



# VOICING CHILD RIGHTS

THROUGH MEMBERS OF COUNTY ASSEMBLIES



Save the Children®

SUPPORTED BY OFFICIAL  
DEVELOPMENT AID FROM THE MINISTRY  
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND



## Acknowledgement

The development of this booklet has been a concerted effort from several individuals. Much gratitude goes to the Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAACR) Regional Coordinators Peggy Saka and John Oduor for mobilizing and organizing the logistics for collecting the stories and Save the Children team led by Dennis Moogi, Caroline Ndolo and Bella Nyamamu for providing technical guidance in compiling the stories and overall coordination of the teams that worked on this assignment.

We acknowledge and appreciate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland for providing the Funds and Technical Assistance, through Save the Children Finland, to implement the ‘Child Friendly County Budgets’ project in Kenya.

# Table of Content

Background Information	3
Child rights message from children’s leaders	6
County friendly budgets	7
Its time for action not talk!	10
Children helping children	12
Disaster risk reduction for children	15
Creating tomorrow’s leaders today	18
The future from the children’s perspective	19

Published by Save the Children  
 Kenya Programme, Matundu Close, Off School Lane,  
 Westlands, P.O. Box 27679 - 00506, Nairobi, Kenya  
 Office switchboard: +254 20 4246000.  
 website: [www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net)



## Background Information

*A preliminary analysis of child rights governance in Kenya conducted by Save the Children staff in 2012 determined that there is civil society space and ability to focus on investment in children.*

It is in this regard that Save the Children and Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAACR) have actively focused on ensuring that children in Kenya benefit from greater public and private investment and better use of society's resources in realising their rights.



“ This capacity building has greatly improved the ability of children and duty bearers to engage meaningfully and ensure adequate allocations are put to proper use.

To achieve the desired impact for children, the Child Friendly County budgets project implemented in five counties began by training both the rights holders, and duty bearers to understand the rights of children and how to provide for them in budget planning, disbursement and utilization of funds.

This capacity building has greatly improved the ability of children and duty

bearers to engage meaningfully. It has also ensured that adequate allocations are not only made to child specific sectors but they are also put to proper use.

This booklet highlights some of the strategies and activities which have contributed greatly to the realization of positive results for both children and duty bearers in the communities where the project has been implemented.



A student addressing an MCA during an accountability session in Mombasa.



# Child Rights message from children's leaders



**Jeremia Ngoja Ngala**

President Kenya Children  
Assembly (KCA) 2016

*"A large population of Kenya is made up of children but many at times the Kenyan child has been forgotten especially during the budgeting process. We are very keen to take advantage of forums with leaders to air our concerns to them. So far we are seeing counties beginning to support children's activities".*



**Ellifet Odhiambo, 14yrs**  
**Waliera Primary School**

President Ugenya Sub County  
Children Assembly 2016


*"If children's rights can be taken seriously then am sure the children in our village can be at least somewhere and nobody would be abusing children".*



**Pauline Wambua**

Child rights club member  
Amani primary school

*"As children we fight for our rights but we also understand that rights come with responsibilities, therefore our club has come up with an initiative to educate children not only on their rights but also their responsibilities".*



**COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF SIAYA  
CHAMBERS AND OFFICES**  
P.O. BOX 7-40600  
SIAYA

E-mail: Clerk@siayaassembly.go.ke  
Clerk@siayaassembly.go.ke

## County child friendly budgets

Children have special needs that are very different from their adult counterparts, yet for a long time children specific issues are never factored into the various budgets both at the national and at the county level.



“ Other counties have factored into their budget free school feeding programs and construction of better toilets for schools as well as provision of water tanks.

It is with this in mind that Save the Children in partnership with KAACR advocate for child friendly budgets at the county level to ensure that children benefit from the devolved system of governance that is intended at bringing resources closer to the people.

The project has been focusing on engaging key decision makers such as the county executives and members of the county assemblies to transform their thinking in regards to factoring children's issues in the sector budgets.

KAACR which is the implementing

partner has been conducting trainings in Kwale, Mombasa, Siaya and Kakamega for Members of the County Assembly as well as County Executives to enhance their knowledge on child rights and child friendly budgeting. The civil society organizations working for children have also been targeted in the capacity building so that they can be able to focus more on policy driven advocacy and to be able to scrutinize county budgets to ensure the best interest of children is taken into consideration.

As a result of this engagement it was noted that at least four child rights





network members have been nominated to sit in key county committees to represent CSO's while others are called to participate in consultation meetings and forums convened by the county governments to discuss different development issues in the county. The network members are keen to use the opportunity to influence increased budgetary allocation for ECD and streamline social protection support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in the counties.

Budget increments in child specific sectors have also been witnessed. In Kakamega County for example, effective lobbying has seen the bursary fund allocation increased by 100% from Kshs. 60 Million to Ksh. 120 Million; besides the government also allocated Kshs. 6 Million towards development of three ECD schools for every ward in the county.

Other counties have factored into their budgets allocations for free school feeding programs and construction of better latrines as well as provision of water tanks that ensure children have access to good sanitation and clean safe water for their use in schools.



**Hon Wilfred Gimoi**  
**MCA Kakamega**  
**county**

*“The children in this particular ward have been so much my neck. They demanded that they required a secure environment. You can now see that this entire school compound is now fenced properly, that was part of their demands”*



**Victor Onjoro- Child Rights**  
**Network Siaya county**

*“Children who were sexually assaulted when taken to hospital would be charged for treatment and when we raised this with the health facilities they complained that they lacked an allocation for that and therefore they could not offer a waiver. We addressed this with the members of the county assemblies and we have now realized that there is an allocation for the same. That is one of the successes that we can boast of”*



## Its time for Action not Talk!

**Children holding MCAs and school administrations to account**

*In an accountability session at Amani Primary school in Mombasa, the child rights club members engage with honorable Mary Akinyi a member of the Mombasa county assembly.*

They courageously ask questions ranging from favoritism in allocation of education bursary funds in the county to an incomplete classroom project that was started way back by the now defunct municipal government.



The project has been using accountability sessions between children and duty bearers at the community and school level to provide a forum where children can air their voices concerning different issues affecting them.

As a result of the capacity building, children are quickly realizing that speaking out on their rights is key in achieving their aspirations and dreams. Through continued direct engagements with the duty bearers the children have been

able to present and sign memoranda of agreements with various county officials on issues that improve child rights in the various counties across the country.

Through such engagements the children have been able to record a number of gains such as construction of new class rooms in Kakamega and improved sanitation in some schools in Mombasa county.

“As a result of capacity building, children are now quickly realizing that their rights are key in achieving their aspirations and dreams.”





## Children helping children

*Conste hails from Kakamega. She is diminutive in body size but she has a big heart, a heart to help others. Two years ago she met Collins Oduor an orphan who did not have a place to stay, no food and could not concentrate in class because of his predicaments.*



Conste assisting with home chores

Conste approached her parents and asked them to allow the boy to stay with them albeit temporarily as they sought further advice from the Children Officer on how Collins could be assisted in the long term. Though surprised by their daughter's actions they accepted to take care of Collins and cater for his needs, which included ensuring he continued with his education.

Conste attributes the turning point in her understanding of child rights to a workshop on child rights organized by KAAACR in western Kenya which she attended. Since then she knew she could do something to make the lives of other children better.

**“** *Through out the project counties children are sending a strong message that they don't have to be adults to act.*



In Mombasa, children are sending a strong message that they don't have to be adults to act. Despite the limited resources that they have access to, they are going out of their way to help other children.

In Amani primary school for instance the one-shilling initiative run by the Child Rights Club members has so far raised a total of Kshs 55,000/- which has enabled eleven needy children some of whom are members of the club to acquire basic needs such as sanitary towels and school uniform hence enabling them to stay in school. The members donate one shilling weekly and when it's enough one child who is most in need is assisted.



In western Kenya, Kakamega and Siaya, two Child Rights Clubs have started initiatives where they plant and sell tree seedlings and banana suckers to raise funds to support child rights initiatives in their localities. The proceeds are used to pay for hot lunches for needy members thus enabling them to be comfortable while in school.

It is through these small acts that children are improving the lives of their fellow children, one child at a time.



## Disaster risk reduction for children

**O**ne morning last year, the children of Wayundo secondary school reported to school as usual, only this time something was different. As they entered into one of the classroom they noticed a human body.



The person had either been killed in the school or elsewhere then dumped in the school. The school was in an open field with no fence or a gate thus making it easy for any trespassers to access the premises. This traumatizing event would mark a turn around for the security of the school. Through support from Save the Children the school acquired a barbed wire fence and erected a gate to deter people from trespassing into the school compound.

Disaster risk reduction for children has been a key focus in ensuring that children are safe at all times. In schools fences and gates have been put up to ensure that children are always safe in the confines of their school environment.

In Mombasa and Kwale members of the Child Rights Clubs requested for fire fighting equipment as a measure of ensuring preparedness to respond to fire outbreaks in their schools. In response to this, Save the Children through Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children has trained 190 girls and 210 boys in the two counties on fire fighting techniques. In addition 40 project schools have been provided with the fire extinguishers. As a result of the initiative started by Save the Children, the county government of Mombasa has shown interest in the initiative and has gone ahead to distribute more fire extinguishers to several other schools as well as sending county fire brigade and inspectorate officers to schools to sensitize and equip the

“ *Disaster risk reduction for children has been a key focus in ensuring that children are safe at all times.* ”



Hon Tendai Lewa Chief Executive Education and Children, Mombasa County demonstrating fire fighting skills to child club members.



children with skills on how to deal with different disasters that they are likely to encounter in their schools.

River Nzoia in Western Kenya, is often described by locals as an angry river due to its habit of flooding and breaking banks whenever it rains.

Emurabe Muslim primary school has always been flooded by the river and as part of the disaster risk reduction, trenches have been dug around the school to re-direct the floodwaters away from the classrooms.



This has ensured that the children can stay in class all year round without disruption from the river. Despite the shielding from the marauding floodwaters of river Nzoia, the children still have to face off with the river at least twice daily when crossing to and from school in a canoe.

Crossing the hippo-infested river is a scary venture, in some occasions it has ended up in fatalities. The child rights clubs have been pushing the county government to construct a bridge over the river so that the crossing of the river can be more bearable especially for the children.

# Creating tomorrow's leaders today

**C**hild right clubs are playing a major role in inspiring children to take leadership roles at an early age.

Through the clubs as well as the children's parliament, children are increasingly getting an opportunity to visit the counties and the national assembly thus enabling them to follow proceedings and interact with the county and national leaders from whom they also draw inspiration to pursue leadership careers when they grow up.

During these interactions the children get an opportunity to follow up on child rights issues previously raised with individual leaders for discussion at the assemblies as well as make follow ups on legislative issues concerning children.

Laura is the president of the child rights club in her school and she is passionate too about the environment. She aspires to be like Wangari Mathaai who spent her

entire life championing for the protection of the environment and she believes that the environment holds the key to the well being of the human society. It is through

such responsible thinking that the child rights clubs are transforming children to be responsible in what they do today for a better tomorrow.



# The future from the children's perspective



**Felix Omondi**  
19years old, Maranda High School.

*"I want to become a politician and when I do I will make sure that children are fully protected from abuse whether from parents, teachers or any other person in the society."*



**Mwana Hawa**  
10years old.

*"I would like to see children living in good conditions where they have cloths, go to school and are taken to hospital when they fall sick. I would like to see an environment where children have all their rights protected".*



**Laura Akoth**  
13years old, St Patricks Sifuyo Primary School.

*"Being in the child rights club has made me want to become a leader one day. Just like the late Professor Wangari Maathai fought for the conservation of the environment, I would also want to protect the environment and make sure that it is a place where one can love to be".*



**Save the Children.**

Kenya Country Programme  
Matundu Close, Off School Lane, Westlands  
P.O. Box 27679-00506, Nairobi, Kenya Office  
Switchboard: +254 20 4246000

[www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)

SUPPORTED BY OFFICIAL  
DEVELOPMENT AID FROM THE MINISTRY  
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND



Kenya Alliance  
for Advancement of Children