

Celebrating 10 Years of the Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya: Reflecting on Successes 2015-2025 and Charting the Future; 2025-2035

Introduction

The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECD Network) marks its 10 years anniversary in 2025 since her inception in 2015, a significant milestone in the journey of implementing Nurturing Care and transforming early childhood care and development across the country. Over the past decade, the Network has successfully promoted awareness, strengthened policies, generated evidence through research and facilitated innovations that have positively impacted the lives of young children, families, and communities. This anniversary offers an opportunity to celebrate achievements, recognize champions, and contribute to charting a future for early childhood development (ECD) in Kenya.

Objectives of the 10 Year Anniversary

1. To acknowledge the ECD Network's 10-year achievements by documenting the strides achieved over the last 10 years.
2. To recognize champions who have made a difference in ECD as of July, 2025.
3. To raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development in Kenya through media campaigns and public outreach initiatives.

Proposed Celebration Activities

1. ECDNeK 10 years' documentary

- Purpose: To showcase the milestones achieved by the ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK) over the last 10 years. This will be accomplished by documenting success stories and publishing a coffee book,
- ***"From Vision to Impact: ECDNeK's Journey at a Glance"*** that highlights the network's journey and achievements since its inception. The book will document the following:
 - ***The vision behind the establishment of the network***
 - ***Pictorial highlights of the success stories***
 - ***Challenges encountered during the ten years journey***
 - ***Opportunities to take the ECD Network for Kenya to the next level***

2. ECD Champions Awards Ceremony

- **Purpose:** Recognize outstanding contributions to early childhood development in categories such as: education, health, social protection, research, innovation, and policymaking among others.

- Document the success stories of the ECD champions and organize an award ceremony.

3. Publicity and Media Campaign

- **Purpose:** Increase awareness of the achievements in ECD through television, radio, and social media; Featuring ECD champions discussing the successes, challenges and the future of early childhood development in Kenya.

Expected Outcomes

- **Increased Visibility:** The celebrations will raise awareness about the importance of early childhood development and the progress made in Kenya.
- **Enhanced Partnerships:** Stakeholders from various sectors will collaborate on future ECD initiatives, ensuring continued support for the Network's work.
- **Sustained Momentum:** Increasing awareness of the need for enhanced investments and prioritization of Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a key component of the development agenda.
- **Showcase strides achieved by the Network.**

Criteria for champions Identification

As part of celebrating a decade of ECD advocacy, ECDNeK is committed to recognizing key stakeholders who have significantly contributed to advancing Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Kenya since 2015.

The general **guiding principles** for identifying champions will include;

- i. **Relevance:** The contributions must align with ECDNeK's mission and advocacy goals.
- ii. **Impact:** Assess the measurable outcomes of the efforts on ECD systems, policies, or services.
- iii. **Sustainability:** Evaluate if the efforts have long-term benefits for ECD.
- iv. **Innovation:** Consider creativity and uniqueness in addressing ECD challenges.
- v. **Equity and Inclusivity:** Prioritize contributions that address marginalized and underserved populations.

Proposed Criteria Categories

The different categories will consider the following sectors: Child Education, Child Health/Nutrition, Child Protection, and Responsive Parenting among others

1. Individual Champions

- **Advocacy Leadership:** Demonstrated consistent leadership in advancing ECD advocacy initiatives at national or county levels.
- **Policy Influence:** Played a key role in shaping or implementing ECD policies, frameworks, or programs.
- **Community Engagement:** Actively mobilized communities to support and invest in ECD initiatives.
- **Mentorship and Capacity Building:** Provided guidance and training to others in the field.

2. Organizational/ Institutions Champions

- **Programmatic Achievements:** Successfully implemented innovative and impactful ECD programs.
- **Evidence-Based Practices:** Used data and research to inform and improve ECD initiatives.
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Engaged in multi sectoral partnerships to strengthen ECD efforts.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Raised funds or resources to support ECD programs.
- **Inclusivity:** Advocated for and implemented programs that focus on vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities.
- **Academic Institutions that have championed and promoted academic programmes in ECD.**

3. County Governments

- **Policy implementation and Budget Allocation:** Demonstrated prioritization of ECD in county policies, County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) and budgets.
- **Service Delivery:** Improved access to quality ECD services across the county.
- **Innovations:** Developed unique approaches to ECD.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Effectively coordinated with stakeholders to enhance ECD outcomes.
- **Sustainability:** Maintained consistent commitment to ECD over the years.

4. Private Sector/ media champions

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Invested in ECD initiatives through CSR programs.
- **Innovative Solutions:** Developed or supported innovative tools, technologies, or programs to improve ECD outcomes.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Actively collaborated with government or organizations to advance ECD goals.
- **Sustainability and Scale:** Supported scalable initiatives with long-term impact.

Nomination Process

The nomination criteria, will be circulated to facilitate the following:

1. **Call for Nominations:** The call for nominations will be opened from 1st February, 2025 to 30th March 2025.
2. **Submission Requirements:** The nominator should identify the potential champion, provide a justification for their nomination, by outlining the unique contribution the nominee has made in early childhood and share their contact details. Thereafter, the nominees will submit evidence of their contributions (e.g., reports, testimonials, photos, or videos).
3. **Evaluation Panel:** ECDNeK through the anniversary committee will review nominations against the set criteria.
4. **Verification:** The anniversary committee will conduct due diligence to verify claims, including stakeholder consultations.

Guidelines for Nominating ECD Champions

To ensure a smooth and transparent nomination process for identifying ECD champions, the following guidelines will be implemented:

1. General Guidelines

- **Eligibility:**
 - The nominee must have made significant contributions to Early Childhood Development (ECD) between 2015 and 2025.
 - Nominations can include individuals, organizations/ institutions, counties, or private sector entities among others.
- **Alignment:**
 - The contributions must align with ECDNeK's mission to promote, support and sustain an enabling environment for the implementation of Nurturing Care for ECD.
- **Impact Evidence:**
 - Nominations should demonstrate measurable or observable outcomes of the nominee's work in ECD.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:**
 - Ensure representation across gender, regions, sectors, and populations, including work that focuses on marginalized communities.

Conclusion

The 10 year anniversary of the ECD Network for Kenya is a pivotal moment to reflect on the successes achieved, acknowledge champions in the field, and pave the way for the next decade of innovation and progress. By celebrating this milestone through the proposed activities, the Network will not only reinforce its mission but also inspire a renewed commitment to providing every child in Kenya with the best possible start in life.

Click on the link to nominate an ECD champion today! - <https://forms.gle/t69QDP8ieVCz2ukW6>