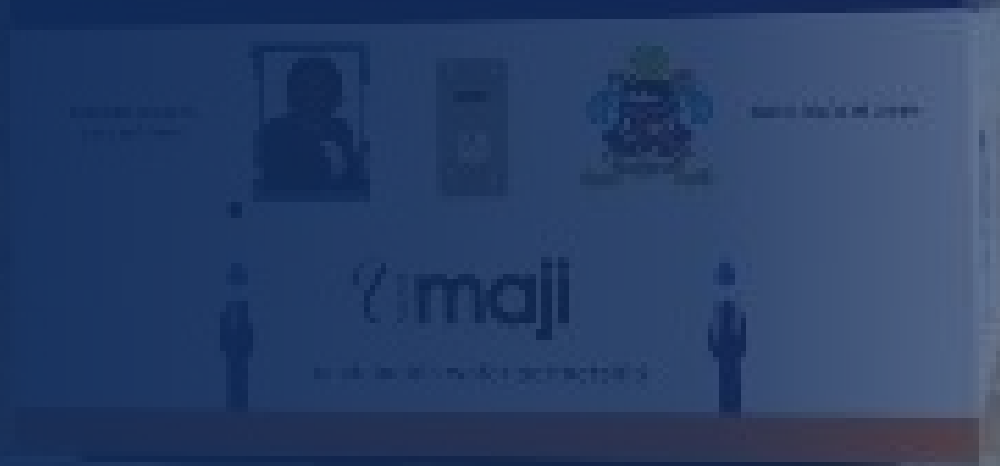




IMPACT & LEARNING STUDY 2026

Water that works. Time that returns.

A donor summary of the evidence, the learning and what comes next.



Evidence for impact — and for improvement.

Project Maji commissioned an independent study to assess the outcomes of its rural water service model and identify opportunities to strengthen it further.

The evaluation combined household surveys, operational records, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and accessibility observations across six Project Maji-supported communities in Kenya.

376

households surveyed

6

communities

5

evidence sources

2026

study year

COMMUNITIES

Ndiini · Mitingani · Konza Police Station · Kyumbi ·
Kwa Kithuka · Noolera

WHAT WAS EXAMINED

Adoption · time savings · productivity · health and
wellbeing · affordability · operational performance
· inclusion

How to read the findings. This was a real-world, non-experimental evaluation. The results indicate Project Maji's contribution to observed outcomes rather than exclusive causal attribution. Some measures rely on respondent recall and perception.

Water is closer, and collection takes far less time.

76.1%

use a Project Maji kiosk as their current primary water source



Project Maji kiosk · river/stream · other sources

2.5 hours

estimated time returned to each household every day
150.89 minutes per household per day, based on average trips and recalled pre-intervention collection time.

MEAN ROUND-TRIP COLLECTION TIME

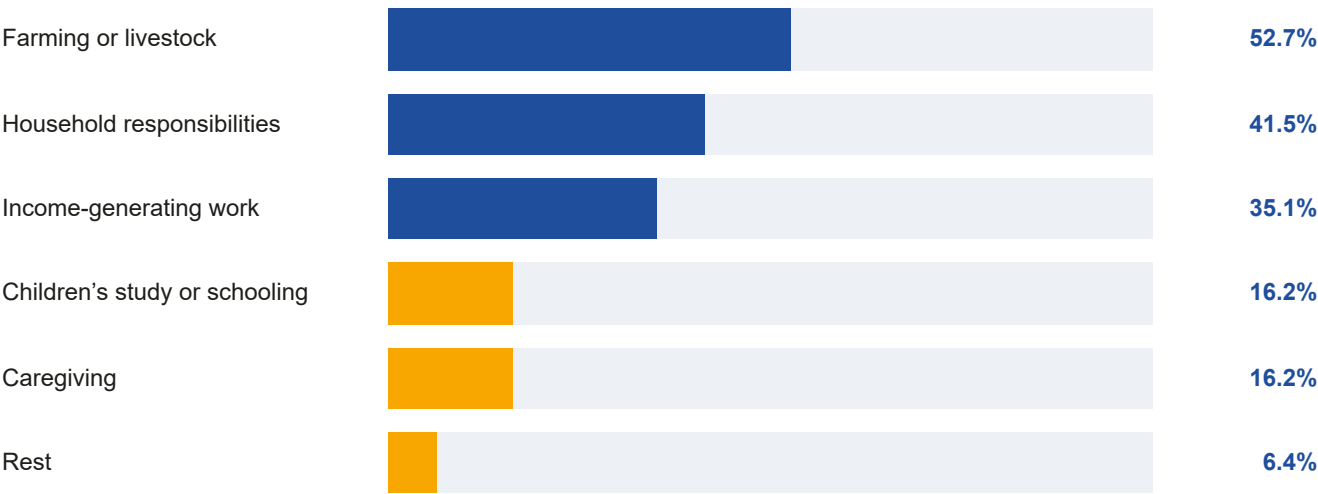


Minutes per round trip. “Before” is based on respondent recall, not a prospectively measured baseline.

Progress with work still to do. 21.8% continued to identify a river or stream as their primary source, pointing to remaining barriers such as distance, affordability, seasonal demand and service constraints.

TIME RETURNED

Households reinvest saved time in livelihoods, care and learning.



Multiple responses permitted; categories do not sum to 100%.

REPORTED PRODUCTIVITY CHANGE



“Nowadays they spend less than 20 minutes. They are now involved in businesses such as selling milk, beads and farming.”

Key informant, Noolera

The benefits extend beyond convenience.

97%

reported reduced water-related stress

98.9%

perceived improved safety for women and girls

86.2%

perceived the systems as accessible to people with disabilities

Households associated improved access with easier daily routines, reduced worry and safer water collection. Interviews described less need for women and girls to travel at risky hours and reduced pressure on caregivers.

ACCESSIBILITY IS STRONG — BUT NOT COMPLETE

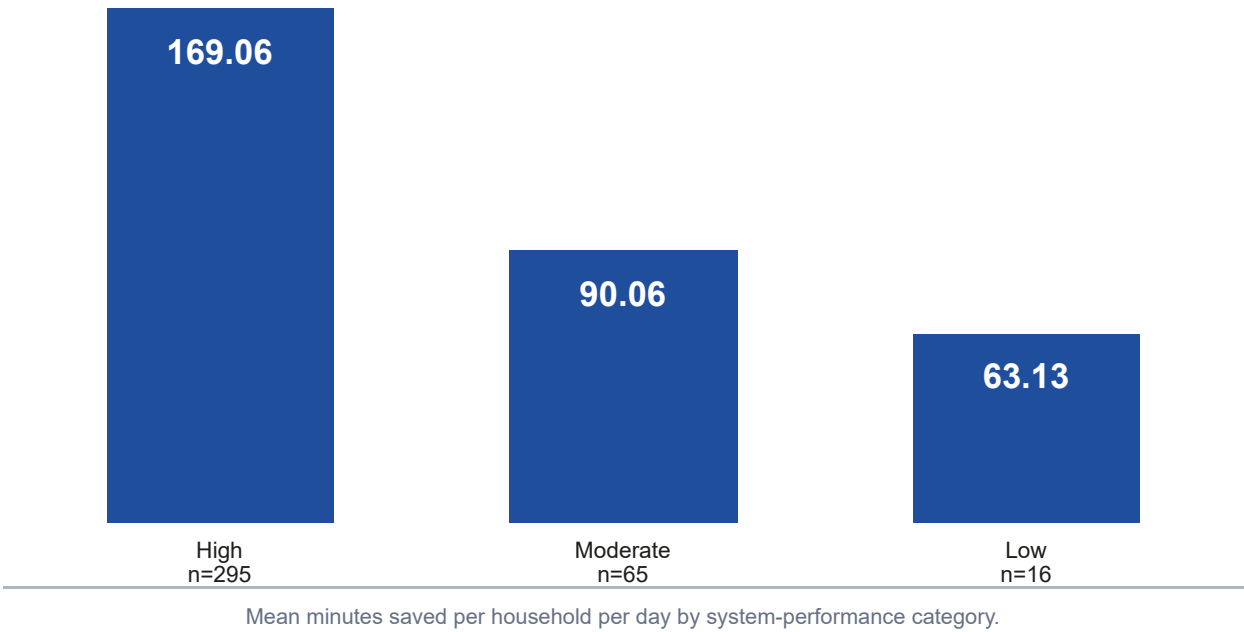
86.2% accessible

13.8% gap

What the study adds. Proximity does not guarantee independent access. Terrain, pathways, tap height, kiosk layout and payment processes still create barriers for some people with disabilities, older people and caregivers.

Health context: 94.4% reported no diarrhoea during the recall period and 74.5% perceived water-related illness as less frequent. These are self-reported indicators and should not be interpreted as verified clinical impact.

Infrastructure creates value when the service keeps working.



Higher-performing systems were associated with substantially greater time savings.

The study also found significant associations between system performance and productivity and affordability perceptions. It did not find significant associations with wellbeing change or diarrhoea prevalence.

A management tool, not simply a measure of success.

The study identified practical priorities to protect the gains already achieved and strengthen service delivery further.

RELIABILITY & USER SUPPORT

- Resolve payment and token failures.
- Create clear refund and escalation pathways.
- Strengthen preventative maintenance and caretaker support.

ACCESS & RESILIENCE

- Improve drainage and infrastructure protection.
- Expand storage and capacity where demand is high.
- Separate livestock access where appropriate.

INCLUSIVE SERVICE

- Improve paths, tap heights and waiting areas.
- Offer accessible payment options.
- Apply universal-design principles and consult users.

Already underway: the study records the introduction of a Paybill option to make payments more flexible. Other recommendations remain an agenda for implementation and monitoring.

Financial note: the study reports positive routine operating margins, but also cautions that low or zero reported costs should be verified and may not capture maintenance, depreciation, staffing and lifecycle replacement. They are therefore not used as a headline claim here.

Funding supports a service designed to last.

The findings reinforce Project Maji's approach of operating as a long-term rural water service provider rather than simply an infrastructure implementer.

When water services are reliable, affordable and professionally managed, households report benefits extending beyond access to water: time is returned, daily routines become easier, productive activity increases and water-related stress falls.

For funding partners, the study provides independent evidence that investment in Project Maji supports not only physical infrastructure, but also the systems, people and operational capacity required to keep rural water services functioning over time.

It also gives Project Maji a clear agenda for improvement and a stronger basis for evidence-led management and future investment.