) living in the same home as during the prior year. In 2011, 14 of the 19 families (74%) had not moved during the year. Three families had moved once; one moved twice, and one moved three times.

In 2010, eight (47%) of the 17 families had relatives within walking distance. Six had one relative; one had two relatives, and one had 10 relatives nearby. More than half the families did not live near relatives. In 2011, 11 (58%) of the 19 families had relatives within walking distance. Seven had one relative; two had two; one had three, and one had five.

Finally, the table below expands upon previous calculations of average weekly earnings minus basic necessities by including average rents. The numbers indicate an average weekly deficit of 152 shillings (about \$2 US) per family in 2010 and an average weekly surplus of 153 shillings per family a year later.

Item	2010 Number	2011 Number
Average weekly income	204	474
Average weekly fuel cost	151	163
Average weekly water cost	104	83
Balance	-51	+228
Average monthly rent prorated by week	-101	-75
Average weekly earnings minus basic needs (excluding food)	-152	153

## ***Conclusion***

GCL's program has made a dramatic difference in the everyday lives of young children and their families in Kiandutu. Because of GCL, significantly more children are eating at least twice a day; parents have more opportunities to work; family incomes are rising, and children are cleaner..a condition that will lead to better health. Children also are receiving vitally important stimulation and learning opportunities in preschools and nursery classes. In an emergency, GCL saves lives with food, medicine and medical care. GCL is becoming rooted tightly in the community and attention to the needs of young children is rising. The differences will, hopefully, last a lifetime.

## APPENDIX

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>2010 Number</b>	<b>2010 Percentage</b>	<b>2011 Number</b>	<b>2011 Percentage</b>
Single	7	42%	10	53%
Married	5	29%	4	21%
Widowed	5	29%	5	26%

In 2011, GCL worked with 17 mothers, 2 grandmothers and 1 father. Ages ranged from 20 to 86 years old, with seven in their 20s; eight in their 30s; two in their 40s; 1 in her 50s, and 1 in her 80s. The average age was 36. Among the married women, several had on/off relationships with husbands and children primarily depended upon the mother for food and other necessities.

### ***Education and income levels of parents***

<b>Parent's education level</b>	<b>2010 Number</b>	<b>2010 Percentage</b>	<b>2011 Number</b>	<b>2011 Percentage</b>
None	9	53%	5	26%
4th grade			1	5%
5th grade	1	6%		
6th grade	3	18%	5	26%
7th grade	2	12%	3	16%
8th grade			1	5%
10th grade			1	5%
12th grade	2	12%	3	16%

<b>Parent's reading level</b>	<b>2010 Number</b>	<b>2010 Percentage</b>	<b>2011 Number</b>	<b>2011 Percentage</b>
Not at all	7	41%	5	26%
A little	8	47%	7	37%
Some	0		4	21%
Pretty well	0		3	16%
Very well	2	12%		

<b>Parent's math level</b>	<b>2010 Number</b>	<b>2010 Percentage</b>	<b>2011 Number</b>	<b>2011 Percentage</b>
Not at all	7	41%	5	26%
A little	8	47%	7	37%
Some	0		4	21%
Pretty well	0		3	16%
Very well	2	12%		

In 2010, all of the families used pit latrines. In 2011, 15 used pit latrines and four used public toilets.

In 2010, five of the 17 families (29%) had electricity. The next year, four of 19 families (21%) had electricity.

***2010: How many meals did your children eat yesterday? What were they?***

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Supper</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>No. meals</b>
None	None	None	None	0
None	Ugali	None		1
None	None	None	None	0
None	Ugali	None	None	1
None	Ugali & vegetables	None	None	1
None	Ugali & vegetables	None	None	1
None	Rice & beans	None	None	1
None	Ugali & vegetables	Ugali & vegetables	None	2
None	Rice & beans	Ugali & vegetables	None	2
None	Ugali	None	None	1
None	Ugali	None	None	1
None	Rice & beans	Rice	None	2
None	None	Ugali & vegetables	None	1
None	None	Ugali & vegetables	None	1
None	Rice & beans	None	None	1
None	Maize & beans	None	None	1
None	Ugali & vegetables	None	None	1
<b>Average</b>				<b>1.1</b>

***2011: How many meals did your children eat yesterday? What were they?***

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Supper</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>No. meals</b>
None	Ugali & vegetables	Ugali & vegetables		2
tea	School Lunch	Ugali & vegetables		2
tea	Porridge	Ugali & vegetables		2
None	School Lunch	Ugali & vegetables		2
tea	Maize & Beans	Ugali		2
None	None	Ugali & vegetables		1
None	School Lunch	None		1
None	Ugali & vegetables	Ugali & vegetables		2
None	None	Ugali & vegetables		1
None	None	Ugali & vegetables	None	1
None	None	Maize and Beans		1
Bread/tea	Ugali	Maize and Beans	Fruits	4

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Supper</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>No. meals</b>
None	Ugali & vegetables	Rice		2
None	None	None		0
Tea/Ugali	School Lunch	Ugali		3
Black tea	Ugali & cabbage			2
None	Maize & Beans	Ugali		2
Tea	Maize & Beans	Ugali & vegetables		2
None	School Lunch	Ugali		2
<b>Average</b>				<b>1.8</b>