

How Communities are Advocating for Ending Child Labor Through a Local Media Station in Bungoma



Out-of-school children breaking stones in Bungoma

Griffin, a grade four pupil at a local school in Bungoma county has been hawking fruits and vegetables during school time because her mother has sent him to raise some money for food. He states “My mother is at home doing her chores but has told me to sell this banana to cater for evening meal and also raise money to buy books so that I can get back to school.”

Just like Griffin, many children in the region have been engaged in child labor that has resulted to out of school children in the region.

Within the region, it is easy to find children in the streets hawking while others performing difficult tasks within farms, construction sites and breaking stones for a living, sacrificing education for survival.

A study conducted on out of school children initiative in Kenya (2020) by UNICEF almost 1.13 million children of primary school age (6 to 13 years old) are out of school in Kenya.

In 2021, Kenya made efforts to eliminating the worst forms of child labor, through involving coor-

inating committees related to elimination of the vice but experts and child right advocates claim that there is still a challenge especially in some of the grassroot communities.

Alfred Mosoti, a child right advocate who educates communities on Child labor attests that there is prevalence of child labor within the communities in the region with most parents and guardians not knowing to differentiate between children helping in home chore and child labor.

He says “There is lack of knowledge on the issue of child labor in this communities and you will see a parent engaging a child in grown up activities with the mind that they are helping in domestic activities.”

Communities within the region have got in to the conversation trying to find a solution to the vice and giving recommendations on how to end child labor by coming up with strategies of education and engagement.

Through the weekly radio program “Makala Ya Tumaini” that airs every Thursday at Tandaza FM, a community radio station on the DigiRedio platform, community members have had the opportunity to share in context the issue of child labor as a big challenge within the region, with experts and the community at large giving solutions on how to curb the issue.

Mosoti who has actively engaged in the program states “After the conversations on the Makala Ya Tumaini program on child labor and its relation to out of school children, I received several calls on my phone from community members advocating for more conversations and to me this is a success as a result of the program.”

Maryanna Munyendo the founder Missing Child Kenya, relates on the issue of child labor and missing children, who are out of school children. She states “In most cases we have handled cases of children running from home because of child labor an issue we are trying to educate communities about”.

Munyendo further states that children are not required to engage in child labor, with the constitution of Kenya providing that every child has a right to be protected from abuse, neglect and harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhumane treatment, and punishment and hazardous or exploitative labor.



Mary Munyendo, founder, Missing Child Kenya

She says “If we are looking at it, then we are looking at even trying to achieve SDG goals. SDG eight on decent work and economic growth calls for an end to child labor in all its forms by 2025 and the eradication of forced labor by 2030, so it is with this

in mind that it is important we protect the rights of children because these rights also infringe on their other rights. “

On the other hand, Mosoti attributes that when a child’s rights to education have been denied, their freedom is also compromised stating, when one right is denied or one harm is done to a child, it’s denying them of many other rights that they are due for as a child protected by the Kenyan Constitution.

Munyendo and other community organizations recommend stakeholders to coming together to have a view on the child labor policy and the national development agenda saying, and then it will point out certain areas that we need to work on.

There is a need for the community to increase transition and participation in the school education system, which will help identify out-of-school children and reasons why they are not in school, look on alternative livelihood activities for families, and ensure children do not have the burden of staying out of school.

Through the Makala ya Tumaini program in the local radio, community organizations and advocates of children education have had the opportunity to have a conversation about the vice and helped coming up with recommendations and solutions to end the challenge.

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