



CHILDREN SERVICES WEEKLY - ISSUE 14



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Foreword From the Principal Secretary's Desk



In Kiambu, mentorship sessions prepared young people in Charitable Children's Institutions (CCIs) for independent living, while in Meru, NCCS piloted training on Care Reform to standardize family-based care practices.

Work in the justice sector advanced through tools such as the Case Digest on Child Justice and a Guidance Note on Interviewing Children, developed with UNICEF support to make legal processes more child-sensitive. In Lamu, the Technical Working Group refined the County Child Protection Policy, while in Kakamega, a multi-stakeholder forum strengthened collaboration on rape and defilement cases, amplifying survivor voices and accountability.

It gives me great pleasure to share this bulletin, which highlights the collective efforts of the State Department for Children Services (SDCS), the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS), and partners in promoting child protection and wellbeing.

At the national level, I joined fellow leaders at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) for the launch of the 2026/2027 and Medium-Term Budget preparation process. This reaffirmed the government's commitment to child-centered budgeting and inclusive development.

Across the counties, encouraging progress was recorded. In Siaya, the Gem Sub-County Children's Assembly empowered children to understand and defend their rights. In Machakos, a youth baraza in Kangundo brought together over 100 young people to dialogue on justice and protection, while all Children Officers were trained on foster care to support the Care Reform Strategy. Immunisation forums also reinforced every child's right to health.

Finally, SDCS participated in developing the Digital Accessibility Maturity Roadmap for the justice sector, ensuring services are inclusive and responsive to children and persons with disabilities, in line with the BETA Agenda and Social Transformation through Access to Justice (STAJ) blueprint.

These initiatives demonstrate a nation steadily embracing a child-centered future. I commend all officers, partners, and community leaders for their commitment. Together, we are not just protecting children, we are shaping Kenya's future.



Principal Secretary

State Department for Children Services

Government Launches FY 2026/27 and Medium-Term Budget Preparation Process

National Desk

On 21st August 2025, the Principal Secretary for Children Services, CPA Carren Ageng'o, joined the Cabinet Secretary for the National Treasury, Hon. FCPA John Mbadi Ng'ongo, EGH, and the PS for National Treasury, Dr. Chris Kiptoo, CBS, at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) for the official launch of the 2026/2027 budget preparation process.



CS National Treasury, FCPA John Mbadi, delivers remarks at the launch of the FY 2026/27 budget preparation process.

The event was graced by key leaders including Hon. Samuel Atandi, M.P. and Chairperson of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, members of the National Assembly, PS Dr. Bonface B. Makokha of the State Department of Economic Planning, other Principal Secretaries, senior government officers, development partners, and representatives from civil society. Children's voices were represented through their leadership, with the President of the Kenya Children Assembly present.

Launching the process, the CS highlighted strategic priorities under the Medium-Term Plan IV (MTP IV) of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA). These include: agricultural transformation to guarantee food security and raise farmer

incomes, MSME development to drive job creation, housing and settlement for affordable living, healthcare through universal health coverage, and the digital and creative economy to harness innovation and empower the youth.

These pillars are designed to accelerate inclusive growth, job creation, poverty reduction, and economic diversification while ensuring social equity and that no citizen is left behind as Kenya advances toward middle-income status.

The forum also provided insights into Kenya's medium-term macroeconomic outlook and fiscal strategies, all aimed at fostering resilience, sustainability, and equitable prosperity. Significantly, the CS reassured children that their views would be incorporated into the upcoming budget and urged all government ministries to reflect children's needs in their planning and allocations.

This launch reaffirmed the government's commitment to inclusive, participatory, and child-centered budgeting.



PS Carren Ageng'o following the proceedings at the FY 2026/27 budget launch.

Building an Inclusive Digital Justice System

Contributed by Damaris Makena



Participants follow proceedings at the Digital Accessibility Roadmap workshop convened for the justice sector.

The digital era has transformed how citizens access services, making inclusivity, efficiency, and user-friendliness more essential than ever. In response, the justice sector convened a workshop to develop a Digital Accessibility Maturity Roadmap, with the State Department for Children Services (SDCS) among the key participants. The roadmap seeks to ensure that government digital services, especially in the justice sector, are accessible to all citizens, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), senior citizens, and children.

The forum brought together government agencies, the Judiciary, civil society organizations, and development partners to assess gaps in digital accessibility. Participants drew lessons from international best practices while exploring strategies for embedding universal design standards into justice platforms. Discussions emphasized the need for structured, measurable, and sustainable solutions that guarantee barrier-free access for all citizens.

SDCS's participation was particularly significant. The Department highlighted the importance of safeguarding children's rights in the digital space and ensuring that justice systems are both inclusive

and child-sensitive. Children, especially those with disabilities, often struggle with online platforms, and SDCS stressed the urgency of tailored solutions that address their unique needs.

This initiative also aligns with national priorities such as the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), which champions inclusivity and innovation, and the Social Transformation through Access to Justice (STAJ) blueprint, which promotes fairness and equity. By embedding accessibility into justice systems, the government reaffirms its commitment to dignity, equity, and protection of fundamental rights.

The forum acknowledged milestones achieved through platforms like e-Citizen, which have expanded access to services, but also noted persistent barriers, including poorly designed websites, inaccessible documents, and limited support for assistive technologies.

By advancing the Digital Accessibility Maturity Roadmap, SDCS and partners are taking bold steps toward an inclusive digital future, one where justice is truly accessible to every Kenyan.

Gem Sub-County Children's Assembly Holds Three-Day Capacity Building Training

Contributed by the Gem Sub-County Office, Directorate of Children's Services

From 12th to 14th August 2025, the Gem Sub-County Children's Assembly (KCA) convened a three-day capacity building training at Mutumbu Secondary School, supported by North Gem Community-Based Organization (CBO). The forum brought together twenty nine (29) delegates, facilitators, and chaperones for an interactive learning experience.



North Gem CBO Project Coordinator makes her remarks at the KCA event

The sessions were facilitated by Children Officers Janet Nyakwaka and Hillary Agesa, working alongside Chaperones Abigael Atieno and Jane Atieno Nyalando. Using child-friendly methods such as group discussions, storytelling, role plays, and active exercises, the facilitators created an inclusive and engaging environment. Delegates also set ground rules that emphasized respect, confidentiality, and inclusivity.

Training content focused on strengthening understanding of the KCA guidelines and standing orders, children's rights under the Children Act, No. 29 of 2022, duties and responsibilities of children, and emerging child protection issues within the Sub-County. Delegates revisited the assembly's motto "Maisha Yetu, Wajibu Wetu / Our Life, Our Responsibility" and reflected on its mission of amplifying children's voices in decision-making.

Participants explored different forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect, while discussing their consequences on health, education, and overall development. They also highlighted reporting mechanisms available through parents, teachers, hospitals, police, Children Officers, and the National Child Helpline 116 (toll-free). Attention was drawn to challenges affecting children in Gem, including child labour in gold mining areas, insecurity, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, and school dropouts.

The President of the Sub-County Assembly expressed gratitude to North Gem CBO for providing meals, accommodation, transport, t-shirts, and logistical support. Appreciation was also extended to the Member of Parliament's office for gift packages and continued partnership. Sub-County Children Officer Janet Nyakwaka commended the delegates for their discipline and called for stronger collaboration with partners to sustain the children's assembly.

The training concluded with prayers, the national anthem, the East African anthem, and a renewed commitment to empower children to thrive in safe and nurturing environments.



Delegate debating on responsibilities of child in society

Voices of the Youth, Safeguarding the Future: Kangundo Baraza Champions Child Protection

Contributed by the Kangundo Sub-County Office, Directorate of Children's Services

On 20th August 2025, the Kangundo Sub-County Children's Office, in partnership with the Assistant County Commissioner, local chiefs, the Sub-County Public Health Nurse, the Public Health Officer, the Youth Officer, and the National Police Service, convened a vibrant youth baraza at Matetani Sub-Location, Isinga Location, Kangundo Sub-County, Machakos County (Eastern Region). The event drew over one hundred (100+) energetic youths, creating a vital platform to discuss administration, security, public health, youth affairs, and child protection.



CPV Janice Ndunge addressing the youth during the baraza.

The Directorate of Children's Services (DCS) was represented by Madam Janice Ndunge, a Child Protection Volunteer (CPV), under the guidance of Sub-County Children's Officer Mr William Omondi Ochieng and his colleague Mr Neville Musima. Madam Ndunge engaged the participants with clarity and depth, making the sessions both informative and interactive.

Discussions centered on key child protection issues. Youths were sensitised on the offence of defilement pursuant to the Sexual Offences Act, No. 3 of 2006,

and the serious legal penalties associated with it. They were also educated on child neglect, often linked to young families, and were introduced to services offered by the National Legal Aid Service (NLAS). Reporting mechanisms, including the National Child Helpline 116 (toll-free), were highlighted as vital tools in safeguarding children. In addition, the baraza introduced participants to the National Care Reform Strategy, which emphasises family and community-based alternative care options. By fostering understanding of these measures, the session underscored the role of youth in building safe, nurturing, and child-friendly communities.

The event concluded with heartfelt appreciation from the youths and area chiefs, who commended the Children's Office for its tireless commitment to their welfare. Their gratitude served as both affirmation and a call to action, motivating officers to deepen inclusive engagements with the public.

The Kangundo baraza not only amplified youth voices but also reaffirmed the transformative power of knowledge and dialogue in safeguarding Kenya's future generations.



Leaders listening to the youth during the baraza.

Nurturing Families of Care: Machakos Children Officers Trained as Foster Care ToTs

Contributed by the Machakos County Office, Directorate of Children's Services

From 18th to 22nd August 2025, Children Officers from all nine (9) Sub-Counties of Machakos County, led by Madam Rhoda Muisyo, County Coordinator for Children Services, participated in a Foster Care Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop at Viet Garden in Tala Town, Matungulu Sub-County (Eastern Region). The training was conducted pursuant to the National Care Reform Strategy for Children in Kenya (2022-2032), which seeks to strengthen family and community-based care for children.

The five (5)-day sessions were facilitated by Madam Jane Njoki Muhune from the Directorate of Children Services (Alternative Family Care Department) and Madam Mercy Ndirangu from Stahili Foundation. Their expertise and engaging approach created an interactive environment where participants explored foster care in depth.



*Madam Jane Njoki Muhune (AFCD - DCS)
delivering her presentation*

The workshop pursued four (4) key objectives, namely familiarising officers with the Foster Care Regulations of 2024, deepening their understanding of foster care provisions under the Children Act, No. 29 of 2022, introducing the Foster Parent Training Manual designed to guide the preparation of foster families, and equipping officers with facilitation

skills to train prospective foster parents effectively. Beyond theory, the training emphasised practical application. Officers engaged in exercises that sharpened their ability to support, guide, and monitor foster parents to ensure children placed in foster care receive safe and nurturing environments.

At the close of the training, participants, through their respective Sub-County Children's Officers, set recruitment targets for foster parents in their jurisdictions. They pledged to champion foster care as a key pillar within Kenya's broader child protection framework.

This workshop marked a significant milestone for Machakos County. By equipping officers as trainers, the Directorate of Children Services strengthened its frontline capacity to roll out foster care across communities. Ultimately, this initiative aims to ensure that vulnerable children grow up in stable, caring family environments rather than in institutional care.



*Group photo of participants during foster care
ToT training workshop.*

Building Resilient Futures: Preparing Young Persons for Life Beyond Care

Contributed by the Githunguri Sub-County Office, Directorate of Children's Services

Turning eighteen (18) is often a joyful milestone, but for children raised in Charitable Children's Institutions (CCIs), it comes with a stark reality: stepping into independence without family, a home, or familiar support systems. Many young people leave care unprepared for budgeting, job seeking, managing relationships, or handling conflict. Having grown up with their needs consistently met, the realities of scarcity and responsibility can feel overwhelming.

Stakeholders in Githunguri and Kiambu Sub-Counties have noted particular risks, including early pregnancies, substance abuse, unhealthy relationships, and exploitation. Yet these same young people are eager to embrace friendships, dating, work, and community life. Without guided transition, however, the leap into adulthood can be daunting.

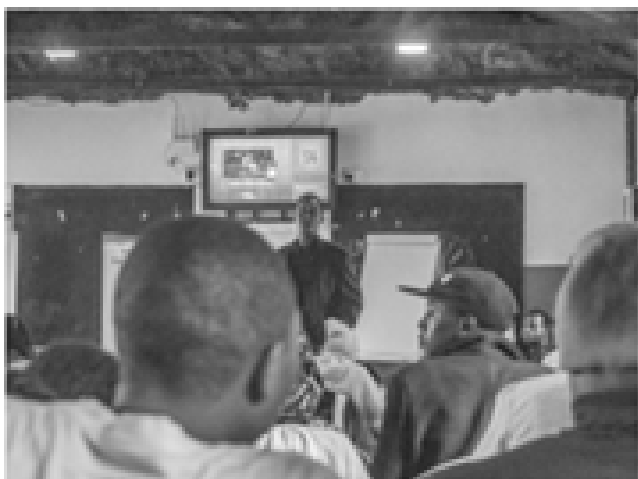
To bridge this gap, the Directorate of Children Services (DCS) Githunguri hosted a mentorship session during the August school break at Gathaithi Children's Home. The event, held in partnership with L4C counsellors Ms Eva Njeri, Mr Moses Waweru, and Ms Immaculate Maracha, Public Health Officer Mr Kago Nienga, and Kenya Society

of Care Leavers (KESCA) Chair Mr Joel Muthee, provided practical guidance for life beyond care.

The sessions covered personal growth, financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health, and drug and substance abuse prevention. Beyond lectures, the young people engaged in open discussions, asking questions, sharing fears, and learning from lived experiences. The day closed with recreational activities, a reminder that resilience is nurtured not only through knowledge but also through joy and community.

In total, sixty seven (67) children from eight (8) CCIs were equipped with soft skills, learning, unlearning, and relearning critical life lessons. According to the Sub-County Children Officer (SCCO), preparing for Supported Independent Living (SIL) goes beyond material provision. It is about instilling the confidence, resilience, and independence needed to thrive as young adults in society.

For institutions seeking to prepare children for life after care, KESCA remains available to support soft skills training and post-care planning. Together, these efforts are shaping a generation ready not just to survive, but to flourish beyond institutional walls.



Participants engaging during the 'Building Resilient Futures: Preparing Young Persons for Life Beyond Care' forum.

Guarding Tomorrow's Health: Kangundo Stakeholders Rally for Stronger Child Immunization

Contributed by the Kangundo Sub-County Office, Directorate of Children's Services

On 21st August 2025, the Department of Health under the County Government of Machakos convened a county-wide immunisation stakeholders' forum aligned with the Kenya Expanded Programme on Immunisation (KEPI). Sub-County Medical Officers of Health from all nine (9) Sub-Counties were directed to mobilise key actors to deliberate on strategies for strengthening immunisation coverage.

In Kangundo Sub-County, the meeting brought together twenty six (26) participants, including the Sub-County Children's Officer Mr William Omondi Ochieng, the Curriculum Support Officer for Special Needs Education (TSC), the Sub-County Public Health Officer, the Sub-County Public Health Nurse, the Sub-County Health Records Officer, representatives from the Deputy County Commissioner's office, the Sub-County Director of Education, the Sub-County Youth Officer, and several area chiefs.



Group photo of Immunization Stakeholders in Kangundo Sub-County.

The forum addressed the persistent challenge of low immunisation coverage despite continuous campaigns and the rollout of new vaccines.

Deliberations centred on performance reviews of ongoing programmes, barriers to routine immunisation such as logistical and socio-cultural challenges, vaccine hesitancy and refusal with emphasis on community sensitisation, and innovative approaches to engaging both traditional and non-traditional partners to drive uptake.



Stakeholders participating in the forum.

By the close of discussions, participants agreed on specific, actionable strategies to boost immunisation coverage. They further pledged their support to the Department of Health in mobilising communities, enhancing health education, and reinforcing accountability among frontline health workers.

The forum underscored that child immunisation is not only a medical intervention but also a legal obligation, safeguarding the right of every child to health and medical care as guaranteed under Section 16 and Section 31(2) of the Children Act, No. 29 of 2022.

This collaborative effort marked a significant step towards ensuring that every child in Kangundo, and Machakos County at large, receives timely, life-saving vaccinations, securing a healthier and more resilient future generation.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement on the Management of Rape and Defilement Cases in Kakamega County

A Field Reflection from Kakamega County, Western Region



Group photo with some of the participants

A two-day multi-stakeholder forum was held in Kakamega County, Western Region, on 19th to 20th August 2025 under the theme **“Strengthening Cross-Sectoral Response to Rape and Defilement Cases.”**

The engagement brought together the Directorate of Children Services (DCS), National Police Service, Office of the County Commissioner, Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, Judiciary (Kakamega Law Courts), County Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Office of the County Attorney, and the Department of Gender, Youth, and Social Services.

The meeting aimed to:

1. Identify barriers to effective implementation of the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Policy.
2. Explore challenges in reporting, investigation, and case resolution.
3. Co-create practical solutions to improve access to justice, medico-legal services, and public trust.

Day 1: Setting the Context

Participants examined SGBV trends in Kakamega

County, supported by survivor stories collected through community sporting events. Key drivers identified included entrenched cultural practices, family breakdown, drug and substance abuse, and low public awareness. Discussions emphasized the need to break the silence, amplify survivor voices, and hold duty bearers accountable from reporting to final resolution.

Day 2: Action Planning and Coordination

Stakeholders mapped pathways to improve access to information, services, and justice. Each institution outlined its mandate, reinforcing the need for a coordinated and proactive approach. Agreed collaborative actions included:

- Public awareness and sensitization campaigns to shift community attitudes.
- Improved coordination and visibility of service providers.
- Strengthened referral systems and follow-ups for survivors.

The forum closed with a strong call for collective responsibility in safeguarding survivors, delivering justice, and dismantling systemic barriers to addressing rape and defilement cases.

Lamu County Child Protection Policy Nears Completion

A Field Reflection from Lamu County, Coast Region

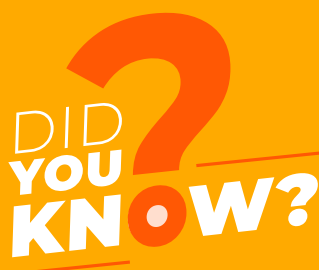
The Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC), in collaboration with the Directorate of Children Services (DCS) Lamu and other key stakeholders, is making significant progress toward finalizing the Lamu Child Protection Policy, a landmark framework designed to safeguard children's rights and ensure their safety across the county.

Now in its third (3rd) engagement, the second (2nd) in-person workshop held in Lamu over the past two (2) days convened the Technical Working Group (TWG) for an intensive review and refinement of the draft policy. This marks a critical step toward its adoption and implementation.

The process is being guided by the technical expertise of Dr Eric Ater, with strong support from Mr Sebastian Owanga, the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Education, and Mr Mwasiwa Boga, the County Director of Children Services. Their leadership underscores the county's commitment to building a child protection framework that is inclusive, practical, and responsive to the needs of children in Lamu.



Members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) during the Lamu County workshop, reviewing and refining the draft Child Protection Policy



What is CPIMS?

The Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) is a centralized tool used by children officers across Kenya to manage and track cases of child abuse, alternative care, and child protection services.

NCCS Pilots Training on Transitioning Child Care System in Meru County

Submitted by Arnorld Mwanake & Kennedy Owino - NCCS Officers



Group photo of participants drawn from various counties.

The National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) has launched a pilot training on transitioning child care from institutional to family and community-based care at Meru Slopes Hotel in Meru County, against the backdrop of the scenic Nyambene Hills. Running from 25th to 29th August 2025, the training marks a critical milestone in implementing the National Care Reform Strategy for Children in Kenya (2022–2032), which seeks to strengthen families and communities as the primary caregivers.

The training brought together Children Officers, Local Implementing Partners under the Legatum “Legacy 4 Children” (L4C) programme, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) drawn from Meru, Kirinyaga, Murang’a, Kiambu, and Nairobi Counties.

Sessions were guided by the National Guidelines for Transitioning Child Care System (2023) and the Child Welfare Programmes Guidelines (2023), both developed by NCCS in partnership with Legatum and Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC). The training manual provides standardized tools and approaches to ensure stakeholders work within one framework, minimizing duplication and safeguarding children

from slipping through system gaps.

Speaking at the opening, NCCS underscored that the shift from institutional to family care is essential to upholding the Children Act, No. 29 of 2022, and international standards that affirm every child's right to a safe, nurturing family environment.

“This training is a significant step toward building a child care system that prioritizes the best interests of every child. By empowering officers and partners, we are laying the foundation for sustainable reforms that keep children in safe, loving families,” said Mr Kennedy Owino, speaking on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The Meru pilot will inform a national roll out across all forty seven (47) counties, with lessons tailored to diverse community contexts. Feedback from the week-long session will refine the manual and guide the training approach.

This pilot reaffirms Kenya's commitment to child care reform, reimagining systems, reorienting resources, and reuniting children with what research proves they need most, a family.

Strengthening Child Justice in Kenya: NCAJ and UNICEF Lead Key Reforms

Submitted by Arnorld Mwanake - NCCS Children Officer

The National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) Standing Committee on Administration and Access to Justice for Children in Kenya, with support from UNICEF, is driving reforms to strengthen child justice systems in line with the Strategy on Justice for Children 2023–2028.



Group photo of members present at the forum.

Two critical tools have been developed under this initiative. The first is the Case Digest on Child Justice, a consolidated reference of case law, policies, and judicial interpretations on children's issues. It enhances consistency in judicial decision-making, transparency, and effective representation, while enriching discourse on child justice.

The second is the Guidance Note on Interviewing Children in the Justice Sector, a practical tool equipping officers with child-friendly interviewing skills for victims, witnesses, and offenders. It emphasizes ethical safeguards and child-centered approaches that uphold children's rights and dignity.

To enrich these tools, regional forums were held in Kisumu, Machakos, Nakuru, and Mombasa, bringing together judicial officers, Children Officers, probation officers, police, prosecutors, and

children. This reflects the principle of “justice for and with children” under the Children Act, No. 29 of 2022, which promotes child participation.

Speaking in Mombasa, the CEO of the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS), also Vice Chair of the Committee, commended the leadership of Hon. Lady Justice Teresia Matheka, describing her as a champion of child-sensitive justice. He urged stakeholders to adopt developmentally appropriate approaches and remove barriers to child engagement.



NCCS CEO, Abdinoor Sheikh Mohamed, giving his address at the forum in Mombasa County

UNICEF's Ms. Roselyne Kabata emphasized reforms that prioritize the best interests of children while upholding accountability. In Machakos, Dr. Florence Mueni underscored the importance of fairness and transparency in child-related cases.

Feedback from the forums will inform the finalization of the Case Digest and Guidance Note, reaffirming NCAJ and UNICEF's commitment to a justice system that protects, empowers, and upholds the rights of every child in Kenya.



MINISTRY OF GENDER, CULTURE AND CHILDREN SERVICES
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STOP CYBER BULLYING





Share Your Story

We're always looking for inspiring stories, reflections, and field reports from across the country. If you have a contribution for the next issue of Children Services Weekly, email us at sdcws.newsletter@gmail.com and be part of the conversation advancing child protection in Kenya.

A heartfelt thank you to all our contributors whose time, insights, and on-the-ground experiences made this edition possible.

~ Children Services Weekly Editorial Team

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