



NATIONAL CHILDCARE DIALOGUE CAMPAIGN REPORT

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILDCARE AND CHILD PROTECTIVES FOR
CHILDREN 0-5 YEARS IN KENYA – *November 14, 2024*



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Childcare, as defined by the World Bank (2022), is a service primarily aimed at caring for children while parents are working or otherwise unavailable. This encompasses a variety of settings, including; 1] home-based care, where children are looked after either in their own homes or in the caregiver's residence, 2] center-based care which is provided through facilities such as daycares, crèches, nurseries, and playgroups and 3] work-based care often found in formal settings like institutions and industries and in informal environments such as markets and farming enterprises. Providing a nurturing care environment is critical in enhancing children's growth and development.

Childcare plays a critical role not only in holistic child development but also in the overall economic growth of a country, Grantham & Somji (2022). According to UN Women (2020), World Bank (2020), and the Kenya Economic Report (KNBS, 2023), women and men face unique challenges in balancing work and domestic responsibilities, including childcare, significantly impacting their time on paid employment, needing community support because responsive caregiving is everyone's responsibility. These reports highlight the role of accessible, affordable, and quality childcare in reducing the burden on parents, especially women, and supporting increased participation in the workforce. This is crucial for promoting gender equality and economic growth, as women's participation in the workforce has the potential to tap into a broader pool of talent, improve family wellbeing, and enhance overall national productivity. However, achieving these benefits requires systemic changes to make childcare services universally accessible, affordable, and of high quality.

According to the World Bank (2020), approximately 40% (350 million) of children globally need but lack access to adequate childcare services, with 80% of these children living in low- and middle-income countries. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Target 4.2 aims to ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education. Achieving this target would significantly contribute to improved educational outcomes and future economic opportunities for children.

The Childcare Campaign in Kenya

In partnership with the African Early Childhood Network (AfECN) and other key stakeholders, the ECD Network for Kenya lead a National Childcare Dialogue campaign from June to December 2024 to raise awareness about the importance of quality and affordable childcare in Kenya. The six-month campaign, launched in June 2024 and running through December 2024, was centered on the theme: **“Universal Access to Quality Childcare and Child Protection Services for Children 0-5 Years in Kenya.”**

The goal of the campaign was to conduct a nationwide awareness on the importance of quality and affordable childcare and highlighted the evidence and milestones in the country. The campaign targeted a broad range of stakeholders, including children aged 0-5 years who were the primary audience, caregivers (both primary and secondary), employers,

investors, government bodies (at national and county levels), media professionals, policymakers, research institutions, community leaders, and all other stakeholders in the childcare sector.

A Technical Working Group (TWG) was formed to oversee the campaign and it included representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, National Council for Children Services, Directorate of Social Development, Department of Children Services, the Council of Governors, development partners, civil society organizations, research institutions, the private sector, caregivers, and the media.

Objectives of the Childcare Campaign

1. To increase awareness of the strides achieved in the Childcare sector in relation to legal and policy frameworks, coordination, advocacy, and research.
2. To advocate for an increase in investment for Childcare across the country by the end of 2025.
3. To enhance the role of multi-sectoral collaboration in policy formulation and implementation for Childcare at both National and County levels, achieving a 50% increase in effective policy implementation by the end of 2025.

Expected outcomes

1. Improved awareness and strengthening of the policy framework ecosystem, leading to increased investments in childcare.
2. Enhanced community engagement and involvement in advocating for and supporting quality childcare initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.
3. Government ownership and stewardship on matters of childcare, providing leadership to all stakeholders.

Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy for the Childcare Dialogue campaign encompassed several key components. These included the launch of the childcare campaign, which marked the beginning of a nationwide effort to raise awareness on childcare issues. The campaign also featured media sensitization tours focused on key calendar events, such as National Nutrition Week and World Breastfeeding Week, aimed at engaging the public and spreading sensitization messages on child nutrition and care.

In addition, the Technical Working Group (TWG) developed a set of childcare advocacy messages that were aligned with the Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) framework developed by the Ministry of Health in partnership with UNICEF and other stakeholders. The messages aimed to educate and mobilize stakeholders across the childcare sector, encouraging them to ensure that children receive the nurturing care essential for healthy growth and development.

The mapping of childcare actors in Kenya involved identifying key stakeholders across the country who are engaged in various aspects of childcare, including both advocacy initiatives and direct service delivery.

A major highlight of the campaign was the childcare webinar, which attracted 156 participants from 20 counties in Kenya and 9 countries. Additionally, the campaign hosted a Twitter Space that brought together 117 participants to sensitize the public on the importance of childcare and early childhood development.

As part of the campaign's knowledge management efforts, documentation of childcare best practices, and success stories was undertaken. This process aimed to highlight diverse childcare practices and environments, shedding light on the importance, challenges, and unique aspects of various caregiving settings across Kenya.

The National Childcare Dialogue

The National Childcare Dialogue took place on 14th November 2024 at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi County, Kenya. The event brought together 149 participants from various sectors, including the National Council for Children Services (NCCS), the Department of Children Services (DCS), the Directorate of Social Development (DSD), the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS), and the Council of Governors (COG). Additionally, the event saw the participation of the Deputy Governor of Nairobi County, who officially opened the proceedings, along with county representatives from Nairobi, Embu, Siaya, Kajiado, Nakuru, Makueni, Vihiga, and Kericho. Civil society organizations, faith-based groups, development partners such as UNICEF and IDRC, as well as early childhood development (ECD) experts, practitioners, caregivers, and academia, were also present.

The event featured a series of impactful activities and discussions centered on enhancing childcare services in Kenya. This included; remarks from the African Early Childhood Network (AfECN) on "Re-envisioning Childcare in Africa", the childcare landscape in Kenya, an overview of the Childcare Dialogue Campaign in Kenya, opening speeches by the Deputy Governor of Nairobi County, the Chief Guest, the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education. Keynote address were presented by representatives of UNICEF and IDRC. The dialogue also included several panel discussions drawn from: State actors focusing on strategies for enhancing the quality and accessibility of childcare services across Kenya; Partners shared about ongoing childcare programs, highlighting key success factors, lessons learned, and the potential for collaboration to maximize impact. Caregivers shared their personal experiences, and the critical need to professionalize the childcare workforce which was emphasized by NITA. The Panels further explored differences in caregiving practices across counties, highlighting diverse approaches and challenges.

Additionally, a documentary was presented, showcasing diverse childcare practices in both rural and urban areas, as well as caregiving for street families, providing a visual insight into the realities of childcare in different settings.

Remarks by various speakers

Remarks by Prof. Teresa Mwoma, National Coordinator, ECD Network for Kenya



Figure 1: Prof. Teresa Mwoma, National Coordinator ECDNeK

The National Coordinator welcomed participants to the national childcare dialogue. She highlighted that the ECD Network for Kenya, in partnership with AfECN and key stakeholders in the childcare sector, have been leading efforts to raise national awareness about the critical importance of quality and affordable childcare. In line with this objective, ECDNeK supported by the childcare Technical Working Group (TWG)

members organized a National Childcare Dialogue to highlight the importance of childcare services and showcase progress made in the country.

The dialogue provided a platform for cross-sectoral discussions on how to ensure universal access to quality childcare and child protection services for children aged 0-5 years in Kenya. The forum emphasized the importance of quality early childhood care in promoting child development and improving future educational outcomes, as well as addressing the challenges that have hindered access to these services for many families, particularly those in rural and underserved areas.

She reiterated that, the National Dialogue themed “Universal Access to Quality Childcare and Child Protection Services for Children 0-5 Years in Kenya,” aimed to bring together diverse stakeholders to discuss pressing issues in childcare, explore solutions, and chart a Call to Action.

Remarks by Dr. George Owino, Research Programme Manager, Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN)



Figure 2: Dr. George Owino, AfECN

The Programme Manager AfECN noted that the campaign was currently being conducted across five countries in Africa namely; Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia. He emphasized that the campaign aimed to address the urgent need for improved childcare systems throughout Africa, recognizing the profound impact that quality early childhood care has on child development and socio-economic progress.

He highlighted that research had consistently demonstrated the critical importance of early childhood development (ECD), with studies showing that 80-90% of brain development occurred within the first six years of life, primarily during the first three years. This period, he pointed out, represents a crucial window of opportunity to provide children with the proper care, stimulation, and nurturing relationships that will lay the foundation for future success. Given this, he underscored the importance of timely investments in ECD to ensure that children received the necessary support during these formative years.

He stressed that investing in early childhood services yields high returns, estimated at 9-13% by adulthood. These economic benefits, he noted, were particularly significant when investments were made early in a child's life, reinforcing the need for policymakers to prioritize childcare within national agendas. Despite the overwhelming evidence supporting the benefits of ECD, he observed a global challenge: 40% of children worldwide, approximately 350 million, lacked access to childcare services, with 80% of these children living in low- and middle-income countries. This gap, he said, highlighted the increasing demand for quality childcare, driven in part by the growing participation of mothers and caregivers in the workforce.

The Programme Manager explained that the African Childcare Campaign aimed to raise awareness of the importance of childcare, not only for children's developmental outcomes but also for its broader socio-economic benefits to families, businesses, and national economies. Citing data from the World Bank, he shared that a professionalized childcare ecosystem had the potential to create up to 43 million jobs and contribute nearly \$3 trillion annually to the global economy. This potential for job creation and economic growth further underscored the strategic importance of investing in childcare systems as a priority for both child welfare and broader national development.

To advance this agenda, he noted that the campaign sought to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, the private sector, civil society organizations, and communities, especially parents and families. He emphasized that collaboration across these sectors was essential to achieving the shared goal of increasing access to high-quality childcare services across Africa. One of the key objectives, he pointed out, was to secure increased financing, both from domestic and external sources, to support affordable childcare programs. Adequate funding, he stated, was crucial to expanding the availability of services and ensuring they were accessible to all families, particularly those in marginalized communities.

In his remarks he advocated for the implementation of quality standards and regulations for childcare providers to ensure that children received safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate care. He mentioned that promoting family-friendly policies, including paid parental leave (both maternal and paternal), was another priority. Such policies, he explained, would support caregivers in balancing their professional and family responsibilities, further contributing to the well-being of children and families.

In addition to childcare services, he noted that the campaign called for the expansion of early childhood education programs, particularly for children aged 0-5 years. These programs, he stated, were essential to ensuring that children received not only care but also early education that would set them up for success in primary school and beyond. With a strong focus on women's economic empowerment, the Programme Manager envisioned that improved access to quality childcare would enable more women to participate fully in the workforce and pursue career advancement. He added that this would have far-reaching effects on socio-economic development, as a more inclusive and productive workforce would contribute to the overall prosperity of societies.

The Programme Manager emphasized that the African Childcare Campaign envisioned a future where every child had access to high-quality, affordable childcare services. By strengthening childcare systems, he said, the campaign aimed to contribute to healthier, more educated, and more productive societies across Africa. Such an investment, he noted, would not only benefit children but would also create broader socio-economic opportunities for families, promote gender equality, and drive sustainable development across the continent.

Additionally, he highlighted that the National Childcare Dialogue played a crucial role in bringing together stakeholders to map out the childcare landscape, foster collaboration, and identify key childcare priorities. Through such dialogues, he noted, medium- and long-term plans could be developed to address existing gaps in childcare provision, ensuring that all children received the care and education they deserved. The ultimate goal, he stated, was to create an inclusive, affordable, and high-quality childcare system that supported the development of every child in Africa, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being and socio-economic progress of the continent. He stressed that by working together,

stakeholders could pave the way for transformative changes that would benefit children, promote gender equality, and foster sustainable development throughout Africa.

Childcare Landscape Analysis in Kenya by Dr. Anne Kamau, Childcare Landscape Analysis Consultant



Figure 3: Dr. Anne Kamau, Consultant AfECN

The Childcare Landscape Analysis Consultant noted that, in Kenya, the provision of childcare was a mix of formal, government-supported programs and informal, unregulated services. While the government provided early childhood education primarily through formal programs for children aged 4-5 years, there was a heavy reliance on informal childcare, particularly for children aged 0-3 years. This reliance on informal services resulted in

significant disparities in access to quality care, with many families, especially those in rural areas and informal urban settlements, depending on unregistered and often unregulated childcare options. These informal services, although more accessible due to their lower cost and flexibility, frequently lacked the necessary quality standards, presenting challenges for both child development and the well-being of caregivers, especially women. The affordability and availability of quality childcare were identified as critical barriers for many families, underscoring the urgent need for systemic reforms to improve the accessibility, quality, and affordability of childcare services across the country.

The majority of childcare in Kenya, particularly for children aged 0-3 years, was informal. Care was typically provided by family members or domestic workers, often in home-based settings. While this type of care was more accessible and affordable, it was largely unregulated and, in many cases, unpaid or low-cost, which made it more prone to issues of quality. In contrast, formal childcare services for children aged 4-5 years were offered through Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centers, as guided by the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC). These centers aimed to prepare children for primary school but faced numerous challenges, including overcrowding, inadequate funding, and insufficiently trained caregivers who were poorly remunerated. Despite the availability of these formal services, there was a significant gap in the provision of quality childcare for younger children, as the demand for services far exceeded the available supply. This imbalance highlighted the need for policy interventions that addressed both the quantity and quality of childcare, especially for children in the critical early years of development.

Kenya's workforce was predominantly engaged in the informal sector, with 83% of the population employed in informal jobs, mainly in agriculture, small businesses, and domestic

work, while only 17% held formal salaried positions (KNBS, 2023). Many of these workers were located in rural areas, where 72% of the workforce earned below the national minimum wage. In urban areas, 82% of workers also earned below the minimum wage. Given that childcare services were costly, ranging from KES 50 to KES 200 per day, many families found it difficult to afford formal childcare and often relied on informal or family-based care arrangements. This economic reality, compounded by the high cost of childcare, made it especially difficult for low-income families to access quality services, particularly when both parents were working.

The unequal division of caregiving responsibilities between men and women also played a significant role in shaping the childcare landscape. Women were overrepresented in the informal economy and spent far more time on unpaid household and care work than men, with women typically spending six to eight hours a day on domestic tasks, compared to about four hours for their male counterparts (ILO, 2024). This unequal burden of caregiving limited women's ability to fully participate in the workforce or pursue career advancements. According to the KNBS (2016), women made up more than half of the informal sector workforce and were often overrepresented in vulnerable employment categories, such as family workers. This gendered burden of care exacerbated existing inequalities and underscored the need for more affordable, accessible, and quality childcare options to enable women to balance work and caregiving responsibilities.

While Kenya had a strong legal framework for child welfare, including the Children's Act (2022) and the National Care Policy (2023), significant gaps remained in the provision and regulation of childcare services. Data on childcare facilities was scarce, making it difficult to assess the full extent of the childcare deficit in the country. The National Care Needs Assessment (2022) found that there was no comprehensive database of childcare services in Kenya, and existing facilities often did not meet the demand. For instance, the child-to-caregiver ratio in many Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers ranged from 8 to 32 children per caregiver, with only 20% of caregivers receiving formal training. The lack of reliable data on the number of childcare centers and trained caregivers hampered efforts to improve service delivery and quality standards across the country.

The cost of childcare was another significant barrier. While childcare services in Kenya could cost anywhere between KES 50 and KES 200 per day, these fees were often unaffordable for many families, particularly in rural and low-income urban areas. A study by Kamau & Kapere (2020) indicated that formal childcare services could cost KES 200 per day, which added up to KES 4,000 per month—a substantial portion of a worker's monthly income, especially for those earning below the minimum wage. As a result, many families were forced to rely on informal care arrangements that were less expensive but often of lower quality.

Despite these challenges, there were examples of quality childcare services in Kenya that could serve as models for scaling up best practices. For instance, some workplace childcare services, such as those at Safaricom and Kenyatta University, provided high-quality care for employees' children. Additionally, community-based childcare services like Kidogo, Kids Academy, and Little Giants were recognized for meeting quality standards and providing safe, nurturing environments for children. These examples demonstrated that with proper

investment, it was possible to establish and maintain high-quality childcare services that supported both children's development and parents' ability to engage in the workforce.

Moving forward, addressing the gaps in Kenya's childcare sector required significant investments in both formal and informal childcare services. This included expanding the number of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centers, particularly in underserved areas, and ensuring that these centers were properly funded and staffed. Additionally, there was a need for greater regulation of informal childcare to improve the quality of care provided in home-based and family settings. Policies also needed to focus on reducing the burden of unpaid care work, particularly for women, by promoting more equitable distribution of caregiving responsibilities and making childcare services more affordable and accessible.

Advancing childcare services also required a focus on three key dimensions: universality, quality, and the integration of child protection. Universality ensured that all children, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographic location, had equal access to high-quality childcare services. Quality emphasized the need for well-regulated, developmentally appropriate care that supported children's physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. The integration of child protection ensured that children were not only cared for but also safeguarded from harm, with systems in place to prevent neglect or abuse within care settings.

Finally, the collection and dissemination of reliable data on childcare facilities, caregivers, and service quality were essential for informed policy-making and monitoring progress in the sector. By addressing these issues, Kenya could ensure that children received the care and education they needed to thrive, while enabling parents—especially women—to participate fully in the workforce. Improving the childcare landscape would not only enhance the well-being of children but also contribute to the broader economic growth and social equity of the country.

Opening Ceremony

Address by the Deputy Governor, Nairobi County, H.E. James Muchiri Njoroge



In his address, the Deputy Governor of Nairobi City County began by acknowledging the importance of discussing the critical issues of childcare focusing on: universal access to quality childcare and child protection services for the youngest citizens of Kenya. He emphasized that children aged 0 to 5 years formed the foundation of the nation's future, as it is during these formative years that the brain develops most rapidly, shaping not only

the child's future but also the future of the country.

He noted that, as a nation, it was vital to recognize that nurturing young lives was not only a moral responsibility but also an investment in a brighter, stronger, and more prosperous Kenya. Both the County government of Nairobi and the National Government recognized the critical importance of providing universal access to quality childcare services for all children, regardless of their background, socio-economic status, or geographic location.

This was not just an ideal but a necessity for the holistic development of children. He highlighted the significant strides made in recent years to increase the availability of early childhood education programs, particularly in urban and rural areas. However, he acknowledged that more needed to be done, particularly in expanding infrastructure to ensure that every child had access to quality early childhood education.

He emphasized the need for more childcare centers, preschools, and early childhood development programs, especially in areas where they were lacking. Investment in the training and capacity-building of early childhood educators was also underscored, to ensure that they could provide safe, nurturing, and enriching environments for children.

Making these services affordable for all families, especially the most vulnerable, was critical in ensuring equal access to quality childcare. Alongside quality childcare, he highlighted the urgent need for strong child protection services, ensuring that no child should ever be subject to neglect, abuse, or exploitation. It was their collective responsibility to safeguard

children's rights and protect them from harm, ensuring they grew up in environments that prioritized their safety and well-being.

Acknowledging the efforts of the National Government, he commended the work being done to strengthen child protection mechanisms, such as improving legal frameworks and establishing support systems like helplines, child protection units within the police force, and community outreach programs. However, he emphasized that more work was needed, particularly in strengthening child protection networks at the community level, and empowering parents, teachers, social workers, and local leaders to identify signs of abuse and take swift action.

Timely interventions when children were at risk were crucial, and he stressed the importance of ensuring sufficient rehabilitation and support services were available for children who had experienced trauma. He pointed out that the government alone could not solve these challenges and that a concerted effort was required from all sectors—civil society, the private sector, and communities—to ensure that every child had the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.

In conclusion, he urged all stakeholders to continue working together, collaborating across all levels of government, and engaging with non-governmental organizations and the private sector to bring innovative solutions to the table. He reaffirmed that every parent deserved support and that every community should be a place where children were valued and protected.

He concluded by renewing the call for a collective commitment to the well-being of children, emphasizing that they were not only the leaders of tomorrow but the foundation upon which Kenya's future was built. Through partnerships, policy reforms, and community engagement, he expressed confidence that Kenya could create a future where every child had the best possible start in life, where quality early childhood education was the norm, not the exception, and where children grew up in environments that fostered their development, happiness, and safety.

Chief Guest: Address by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection represented by, Mr. George Migosi, Director for Planning and Development, DCS



In his remarks, the Cabinet Secretary emphasized that childcare was not merely a service but a critical foundation for the future of society. He explained that research consistently demonstrated that the early years of a child's life were pivotal for their cognitive, emotional, and social development. According to him, children who receive quality care in their formative years are more likely to succeed academically and

socially, and grow into adults who contribute positively to their communities.

He acknowledged the many challenges families face in accessing quality childcare, particularly economic hardships, as well as social issues like violence, neglect, and discrimination that disproportionately affect vulnerable children. He also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had worsened these challenges, leaving many children without essential services and support. He stressed that for the nation to prosper, there was a need to prioritize the advancement of childcare to ensure every child had access to a safe and nurturing environment.

He pointed out the significant role of the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS), which was established under the Children Act of 2022 that is regulating and overseeing children's services nationwide. He highlighted that the Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Policy developed by the NCCS together with other line ministries and partners represented a major step toward providing holistic support to children during their formative years.

The extensive network of the Directorate, which included eight regional offices, forty-seven county offices, and over three hundred sub-county offices, was also discussed. He emphasized that the DCS was not only focused on intervention but also on prevention, working closely with community-based organizations and child protection volunteers to address issues before they escalated. In addition to the statutory institutions under the DCS, such as remand homes and rehabilitation schools, which provided support for children affected by violence, neglect, or involvement with the law.

He stressed the importance of rehabilitation over punishment for children in conflict with the law, highlighting the DCS's commitment to providing counseling, guidance, and social support to help these children reintegrate into their communities. He also mentioned the toll-free Child Helpline 116 and the Vurugu Mapper application, which empowered

communities to report child protection cases, demonstrating the government's dedication to safeguarding every child.

Further, he noted the contributions of the Directorate of Social Development (DSD) in empowering vulnerable families and communities. He mentioned the National Parenting Programme, developed in partnership with other line ministries, UNICEF and other partners, aimed to strengthen family dynamics and support parents and caregivers in promoting their children's well-being.

The role of the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) in professionalizing the childcare sector was also acknowledged. NITA had developed a draft Child-caregiver Curriculum III, designed to improve the quality of care by ensuring that caregivers received adequate training in order to raise the standards of childcare services across the country.

In conclusion, he called for greater collaboration among all sectors of society to address the challenges faced by children. He urged government officials, civil society, private sector leaders, and research institutions to lend their expertise and resources to this critical cause. Emphasizing that investments in childcare and early childhood development would shape the future of the nation, and called on all stakeholders to unite in creating a brighter, more resilient future for Kenya's children.

Remarks by the Principal Secretary, State Department for Basic Education, Ministry of Education delivered by Mr. Osman Mohamed, Deputy Director, Policy, Partnerships and EA community

In his remarks, the Principal Secretary emphasized the critical importance of early childhood education (ECE) in shaping the future of Kenya. He expressed his gratitude to all participants for gathering to discuss the pressing issues surrounding the education and well-being of the nation's youngest citizens.

He pointed out that research has shown that 90% of brain development occurs before the age of five, making Early Childhood Education a pivotal investment in the nation's future. The formative years are not only critical for academic skills but also for emotional, social, and cognitive development. Quality pre-primary education plays a central role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning, fostering resilience, and preparing children to contribute meaningfully to society.

The connection between Kenya's commitment to early education and its broader development goals under Vision 2030 and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was also highlighted, particularly SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all.

Despite the progress made in Early Childhood Development, several challenges were acknowledged that continue to hinder the full realization of quality ECE across the country. These challenges include:

1. **Inadequate and Inequitable Funding:** While resources are allocated by the national government to counties for early childhood development education (ECDE), there are disparities in how these funds are utilized. Many counties prioritize infrastructure development over critical areas like teacher welfare, learning materials, and child nutrition programs.
2. **Teacher Remuneration and Motivation:** Pre-primary teachers, who form the backbone of early education, often work without proper remuneration or professional schemes. This lack of support affects both their morale and the quality of education delivered to young learners.
3. **Gaps in Policy Implementation:** The decentralization of ECDE services to counties has led to significant disparities in the quality of education across regions. Arid and marginalized areas face even greater challenges due to the lack of standardized guidelines for budgeting and quality assurance.
4. **Parental Engagement:** Although parents play a crucial role in early childhood education, many families—especially those in underserved areas—lack the resources and knowledge to effectively support their children’s learning journey.
5. **Health and Nutrition Challenges:** Malnutrition, stunting, and health challenges, particularly in rural and informal settlements, continue to affect children’s ability to engage meaningfully in learning.

To address these challenges and strengthen the pre-primary education system, the following actions were proposed:

1. **Increase and Prioritize Investment in ECDE:** The national and county governments must allocate adequate resources to ECDE, focusing not just on infrastructure but also on teacher salaries, training, and instructional materials.
2. **Develop a Scheme of Service for Pre-Primary Teachers:** Establishing fair remuneration packages and professional development programs for pre-primary teachers is essential. Motivated teachers are key to delivering quality education.
3. **Enhance Parental and Community Engagement:** Empowering parents and caregivers to be active participants in their children's early learning journey is crucial. Programs that offer parenting skills, community support, and awareness about the importance of early education will create an environment conducive to children’s development.
4. **Integrate Health and Nutrition Services with Pre-Primary Education:** Learning cannot happen without health. ECDE programs should integrate health services, including regular nutrition assessments and vaccination drives, to ensure children are healthy and ready to learn.
5. **Strengthen Policy Coordination and Monitoring:** The national government, through the Ministry of Education, must work closely with counties to develop clear guidelines

for budgeting, policy implementation, and quality assurance to reduce regional disparities.

6. Innovative Solutions for Marginalized Areas: Special focus must be placed on providing inclusive services in arid and semi-arid regions, informal settlements, and other underserved areas. Mobile classrooms, community-based childcare programs, and public-private partnerships are potential solutions to address these gaps.

The call for collaboration among stakeholders—including government agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, educators, and parents—was a central theme of the discussion. Collective action is essential to ensure that every child, no matter their background or location, receives the quality early education they deserve. The long-term social and economic benefits of investing in early education were emphasized, with a focus on producing healthier, more educated, and more productive citizens.

Keynote address

Collaborative Strategies for Advancing Childcare Systems and Improving Early Childhood by Dr. Oliver Petrovic, Regional Adviser, Early Childhood Development, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, UNICEF



Figure 6: Dr. Oliver Petrovic, ESARO UNICEF

In his address, the Regional Adviser, ECD UNICEF ESARO, noted that early childhood represents a critical window of opportunity for human development. During this period, interactions between young children and their environment profoundly influence their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. These early years are pivotal, and if missed, the opportunities for optimal development are irreversibly lost. The importance of investing in quality childcare and

early childhood education cannot be overstated, as it lays the foundation for lifelong learning, well-being, and success.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, significant deprivation impacts young children, leading to adverse developmental outcomes. Some alarming statistics include;

- 50 million unregistered children who lack access to basic services and protection.
- 26 million children who suffer from stunted growth, a direct result of malnutrition and insufficient early care.
- 82% of children experience violent discipline, which negatively impacts their mental and emotional development.
- Only 30% of children have access to early learning centers, limiting their opportunities for cognitive and social development.
- 43% of children receive responsive care, which is essential for their emotional well-being.
- 66% of children are at risk of developmental delays due to inadequate nutrition, care, and early learning.
- 4 million children are "zero-dose," meaning they have received no vaccinations, putting them at risk for preventable diseases.

These statistics highlight the urgent need for a multi-sectoral approach to early childhood development that addresses the varied challenges children face, including health, nutrition, education, and protection.

Responsive caregiving is essential for a child's development. Caregivers need specific skills, but more importantly, they require adequate time and resources to provide the level of care necessary for healthy development. The role of caregivers is crucial in ensuring that children receive the emotional support and stimulation they need during the early years. However, many caregivers face barriers, such as financial constraints and a lack of supportive policies, which hinder their ability to provide quality care.

Access to affordable childcare is a key enabler of early childhood development. However, the current systems in place often fall short in meeting the needs of families, particularly in low-income and rural areas. There is a pressing need to improve the accessibility, quality, and affordability of childcare services. Expanding childcare options and improving quality standards will ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Gaps in Childcare Services

Current support systems for childcare are insufficient. For example;

- Parental leave is limited to three months, and only 10% of children have access to formal childcare.
- There is a need to extend parental leave to six months, including for workers in the informal sector, and increase childcare access to 30%.
- There is also a need to expand preschool access to 50% and work towards universal access to preschool and childcare services, aiming for 50%-100% coverage.

Many children are left home alone or under the care of siblings, which raises concerns about safety and the adequacy of caregiving. In fact, one in three children under five is left alone or

in the care of another child under 10 for more than an hour at least once a week, highlighting the need for better childcare infrastructure and policies.

Strategic Impact of Investing in Quality Childcare

Investing in quality childcare has a profound and long-lasting impact on human capital development. It offers a "win-win-win" combination for children, families, and society at large. However, there are several critical issues that need to be addressed to scale up quality childcare services;

1. **Enabling Environment:** There is a need for supportive policies, adequate financing, clear coordination mechanisms, and a robust monitoring system.
2. **Supply Side:** Infrastructure needs to be improved, with a focus on building well-equipped childcare centers and training caregivers.
3. **Demand Side:** Financial barriers, cultural norms, and social expectations need to be addressed to ensure that all children have access to quality care.
4. **Quality:** Establishing and implementing quality standards, providing workforce training, and ensuring safe and stimulating environments are crucial for ensuring high-quality childcare.

Key Strategies for Scaling Up Childcare Services

To scale up childcare services effectively, the following steps are essential:

1. **Align Policies with Family Needs:** Policies should be designed to support caregivers, such as extending paid parental leave for both fathers and mothers, providing childcare support, and introducing flexible working options.
2. **Adequate Financing:** Governments need to ensure adequate financing for early childhood development services, gradually increasing investments to match the population's growth.
3. **Strong Governance:** Effective governance, with clear accountability and robust monitoring systems, is critical for the successful implementation of childcare services.
4. **Engage Families and Communities:** Families and communities should be actively engaged in the provision of childcare services, fostering greater ownership and participation.
5. **Equity:** Services must be designed with equity in mind, ensuring that vulnerable children and families receive the extra support they need.
6. **Quality Standards:** Setting up and implementing quality standards is crucial to ensuring that children are in safe, stimulating, and developmentally appropriate environments.
7. **Diversified Models:** Different models of childcare should be developed to meet the needs of various communities, including center-based, home-based, low-cost, and faith-based models.

Integrated Package of Services

For holistic child development, an integrated package of services is required, covering the following areas;

Health	Promoting healthy practices, immunization, and care-seeking behavior
Nutrition	Growth monitoring, micronutrient supplementation, and meal programs.
WASH	Access to safe water, sanitation, hygiene, and safe places to play.
Child Protection	Prevention of violence, birth registration, and child-family grants.
Social Protection	Parenting education, home visits, income generation programs, and financial support.

Regional and Country Examples

Several countries in the region are making strides in improving early childhood development services:

- **Rwanda:** Thousands of childcare centers are being established to ensure that every child has access to quality early childhood education.
- **Zambia:** National dialogues are taking place to promote the provision of childcare services for all children.
- **Tanzania:** The country is developing model ECD centers to scale up quality services nationwide.
- **Kenya:** Kenya is advancing rapidly in early childhood development, with a focus on increasing investments and providing better services for the youngest and most deprived children.

In conclusion, investing in early childhood development and childcare services is essential for building human capital and improving the overall well-being of children, families, and societies. By addressing the critical gaps in childcare, ensuring quality services, and investing in supportive policies and infrastructure, we can unlock the full potential of every child, especially those from the most vulnerable backgrounds. If we change the beginning of the story, we can change the entire narrative for future generations.

Leveraging Research to Enhance Childcare Systems by Dr. Annet Abenakyo, Senior Program Officer, International Development Research Centre (IDRC).



Figure 7: Dr. Annet Abenakyo, IDRC

Childcare systems play a critical role in the holistic development of children and the broader economic growth of nations. These systems encompass not only the care and supervision of children but also the professionals and institutions that provide these services, and the social and cultural conventions surrounding them. Access to quality childcare is vital for supporting families, enabling educational opportunities, and allowing individuals to engage

in life beyond the home. However, childcare remains a significant challenge in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where limited access to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) services and a lack of appropriate models continue to impede the well-being of children and families.

Research conducted by organizations like Uthabiti (2022) highlights the limited access to quality ECD services, with only a small percentage of children under five receiving such care. Many women opt for home-based childcare, not as a preference but due to the lack of affordable, accessible, or quality childcare options. Cultural norms and societal expectations in LMICs also influence childcare choices, often placing the burden of care on women, which affects their ability to participate in the workforce or focus on personal development. The growing need for quality childcare services across various contexts, including urban, rural, and informal settlements, has led to the proliferation of informal childcare centers, with both positive and negative consequences for children's development.

Given the universality of childcare needs, it is essential to tailor delivery models to the specific needs of local communities. This can significantly reduce the unpaid care burden on women while enhancing support for childcare providers and early childhood educators. However, the reality of scaling universal childcare provisions in Africa is complex due to high foreign debt, limited national resources, and the need to meet the growing demands of a young population. These challenges underscore the critical role of research in enhancing childcare systems, particularly in Africa, where the need for evidence-based policies and practices is paramount.

Leveraging research to enhance childcare systems in Africa requires evidence-based insights that can guide investments in quality, accessible, and affordable childcare services. Below are key areas where research is driving improvements in childcare systems;

Context-Specific Quality Standards

A significant step in enhancing childcare systems is establishing context-specific quality standards for childcare services. These standards should focus on safe physical environments, hygiene protocols, nutrition, and injury prevention. For instance, the GrOW-EA initiative, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, and IDRC, has supported research to inform policy and practice. A key outcome has been data on the effectiveness of community-based childcare models in Ethiopia, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas. This research has shown the importance of investing in childcare facilities that promote child nutrition, outdoor play, and vaccination. Similarly, IDRC-funded research has explored innovative models in markets, ensuring the safety of children while promoting Early Childhood Education.

Data-Driven Policy and Decision-Making

Data from evaluative research, including randomized controlled trials (RCTs), is essential in determining what works in childcare systems. This evidence-based approach enables policymakers to make informed decisions about resource allocation and interventions. An example of this approach is a project led by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in Nakuru County, Kenya, which worked with policymakers to develop a childcare bill and guidelines for implementation. This work has influenced budgeting processes to scale childcare services and sustain a Centre of Excellence in the county, demonstrating the power of data in shaping effective childcare policies.

Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Care

Limited research exists on how culture and religion influence unpaid care work, yet understanding these dynamics is crucial to improving childcare systems. Research on cultural practices that restrict women's involvement in caregiving can inform policies that respect cultural values while promoting gender equality. IDRC-funded research in Uganda, for example, engaged cultural and religious leaders to influence the Uganda National Cultural Policy and encourage shifts in attitudes toward unpaid care work. By incorporating cultural and religious values into childcare programs, services can be more inclusive and responsive to diverse populations.

Investment in Parental Engagement and Support Services

Research shows that parental engagement plays a critical role in children's development. Evidence from IDRC-supported projects has highlighted the benefits of male involvement in caregiving and children's learning, which fosters household harmony and better developmental outcomes. Policymakers can use this research to enhance family support programs, such as parenting workshops and financial resources for families facing economic hardships. In Rwanda, for example, the government has implemented a program where households meet regularly in clusters to discuss family issues, supporting community cohesion and child development.

Professionalizing Childcare

A significant barrier to quality childcare in many African countries is the lack of qualified professionals. This has led to a lack of trust in caregiving services. To address this, research on best practices can help implement effective training programs for caregivers, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge necessary to create safe, nurturing environments for children. IDRC has invested in research to understand how Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can professionalize childcare, providing caregivers with formal qualifications that improve both the quality of care and the employability of women.

Exploring Complex Multidimensional Problems

Research can also explore the intersecting challenges of childcare, such as the relationship between climate change, health, and care. By understanding these nexuses, policymakers and researchers can develop multidisciplinary partnerships to address the complex issues that affect both caregivers and children. IDRC is investing in research that connects these issues to create comprehensive solutions for childcare systems.

In conclusion, leveraging research is crucial for creating nurturing, supportive, and effective childcare systems. By scaling tested approaches to childcare provision, we can ensure that Early Childhood Development is supported, resilience is built, and lifelong learning is fostered. Additionally, empowering women economically through improved childcare systems can have a transformative impact on families and communities. IDRC's commitment to supporting local research, in partnership with policymakers and other stakeholders, is driving innovation in childcare systems. The goal is to develop local solutions for local problems, enabling scalable and sustainable models that improve the quality of care for children and support caregivers, both paid and unpaid. By continuing to invest in research and evidence-based policies, we can develop childcare systems that foster the well-being of children, support families, and contribute to the overall socio-economic development of nations.

Panel Discussions

Panel 1: Strategies to enhance the quality and accessibility of childcare services, ensuring optimal early childhood development for all children, including those in vulnerable situations.



Figure 8: Panel 1

This panel consisted of panelists drawn from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Kenya Prisons Service, the National Council for Children’s Services, the Directorate of Social Development, the Council of Governors, and Nairobi County. Ms. Ruth Muendo from World University Service of Canada (WUSC) moderated the session.

Below are the deliberations of the panel;

<p>Ministry of Health (MOH)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MOH embraces the National Child Framework (NCF) to ensure that children survive, thrive, and reach their full potential. The development of the brain begins even before birth, emphasizing the critical role of maternal health and nutrition. • Mothers of childbearing age must receive proper nutrition and health care to ensure the healthy development of their babies in the womb. Pregnant women should also be protected from violence, as stress during pregnancy can negatively affect fetal development. • MOH advocates for adequate supplementation and vaccinations to support optimal development. The focus on good health and nutrition for infants is seen as critical for long-term developmental success.
<p>Ministry of Education (MOE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MOE is mandated with policy formulation, quality assurance, and curriculum development. It emphasizes that education begins even before age five, with parents acting as the first teachers. The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) specifically recognizes the importance of parental empowerment and engagement in the learning process.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MOE uses robust data (e.g., KEMIS) for effective planning, budgeting, and capitation. The collection of data is essential for resource allocation and improving the quality of early childhood education. • CBC promotes play-based learning, encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and social skills in children. The ministry has created safe play spaces and invested in equipment to enhance child development. • The MOE is a strong advocate for increasing investment in ECD. Continuous research and benchmarking are encouraged to bridge existing gaps in the education system. The CBC framework allows for two years of pre-primary education, and infrastructure development is ongoing to accommodate the growing number of ECD learners. • MOE emphasizes the need for a motivated and well-trained workforce to care for young learners.
<p>Kenya Prison Service (KPS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Kenyan law, incarcerated women are allowed to keep their children aged 4 years and below with them in prison. Currently, there are 44 women’s prisons housing 226 children. The KPS, in partnership with non-state actors, has created daycare centers in 10 prisons to provide safe spaces for children. • Although CAP 90 guidelines exist to ensure the nutritional needs of children are met, there is no consistent education on their implementation. Children are often fed the same meals as incarcerated mothers, which may not meet their specific nutritional needs. KPS has partnered with MOH to provide health services and has trained prison officers and midwives to care for mothers and children. • KPS has established ECDE centers where children can start their education. These children often learn alongside prison officers’ children to reduce feelings of isolation. • While KPS has developed a care policy, it remains in its early stages due to limited funding. The need for structured reintegration policies and quality caregiver training in prison daycare centers is identified as a critical gap.

<p>National Council for Children Services (NCCS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCS emphasizes the need for policies that are informed by evidence and address existing gaps in child care services. The focus is on the holistic care of the child, ensuring all policies are consultative and inclusive. • Successful implementation of policies requires concerted efforts at the grassroots level, with county governments playing a central role. The Children’s Act 2022 and the forthcoming IECD policy aim to address systemic challenges in child care and development. • A significant challenge is the unregulated operation of many daycare centers. NCCS stresses the importance of developing and enforcing a legal framework for childcare institutions, ensuring they operate transparently and prioritize the welfare of children.
<p>Directorate of Social Development (DSD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DSD is focused on mobilizing and empowering individuals, families, and communities to improve Early Childhood Development. It works closely with both state and non-state actors at all levels. • The DSD has launched the National Positive Parenting Program to support parents and caregivers in providing quality childcare. This program emphasizes the importance of strong and secure attachments between parents and children. • Social protection initiatives are crucial in addressing the socioeconomic barriers that prevent vulnerable families from accessing quality childcare services. • The DSD highlights the importance of strengthening multi-sectoral coordination to ensure the success of child welfare programs.
<p>Council of Governors (COG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COG recognizes the constitutional framework that requires county governments to work together and with the national government. It is essential that counties understand the functions related to ECD that have been devolved to them. • There is need for ongoing dialogue between the CS, MOLSP and COG to identify and clarify the roles of county governments in the provision of ECD services. • County governments must integrate children's rights into local programs and ensure that public infrastructure and residential areas, include appropriate play spaces for children.
<p>Nairobi County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Nairobi, the demand for childcare services is high, driven by the increasing participation of women in the workforce. As such, there is an urgent need to improve access to quality childcare services. • The county government, along with CSOs and private sector, plays a key role in improving access to childcare facilities. The government’s role is to set minimum standards, procedures, and support services that are multi-sectoral in nature. • Nairobi is working to ensure that caregivers in both formal and home-based childcare settings receive appropriate training. The

	county aims to provide clear standards for childcare providers and ensure equal quality of care for all children.
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Key takeaways from the panel

Child development begins as soon as conception occurs, and preparing for this early stage is crucial for the child’s optimal growth and well-being.

1. The collection of comprehensive data in Early Childhood Development (ECD) is essential for effective planning and the equitable disbursement of funds.
2. Development partners should assess the quality of care provided in prisons, particularly regarding health and nutrition, to ensure that incarcerated mothers and their children receive adequate support. Additionally, programs should be developed to address the needs of children with special needs in correctional facilities.
3. A structured reintegration policy is needed to facilitate the smooth transition of children from correctional facilities back into the community. This policy should be evidence-based, participatory, and consultative to ensure its effectiveness.
4. While effective ECD policy development is essential, its implementation faces challenges due to insufficient community-level sensitization.
5. Since preprimary education is a devolved function, county governments must take the lead in implementing policies and programs. This ensures that ECD services are tailored to local needs and effectively delivered.
6. Services provided for child development should complement each other, rather than compete. Coordination between different sectors (health, education, social services) is vital to achieving holistic child development.
7. Caregivers in childcare centers need meaningful livelihoods, as well as training in safety standards and how to handle children who have come from correctional facilities. Proper support for these caregivers is crucial for maintaining quality care.
8. Childcare institutions, especially those in informal settlements, must be regulated to ensure they meet established quality standards. Many unregulated centers fail to provide the necessary level of care, highlighting the need for stronger oversight.
9. It is important to strengthen the capacity of mothers and families to provide quality care at home. All children, whether in formal childcare centers or home-based care, should receive the same standard of care to support their overall development.

Panel 2: Understanding Caregiving: Key Insights from Caregivers' Experiences & Professionalizing the Childcare Workforce



Figure 9: Panel 2

participated in the panel to share on the role of NITA in professionalizing the childcare workforce. The panel was moderated by Rebecca Muiruri, a Media Champion and TV producer at KTN.

Key Insights from the Caregivers' experiences

The panel brought to light a range of critical challenges and opportunities within the caregiving sector, particularly for those providing childcare services and support to children with special needs. Panelists, who represented a variety of experiences, ranging from mothers of children with disabilities to seasoned daycare providers, and childcare centres; including centre based daycares and home based day cares, shared valuable insights into the struggles they face, the support systems they rely on, and the systemic changes needed to improve the quality of childcare services. The key issues highlighted include:

1. The central themes of the discussion were the financial strain that caregivers experience, particularly when caring for children with special needs. A mother of a child with cerebral palsy shared the challenges of providing ongoing therapy, medical care, and other necessities such as diapers, food, and hiring help, all of which can be prohibitively expensive. Additionally, the lack of family support can pose a big challenge, leaving caregivers to manage these responsibilities alone.
2. The caregivers called for expanded access to free health assessments and services for children, particularly those with disabilities. While the Ministry of Health currently provides free services for children up to 5 years of age, there is a clear gap for children above that age. Caregivers requested that the government extend these services, as many families struggle to afford private healthcare for children with ongoing needs.
3. Caregivers involved in domestic work raised the issue on lack of recognition and underpayment of care workers, which remains a pervasive problem in many

communities. Despite the essential role they play, domestic workers often work without formal contracts, protection, or recognition. One caregiver highlighted that the caregiving workload is not evenly distributed, leaving little time for personal self-care. To address this, there was a call for formal recognition of domestic work, better wages, and a redistribution of caregiving responsibilities.

4. The daycare providers expressed frustration with the difficulties in obtaining licenses to operate their facilities. High licensing fees and bureaucratic red tape were identified as significant barriers to entry for new childcare providers. These costs often discourage many from formalizing their operations, which can result in substandard care for children. Caregivers called for the government to reduce licensing fees and simplify the registration process to support more providers in meeting safety and quality standards.
5. One of the most innovative solutions discussed was the development of market daycares, especially in local marketplaces, to allow women to participate in economic activities without worrying about the safety and care of their children. An example was given of Wow Mom, a social enterprise that advocates for children friendly cities, who are working to provide childcare services in the market places such as the Gikomba market. There was a call for the government to partner with non-state actors to create affordable, accessible childcare centers within market areas. This would enable women to engage in economic empowerment programs while ensuring that their children are well cared for in safe, nurturing environments.
6. The daycare providers highlighted the challenge of inadequate space to meet the standards required for a safe and conducive learning environment for children. Limited physical space in some facilities makes it difficult to provide proper childcare, especially in overcrowded urban areas. Panelists suggested that government and non-state actors invest in infrastructure improvements and support the creation of more adequate spaces for daycare centers.

Professionalization of the child caregivers

A critical challenge raised by daycare providers was the lack of formal training for childcare workers. Caregivers noted the importance of a standardized curriculum for training childcare professionals to ensure they are equipped with knowledge and skills to meet the developmental needs of young children. In response to this, the panelist from NITA highlighted on the Child Caregiver curriculum III that has been developed to equip caregivers with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide high-quality care and support to young children. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between the demand for skilled childcare workers and the limited formal training opportunities available in the sector. By providing formalized training and certification, the curriculum aims to raise the status of caregiving as a profession. It will help caregivers transition from informal, unregulated care roles to recognized professionals with a defined skill set.

The panelists made several requests to the government to improve the caregiving landscape in Kenya:

- Caregivers requested that the government extend free healthcare services for children beyond the age of 5, particularly for children with special needs.
- There was a strong call for increased financial support through programs like *Inua Jamii*, which help families afford the costs of caregiving. Additionally, panelists advocated for more affordable education options and subsidies for low-income families.
- They stressed the need for government investment in formalizing training programs for childcare workers. This would include developing a curriculum tailored to the specific needs of caregivers, along with certification processes to professionalize the field.
- Several daycare providers called on the government to reduce the costs associated with licensing daycare centers, as these high fees often prevent providers from formalizing their businesses and meeting regulatory requirements.
- The panelists called for greater coordination between government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide more holistic support to caregivers. This could include assistance with childcare infrastructure, funding opportunities, and capacity building for both formal and informal childcare providers.

Panel 3: Childcare Practices across regions.



Figure 10: Panel 3

The panel discussion on exploring the differences in childcare across regions brought together a dynamic group of participants from different counties, including Kajiado, Embu, Nairobi, and Siaya. The session aimed to highlight regional variations in childcare practices, challenges, and innovations, offering a unique perspective on how cultural, economic, and social factors influence early childhood care in different parts of the country. Participants shared their

local insights, experiences, and strategies for improving childcare in their respective areas. The session was moderated by Dickens Omedo from PATH and the deliberations of the panel are presented below.

County	Childcare Practices
Kajiado County	Kajiado County presents two distinct childcare contexts: urban areas and vast pastoralist lands. In the urban areas, most residents are engaged in formal employment, which has led to a growing demand for childcare services. In contrast, the pastoralist regions, where informal work predominates, face considerable gaps in childcare infrastructure. In urban settings, the challenge lies in meeting the increasing demand for quality services, while in rural areas, there is a lack of both formal and informal childcare options. The county needs to develop tailored

	<p>childcare solutions that can serve both its urban and pastoral communities effectively.</p>
<p>Embu County</p>	<p>Embu County faces significant challenges in the provision of childcare services. The county does not have any county-funded daycare centers, and its budget is primarily directed towards supporting children aged 4-5 years, leaving children under three with limited options. While the Childcare Facility Act of 2016 was developed by the Department of Education (DOE), there is no clear department overseeing its implementation. Additionally, many daycare centers operate without proper licensing or oversight, and there is a lack of data on the enrollment, quality, and operational standards of these centers. The Department of Finance (DOF) views daycare centers mainly as revenue-generating entities, which limits investment in the quality of services.</p> <p>Recommended Actions for Embu County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a Baseline Survey: There is need to conduct a comprehensive survey to assess the situation of daycare centers in the county, including enrollment, service quality, and regulatory gaps. • Engage Local Policymakers: Involve Members of County Assembly (MCAs) in discussions to ensure that childcare becomes a key policy priority. • Develop Model Daycare Centers: Establish Centers of Excellence in childcare that can be used for learning, training, and benchmarking best practices.
<p>Siaya County</p>	<p>Siaya County has made significant progress in advancing early childhood care through the Smart Start Siaya Initiative, which uses a multi-sectoral approach to early childhood development (ECD). The initiative has been adopted by other counties as a model for comprehensive ECD interventions. A major component of this initiative is the introduction of a school feeding program, which aims to improve child nutrition and support early development. The county is also building Centers of Excellence, starting with Bondo that will provide training spaces, play areas for children, and learning resources for childcare providers. Additionally, Siaya is constructing markets with designated breastfeeding areas to support working mothers.</p> <p>Siaya County has also established a child protection policy, ensuring that children’s rights are upheld within the community. The integration of</p>

	<p>ECD services with other sectors, such as health and nutrition, has proven effective in addressing the multifaceted needs of children and families.</p>
<p>Nairobi County</p>	<p>Nairobi has adopted a multi-sectoral approach to early childhood development, with the Department of Education leading efforts to coordinate childcare services across sectors. One of the notable initiatives is the 'Dishi na County' program, which fosters collaboration between health, education, and gender departments to ensure holistic development for children. Through this program, there have been consistent child assessments, growth monitoring, vaccination, and deworming programs, which have been instrumental in promoting children's health. Nairobi has also developed a Childcare Act, and regulations are currently being developed to ensure compliance and quality service provision.</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is competition among stakeholders, leading to the duplication of efforts and inefficient use of resources. • The childcare sector has historically been underfunded, and there is a need for increased financial commitment to improve services. <p>Recommended Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that childcare policies are not only updated but are also inclusive and supportive of families, particularly working mothers. • Focus on building the capacity of local governments and service providers to implement and monitor childcare policies effectively. • Foster partnerships and collaboration between government departments, private stakeholders, and civil society organizations to avoid duplication and improve service delivery.

Key recommendations across Counties

1. There is an urgent need to establish better regulation and robust data collection mechanisms for daycare centers. Standardizing licensing requirements for childcare facilities is crucial to ensure consistency in quality, safety, and service delivery across regions.
2. Successful Early Childhood Development initiatives require collaboration across multiple sectors. Nairobi's multisectoral approach, integrating education, health, and social services, demonstrates the effectiveness of partnerships in reducing

duplication of efforts, optimizing resource allocation, and achieving comprehensive ECD outcomes.

3. Counties should establish Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to facilitate coordinated discussions, strategic planning, and policy implementation in the ECD and childcare sector. These groups can help streamline efforts, ensure alignment across stakeholders, and support local policy development.
4. There is a pressing need for increased investment in ECD programs, particularly from the national government. Adequate financial resources are necessary to support local initiatives, improve infrastructure, and ensure the successful implementation of policies at the county level.
5. Counties should establish Centers of Excellence in childcare and early childhood education. These centers can serve as models for best practices, providing a platform for benchmarking, training, capacity building, and the professional development of caregivers and educators.
6. The inconsistency in the quality of childcare facilities across regions remains a major challenge. There is a need for standardized regulations and support to improve the quality of services provided in daycare centers, ensuring that all children have access to safe, nurturing, and effective care.

Panel 4: Insights on Childcare programs being implemented in Kenya.



Figure 11: Panel 4

The panel discussion on childcare programs in Kenya brought together key stakeholders from prominent organizations, including Safe Waters and AIDS Project (SWAP) Kenya, Aga Khan University Institute of Human Development (AKU-IHD), Kenyatta University Women Economic Empowerment (KU WEE) Hub, Zizi Afrique, and Uthabiti. The session focused on sharing valuable insights into the various childcare programs being

implemented across the country, highlighting key success factors and lessons learned from these initiatives. The panelists also explored the crucial role of collaboration in enhancing the impact of these programs, emphasizing how partnerships between different organizations and sectors can lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes for children and families. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Benter Owino from Mathematica and the deliberations were as follows;

Organization	Childcare Program
SWAP	SWAP, in collaboration with the University of Southern California (USC) and the ECD Network for Kenya, is conducting a randomized control trial

	<p>in Vihiga and Kisumu counties dubbed Msingi Bora. The study has enrolled 1,200 households, with a focus on families with children between the ages of 6 to 18 months.</p> <p>The main aim of the study is to assess the relative effectiveness of two delivery methods, in-person and remote, for delivering an international curriculum focused on early childhood development. The study is testing how these methods impact the development of young children and the involvement of caregivers in the learning process.</p> <p>The study involves 60 community health promoters (CHPs), with 20 CHPs assigned to each sub-county. These CHPs are trained to deliver bi-weekly ECD sessions to the enrolled households.</p> <p>The curriculum consists of 20 sessions, covering key five messages, love and respect, 2 way talk, play, clean hands and nutrition. In addition to in-person sessions, the project leverages mobile technology to enhance learning, with 324 smartphones provided to mothers to access the sessions remotely via mobile phones.</p> <p>The mobile platform serves as a key tool for delivering parenting content, enabling mothers to access training materials and instructional sessions at their convenience. This approach is particularly beneficial for reaching households in remote or hard-to-reach areas, ensuring that caregivers can engage with the curriculum even when in-person sessions are not possible.</p>
<p>AKU-IHD</p>	<p>AKU-IHD's research on childcare focuses on vulnerable and marginalized communities, particularly in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) regions. Currently, several projects are being implemented, including one funded by IDRC called "Care for All," which examines unpaid care work and childcare. The project is in the data collection phase. The goal is to identify the challenges faced by childcare facilities in these regions while highlighting the importance of including men in the conversation. To ensure a comprehensive approach, collaboration with women empowerment groups is a key component.</p> <p>Looking ahead, programs inspired by the successful madrassa model used in various regions of Kenya and Tanzania will be implemented. Community involvement will be central to the approach, and human-centered design will be applied to incorporate community feedback into the initiatives. Over the next two to three years, efforts will focus on monitoring and evaluating the findings and their impact.</p>

<p>Zizi Afrique</p>	<p>Zizi Afrique, through its Africa Foundation, is an education and evidence-based advocacy organization that works across three main pillars. The first pillar focuses on evidence generation to inform policy and practice, aimed at improving learning outcomes for children and youth who are further behind. The second pillar involves policy and practice improvements to ensure that children and youth are equipped with the necessary competencies for life and work. The third pillar is dedicated to providing solutions, which includes testing and scaling up effective models.</p> <p>While the organization has worked in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, it recognizes that investing in the early years is crucial for building future human capital, impacting both learning and health outcomes. As part of this focus, Zizi Afrique is currently conducting a scoping exercise to better understand the landscape for scaling up nurturing care for children aged zero to three. This initiative centers on three key areas: first, conducting a political economy analysis to understand the power dynamics and decision-making processes around the provision of services for young children; second, identifying grassroots champions and documenting their innovative solutions for scaling up service delivery at the community level; and third, conducting a study to deepen understanding of school re-entry for adolescent mothers within the context of nurturing care.</p>
<p>Uthabiti Africa</p>	<p>Currently, Uthabiti Africa focuses on three main pillars. The first pillar is rooted in the belief that government services should support policies that promote positive outcomes. This is achieved by ensuring that the right people and resources are in place to create supportive environments. The second pillar is centered on women's economic empowerment, particularly through childcare. This is addressed by providing training and capacity-building opportunities, enabling women to improve their economic well-being while contributing to the development of their communities. The third pillar is focused on knowledge management, collaboration and learning.</p>
<p>Kenyatta University WEE Hub</p>	<p>Kenyatta University through the Women Economic Empowerment Hub is implementing a collaborative research project conducted in partnership with Yale University, Bangor University, Kenyatta University, and the Tharaka Nithi County government. Funded by the Gates Foundation the research aims at economically empowering women by providing childcare services for their young children, enabling them to engage in economic activities.</p> <p>The study is based on insights from a rapid needs assessment, which revealed that many women spend a significant portion of their time caring for their children and engaging in home-based activities. Although Tharaka Nithi County has established a crèche program in Chuka town</p>

	<p>for women working in the market center, a gap was identified in supporting women in rural areas.</p> <p>To address this gap, Kenyatta University in partnership with the Tharaka Nithi County Government and Yale University designed an intervention with a view of creating spaces in public pre-primary schools for three-year-old children. Through randomization, 60 schools were selected for the intervention and 60 for the control group, focusing on women with three-year-olds who are the youngest and keeping them at home. The intervention began in January, 2024, and plans are underway on sharing the progress and findings as the study continues.</p>
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Key Success Factors and Insights from the panel

- Research highlighted the importance of addressing the mental, physical, and economic well-being of caregivers, especially women, as challenges like mental health issues can negatively impact the quality of childcare.
- The training of community health promoters was identified as a key success factor in effectively reaching mothers with essential parenting information, leading to improved childcare interventions.
- Mobile technology has been successfully used to deliver parenting content including topics like love, hygiene, nutrition, play, and communication. Despite challenges such as data costs and limited internet access, mobile phones have proven effective in reaching mothers in remote areas.
- Technology is being used to document grassroots innovations, which could potentially serve as scalable models for future childcare interventions.
- Integrating three-year-old children into pre-primary education has garnered significant interest from parents, showing potential for increased enrollment and fostering early childhood learning. This approach highlights the need for adequate teaching materials as children advance through schooling.
- Successful efforts to integrate younger children into formal education settings reinforce the importance of policy advocacy to ensure inclusion and support for ECD.
- Successful collaboration depends on intentional alignment and respect for each organization's goals. Strong partnerships between governments, NGOs, and communities are crucial for long-term success.
- Conducting a political economy analysis to understand the power dynamics and decision-making processes around childcare policy emphasizes the need to influence policy and ensure support for early childhood development at all levels.

The Role of Collaboration in Enhancing Impact

- Collaboration among organizations fosters the sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices, which enhances the effectiveness of childcare programs. By working

together, organizations can avoid duplication and focus on the most impactful strategies.

- Collaborative efforts amplify advocacy for policy change. When organizations unite around common goals, they can present a stronger case for the inclusion of early childhood care policies in national agendas, as seen in efforts to influence policy through political economy analysis.
- Working with local governments, communities, and grassroots organizations ensures that programs are better aligned with local needs and have the support necessary for long-term sustainability. Engagement with policymakers can lead to systemic change, such as the passing of childcare policies for young children.
- Collaborative efforts enable the scaling of successful models. Documenting and disseminating grassroots solutions helps replicate effective interventions across regions. Additionally, scalable approaches, such as using mobile technology to deliver parenting content, can be expanded to other areas, broadening the impact of the program.

Closing remarks - The National Council for Children Services



Figure 12: Sheikh Abdinoor, NCCS

The CEO National Council for Children's Services Mr. Sheikh Abdinoor in his closing remarks reiterated that, the National Childcare Dialogue provided a significant platform for discussions and reflections on the importance of childcare. Throughout the day's discussions, it became evident that establishing a strong foundation for ECD is not only critical for the growth and well-being of each child but also essential for the broader socio-economic development of our societies.

The dialogue focused on the core components of quality childcare, which encompass health, nutrition, education, and emotional support. More importantly, it underscored the necessity of adopting a collaborative approach to address these areas effectively. This approach requires the active involvement of policymakers, educators, healthcare providers, community organizations, and families. The shared goal expressed during the dialogue was to create a cohesive, well-coordinated system that centers on the unique needs of children at every stage of their development.

The theme of the event emphasized the need for a shift from fragmented, isolated efforts to a more unified and integrated strategy that bridges gaps across various sectors. Achieving this requires collaboration and coordination between different stakeholders, as only through collective action can the complex needs of children and families be comprehensively addressed.

It was highlighted that a child's development is influenced by various interconnected factors, ranging from healthcare and education to family dynamics and community safety. However, these sectors often operate in silos, limiting the effectiveness of services provided to children. The dialogue stressed the potential benefits of fostering cross-sector partnerships that could integrate Early Childhood Education, healthcare, social services, and community leadership under a shared vision. By bringing these sectors together, we can build a support network that is both comprehensive and adaptable to the unique needs of each child. Such collaboration would not only enhance individual services but also allow for the development of policies and programs that address the whole child in a holistic manner. By breaking down the barriers between sectors and building stronger connections, we can provide sustainable, holistic support for early childhood development, ultimately paving the way for lifelong success for children.

Dinner hosted by Zizi Afrique in partnership with ECD Network for Kenya

Findings of Political Economy Analysis on ECD in Kenya

Introduction

Investing in Early Childhood Development (ECD) is essential not only for the well-being of individual children but also for the socio-economic development of nations. The returns on investment in the earliest years are the highest, with evidence indicating that proper care and nurturing during the first three years of a child's life lay the foundation for lifelong success. The Nurturing Care Framework, which encompasses key areas such as good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, opportunities for early learning, and safety and security, is central to guiding the development of ECD policies and interventions.

The framework advocates for a **whole-of-government** and **whole-of-society** approach, promoting nurturing care for young children through strategic actions and progress monitoring. It offers a roadmap for action, focusing on strengthening public policies, programs, and services aimed at supporting children aged 0-3 years.

The dissemination meeting was held as a sequel to the National Childcare Dialogue Campaign held on 14th November 2024 at Safari Park Hotel and had an attendance of 32 state and non-state key actors in ECD both from national and county level. The objective of the workshop was to share ECD learning with key ECD actors on the political economy analysis with focus on nurturing care for children below age three. The presentation explored the key issues, drivers, and barriers to ECD service delivery, as well as the roles and influences of various stakeholders.

Opening remarks

In her remarks the National Coordinator, ECDNeK, acknowledged the presence of the state and non-state officers present and welcomed all participants to the meeting. She shared the main agenda for the dinner meeting which was to;

1. Provide opportunity for Zizi Afrique Foundation to share ECD learnings from the Political Economy Analysis exploration.
2. Reflections by participants on the study findings shared.
3. Share key action items by participants from learnings.
4. Closing remarks from the ECDNeK chairperson.

Overview of the Political Economy Analysis of ECD in Kenya

The political economy analysis of ECD in Kenya aimed to uncover the drivers, barriers, and key actors involved in the ECD service delivery ecosystem. The analysis highlighted that decision-making in ECD is influenced by a complex interplay of formal institutions, informal power structures, and relationships that go beyond institutional mandates. This examination focused on understanding how decisions are made, identifying key power holders, and exploring the barriers to effective service delivery in ECD.

Key Aspects of the Analysis

- **Service Delivery Ecosystem:** Shaped by multiple actors with varying levels of influence and interest, including both formal institutional powers and informal actors outside of legal frameworks.
- **Political Dynamics:** Policies and decisions are often influenced by intense negotiations and lobbying by political and technical actors at both national and county levels.
- **Barriers to Implementation:** Despite progress, access to ECD services remains hindered by significant barriers, including limited resources, political dynamics, and inconsistent implementation of policies.

Stakeholder Engagement and Methodology

The political economy analysis engaged a variety of stakeholders at both the national and county levels. A participatory action research approach was employed, utilizing tools such as stakeholder engagements, snowballing, and interviews. These tools aimed to understand the formal and informal power dynamics influencing the delivery of ECD services.

Stakeholder Engagement Statistics

- **National Level:** 25 stakeholders (11 state actors, 14 non-state actors)
- **Samburu County:** 29 stakeholders (22 state actors, 7 non-state actors)
- **Siaya County:** 41 stakeholders (29 state actors, 12 non-state actors)
- **Mombasa County:** 23 stakeholders (10 state actors, 13 non-state actors)
- **Total Stakeholders Engaged:** 118 stakeholders (72 state actors, 46 non-state actors)

Key Findings from the Political Economy Analysis

Positive Progress in ECD

Kenya has made notable strides in improving ECD indicators over the past decade. Some of the achievements included:

- **Developmental Milestones:** 78% of children aged 24-59 months are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being.
- **Decreased Mortality and Malnutrition Rates:** Under-five mortality has dropped from 52 per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 41 per 1,000 in 2022, and under-five stunting has reduced from 26% in 2014 to 18% in 2022.

Drivers of Improvement

The improvements in ECD services are attributed to several factors:

- **Devolution:** The decentralization of key services to county governments has enhanced accessibility.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** The development and implementation of various ECD policies and the active involvement of advocacy groups have contributed to increased service delivery.
- **Community Health and Protection Systems:** The operationalization of community health promoters and strengthened child protection systems have had a positive impact on service delivery.
- **Public Participation:** Increased public engagement in the county budgeting process has helped prioritize ECD in resource allocation.

Key Barriers to ECD Service Delivery

Despite improvements, several barriers continue to hinder the full development of young children in Kenya:

- **Developmental Delays:** 22% of children aged 24-59 months are not developmentally on track, with 17% of children aged 24-35 months and 26% of those aged 48-59 months facing developmental delays.
- **Malnutrition:** Approximately 1.5 million children aged 6-59 months suffer from varying degrees of malnutrition.
- **Adolescent Pregnancies:** High rates of adolescent pregnancies remain a significant challenge, with one in five antenatal service clients being aged 10-19 years.

Policy Barriers

Despite the existence of several sectoral policies addressing various aspects of nurturing care, implementation challenges persist. These challenges affect both access to services and the quality of care provided to children.

Power and Influence in ECD Decision-Making

The political economy analysis revealed that power dynamics in the ECD ecosystem are marked by a range of actors with varying degrees of influence:

- **Formal Actors:** Include the Presidency, Cabinet Secretaries, Members of Parliament, and county officials such as Governors and Members of County Assemblies.
- **Informal Actors:** These include political advisors, business leaders, and non-state actors who engage in lobbying and advocacy, particularly around resource allocation.
- **Powerful Actors in Resource Allocation:** Key decision-makers include the National Treasury, county treasuries, and committees responsible for financial planning and resource distribution.
- **Political Capital:** Resource allocation often favors programs with high political capital, such as educational bursaries and infrastructure projects.

Policy and Budgeting Dynamics

The process of integrating ECD into the county budgets involves multiple stages of decision-making, with key actors playing crucial roles at each stage. Key stages include:

1. **Political Advocacy:** Lobbying for ECD investments through campaign manifestos and political leaders' priorities.
2. **Strategic Planning:** Prioritization of ECD investments in county sector-specific plans and the County Integrated Development Plan.
3. **Budgeting and Resource Allocation:** The inclusion of ECD investments in county budgets requires political and technical negotiations and lobbying.
4. **Public Participation:** Public involvement in the budget review and approval process, which helps ensure that community needs are reflected in the final budget.

Key Actors in Budgeting

- **National and County Government Leaders:** Including Governors, Cabinet Secretaries, and Members of Parliament.
- **Non-State Actors:** Business leaders, first spouses, and community advocates who influence policy and budget decisions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the political economy analysis, the following recommendations were put forward to strengthen ECD service delivery in Kenya:

1. **Lead and Invest in ECD:** Develop and implement advocacy strategies targeting both formal and informal power structures to drive policy changes and increased investment in ECD.
2. **Use of Data and Evidence:** Strengthen evidence generation and data management to build a contextualized case for increased investment in ECD services.
3. **Strengthen Multisectoral Coordination:** Enhance coordination among key actors to ensure integrated and inclusive early childhood services, with a focus on equity and access for marginalized groups.

4. **Grassroots Advocacy:** Empower local communities to advocate for the scaling up of nurturing care services, particularly in underserved areas.
5. **Policy and Budget Advocacy:** Encourage political commitment to prioritizing ECD investments in national and county budgets, ensuring that resources are allocated equitably and effectively.

Reflections and feedback

The participants expressed their enthusiasm for the findings that had been shared. They shared their reflections as follows;

- Concerns about resource allocation for ECD implementation were raised. This stems from the fact that many counties allocate funds for ECD during the development of their County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP), Annual Development Plans (ADP), and other departmental plans, but no concrete actions follow. As a result, ECD resources are often redirected to other development areas.
- The need to clearly outline specific ECD issues in county development plans was emphasized to ensure proper allocation of funds for ECD initiatives.
- Delay in the implementation of the comprehensive IECD policy was highlighted as a concern, as it has led to confusion regarding which unit should coordinate issues related to children aged 0-3 at the county level.
- Disparity in ECD implementation across counties was noted, with a concentration of partners working on the NCFECD (Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development) in specific counties. This concentration has led to imbalances in service delivery, underscoring the need for advocacy to promote the adoption of the IECD policy across all counties.
- The Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Committee addressed the concerns, assuring participants that the upcoming comprehensive IECD policy will address many of the raised issues and will soon be made available for use by counties.
- Participants expressed the need for continuous sensitization of politicians and high-ranking government officials about the significance of ECD. There is a need to correct the common misunderstanding that ECD refers solely to pre-school learning. The importance of investing in the early years, along with the need for a childcare curriculum and a multisectoral approach to ECD programming, was underscored.
- Concerns about the impact of climate change on ECD were raised, particularly regarding the harsh effects on children in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). These areas face challenges related to health, nutrition, and education due to adverse weather conditions, which hinder the growth and development of children.
- The need for intentional inclusion of children with disabilities in ECD services was emphasized. ECD programs should be tailored to meet the specific needs of children with disabilities, ensuring that services are accessible and inclusive. Stand-alone approaches addressing disability in ECD should be prioritized.
- A reflection on teenage and adolescent mothers and the impact of early pregnancies on child development was shared. The complex dynamics surrounding adolescent pregnancies negatively affect the growth and development of their children. There is

a need to design interventions that address these gaps to support both the mothers and their babies.

- Implementing partners shared different approaches to address the gap in coordination of ECD activities at the national and county levels. One example shared was Uthabiti, which uses the national guidance of the 2019 CECEC (Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Curriculum) to establish a multisectoral approach, anchored in the Department of Education. Being intentional about defining the age range for ECD, to include childcare, was also discussed. At the national level, the reference is made to NECEC (National Early Childhood Education Curriculum).
- For the effectiveness of a multisectoral approach in implementing ECD policies, the timing of when to involve all relevant department officers, both at national and county levels, was questioned.
- Addressing issues of transition in government was raised as a concern. It was noted that trained committee members responsible for strengthening ECD implementation are often dropped or reassigned during transitions in government. A strategy is needed to ensure continuity and address the loss of key personnel in the ECD sector.
- The need for strategic sensitization of key government officials responsible for resource allocation was emphasized. A well-planned strategy to reach decision-makers in government is crucial to ensure that ECD receives adequate attention and funding.

Closing remarks

The meeting concluded with closing remarks from the Chair of the ECD Network for Kenya, who emphasized the importance of collaboration among partners in the implementation of ECD services. He highlighted the need for joint efforts in conducting research, documenting evidence, and working closely with the government to develop interventions that support the quality delivery of ECD services.

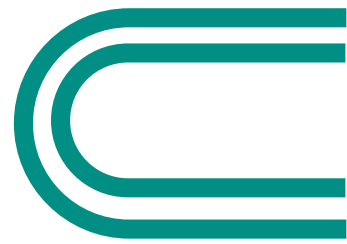
Annex



Figure 13: Participants of the National Childcare Dialogue Campaign

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Acknowledgement

All appreciation goes to our Technical Working Group (TWG) committee for their invaluable support in planning and executing the national event. The TWG was drawn from AfECN, UNICEF, PATH, IHD/AKU, Kidogo Early Years, Catholic Relief Services, Gift Connect, World Vision, AOSK, Nurture First, IDRC, Community Initiative Agenda, House Managers Association Agency (HMAA), Nyota Care, Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS), Early Start Africa, Media Champion & Consultant, NITA, Clean Start, Kenyatta University WEE Hub, ICRW, Directorate of Social Development (DSD), National Council for Children Services (NCCS), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, University of Nairobi, Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Stepping Stones, Upward Bound, Clubfoot Care for Kenya, The Action Foundation, Tiny Totos, Uthabiti Africa, EIDU, APHRC, WUSC, KPS, Mothership, Wow Mom, Save the Children, GDI, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and the ECD Network for Kenya Secretariat.

Funders

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our funders—AfECN, UNICEF, PATH, AKU-IHD, Kidogo Early years, CRS, World Vision, Gift Connect and Zizi Afrique—whose generous support was instrumental in making this event a reality.

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