



JUSTICE FOR EVERY CHILD KENYA MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE

Your Excellency,

Based on our collective experience serving children and young people in Kenya, our focus is on safeguarding the fundamental rights of our vulnerable peers, as well as access to justice despite the challenges presented by this pandemic.

Through the aforementioned engagement, we identified the following areas as requiring urgent attention from the government:

1. Education Inequality

Your Excellency, as young people, we recognize that education is critical to national development, and, perhaps, the most hit by the pandemic. But even before this pandemic, we still hadn't achieved 100% primary to secondary school transition rate. Consequently, we urge the Ministry of Education, and your office, through the Regional and County Commissioners, to work with organizations such as ours to accelerate the achievement of 100% transition.

On the other hand, pervasive teenage pregnancy is an existential threat to access to education by young girls. Save the Children has also sent a chilling warning that approximately 10 million girls may never return to school post this pandemic in what it terms as a 'hidden education emergency', further exacerbating the existing poverty-driven inequalities ravaging the country.

It is on this backdrop, Your Excellency, that we call on your government to develop and implement a comprehensive school withdrawal, tracking, re-entry, and retention mechanism particularly for teen mothers through instituting on-school social support programs. They include free feeding, special accommodation, establishing nurseries within schools, breastfeeding breaks, psychosocial support services, a preference for morning, afternoon, or evening classes, and special subsidies to particular companies that provide essential products for fighting Covid-19 to school-going children such as masks and sanitizers.

Furthermore, there exists a tremendous digital divide between the majority of poor children and the rest. As such, the public and private digital learning initiatives have had significantly different outcomes for the poor vulnerable children whose uptake of digital skills and knowledge is generally low as compared to those from middle and upper-income backgrounds.

We, therefore, submit that you enhance measures to bridge the digital gap through the establishment of the required infrastructure, as well as ensuring equitable access to the resources needed to actualize digital learning.

2. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Your Excellency, we recognize that safe and productive centers are a core service within the prevention of, protection from, and response to sexual and gender-based violence as a way of providing a conducive environment for recovery and resilience, recreational spaces, and access to information and support. In line with the Cabinet's approval for an inter-Agency Programme to



prevent and respond to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the context of COVID-19, we urge you to:

- Speed up the creation of a rapid response mechanism through prompt operationalization of the newly established toll-free hotlines and online and mobile applications to enable anonymous reporting of all incidences of GBV and abuse of Children’s Rights;
- Declare, as essential, protection structures and services for victims of gender-based violence and referral of survivors to services during this period including access to fully manned, resourced, and functioning gender desks in all police stations. Through partnerships with organizations such as ours, we can offer capacity-building training sessions to male and female officers from each station to enhance their background knowledge on the architecture, forms, and both legal and health protocols involved while handling cases of SGBV;
- Urgently address the dire need for functioning safe houses for survivors by expanding the capacity and resourcing of current safe houses and establishing new ones in every county with the support of NYS. Such houses could be furnished with resource centers that encompass libraries, digital and technical training spaces, sports fields as well as recreational centers to impart into the survivors the intellect, skills, and right state of mental and physical health for recovery. We applaud the Makueni County Government for establishing a safe house for victims and survivors of GBV and which could be a blueprint on how to best roll out this program; and
- Fully operationalize the Coroners Service Act, which is very instrumental in addressing sexual offenses independently and without external pressure piled to scuttle the realization of justice for victims of these heinous acts.

3. Police brutality

Your Excellency, the Missing Voices Coalition has documented a total of 115 police killings and enforced disappearances in the first eight months of 2020. What is even more disheartening being that Yassin Moyo, a 13-year-old child, is part of this figure. Over 800 cases have been reported by the **Social Justice Centers Working Group** to the Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA), but this oversight organization has only brought 2 cases to court. In Mukuru, Mathare, Githurai, Kayole, and Dandora alone, over 10 youth aged between 14 and 24 years, were executed by police in the month of May. Hence, the lack of thorough, expeditious, and conclusive investigations is the profound stumble to accessing justice for victims of police killings/brutality.

While we demand that your Administration immediately and effectively stops extrajudicial executions police violence unleashed on civilians, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) must revisit the hundreds of cases referred to it by the **Social Justice Centers Working Group**, investigate them and prosecute those found culpable of exerting extrajudicial force on civilians. This is vital in not only ensuring that justice is served and the grieving families come to closure, but will also enhance the trust that has been deficient in the country’s criminal justice system.

Once more, kindly operationalize the Coroners Service Act, which you signed into law in 2017 that seeks to establish an independent National Coroner Service with a lucid armature for investigation and determination of causes of reported unnatural deaths. This is integral in ensuring that investigations into alleged cases of police brutality are free from interference and intimidations and carried out in the best interest of Justice.



4. Accountability in the use of Covid-19 funds

Your Excellency, COVID-19 has sharply highlighted the value of openness in public procurement processes in a bid to entrench transparency and accountability. We appreciate that during the 31st August virtual COVID-19 Summit, you directed that all COVID-19 tenders from KEMSA be published online. Considering the multiple agencies involved in the fight against COVID-19, creating a dedicated COVID public accountability portal with consolidated financial information through which every shilling spent in battling the pandemic will be accounted for transparently is paramount.

This will escalate the full and public disclosure of the use of the various funds, kitties, and equipment that have either been set aside, loaned, or donated for use in the fight against the COVID 19.

Finally, Your Excellency, we urge your government to ensure that the recovery from this pandemic responds to the challenges faced by our most marginalized and vulnerable groups through removing the risks of them being excluded socially, politically, and economically. The necessity of not only acting reactively to emerging crises like COVID-19 but proactively ensuring all citizens access their basic rights, most critically children, is essential to building resilience.

Your Excellency, you have severally committed yourself to fighting corruption without fear or favor. Once again, we call on your administration to build an effective working synergy with other institutions such as the Judiciary as a key cog in wheeling corruption cases to their conclusive ends with the culprits facing the law and their illicit assets recovered.

We eagerly await your response to these critical issues affecting the human rights of children and young people across the country. We are able to provide more information, counsel, and evidence should you require any and are available to meet with you or your representatives at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Evans Otieno

HAKI Africa

Carine Umutoniwase

Footprints for Change

Burugu Babu

Dada Power

