



**MINISTRY OF GENDER, CULTURE
AND CHILDREN SERVICES**
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN SERVICES



CHILDREN SERVICES WEEKLY - ISSUE 8

In this Issue, we spotlight key developments following the transition of the State Department for Children Services to the Ministry of Gender, Culture and Children Services. From high-level strategy sessions led by Cabinet Secretary Hon. Hannah Wendot Cheptumo and PS CPA Carren Ageng'o, to inspiring stories from the field—this edition captures how policy, partnerships, and community action are working together to strengthen childcare and protection systems across Kenya.

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A NEW ERA BEGINS: CS HANNAH WENDOT CHEPTUMO TAKES THE HELM

Following the reorganization of government through Executive Order No. 1 of June 2025, the State Department for Children Services has officially moved from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to the Ministry of Gender, Culture and Children Services. This transition marks a significant step in strengthening coordination and aligning child protection efforts within a broader framework of gender equality and cultural development. The move offers an opportunity to elevate child-focused services through holistic policy and programmatic approaches that center both family and community wellbeing.

Cabinet Secretary Ms. Hannah Wendot Cheptumo, who has been serving in this capacity since April 2025, now leads the integrated ministry overseeing children's services. Her leadership brings renewed momentum to the department, with a strong emphasis on cross-sectoral partnerships, inclusive systems, and community-driven solutions. With a longstanding commitment to social justice and equity, CS Cheptumo is expected to play a key role in advancing the implementation of the Children Act, 2022, promoting care reform, and ensuring that every child in Kenya is protected, nurtured, and empowered to thrive.



PS AGENG'O MEETS PRESIDENT'S ADVISOR ON WOMEN RIGHTS



In a continued effort to build cross-sectoral alliances for child protection and care, the Principal Secretary, State Department for Children Services, CPA Carren Ageng'o, on July 2, 2025 held a consultative meeting with Hon. Harriette Chiggai, the President's Advisor on Women Rights in the Executive Office of the President.

The high-level meeting focused on strengthening collaboration between the two offices in areas where the rights of women and children intersect, particularly in the development of holistic, inclusive childcare systems.

Evidence-Driven Reform for Childcare Systems

At the center of their conversation was an upcoming national study on childcare systems, which will serve as a foundation for policy recommendations and institutional reforms. The study is expected to provide critical insights into the current status of childcare in Kenya and identify actionable pathways to strengthen regulation, accessibility, and quality of care.

PS Ageng'o reaffirmed the State Department's commitment to ensuring that all policy frameworks reflect the realities and needs of caregivers and children, especially in underserved and vulnerable communities. This engagement marks a key step toward building evidence-based, gender-responsive policies that place the well-being of children and their caregivers at the heart of national development.

STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION: CS CHEPTUMO MEETS SENIOR LEADERS OF CHILDREN SERVICES

On July 1, 2025, Cabinet Secretary Ms. Hannah Wendot Cheptumo of the Ministry of Gender, Culture and Children Services convened a strategic briefing session with senior leadership from the State Department for Children Services to strengthen coordination and alignment within the newly restructured ministry.

The session, led by Principal Secretary for Children Services, CPA Carren Ageng'o, brought together officials from the Child Welfare Society of Kenya (CWSK), the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS), and the Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund (SFRTF) to review departmental priorities and affirm collective commitment to delivering for children.



CS Hannah Wendot Cheptumo with PS Carren Ageng'o with senior officials

Focus on Data-Driven and Coordinated Action

The meeting emphasized the need for stronger coordination between statutory and community-based child protection services. Key to the discussions was the scaling and integration of data-driven systems, particularly the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS), which remains central to monitoring and case management efforts nationwide.

The State Department outlined its strategic functions, including:

- Legal support and family mediation,
- Rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of

vulnerable children,

- Institutional inspections and placement into alternative family-based care,
- Prevention of violence against children, including counter-trafficking,
- Oversight of national programs on adolescent development, nutrition, online safety, and emergency helpline response.

A Renewed Call for Partner Alignment

In her remarks, CS Cheptumo reiterated the ministry's commitment to building a robust, inclusive child protection system driven by evidence, accountability, and collaborative leadership.

"We must ensure our structures, from national to grassroots, are aligned in purpose, connected by data, and resourced to respond to the evolving needs of every child in Kenya,"
CS Hannah Cheptumo

This strategic engagement reflects the government's broader efforts to deliver child protection as a shared responsibility across all actors and institutions. By deepening coordination and leveraging digital systems, the ministry aims to create safer, more responsive environments for children to thrive.



CS Hannah Wendot Cheptumo receives the Children's Act from PS Carren Ageng'o

GALVANIZING ACTION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN: PS AGENG'O LEADS HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON STRENGTHENING CHILDCARE SYSTEMS IN KENYA

The Principal Secretary, State Department for Children Services, CPA Carren Ageng'o, on July 8, 2025, convened a high-level breakfast meeting with key childcare organizations and early childhood stakeholders. The engagement, held in partnership with the Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK), brought together representatives from the national government, civil society, and development partners for an in-depth policy and systems dialogue on early childhood care and development (ECCD) in Kenya.

The forum served as a timely platform to reflect on the current state of childcare in the country and to reimagine a coordinated path forward. Expert presentations revealed critical gaps in regulation, service delivery, and equitable access, particularly for children living with disabilities and those requiring special care. Stakeholders emphasized the urgent need to strengthen the legal and policy frameworks governing childcare services, improve standards, and ensure better oversight.

In her keynote address, PS Ageng'o reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring the rights,

safety, and development of all young children. She called for multisectoral collaboration, inclusive policy design, and the prioritization of childcare systems within public planning and budgeting frameworks.

“We must move from fragmented interventions to fully coordinated, adequately resourced systems that offer responsive, safe, and equitable care for every child, especially those most vulnerable,”

PS CPA Carren Ageng'o

The meeting concluded with a strong recommendation to establish a joint technical working group tasked with reviewing current policies and assessing their adequacy in addressing systemic gaps in Kenya's childcare landscape.

As the government continues to drive reform through strategic partnerships, this engagement marks a significant step toward realizing a national childcare system that supports families and places the wellbeing of every child at the center of public development.



PS Carren Ageng'o addressing stakeholders



Stakeholders at ECDNeK

ECHOES OF A CAUSE: FROM AIRWAVES TO BOARDROOMS AND COURTROOMS

Contributed by the Kangundo Sub-County Office

On June 30, 2025, the Kangundo Sub-County Children's Officer, Mr. William Omondi Ochieng, participated in a stakeholder planning forum convened by the Ministry of Health in Kangundo, Machakos County (Eastern Region).

The meeting aimed to strengthen interagency coordination and operational preparedness for the upcoming Nationwide Measles-Rubella and Typhoid Vaccination Campaign, scheduled to run from July 5th to 14th, 2025.

Mr. Ochieng's participation reaffirmed the statutory role of the Directorate of Children's Services (DCS) in upholding every child's right to the highest attainable standard of health, as provided under Section 16 of the Children Act, No. 29 of 2022, and Article 53 (1) (c) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.



Group photo of vaccination campaign planning team

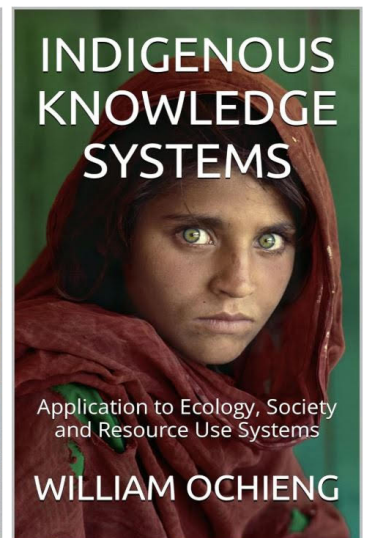
The engagement prompted a moment of personal reflection for Mr. Ochieng, who recalled a BBC interview he gave nearly five years ago while serving in the private sector. In that conversation, he passionately advocated for children's rights, a cause he continues to champion today. That same year, he authored two of his five internationally published works: **Climate Change: Impact on Organisations and Societies** and **Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Application to Ecology, Society and Resource Use Systems**.

Now in public service, Mr. Ochieng expressed quiet

gratitude for the opportunity to continue this work in a different capacity, driven by the same conviction that has guided his journey as a sociologist, child protection and juvenile justice expert, and published author.

Following the health planning forum, Mr. Ochieng returned to the Kangundo Sub-County Children's Office, where he and colleague Mr. Neville Musima addressed a number of emerging child protection cases. Later that day, the two officers attended a scheduled Court Users Committee (CUC) session at the Kangundo Law Courts, where they advocated for the full realization of children's rights within the justice system.

Their participation reflected the legal obligation outlined in Section 8 (1) of the Children Act, 2022, and Article 53 (2) of the Constitution, which enshrine the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all matters concerning children.



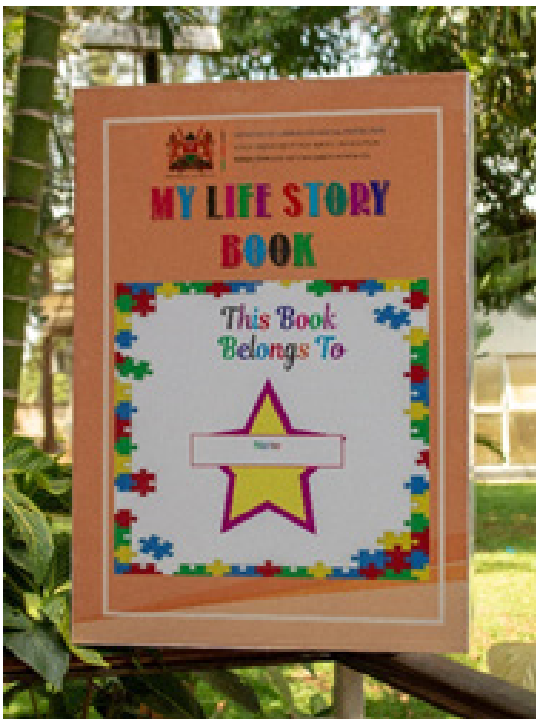
Published Books by William Ochieng

FILLING THE GAP: HOW THE LIFE STORY BOOK SUPPORTS CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Contributed by the Githunguri Sub-County Office

During routine monitoring visits to foster care placements in Githunguri Sub-County, Ms. June Wachira, the Sub-County Children Officer, identified a significant psychosocial gap: many children in alternative care lacked memory boxes or photo albums, tools that help preserve their personal history and identity. For children who have lost contact with their biological families, the absence of such memories can create confusion, emotional disconnection, and challenges in building a strong sense of self.

To address this, and with the support of the Kenya Children's Assembly, the Kenya Society of Care Leavers, and Child in Family Focus, the Life Story Book was developed and launched as a national psychosocial support tool for children in foster care, adoption, and other alternative family-based care arrangements.



My Life Story Book

The Life Story Book provides a structured and supportive space where children can reflect on and record important aspects of their life journey. With the guidance of social workers and caregivers, children can fill in elements such as their family

tree, memories, favorite activities, dreams, and aspirations. This process promotes identity formation, builds self-esteem, and supports emotional healing.

Imagine having to explain your family background to a friend, partner, or employer, but having no photos or stories to share, simply because you were abandoned at an early age. The Life Story Book helps bridge that gap, empowering children to own and tell their stories with dignity.

As a psychosocial tool, the Life Story Book aligns with the psychosocial domain of the Case Management Star Model, reinforcing emotional support in child protection work.

Every child placed in foster care, kinship care, adoption, or other alternative care arrangements should receive this tool as part of their care plan. Likewise, children living with their biological families are encouraged to preserve their family history through photo albums and shared storytelling.

The Life Story Book is freely available for download [here](#) or in sub-county children's offices, or through partner organizations. By making this resource widely accessible, we take an important step toward restoring dignity, building identity, and ensuring every child grows up with a sense of belonging and hope.



*H.E Samuel Smith,
President, The Kenya Children's Assembly*

OPENING HER HOME, AND HER HEART: MARY GITIHA'S JOURNEY AS A FOSTER CARER

Contributed by the Githunguri Sub-County Office

In a quiet village in Githunguri, Mary Gitiha did something profoundly impactful, she opened her home and heart to two young boys in need. For three years, Mary served as a certified foster parent, providing care, stability, and unconditional love until the siblings were successfully reunified with their biological family.

“It was an honour to stand in the gap for them,” Mary reflects. “I was there when they needed a safe space the most.”

Mary is one of 33 foster parents in Githunguri Sub-County, part of a growing movement advancing family-based care under the care reform program. To date, 76 children in the sub-county have benefited from foster care through robust gatekeeping mechanisms that prioritize homes over institutions.

The Power of Support in Foster Care

Foster parenting, while deeply rewarding, also comes with emotional and practical challenges, particularly when supporting children who have experienced trauma, abandonment, or loss. That's why the Githunguri Foster Parents Support Group is such a vital space for healing and learning.

In regular group meetings often filled with laughter, shared meals, and heartfelt stories, foster parents connect with peers, share experiences, and receive support. These gatherings are more than just meetings; they are lifelines. They are supported by:

- The Githunguri Sub-County Children Officer, Ms. June Wachira
- Child in Family Focus Organization
- Representatives from local Charitable Children Institutions (CCIs)

The focus is on trauma-informed parenting, emotional resilience, and community building. By sup-

porting caregivers, the system ultimately provides better outcomes for children.

Why Support Groups Matter

Foster carers benefit through:

- Emotional debriefing and peer encouragement
- Skills for trauma-sensitive and responsive parenting
- A strong sense of community, reducing isolation and burnout
- A space to celebrate both small wins and major milestones

A Call to Action

Mary is now ready to foster again. Though her previous foster children have been reunified, she says they will always carry a piece of her heart.

“I’m ready for the next child who needs a safe place to land,” she says with quiet confidence.

Do you feel called to support children in need of family-based care? Get Involved!

To learn more about becoming a foster parent or supporting foster care initiatives, reach out to: dcogithunguri@gmail.com or contact your nearest Sub-County Children's Office.



Foster parents sharing stories and debriefing at a support group meeting at Hossana Children Home, Githunguri



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Got a story to share?

We're always looking for inspiring stories, reports, or reflections! Send your contributions to sdews.newsletter@gmail.com and be part of the next issue of Children Services Weekly.

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