

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

### Trends In Childhood Stunting in Kenya: Opportunities for the Future

*Amos Kipkemoi Ronoh<sup>1</sup>; Gertrude Mercy Were<sup>2</sup> Lisa Malesi Were<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Food Bioresources Technology, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Nyeri, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, School of Agriculture and Biotechnology, University of Eldoret, Kenya

<sup>3</sup>M. Sc student Department of Foods, Nutrition and Dietetics, Kenyatta University, Kenya

**Correspondence Authors Email:** [ronoh.kipkemoi@dkut.ac.ke](mailto:ronoh.kipkemoi@dkut.ac.ke)

#### Abstract

Childhood stunting continues to be a persistent nutritional challenge among young children in developing countries. However, according to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022, Kenya has achieved a milestone by markedly reducing the stunting levels since 1993, with the greatest decrease in 2008-2009 (35%) and 2022 (18%). The aim of this review paper is to give an insight into the trends, causes and consequences of stunting, interventions strategies and what remains to be done with regards to combating childhood stunting in Kenya. To address this challenge in Kenya, interventions such as integration of agriculture to promote household diet diversification, supplementation, fortification and nutrition education have been proposed as efficacious. However, the effectiveness of nutrition-specific (such as food-to-food fortification, diversification of diets) and nutrition-sensitive (such as water sanitation and hygiene, deworming, malaria control) programs show mixed effects on child growth and reduction in stunting levels, and they appear to be context-specific. Furthermore, improvement in livelihood systems to reduce poverty, improved child feeding practices, gender roles and decision-making dynamics have been suggested to reduce stunting levels significantly in Kenya, however studies exploring such components are limited. There is need to for multiple integrated interventions to achieve benefits in reducing stunting. These include strengthening cross-sectorial coherence such as health, education and agriculture, generating data and evidence that combine health and agricultural factors, strengthening capacities of health and nutrition institutions. These proposals present opportunities for Kenya to further reduce childhood stunting.

**Key words:** Stunting, nutrition-sensitive programs, health, developing countries, children