

# eKitabu

*Digital Essay Competition 2024 Report*

For Kenya Ministry of Education

April 2025

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## I. LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
DEC	Digital Essay Competition
KEPSHA	Kenya Primary School Heads Association
KIB	Kenya Institute for the Blind
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KISE	Kenya Institute of Special Education
KPA	Kenya Publishers Association
KPSA	Kenya Private Schools Association
MOE	Ministry of Education
NIBF	Nairobi International Book Fair
RKO	Regional Kick Off

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, aligned with eKitabu's mission to advance inclusive and equitable quality education for all, eKitabu launched the 12th annual Digital Essay Competition (DEC). The competition invited students from over 8,000 public and private schools across Kenya, emphasizing the importance of amplifying students' voices and encouraging young writers to express their perspectives and ideas. To ensure accessibility and broad participation, students were able to submit their essays online through: <http://essay.ekitabu.com> and through various alternative submission channels, engaging diverse voices from across the country.

The Competition ran from May to October for both Upper Primary, Junior and Secondary School students in the following categories: Kiswahili, English, Art, Kenyan Sign Language, Braille, French, German, and Arabic.

The 2024 essay questions were:

### **Primary and Junior School:**

*How can we take care of our environment at home and in school?*

### **For Secondary School:**

*How can students contribute to addressing climate change, in their communities and globally?*

The 2024 Competition registered **18,480** students from **191** schools from **all 47** counties of Kenya. We had over **160** students from **27 special needs education schools** in **15** Counties who participated. **242** of the total number of

essays came from **12** schools in the refugee camp—Kakuma. We also received French, German and Arabic essays.

The purpose of this document is to summarize the results, process, and lessons learned in 2024.

eKitabu warmly thanks Kenya’s Ministry of Education for its support in 2024, and we look forward to more collaboration in 2024.

### **III. PRIMARY BENEFITS OF THE DIGITAL ESSAY COMPETITION**

1. Encourages all students including learners with special needs and disabilities—to write, to develop, and to express their original ideas and perspectives.
2. Enhances creativity and critical thinking practices amongst students and teachers.
3. Supports learning through enhancement of writing skills.
4. Gives students and teachers an opportunity to reflect on how we can use technology to enhance learning.

### **IV. 2024 GOALS**

In 2024, our goals focused on reaching more students and schools despite tight school calendars:

1. Work with partners to reach the highest number of students as possible.

2. Reach and recognize winning students from special needs schools in Kenya to widen inclusivity.
3. Promote environmental awareness: Inspire young people to think critically about sustainability and global climate issues.
4. Encourage young writers: Support the development of young writers by providing them with a platform for them to express their thoughts creatively, in multiple languages and formats.
5. Reach and recognize winning students from schools in the main refugee camps in Kenya: Dadaab and Kakuma.
6. Collaborate with teachers, schools and partners.
7. Generate more online entries in English, Kiswahili, French, German, Art, KSL, braille, and Arabic categories.
8. Generate essays from all 47 counties. This year, special efforts were made to increase participation from Nairobi, resulting in a greater number of submissions from schools in Nairobi.

## **V. ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPETITION**

The organization of the Competition begins with seeking approval from the Ministry of Education. Also of significant importance to DEC 2024 were partnerships with regional Ministry offices, the Directorate of Special Needs Education (DSNE), head teachers, teachers, partners and regional eKitabu DEC agents we have recruited over the years to reach the various schools and students.

The following are among the steps we undertook in 2024:

- 3 main Official Launch events and 6 Regional Kick-Off (RKO) events.

- School visits in three counties; Nairobi, Machakos, Kiambu and Kajiado
- Systematic distribution of Digital Essay Competition digital posters to teachers, agents and parents.
- Digital Essay Competition posters widely distributed online throughout the country.
- Social media and SMS updates at every stage.

## Summary of the Events in 2024:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Counties</b>
Official Launch - Primary school - (CITAM Buruburu Primary School)	6	Nairobi
Official Launch - Secondary School (Limuru Girls High School)	4	Kiambu, Nairobi and Narok
Official Launch - French Category (Alliance Francaise)	8	Nairobi, Kiambu,
1 <sup>st</sup> Regional Kick-Off	17	Nakuru, Kericho, Kisumu, Siaya and Busia
2 <sup>nd</sup> Regional Kick-Off	11	Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, Kakamega and Bungoma
3 <sup>rd</sup> Regional Kick-Off	9	Muranga, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Meru, Embu and Isiolo
4 <sup>th</sup> Regional Kick-Off	12	Mombasa and Tana River
School Visits		Kiambu, Nairobi, Machakos and Kajiado
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>23</b>

## EVENTS KEY

**Official launch:** This is an event held at one or two different schools selected annually, usually one primary school and one secondary school, usually one school in Nairobi and one school not in Nairobi, to formally introduce and reintroduce DEC to students and teachers in schools countrywide. We also invite Ministry of Education officials, education stakeholders, partners and friends of eKitabu. At the event, the DEC questions for primary, junior school and senior school are unveiled. The event also provides an overview of the program's goals, success stories, alumni community, timelines, and plans for the current year.

**Mini launch:** This is a smaller version of the official launch done at a school in a selected region where students and teachers of neighboring schools can attend.

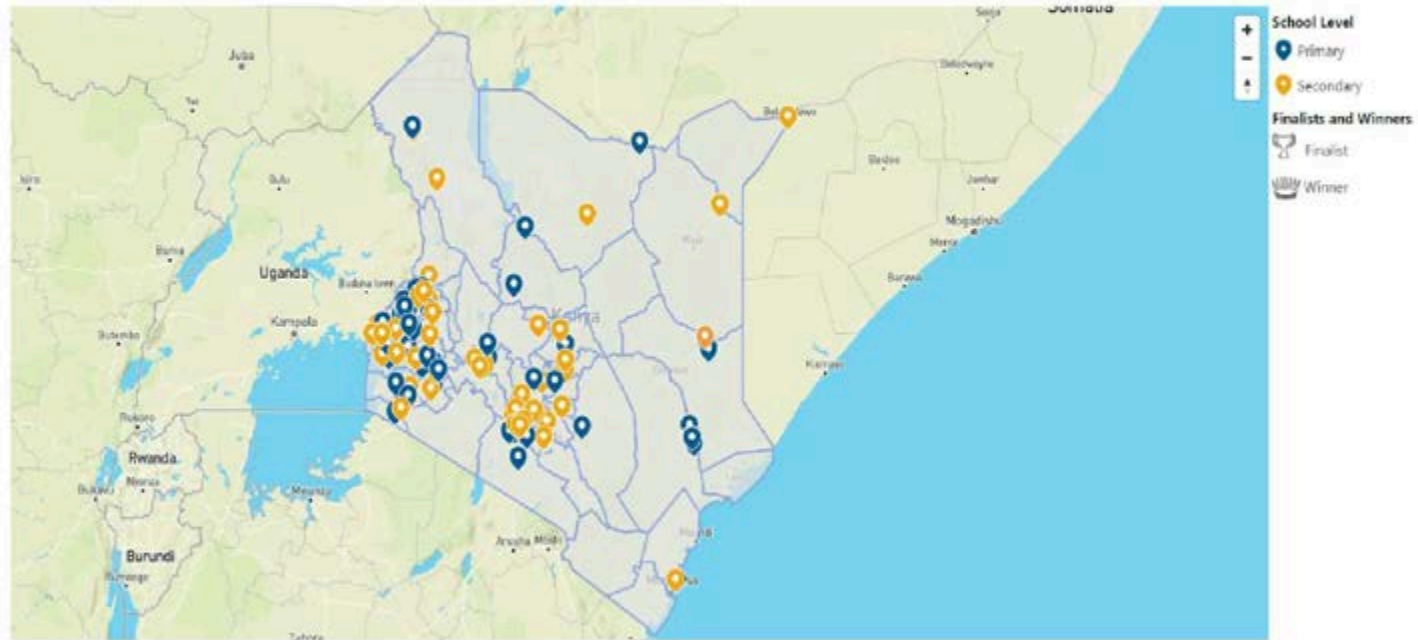
**Regional Kick-Off:** This is a series of school-by-school events to engage students, headteachers and teachers in multiple selected regions either to introduce DEC to new schools or to carry out follow up activities in existing DEC schools including recognizing DEC winners, finalists and their teachers in these schools, which we have found is one of the best ways to encourage learners, teachers, headteachers and whole schools to join and rejoin the DEC community.

**School visits:** These are eKitabu team visits especially to new DEC schools with the objective of engaging headteachers and teachers in DEC.

**Note:** The full list of events and activities is in the annex to this document.

## A. PARTICIPATION 2024: A MAP REPRESENTATION

Entries were from individual students from **47 Counties**, over **6,000** from Nairobi.



## B. DEC 2024 SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

2024 Sponsors and partners included Kenya Publishers Association (KPA), Kenya Primary School Heads Association (KEPSHA), Kenya Private Schools Association (KPSA), and The Embassy of France in Kenya.



## DEC 2024 TEACHERS

As observed since the start of DEC in 2013, teachers play a key role in this program, 2024 was no exception. Without the teachers we will not have achieved much, and in 2024 we worked with over **420 teachers**.

The teachers we have been able to coordinate with are:

- School head teachers
- School language teachers of English, Kiswahili, French and German both from mainstream and special needs schools

- Senior teachers
- School ICT champions as well as Computer Studies teachers
- eKitabu DEC field agents who are also teachers
- Schools, head teachers and teachers in the camps

The eKitabu team has always tried to engage with the teachers through industry events, school visits among other means. In 2024 we engaged them through social media platforms, events, and in some instances school visits. We also engaged teachers in schools in the Nairobi metropolis through visits and frequent phone calls.

Our 2024 strategy focused on recognizing teachers' contributions through awards and certification. We were pleased to see that teachers valued receiving feedback based on judges' comments regarding their students' essays and their schools' overall performance.

**DEC 2024 PHOTO GALLERY**



*Digital Essay Competition 2024 launch in June at Limuru Girls High School in Kiambu County*



*DEC 2024 winner, accompanied by his teachers and parents during the awards ceremony at the Nairobi International Book Fair (NIBF) in Nairobi County*



A music presentation by Limuru Girls High School during the DEC 2024 official launch at the school in Kiambu County.



DEC 2024 school awarding at Kibos School for the Visually Impaired in Kisumu County.



DEC 2024 KSL Judges at the eKitabu office in Nairobi during the judging of the essays.



Some of the DEC 2024 winners accompanied by their teacher at the Nairobi International Book Fair (NIBF) in Nairobi County.

### **C. PLANS FOR DEC 2025 TEACHERS**

1. Involve teachers from various schools in the DEC process from the outset, starting with the development of the question or theme.
2. Work with the teachers to get complete and accurate data during registration and submission of essays, by giving them clear instructions.
3. Involve more teachers from partner organizations with whom we are already working.
4. Involve teachers and agents more in planning of regional events.
5. Recognize all the teachers who supported the program in 2024.
6. Work closely with the contact teachers in the refugee camps to organize better for the registration of more learners for the competition, including learners with disabilities.
7. Increase participation of schools in Nairobi County: Factor in the lessons we learnt in 2024.

### **D. DEC 2025: STRATEGIES FOR IMPACT AND GROWTH**

#### **WHAT HAS WORKED OVER THE YEARS**

1. Seek the necessary program approval on time.
2. Involve more stakeholders: teachers, partners and agents in coming up with DEC questions.
3. Focus on maximizing the number of schools to maximize county reach and student participation.
4. Proper planning. The DEC is a cycle that spans the whole year: good planning is necessary for good results.

5. Recruit more agents for scale, focus more on the counties which were unrepresented in 2024.
6. Raise awareness among special needs schools early and ensure learners with different disabilities participate.
7. Securing the prizes on time is critical.
8. Ensure all DEC teachers receive written qualitative and quantitative feedback.
9. Work with the teachers to get complete and accurate data during registration and submission of essays, by giving them clear instructions.
10. Communications: calls, posters, emails, WhatsApp, bulk SMS and follow-ups from 2013 to date, returning schools as well as new schools.
11. Events: Regional Kick Off (RKO) events to target repeat schools.
12. Add sponsors for increased exposure and leverage. Sponsors may sponsor different categories, for example, French, German, or Art.
13. Recruit more agents from focus/target counties to ensure we improve reach.
14. Get sponsors involved with poster distribution through co-branding, exclusively-branded posters, banners.
15. Continue to assess the quantitative impact of DEC on schools and students.
16. Relationships: explore and enhance partnerships with teachers and schools' ICT champions.

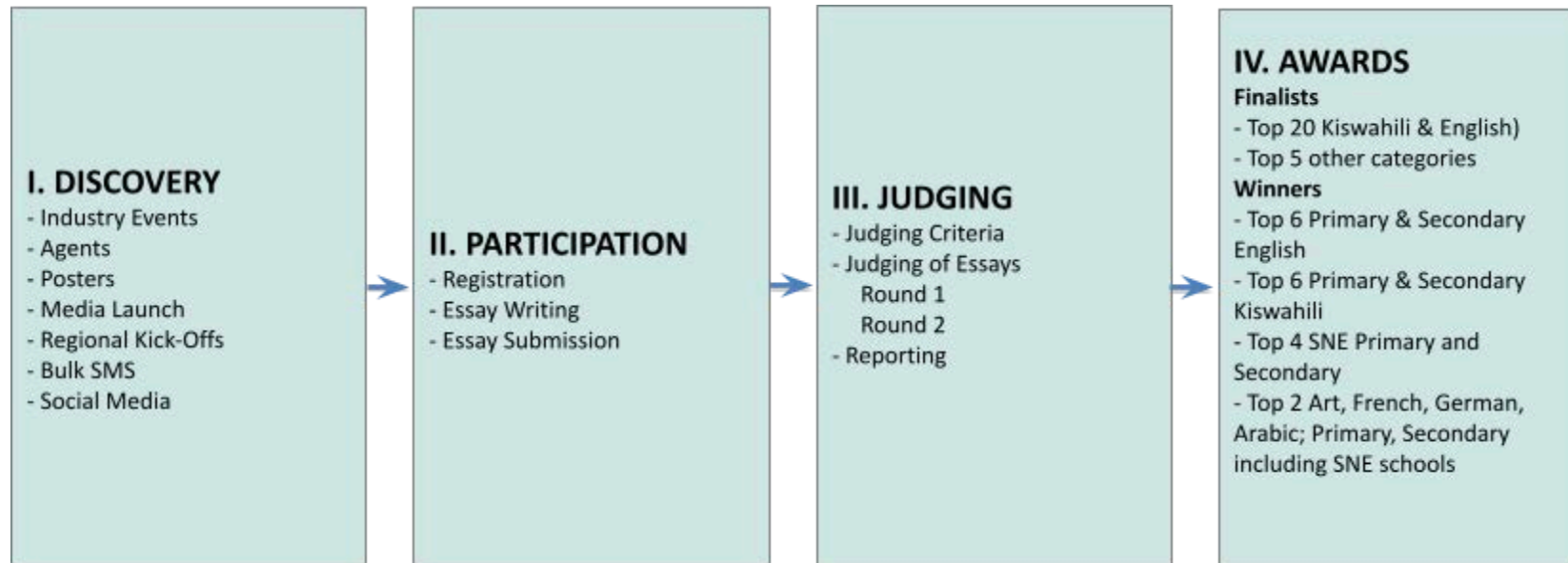
## **OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT IN DEC 2024**

1. Having two separate questions for learners in primary and those in secondary school to align the prompts better with different learners' levels of understanding and their ability to respond in writing with quality essays worked well.
2. We need better measures to ensure originality and detect and act on plagiarism as well as AI generated work.
3. We need better data collection tools for learners submitting hard copy essays to ensure complete and accurate data.
4. Consider implementation of a process to vet winners going forward to ensure they are the true originators of the work. For example, have interviews regionally for verification and to ease logistical challenges of having finalists come to Nairobi.
5. Design and experiment with the next step after DEC: potential mentorship of the top students authors toward publishing their work.
6. Identify like-minded partners to improve the awards and expand DEC reach.
7. Consider online second judging in DEC 2025.
8. In 2024 we should get feedback from past winners to find whether and to what extent the learners themselves value the awards they received, and what input they have on what would help them most.

## VI. PROCESS & ANALYSIS

In the course of DEC 2024 eKitabu team and other stakeholders collaborated closely throughout to develop and deliver a program that had integrity. The 2024 Competition process flow was sound, well-planned in advance and in general well executed. Changes along the way were mainly changes in dates, for example, we extended the closing deadline by two weeks to allow more submissions, as we had planned to do from previous years.

The sections below describe in detail the stages of the 2024 Competition process.



## **STAGE I. DISCOVERY/AWARENESS**

eKitabu created awareness of the Competition through:

### **a. Bulk SMS**

eKitabu's presence at national events, conferences and expositions such as KSSHA, KEPSHA, KPSA and Book Fairs in the past years helped to grow school contacts, especially with school head teachers and teachers who visited our stands.

We also contacted the 2013 through 2024 DEC schools, teachers and parents through the contact information we had. With these contacts we reached schools with information about the Competition using bulk SMS. The information we delivered was, in chronological order:

- Launch of the Competition
- The Competition topic(s)
- Registration and submission instructions
- Online events
- Number of days to go
- Deadlines for essay submission
- Essay prizes
- Prize giving
- Results

**b. WhatsApp Groups**

WhatsApp Groups have been useful for us for the last 6 years in reaching the different groups of teachers, headteachers parents including special needs groups.

**c. Posters to Schools**

Since the 2013 Digital Essay Competition, we have tried as much as possible to ensure the program achieves and sustains national reach. In 2024 we increased our targeting with more digital posters to agents, teachers and parents mostly through WhatsApp.

**d. Social Media**

Since 2016 the eKitabu team has kept major social media platforms up to date with DEC activities. In 2024 they helped as a constant reminder and as well a call to action to the growing number of followers.

**STAGE II. PARTICIPATION**

Entrants were encouraged to use the online essay submission platform at <http://essay.ekitabu.com>. We kept the online registration and submission process simple to minimize barriers to online submission.

**a. Registration**

Students registered to participate in the Competition by creating an account with their personal and school details. The system issued unique user IDs to all users on completion of the registration process.

**b. Essay Submission**

On completion of the online registration, entrants could type in or paste in their essays.

The platform also allowed students to upload Word documents, PDF, scanned copies of handwritten essays, or art.

We maintained our new modes of submission from the 2024 program including through WhatsApp.

For the case of special needs Learners, they were allowed to submit essays in braille, Audio recordings or sign language videos.

Over the years we have also allowed students to submit essays through field agents from the different regions.

### **STAGE III. JUDGING**

Over the years we have seen the need to have two rounds of judging:

#### **a) First Round Judging**

Before the essay submission deadline eKitabu recruited a panel of teachers recommended by publishers, partner organizations and teachers from top performing schools. These were teachers with high levels of experience in essay marking, most of them national examiners in primary or secondary school categories. In advance of the Competition, the judges sat together as a team to review and validate marking criteria (see below).

The first-round judging grouped the essays into two categories: Upper Primary and Junior School (Grade 5 - 9) and Secondary (Form 1 - 4). The essays were then read and marked. The essays that received the highest marks, at least twenty from each category (Finalist Essays), were selected to proceed to the second-round judging.

In 2024 we also had a set of judges for the French, German and Arabic Category of essays. They were recruited through the same process as above.

**b) Second Round Judging**

The judges in this stage were a group of eminent persons: CEOs of Kenyan publishing firms; School Directors/Heads; and University Professors. The second round judging took place in part online. Judges read the Finalist essays and scored them to select the Winners in each of the categories.

**c) Judging of Special Needs Students' Essay**

Since the essays received in this category were mostly braille and KSL videos we engaged judges from Kenya Institute for the Blind. For essays in sign language we engage KISE and teachers from schools of hearing impaired learners who have KSL skills.

**FIRST ROUND JUDGES:****English Category**

1. Kennedy Mbuvi - Kitulu Secondary School
2. Damaris Sayo-Ogande Primary School
3. Peter Odongo-Kakamega Primary School
4. Lucy Magiri Kagwai - Muthangari Primary School
5. Reagan Okoth-Migingo Girls High School
6. Anne Njeri Wagengi-Limuru Girls High School

**Kiswahili Category**

1. Beatrice Kagai Kikuyu - St. Monica Primary School
2. Peris Wambulwa - Karapul Primary School

3. Moses Kituyi Moreka - Alliance Girls High School
4. Esemé Etyang Paul - Kitale School
5. Duncan Were-Aga Khan School Mombasa
6. Franklin Mukembu - Munithu Mixed Day Secondary School

### **Kenyan Sign Language Videos**

1. Odhiambo Margaret - KISE
2. Aska Josephine - KNAD
3. Hellen Irungu - Tumutumu School for the Deaf
4. Sheilah Lutta - MOE-DSNE
5. Modest Oswago -Murang'a Secondary School for the Deaf
6. Bernard Ragwel - St. Kizito Girls Secondary School for the Deaf

### **French Category**

1. Jules Juliusi - Maryhill High School
2. Diana Naliaka Wanyonyi - Jamhuri High School
3. Jameson Mativo - Kaumoni Boys High School

### **Braille**

1. Jules Juliusi - Maryhill High School
2. Martin Obiero - KIB
3. Phenny Akoth Onyango - KIB

4. Beatrice Auma Onyango - KIB
5. Brian Irungu Mwangi - KIB
6. Faith Ayuma Wawire - KIB

**German Category**

Lehrerin Charity Afandi - Chuka High School

**Arabic Category**

Amina Atitala Suleiman - Mahada Girl Training Institute

**JUDGING CRITERIA (ACTUAL FINAL CRITERIA)**

Each essay must reflect the contestant's own research, writing and original thinking. Any essay that the judges deem to have been written by someone else will be disqualified.

**a. Factors to weigh in assessing overall quality of essays**

The final winners should reflect regional, gender and social balance, but not to the exclusion of overall essay quality according to the criteria below which should be the major determining factors in deciding winners. Received essays will be categorized in two groups: Upper Primary School and Secondary School essays.

The following characteristics will be noted as factors to consider in judging each essay:

- a. Private/public schools
- b. Urban/rural schools
- c. Gender of the writer: male/female

d. Grade level

The essays are judged using five criteria as indicated on the scoring sheet below. Each rated based on the five tested skills on a scale of 1- 20, with 20 as the highest score. The five categories to reach the candidate's final score.

**Essay Number** \_\_\_\_\_

I.	<b>Comprehension (1-20 points)</b> _____ How well does the essay reflect a thorough comprehension of the issues indicated by the essay question? Essays may be approached in unusual ways. Questions can be answered as essays, stories, dialogue. They should still respond to the essay question.
II.	<b>Organization (1-20 points)</b> _____ Does the argument follow a logical and easily understood progression? Does corroborating evidence support the essay's main points?
III.	<b>Conclusions (1-20 points)</b> _____ Do the conclusions follow logically from the argument? How compelling are the conclusions?
IV.	<b>Creativity (1-20 points)</b> _____ Portrayal of an innovative or creative angle on the question.
V.	<b>Writing (1-20 points)</b> _____ Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Concise language.
<b>Final Score</b> _____	

**Marking schemes: criteria related to grade bands**

<b>80 – 100</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>70 – 79</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>60 – 69</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>50 – 59</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Below 50</b>	<b>Fail</b>

The individual judges will present the essays they categorized in grade A to the lead judge who will allocate them to different judges to do the grading again and identify the best among them.

**b. DEC 2024 results**

For Primary, Junior and Secondary school categories at least the 20 best Kiswahili, 20 best English, 10 best French and 10 best Art Essays will be selected and presented to the second-round judges.

## VII. DEC 2024 FINAL RESULTS & ANALYSIS

**DEC 2024** received **18,480 Essays**, **242** of these essays were from one of the refugee camps (Kakuma).

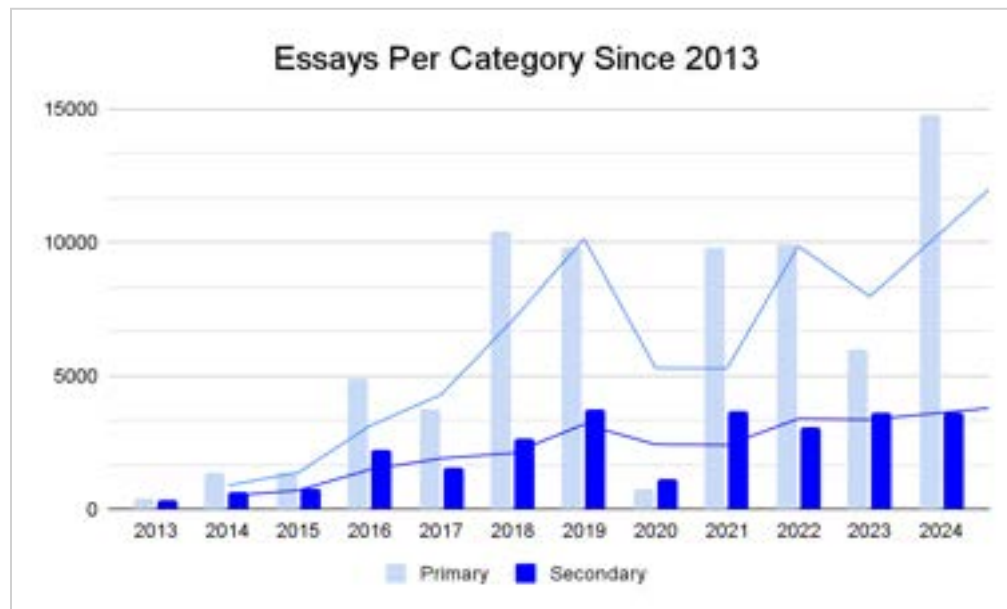
The essays came from:

- **435** Schools
- **256** Primary Schools, **179** Secondary Schools
- **27** Special Needs Education schools
- **105** Schools new to DEC (41% new, unique schools vs. 59% return schools)
- **47** counties registered
- **4233** Kiswahili essays
- **11691** English essays
- **170** essays from students with disabilities
- **1515** Art submissions
- **103** French essays
- **29** German essays
- **93** Arabic essays
- **50** KSL
- **117** Braille

The charts and tables that follow summarize DEC 2024 results:

**1. Entries per Category since 2013: Primary & Secondary**

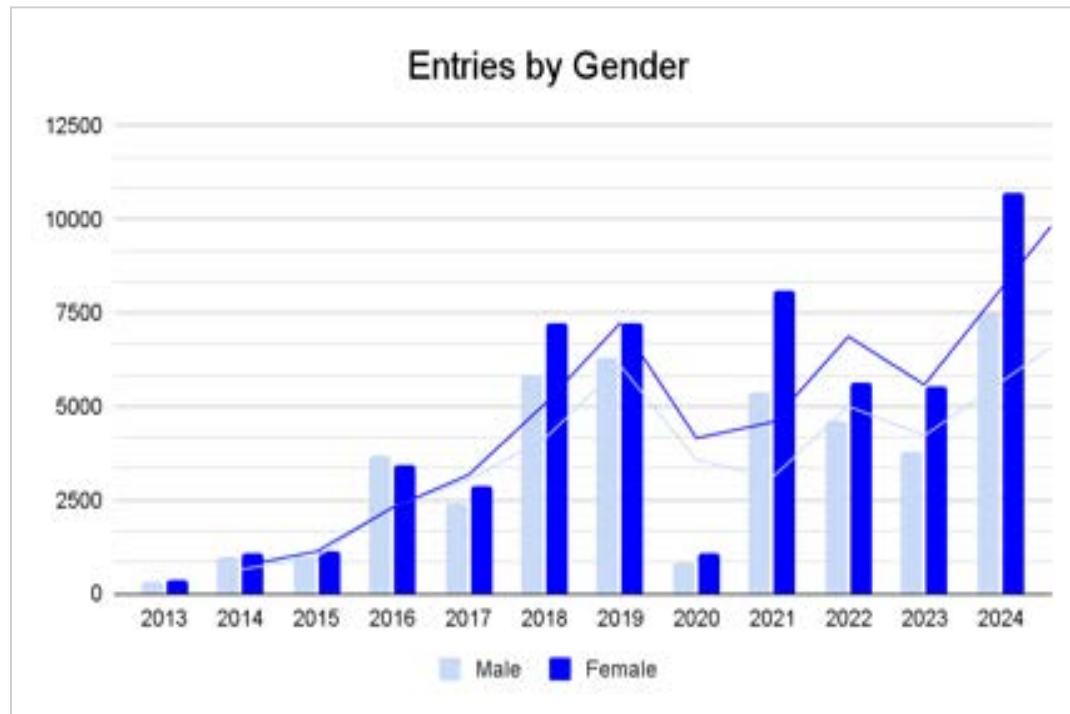
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Primary</b>	381	1,397	1,366	4,876	3,719	10,438	9,826	763	9,782	9,939	5,984	14,755
<b>Secondary</b>	337	665	754	2,226	1,586	2,626	3,739	1,123	3,694	3,088	3,628	3,607
<b>Totals</b>	718	2,062	2,120	7,102	5,305	13,064	13,565	1,886	13,476	10,327	9,612	18,362
<b>Cumulative</b>	718	2,780	4,900	12,002	17,307	30,371	43,936	45,822	59,298	69,327	78,939	97,301



**Observation:** Every year DEC has registered a higher number of essays from primary school than from secondary school. 2024 was no exception: 80% of the total essays came from primary and junior school.

## 2. 2013 to 2024 Entries by Gender

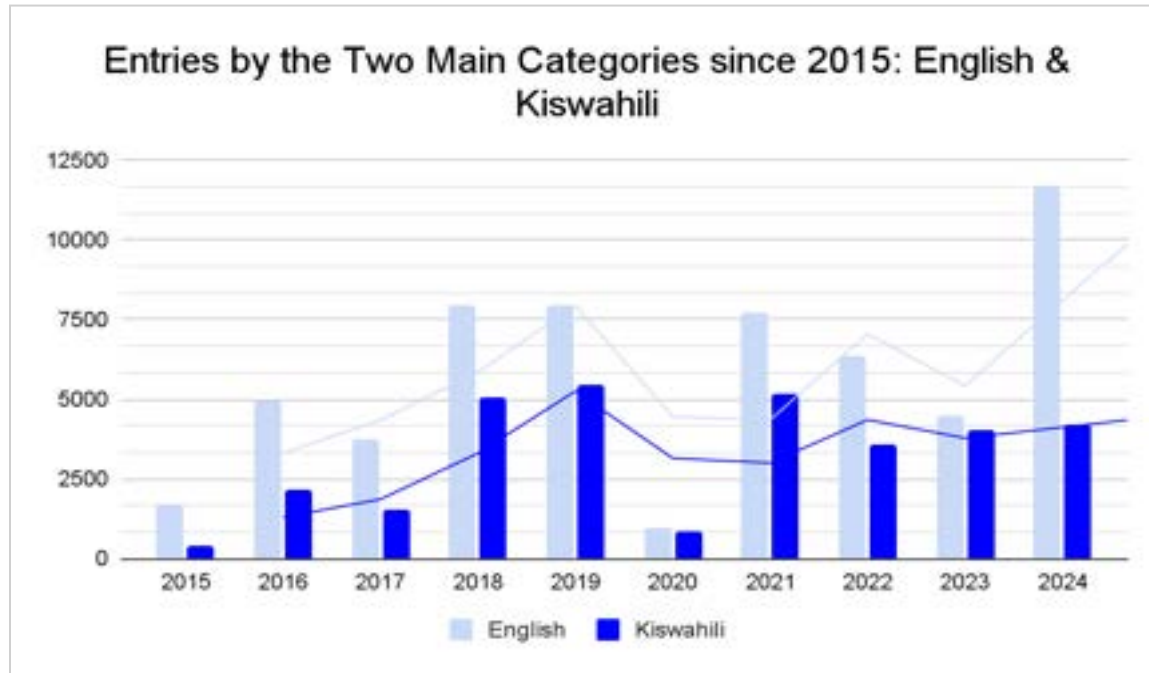
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Male</b>	314	969	968	3,665	2,410	5,849	6,319	829	5,373	4,629	3,812	7,466
<b>Female</b>	378	1,093	1,152	3,437	2,895	7,215	7,246	1,057	8,103	5,629	5,527	10,710



**Observation:** Just like in 2023 DEC 2024 registered 59% entries by girls, the rest were boys.

### 3. Entries by the two main categories since 2015: English & Kiswahili

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>English</b>	1,690	4,939	3,748	7,948	7,931	979	7,741	6,349	4,510	11,691
<b>Kiswahili</b>	430	2,163	1,557	5,054	5,456	844	5,160	3,554	4,011	4,233
<b>Total</b>	2,120	7,102	5,305	13,002	13,387	1,823	12,901	9,903	8,521	15,924



**Observation:** Since 2015 the number of English Essays compared to the Kiswahili Essays has always been higher by at least 25%. For 2024, English essays were more by only 63.7% of the total number of essays submitted.

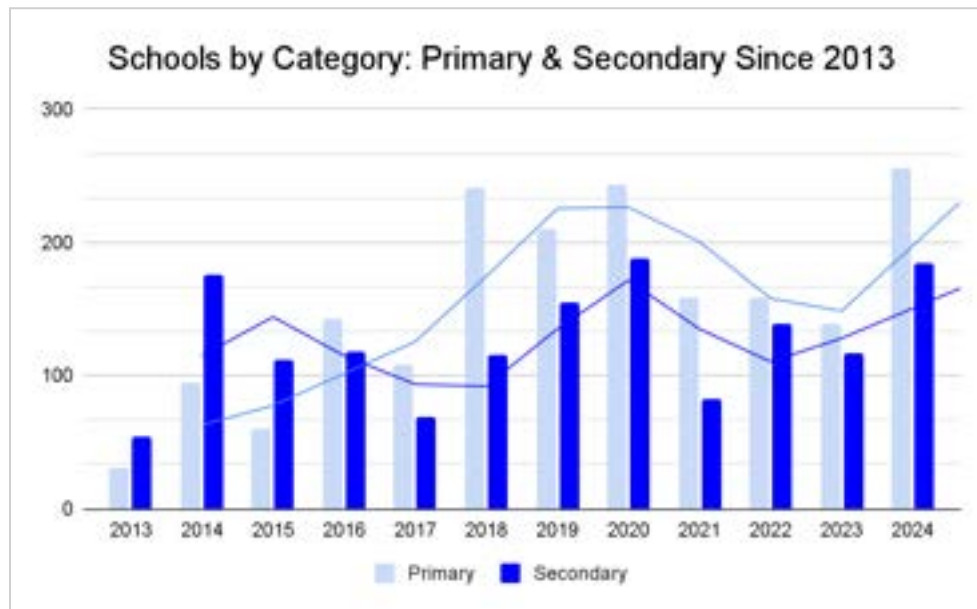
**Other Categories since 2019:**

Number of Entries for Other Categories since 2019						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Art</b>	20	26	158	96	129	1,515
<b>Kenyan Sign Language (KSL)</b>	7	6	23	62	45	50
<b>Braille</b>	86	23	53	98	32	117
<b>French</b>	56	17	68	55	52	103
<b>German</b>	11	5	12	16	36	29
<b>Arabic</b>	0	0	28	15	29	93

**Observation:** 2024 DEC registered the highest number of Art submissions since 2013 - 8% of the total number of entries submitted.

#### 4. SCHOOLS BY CATEGORY: PRIMARY & SECONDARY SINCE 2013

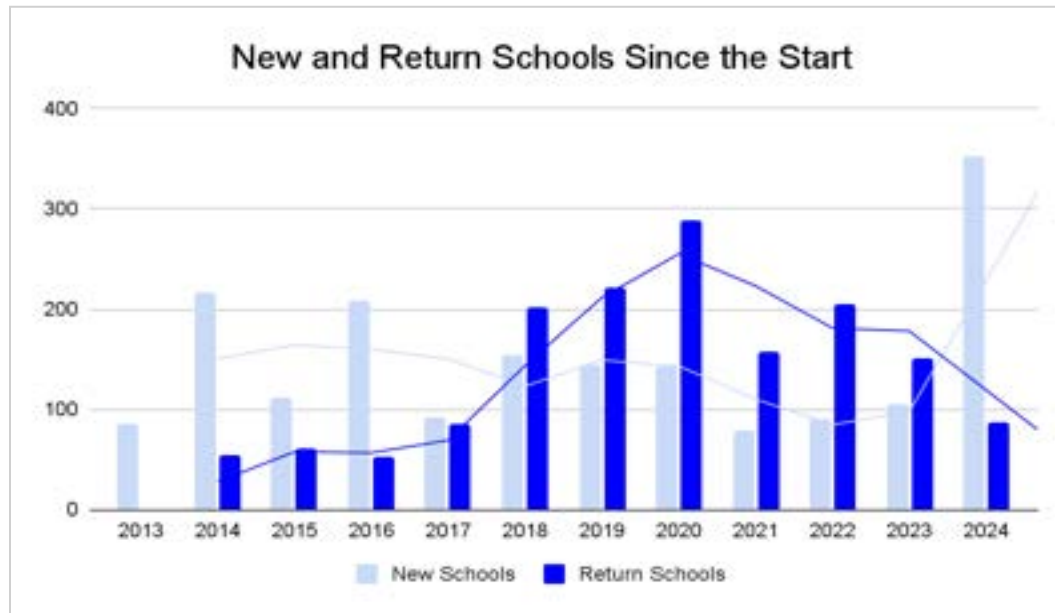
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Primary</b>	31	95	60	143	108	241	210	243	158	158	139	256
<b>Secondary</b>	54	176	112	118	69	115	155	188	82	139	117	184
<b>Total</b>	85	271	172	261	177	356	365	431	235	235	256	440



**Observation:** For the past 9 consecutive years the number of registered primary schools for DEC has always been significantly higher than for secondary schools.

### 5. NEW SCHOOLS, RETURN SCHOOLS, AND TOTAL SCHOOLS SINCE START

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
New Schools	85	216	112	208	92	154	144	142	78	91	105	353
	100%	80%	65%	80%	52%	43%	39%	33%	33%	31%	41%	80%
Return Schools	0	55	60	53	85	202	221	289	157	205	151	87
Total NO. of Schools	85	271	172	261	177	356	365	431	235	296	256	440



**Observation:** New schools in DEC 2024 were 80% of the total number of schools

**6. MEAN SCORE BY GENDER SINCE 2013**

Male and Female Mean Scores Since 2013			
Year	School Level	Male	Female
2013	Primary	50.77	51.6
	Secondary	49.94	52.51
2014	Primary	44.56	47.27
	Secondary	49.34	50.24
2015	Primary	37.97	40.28
	Secondary	59.6	60.07
2016	Primary	34.13	35.6
	Secondary	51.27	53.29
2017	Primary	35.23	36.16
	Secondary	50.14	53.49
2018	Primary	38	40.16
	Secondary	45.12	46.49
2019	Primary	40.34	42.12
	Secondary	43.23	45.23
2020	Primary	44.37	45.33
	Secondary	46.38	48.43

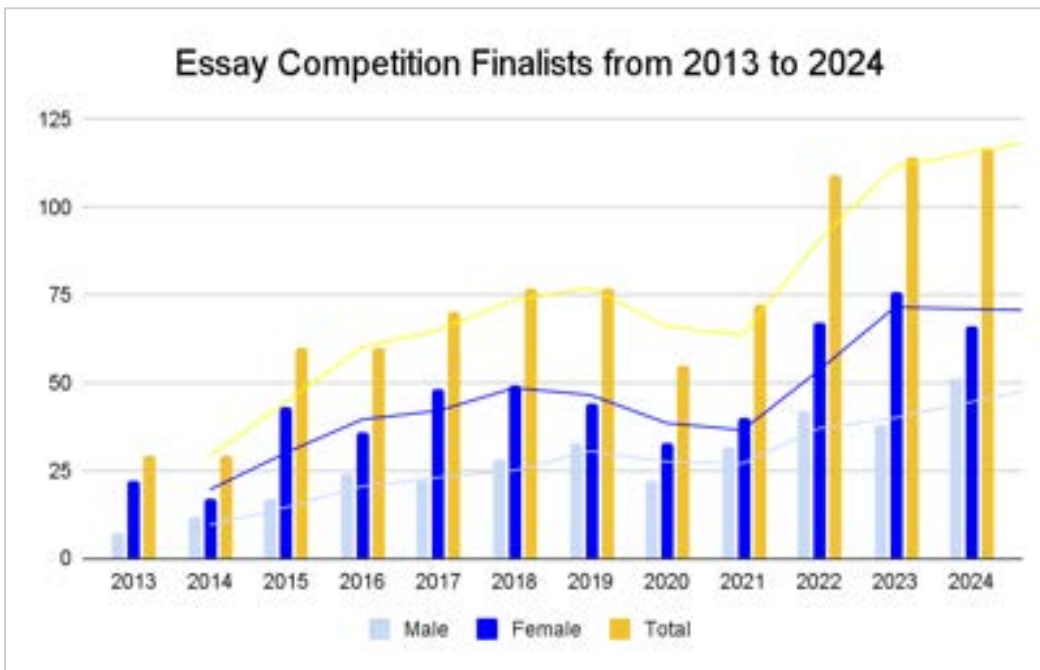
2021	Primary	39.44	40.03
	Secondary	42.32	45.45
2022	Primary	40.33	46.06
	Secondary	45.23	48.67
2023	Primary	33.42	35.33
	Secondary	44.92	45.67
2024	Primary	27.32	28.70
	Secondary	30.73	30.94

Observation:

- Since 2013, girls have consistently achieved higher mean scores than boys. In 2024, this trend continued, with the mean score for girls slightly surpassing that of boys. However, both groups recorded mean scores below 40%.

### 7. FINALISTS BY GENDER 2013 TO 2024

Essay Competition Finalists from 2013 to 2024												
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Male</b>	7	12	17	24	22	28	33	22	32	42	38	51
<b>Female</b>	22	17	43	36	48	49	44	33	40	67	76	66
<b>Total</b>	29	29	60	60	70	77	77	55	72	109	114	117



**Observation:** Since 2013 the number of female finalist students has always been higher than males; DEC 2024 was no exception; female finalists were 56% of the total.

## 8. COUNTIES WITH MULTIPLE FINALISTS IN 2024

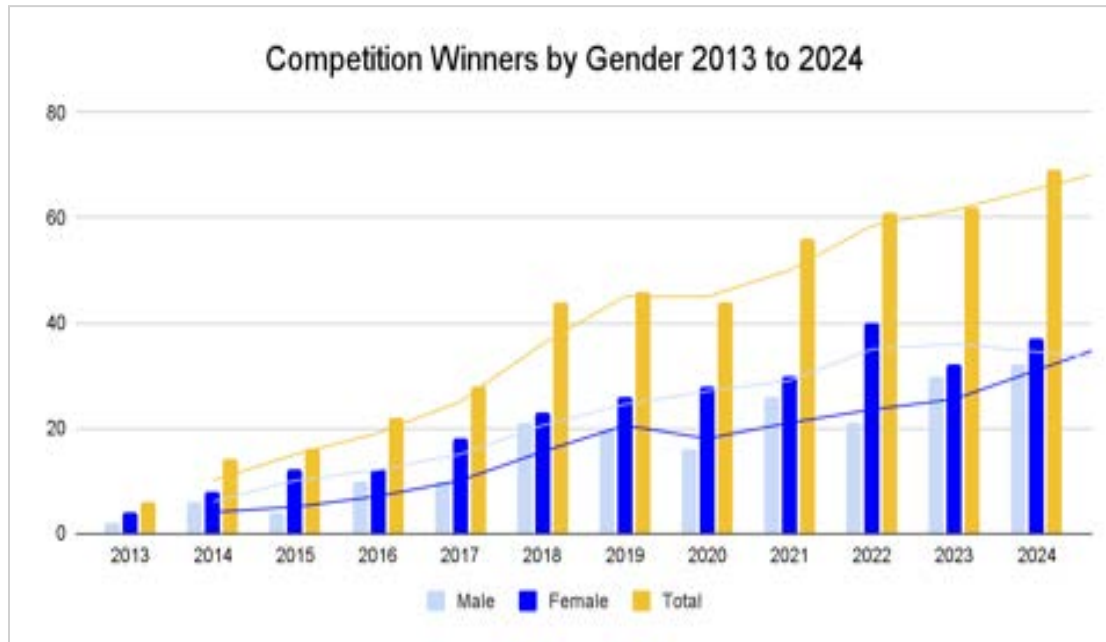
County	Number of Finalists	County	Number of Finalists
Nairobi	14	Kericho	3
Kiambu	10	Kilifi	3
Bungoma	8	Mandera	3
Kakamega	7	Meru	3
Kisumu	7	Murang'a	3
Homa Bay	6	Siaya	3
Machakos	6	Tana River	3
Makueni	4	Murang'a	3
Migori	4	Siaya	3
Trans Nzoia	4	Tana River	3
Bomet	3		
Busia	3		

Observation:

- Nairobi County produced the highest number of finalists over 11% of the total number of finalists in the DEC 2024.

### 9. WINNERS BY GENDER

Competition Winners by Gender 2013 to 2024												
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Male</b>	2	6	4	10	10	21	20	16	26	21	30	32
<b>Female</b>	4	8	12	12	18	23	26	28	30	40	32	37
<b>Total</b>	6	14	16	22	28	44	46	44	56	61	62	69



**Observation:** Since 2013, the number of female winners has always been higher than their male counterparts, DEC 2024 was no exception, with 54% being female students.

**10. COUNTIES WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF WINNERS IN DEC 2024**

County	Number of Finalists	County	Number of Finalists
Kiambu	15	Kisumu	2
Nairobi	9	Kitui	2
Bungoma	6	Migori	2
Siaya	6	Garissa	1
Bomet	4	Kirinyaga	1
Kakamega	4	Makueni	1
Mandera	4	Muranga	1
Homa Bay	3	Nakuru	1
Machakos	3	Tana River	1
Kericho	2	Vihiga	1

**Observation:**

- The counties of Garissa, Kirinyaga, Makueni, Muranga, Nakuru, Tana River and Vihiga all had one winner only.
- Kiambu produced the highest number of winners in DEC 2024 with a total of over 17% of the total number of winners.

### 11. DEC 2024 PARTICIPATION IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS

We received 242 essays from schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp:

Camp	Schools	Participants	Female	Male	Learners with Disabilities
Kakuma	12	242	96	146	0

Observations:

Based on the data presented, 60% of the submissions were from male participants and 24% from female participants. This disparity is not surprising, considering the demographics of learners in the target age groups at both camps. Several factors contribute to this difference, including the lower enrollment rates of pre-teen and teenage girls due to cultural and social barriers. Moving forward, we will prioritize collecting more comprehensive registration information and ensuring greater accuracy in the data gathered from participating learners.

### 12. DEC 2024 WINNERS AND FINALISTS IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS

Camp	Finalists			Winners		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Kakuma	5	11	16	2	10	12

Observation:

- Over 80% of both finalists and winners from the refugee camps are male students compared to their female counterparts who cover 15% for the same reasons given in 11 above.

**13. NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED DEC SINCE 2013**

Digital Essay Competition Teachers 2013 to 2024												
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>New Teachers</b>	76	130	35	181	216	218	295	39	69	72	211	344
	100%	66%	36%	78%	84%	51%	61%	27%	30%	28%	60%	80%
<b>Return Teachers</b>	N/A	67	62	49	39	202	185	106	159	180	142	87
<b>Total Teachers</b>	76	197	97	230	255	420	480	145	228	252	353	431

Observation:

- Since 2013, we have kept building partnerships with teachers of various schools because they play a critical role in mobilizing students to participate and submit essays for the competition; in 2024 we engaged more than 80% new teachers.

**VIII. SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS’ PARTICIPATION IN DEC 2024**

In 2024 in accordance with eKitabu’s mission to achieve transformative and inclusive educational outcomes, eKitabu invited Special Needs Schools in Kenya to participate in the 12<sup>th</sup> Digital Essay Competition, including learners in the refugee camps (Kakuma).

We were delighted to receive **241 essays** from **27** Special Needs Schools from **15** Counties of Kenya. This was possible through the help of key stakeholders, eKitabu partners, the head teachers and teachers of these schools.

The table below gives a summary:

Special Needs Students’ Participation in Dec 2024 compared to Dec 2023														
	Counties		Schools		Participants		Male		Female		Winners		Finalists	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
<b>Primary School</b>	8	9	13	13	75	175	24	101	28	74	14	14	21	15
<b>Secondary School</b>	7	11	9	14	31	66	31	21	23	45	14	13	16	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26</b>

## IX. AWARDS

All the 125 Finalists, including 26 for special needs and 16 for the art category, submitted outstanding work per the judging criteria. All received awards and Finalist certificates.

### Prizes awarded:

1. For 1<sup>st</sup> prize winners in both Primary, Secondary and Special Needs categories, English and Kiswahili: scholarship money of Kenya Shillings 40,000 and Kenya Shillings 10,000 for uniform for a total of Kenya Shillings 50,000 for each 1<sup>st</sup> prize winner.
2. For 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winners in both Primary and Secondary categories, English and Kiswahili: scholarship money of Kenya Shillings 20,000 and Kenya Shillings 5,000 for uniform for a total of Kenya Shillings 25,000 for each 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winner.
3. For 3<sup>rd</sup> prize winners in both Primary and Secondary categories, English and Kiswahili: uniform money of Kenya Shillings 10,000 for each 3<sup>rd</sup> prize winner.
4. Twenty computing devices for the twenty winning students in the Special Needs category.
5. Six computing devices for the top six students, Primary School category, and six computing devices for the top six students, Secondary School category, both English and Kiswahili.
6. Two computing devices for the top student in Primary and one computing device for the top student Secondary in the Art, French, German, and Arabic categories.

	CATEGORY	LEARNERS WITHOUT DISABILITIES			LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES		
		WINNERS	FINALISTS	SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS	WINNERS	FINALISTS	SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS
PRIMARY SCHOOL	ENGLISH	6	18	3	7	8	2
	KISWAHILI	6	18	3	2	2	2
	FRENCH	2	1	2			
	ART	2	3	2	3	2	3
	KSL				2	2	4
	GERMAN	1	1	1			
	ARABIC	2	2	2			
SECONDARY SCHOOL	ENGLISH	6	19	3	7	8	2
	KISWAHILI	6	19	3	2		2
	FRENCH	3	2	2	1		1
	ART	2	3	2	2	2	3
	KSL				2	2	4
	GERMAN	3	2	2			
	ARABIC	2	3	2			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	41	91	26	28	26	23

<b>WINNERS</b>	69
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<b>FINALISTS</b>	117
<b>SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS</b>	44
<b>CERTIFICATES</b>	All Schools & Contact Teachers

### DEC 2024: HIGHLIGHTS & OBSERVATIONS

1. DEC 2024 generated **18,480** entries across all categories.
2. Although Nairobi County has consistently recorded the highest number of entries compared to other counties, due to our new approach this year, both the number of submissions and the number of schools improved significantly, reaching **6,150** essays from **52** schools.
3. The entries came from all the 47 counties of Kenya including one refugee - Kakuma refugee camp.
4. We received **242** entries, including entries from special needs learners, from Kakuma refugee camp.
5. DEC 2024 received essays from **435** schools, the highest number of schools in one year since the start. **353** of these schools were new - 80%.
6. Over 80% of both finalists and winners from the refugee camp are male students compared to their female counterparts.
7. DEC 2024 recorded the highest number of entries from special needs learners: 241 entries from 27 schools in 20 counties.
8. This year saw 53 special needs students recognized as finalists and winners from primary and secondary schools; their teachers and schools also received recognition.

9. DEC has engaged 1,780 unique schools since 2013.
10. 37 out of 69 (54%) of the national winners were female students in 2024.
11. DEC 2023 winners were generally spread through 20 counties of Kenya, Kiambu county having the highest number of winners for the fifth consecutive year.

## X. DEC 2024 VOICES AND IMAGES

“By participating in international competitions or working with local tech hubs, students can turn their innovative concepts into real-world situations. It’s not just about creating cool gadgets but about finding ways to reduce our carbon footprint on a grand scale.” Angela Dorothy, Digital Essay Competition (DEC) 2024 winner, Secondary School English Category. Angela is a student at Ogande Girls High School, Homa Bay County. [essay.eKitabu.com](https://essay.eKitabu.com)  
[#DECVoices](https://twitter.com/DECVoices)



“Wanafunzi Wanaweza kutumia talanta zao kutoa hamasa kuhusu athari za mabadiliko ya tabianchi na jinsi ya kujikwamua kutoka kwa janga hili. Kupitia tamasha za muziki na drama wanafunzi wanaweza kuzungumza mada tofauti kama ukame, umuhimu wa misitu na faida za kuwa na hali sawa ya anga.” Faith Safari, Digital Essay Competition (DEC) 2024 winner, Secondary School Kiswahili Category. Faith is a student at Alliance Girls High School, Kiambu County. [essay.eKitabu.com](https://essay.eKitabu.com) #DECVoices



“Wanafunzi wanaweza kushiriki katika miradi ya mazingira kama vile upandaji miti, bustani za jamii au jitihada za kusafisha mazingira ya ndani ya jamii. Miradi hii inaweza kusaidia kuboresha bioanuai ya eneo.” Emmanuel Muia, Digital Essay Competition (DEC) 2024 winner, Secondary School Kiswahili Category. Emmanuel is a student at Kiambani Secondary School, Makueni County. [essay.eKitabu.com](https://essay.eKitabu.com) #DECVoices



“Students can join environmental groups and participate in advocacy efforts to push for policies that address climate change. These groups often work on campaigns to influence legislation, promote renewable energy and protect natural habitats” Lynne Jemutai, Digital Essay Competition (DEC) 2024 winner, Secondary School English Category. Lynne is a student at Kipsigis Girls High School in Kericho County. [essay.eKitabu.com](http://essay.eKitabu.com) #DECVoices



## XI. PLANS FOR 2025 eKitabu DIGITAL ESSAY COMPETITION

The 2025 Digital Essay Competition is planned to be held from **21<sup>st</sup> March, 2025** with the submission period open through the 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2025 and closing on **8<sup>th</sup> August, 2025** Winners will be announced at the Prize Giving ceremony on **25<sup>th</sup> September, 2025**.

Students will register and submit their essays through <http://essay.eKitabu.com> or submit physical copies to eKitabu office through the agents or by courier.

The Digital Essay Competition gives students in Kenya the chance to contribute their voices and visions to issues affecting them. It helps them develop critical thinking and innovative minds.

## XII. PLANS DEC 2024 IN NAIROBI COUNTY

Over the past seven years, participation in DEC among learners from Nairobi schools has remained below 2,000 entries annually, despite Nairobi being one of the counties with the highest number of schools in Kenya - over 1,600 and a large learner population. In 2024, then we implemented a new approach - involving school-to-school campaign strategy, engaging head teachers and teachers directly to encourage greater learner participation.

As a result of this targeted approach, Nairobi schools recorded significant gains: **6,150** essay submissions were received from **52** schools - the highest participation from Nairobi in five years. This outcome demonstrates the effectiveness of direct school engagement and provides critical insights that will inform the strategy for the program in 2025 and beyond.

DEC Participation in Nairobi Schools Over the Last 5 Years							
Year		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Schools	Primary Schools	7	6	5	15	12	38
	Secondary Schools	4	16	17	17	9	14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>52</b>
Entries	Primary School	1,435	18	25	1,650	992	5,880
	Secondary School	50	123	164	57	69	270
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,485</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>1,061</b>	<b>6,150</b>

### **XIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

eKitabu thanks the Ministry of Education for its support in 2024, and looks forward to more collaboration in 2025.

We thank the DEC 2024 sponsors for supporting this cause, and we look forward to doing more in 2025. Thanks to our judges in the 1<sup>st</sup> round and 2<sup>nd</sup> round judging, and Kenya Institute of the Blind (KIB) judges for supporting the program. We thank the DEC 2024 agents for the good work in 2024. We thank the schools' head teachers and teachers for the great support they gave the program in 2024, and we look forward to more partnership in 2025.

Thanks finally to the eKitabu team for the planning, support and teamwork in the execution of DEC 2024.

***Tuko Digital!***

**ANNEX**

List of DEC events and school visits in 2024:

Event	School	County
<b>Official Launch</b>	<b>Host: Alliance Girls High School</b>	<b>Kiambu</b>
	Machakos Girls High School	Machakos
	Meru School	Meru
	Precious Blood Girls High School - Riruta	Nairobi
	Kambui School for the Deaf	Kiambu
	Mpesa Foundation Academy	Kiambu
	Alliance High School	Kiambu
	Makini Secondary School	Nairobi
	Thika High School for the Blind	Kiambu
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Mini launch</b>	<b>Host: Langalanga Primary School</b>	<b>Nakuru</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Mini launch</b>	<b>Host: Hormud Primary School</b>	<b>Garissa</b>
	Central Primary Hagadera	Garissa
	Amani Primary School	Garissa
	Unity Primary School	Garissa
	Horyaal Primary School	Garissa
	Maranda High School	Siaya

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Regional Kick-Off</b>	St. Oda School for the Blind	Siaya
	Nina School for the Deaf	Siaya
	Sega School for The Deaf	Siaya
	Aluor Mixed Primary School	Siaya
	Migingo Girls' High School	Kisumu
	Maseno School for The Deaf	Kisumu
	Kibos School for the Blind	Kisumu
	Mundika School for the Deaf	Busia
	Mundika High School	Busia
	St. Mary's Mundika High School	Busia
	Lions Primary School	Nakuru
	Moi Forces Academy-Lanet	Nakuru
	Naivasha Girls High School	Nakuru
	Ngala Secondary School for the Deaf	Nakuru
	Ngala Primary School for the Deaf	Nakuru
	Kipsigis Girls High School	Kericho
	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Kick-Off</b>	Kipkeino School
Loreto High School - Matunda		Uasin Gishu
Kitale School		Trans Nzoia

	G.F.E. Tumaini	Kakamega
	Mumias Primary School for the Deaf	Kakamega
	Archbishop Njenga Girls High School	Kakamega
	Holy Family Misikhu	Bungoma
	Nzoia Sugar Primary School	Bungoma
	Lugulu Girls High School	Bungoma
	Khasoko Boys High School	Bungoma
	Phim School	Bungoma
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Kick-Off</b>	Nyandarua County-1 School	Nyandarua
	Nyahururu High School	Nyandarua
	Rev. Muhoro Sec School	Nyeri
	Tumutumu School for the Deaf	Nyeri
	Meru County-2 Schools	Meru
	St. Lucy High School For The Blind	Meru
	Kajiunduthi High School	Meru
	Kaaga School for the Deaf	Meru
	Tenri Primary School	Embu
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Regional Kick-Off</b>	Chewani Primary School	Tana River
	Hola Primary School	Tana River

	Daku Primary School	Tana River
	Laza Primary School	Tana River
	Daku Secondary School	Tana River
	Hola High School	Tana River
	Likoni School for the Blind	Mombasa
<b>School Visits</b>	St. Kizito Primary School for the Deaf	Bomet
	St. Kizito Secondary School for the Deaf	Bomet
	Nyabururu Girls High School	Kisii
	Olympic Primary School	Nairobi
	Kasarani Primary School	Nairobi
	Utafiti Primary School	Kiambu
	Alliance Girls High School	Kiambu
	S.A. Thika High School for the Blind	Kiambu
	Kambui Secondary School for the Deaf	Kiambu
	Mpesa Foundation Academy	Kiambu
	Kambui Primary School for the Deaf	Kiambu
	Garissa Primary School	Garissa
	Mandera High School	Mandera
	Undugu Primary School	Garissa

	Hornimo Primary School	Garissa
	Iftin Primary School	Garissa
	Juba Primary School	Garissa
	Midnimo Primary School	Garissa
	Bahati Primary School	Garissa
	Friends Primary School	Garissa
	Greenlight Refugee Secondary School	Turkana
	Starlight Secondary School	Turkana
	Lifeworks Tumaini Girls Secondary School	Turkana
	Vision Secondary School	Turkana
	Kakuma Refugee Secondary School	Turkana

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