

KANGAROO MOTHER CARE

Save the Children has worked with Kenya's Ministry of Health to promote, prioritise and actively practice Kangaroo Mother Care with premature babies, to support child survival. Kangaroo Mother Care is now being scaled up across the country.



Premature Babies in Kenya: The challenge of survival

193,000
Babies born prematurely in Kenya¹

12%
of all babies born are delivered before 37 weeks²

8%
Are born with low birth weight—less than 2,500g³

12%
Of under-age-five mortality in Kenya is attributed to prematurity⁴

Premature babies are classified as those born before 37 weeks, and weighing less than 2,500g.

Kenya has one of the highest rates globally, for premature babies. The challenges premature babies face to survive:

- Risk of death due to hypothermia hypoglycaemia
- Respiratory diseases due to weak lung capacity
- Weak immune system

For premature babies that survive, they're at risk of life-long disability.

Incubators are an essential piece of equipment for premature babies, particularly those in a critical state. They are however resource intensive, and can increase risk of infection when multiple babies are placed in one together.

Kenya's hospitals face the challenge of having too few incubators to cope with demand, and no back-up solution when then power goes off.



Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) in Kenya

KMC provides care for preterm newborn babies through early, continuous and prolonged skin-to-skin contact between the mother and the baby.



Since 2014, Save the Children has worked in Kenya with the Ministry of Health to prioritise KMC as an effective mechanism for premature child survival.

Impact in Kenya⁵

99.3%
Survival rate of babies admitted to KMC

62%
Average uptake of KMC for pre-term babies

- KMC is now being practiced in Kenya's largest teaching hospital—Kenyatta National Hospital—as a **Centre of Excellence**
- Save the Children has supported the development of official **National KMC Clinical Implementation Guidelines** along with a **National Toolkit** to facilitate Scale Up
- **Ministry of Health Management Information System** is being updated to incorporate KMC data

Kenya's Kangaroo Mother Care in Numbers⁶



24

Counties actively practicing Kangaroo Mother Care, with 8 more in the pipeline

446

Health workers trained

3,606

Babies Supported

82

Health Facilities practicing Kangaroo Mother Care

Challenges remain to be addressed, in scaling up Kangaroo Mother Care, including: the space required in hospitals for beds (the main barrier to uptake), the methodology is time intensive on the mother, and ensuring more staff are trained.

References

¹ Blencowe H, Cousens S, Oestergaard MZ, Chou D, Moller AB, Narwal R, et al. National, regional, and worldwide estimates of preterm birth rates in the year 2010 with time trends since 1990 for selected countries: a systematic analysis and implications. *Lancet* 2012;379:2162-2172.

² Ibid

³ UNICEF - State of the World's Children 2015

⁴ Countdown to 2015 Report, 2015

⁵ Data is from Save the Children's KMC programming in Bungoma County (2015-2017), Nairobi (2016-2018) along with support for the Ministry of Health scale-up programme (2017) with a focus on Busia County.

⁶ Ibid.

Save the Children is widely recognized as the leading expert in Kangaroo Mother Care in Kenya, working collaboratively with the Ministry of Health to achieve scale.

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With thanks to our partners for their support:



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