



Fact Sheet
December 2015

Daycare in a Nairobi Informal Settlement: a snap shot of Korogocho



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Women preparing to return to the workforce after the birth of their children face a difficult dilemma: how do they make sure that their children are well cared for, so that they can attend to the business of work? Nowhere is this concern more pressing than in informal urban settlements, or slums, where daycare is often of poor quality and unaffordable to women with young children.

A team of researchers from the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in Kenya and McGill University in Canada are implementing a three-year project to see just what impact such constraints have on the economic empowerment of poor, urban women in Nairobi.

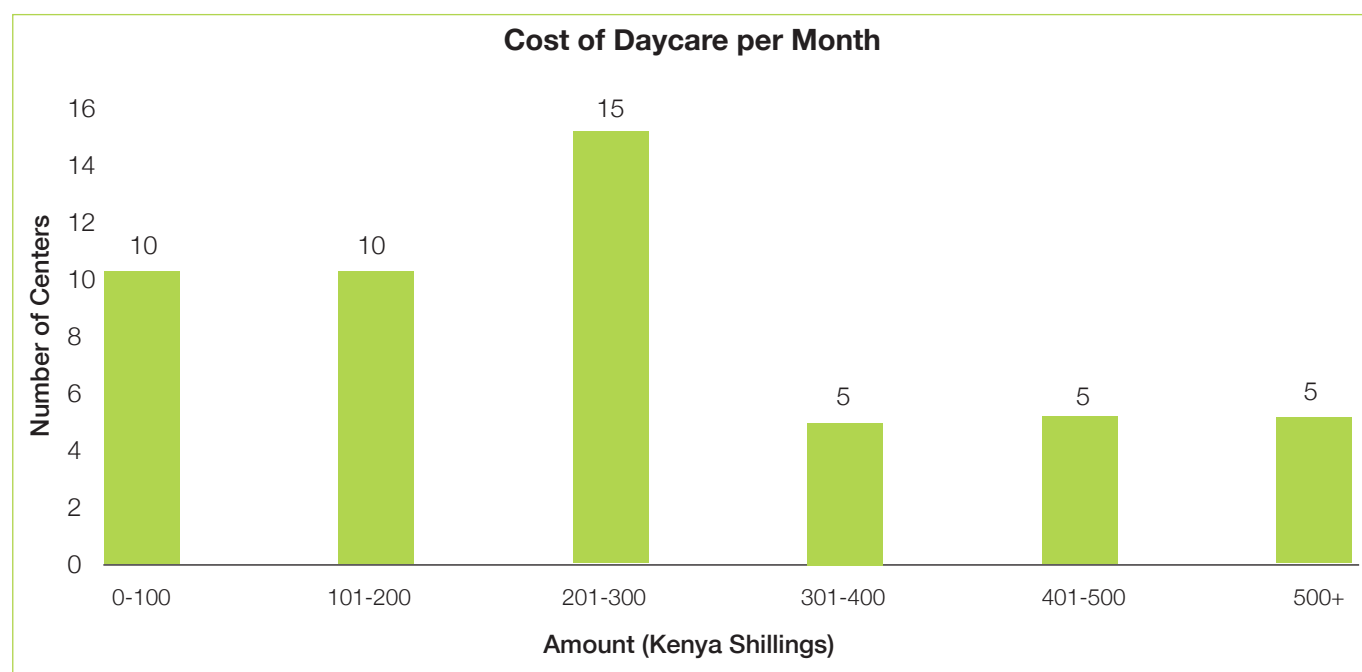
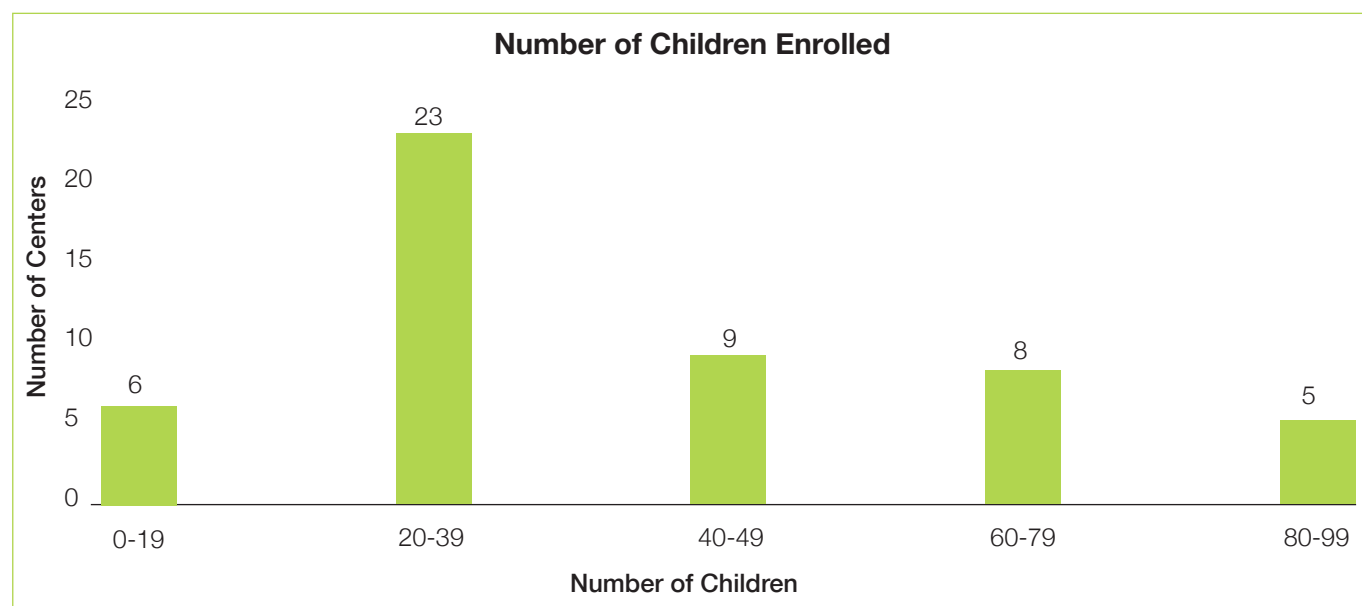
The project aims to assess whether subsidized and enhanced quality childcare can influence a woman's ability to work and earn. The study will focus on mothers 15 to 49 years of age in the Korogocho slum in northeast Nairobi, who have at least one child aged 1 to 4 years old.

The results of this study will provide insight into ways to stimulate the participation of women in the workforce and to close the gender gaps in earnings, by providing better quality and affordable childcare. These findings may also serve as the basis for discussions by policymakers and community leaders about how to better meet the needs of mothers with young children.

This fact sheet summarizes data on the current state of daycare options in Korogocho, which with around 200,000 residents is one of the largest informal settlements in Nairobi. Information was drawn from an inventory survey of 51 daycare centers conducted in 2015. The centers were identified through an initial quick sampling and a subsequent baseline survey of women with young children, who were asked whether and where they took their child to daycare. The inventory survey will inform a quality improvement intervention in the next phase of the project.

Characteristics of Daycare Centers in Korogocho

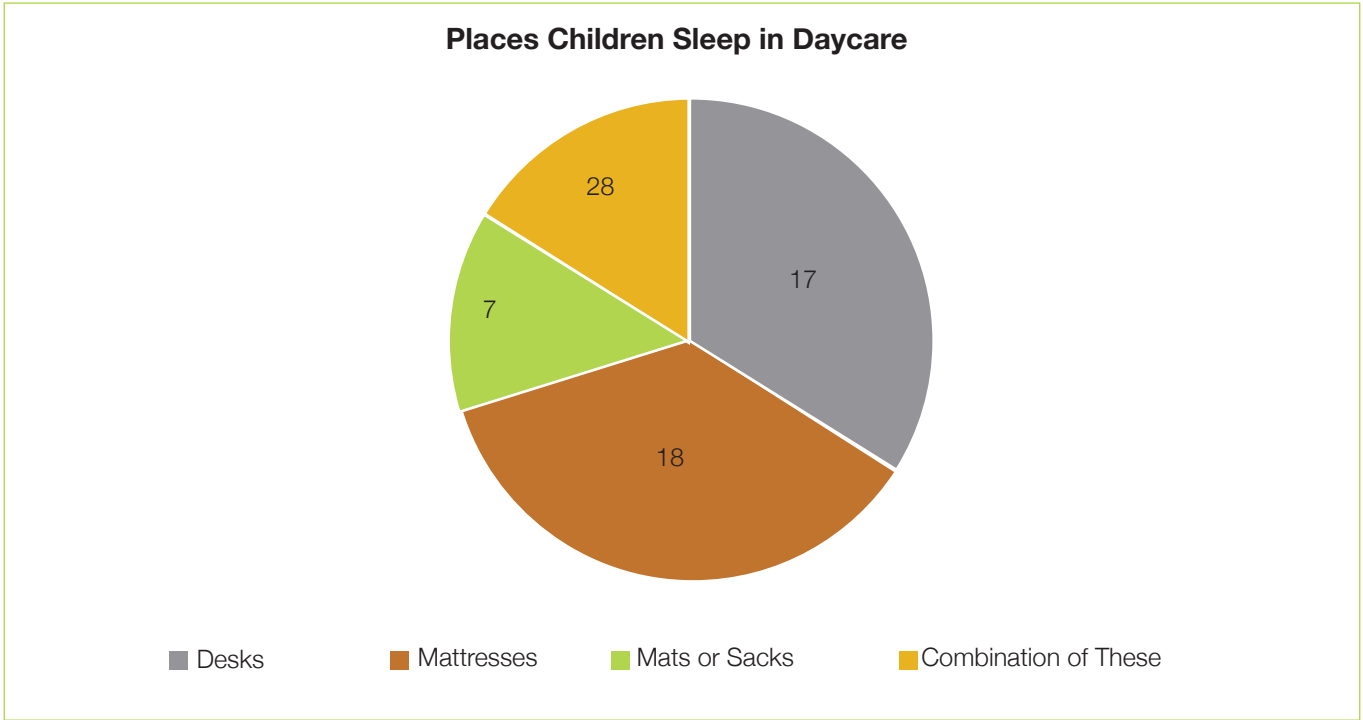
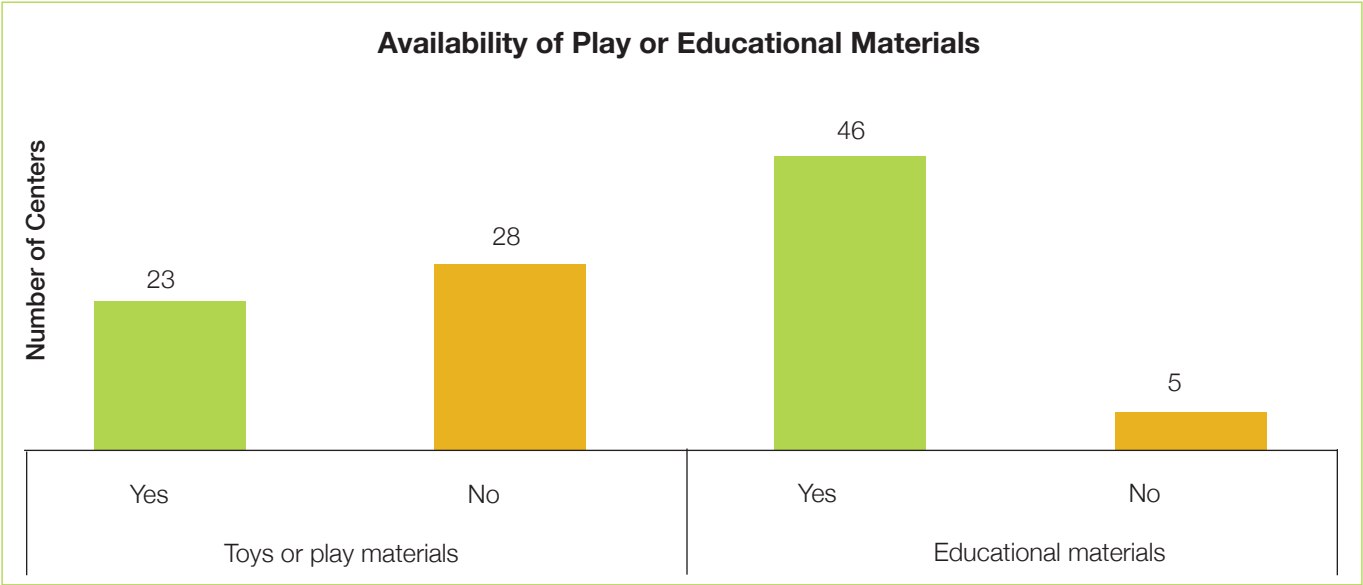
- Most of the daycare centers (80%) have been open for 15 years or less. The oldest center was established 25 years ago.
- In many centers, the majority of children were aged 3-4 years; however, the age range of children in care was three months to 8 years. About half of the centers separated the children by age-groups for learning activities.
- The average ratio of caregivers to children was 1:22. Over half of the daycare centers (59%) required that caregivers have at least a secondary school education, and 23% required that they have an Early Childhood Education certificate.
- Most (96%) centers opened between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM and closed between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM on weekdays. Nine centers remained open on Saturday and one also on Sunday. Over 75% had flexible operating hours.
- The average monthly cost of full-time daycare in this setting was KSH 335 (US\$3.35). Relatively few centers (21%), indicated that they offer discounts and payment options such as waiving fees for particularly needy children, or accepting payments in installments.



NOTE: Five daycare centers were run as community-based organizations and did not charge fees, while one declined to report the cost.

How Do Children Spend Their Time? Care, Play, Discipline, and Sleep

- Of the 51 centers, 22 indicated that they had toys and activities that were age-specific.
- A majority of the centers (67%) did not have a designated secure play area for children. Only three centers said that they took children out on walks.
- Most centers (84%) said that they did not ‘cane’ children when handling inappropriate behavior, but rather counseled the children, and 38 centers (74%) said that they gave children rewards, including candy, pens, books, or soap for good conduct.
- Nearly all centers (46 of the 51) reported having educational materials.
- Children sleep on mattresses, their desks, mats or sacks.



Quality of Care

Safety

- Over half of the centers (62%) monitored the coming and going of children, mainly through use of a register.
- A majority (92%) had doors/gates to prevent strangers from entering, and seven centers employed at least one security guard.
- All centers required a parent, guardian, other relative (including siblings), or another person authorized by the parent(s) or guardian(s) to pick up the child at the end of the day.
- Most centers interviewed parents before admitting their children, and 32 centers encouraged parents to visit during the day.



Health and Hygiene

- Half of the daycare centers checked the immunization records of children before admission.
- A majority (82%) said that they would call the child's parent or guardian, and 49% said that they would take the child to a health care facility in case of an injury or illness.
- All daycare centers had toilet facilities for adults and children. Of these, 23 centers had their own facilities, 24 centers shared toilets with other users, and only 14 daycares had potties for children.
- Almost all (98%) reported that children were taught to wash their hands after using the toilet. Most daycares used handwash stations or water basins for handwashing.

Nutrition

- Forty centers (78%) provided a meal at lunch, mainly consisting of rice or *ugali* (maize meal) with beans, or *githeri* (a combination of maize and beans cooked together). The rest required parents or guardians to bring food for their children. Only three centers provided a refrigerator where milk or meals could be stored.
- Four centers provided breakfast, eleven provided a morning snack, and six provided an afternoon snack. Porridge was the most common snack offered.



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