



MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, GENDER, SENIOR CITIZEN AFFAIRS
AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION, SENIOR
CITIZENS AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES
DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY SECRETARY CHILDREN'S SERVICE
DURING THE DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON THE CAPACITY
ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD
PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

20TH APRIL 2022

The Vice Chancellor Daystar University – Prof. Laban Ayiro

The Ag DVC Daystar University – Prof. Martha Kiarie

Grant Manager, Porticus Africa – Ms. Mary Oyolo

Director Worldreader – Ms Joan Mwachi- Amolo

Executive Director Usawa Agenda – Dr. Emmanuel Manyasa

Executive Director Dignitus – Mrs. Deborah Kimathi

Save the Children Representative – Ms. Sara Mukhisa

Executive Director AfECN – Rep

ECD Representatives

The Project Investigators

All protocols observed

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join you during this virtual dissemination workshop on the **Capacity Assessment on the Implementation of Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** funded by Porticus and carried out by Daystar University. As a Directorate of Children's services we would encourage and support the sharing of the findings and lessons learnt to as many stakeholders in order to improve the child protection systems in the country.

The workshop theme “Child Protection is Everyone's Responsibility” resonates well with responsibility bestowed to various duty bearers in the children sector.

As you are aware, Child Protection involves actions that individuals, organizations, communities, societies and countries take to prevent and respond to both intentional and unintentional harm to children.

It involves the safeguarding of the welfare and rights of the child from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect; man-made and natural emergencies as stipulated in the National, regional and international legal instruments. Essentially, it is the protection of children from *all* forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, neglect and family separation.

The Directorate of Children's Services is the Government lead agency in Child Protection. It draws its mandate from the Children Act, 2001. It provides leadership in co-ordination, supervision and provision of services towards promoting the rights and welfare of all children in Kenya.

Departments within the Directorate:

1. Planning and Development
2. Child protection
3. Strategic Interventions
4. Community Capacity Support
5. Institutions (statutory/CCIs)
6. Alternative Family Care
7. Counter Trafficking in Persons
8. Child on Line Protection

To provide child protection services across the country the Department has Offices in all the 47 Counties and in over 290 Sub-Counties.

To implement its activities, the Department works closely with related Government Ministries (health, Edn, NPS, ODDP, Judiciary, KBS, Prisons etc) UN Agencies (UNICEF, ILO), Development partners, the Academia, Faith-Based and community-based organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This dissemination workshop has come at a favorable time when the country is facing a myriad of child protection issues.

The Government of Kenya conducted the first Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) in 2019 and it showed remarkable reduction in childhood physical violence for both female and male and reduction in childhood sexual violence for female. Emotional violence perpetrated by parents, caregivers and adult relatives also decreased. The survey however highlighted trends which showed increase in physical and sexual violence among adolescent girls.

Data from the recently conducted survey on Violence *Against Children 2019* indicate that;

- Nearly half of females (45.9%) and more than half of males (56.1%) experienced childhood violence in Kenya.

- Among the 15.6% of females who experienced childhood sexual violence, nearly two-thirds (62.6%) experienced multiple incidents before age 18.
- Physical violence is the most common type of violence experienced in childhood in Kenya. Nearly two out of five females (38.8.%) and half of males (51.9%) experienced childhood physical violence
- *The survey also showed that there is* high level of acceptance and normalization of violence against children by adolescents and young people. Among 13-17-year-olds, two-thirds of females (63.4%) and males (64.3%) endorsed one or more traditional beliefs about gender and sexual violence.

To respond to the issue of Violence Against Children, 16th July 2020, the Government of Kenya launched; Violence Against Children Survey 2019 Report, the National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence Against Children 2019-2023, the Child Friendly Booklet on Protecting Children Against Violence and Spot it Stop it Campaign on Violence Against Children.

- Key interventions that Government has adopted is the dissemination and implementation of the *National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence Against Children 2019-2023*. The Plan has 6 strategic areas of actions reflecting the multi-sectoral and the whole-of-society approach involving children, parents, caregivers, families, communities, service providers and the Government, both at national and county levels
- As part of addressing norms, attitudes and behaviours around violence against children in our society, we launched public behaviour change

campaign on Violence against Children, *spot it, Stop it*. The campaign aims at creating awareness from the national to the grass root levels, on violence meted against children, and how we can stop it. We are calling on all of you to be part and parcel of this campaign that has been launched by the Ministry.

Harmful socio-cultural practices

- Harmful socio-cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, child marriage and child beading are practiced in some communities with far reaching physical and psychological consequences for affected children.
- Female Genital Mutilation is prevalent with Somalis at (94%), Samburu at (86%), Kisii at (84%) and Maasai (78%).
- His Excellency, The President made a firm commitment to put an end to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by the year 2022.

Child Sexual Exploitation:

- Data from the Violence Against Children Survey 2019 indicates that Sexual violence was experienced by 15.6% of females and 6.4% of males before age 18.
- Some of the consequence of sexual exploitation includes teenage pregnancy which robs girls of their childhoods, their education and their future. These pregnancies tend to be the result of having few choices in life.

Child Trafficking:

- An estimated 17,500 Kenyans are trafficked annually for domestic work, forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation, with indications that about half of them are minors.
- Various studies have assessed the extent of trafficking in Kenya and have confirmed that Kenya is a country of origin, transit, and destination for trafficked persons.
- The Government has made efforts on the implementation of the Counter-Trafficking in Person's Act 2010. The Counter Trafficking In Person's Advisory Committee was launched on 8th July, 2014.

Child Online Abuse:

- In 2022 ECPAT UNICEf and Interpol conducted a study on Disrupting Harm on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and on how they use social media and digital technologies.
- The study revealed that children encounter sexually explicit and pornographic and at time sexually groomed for sexual exploitation and are cyber bullied.
- NPA/ CPU Anti Human Trafficking Unit /DCI
- There is an also very low level of awareness of risks to children among them and also their parents....
- Communication Authority /Terres de Home /DCS/MOE have initiated efforts to create awareness on COA

Ladies and Gentlemen

Research has shown that the issue of Child protection cannot be addressed in isolation. We need to work together to protect our children. It is our collective responsibility to protect children, to create safe, protective and nurturing environments, where our children have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest potential.

On my own behalf and that of the Directorate of Children's Services, I take this opportunity to wish you a fruitful and interactive discussion that will enrich the child protection system in Kenya.

Thank you