

Out-of-School Children in Nairobi's Mukuru Kwa Ruben

Mukuru Kwa Ruben is one of the informal settlements in Nairobi, where access to education remains a significant challenge. High levels of poverty in this area make basic education unattainable for many families, leading to a high rate of school dropouts.

Case studies

Mary Achieng', a Community Health Promoter (CHP) in Mukuru Kwa Ruben, plays a crucial role in ensuring children in her zone attend school. She recounted a specific case involving three children, aged 8, 12, and 13, who had dropped out of school.

"Their stepfather refused to take them to school, so I had to report the case to the area chief. The chief took the three children and stayed with them until their mother came for them. It was then that the chief directed me to help them go back to school," Mary narrated.

With the help of Catherine Njuki, a social worker at Ruben Centre, these children were re-enrolled at Ruben AEF Primary School in Mukuru Kwa Ruben and have since continued their studies uninterrupted.

Another case involved Joyce Wanjiru, who dropped out of school at around 14 years old due to pregnancy. Her male friend, responsible for the pregnancy, and his parents refused to take responsibility. Joyce was fortunate to receive a scholarship through Sister Elizabeth, a counselor at Ruben AEF Primary School.





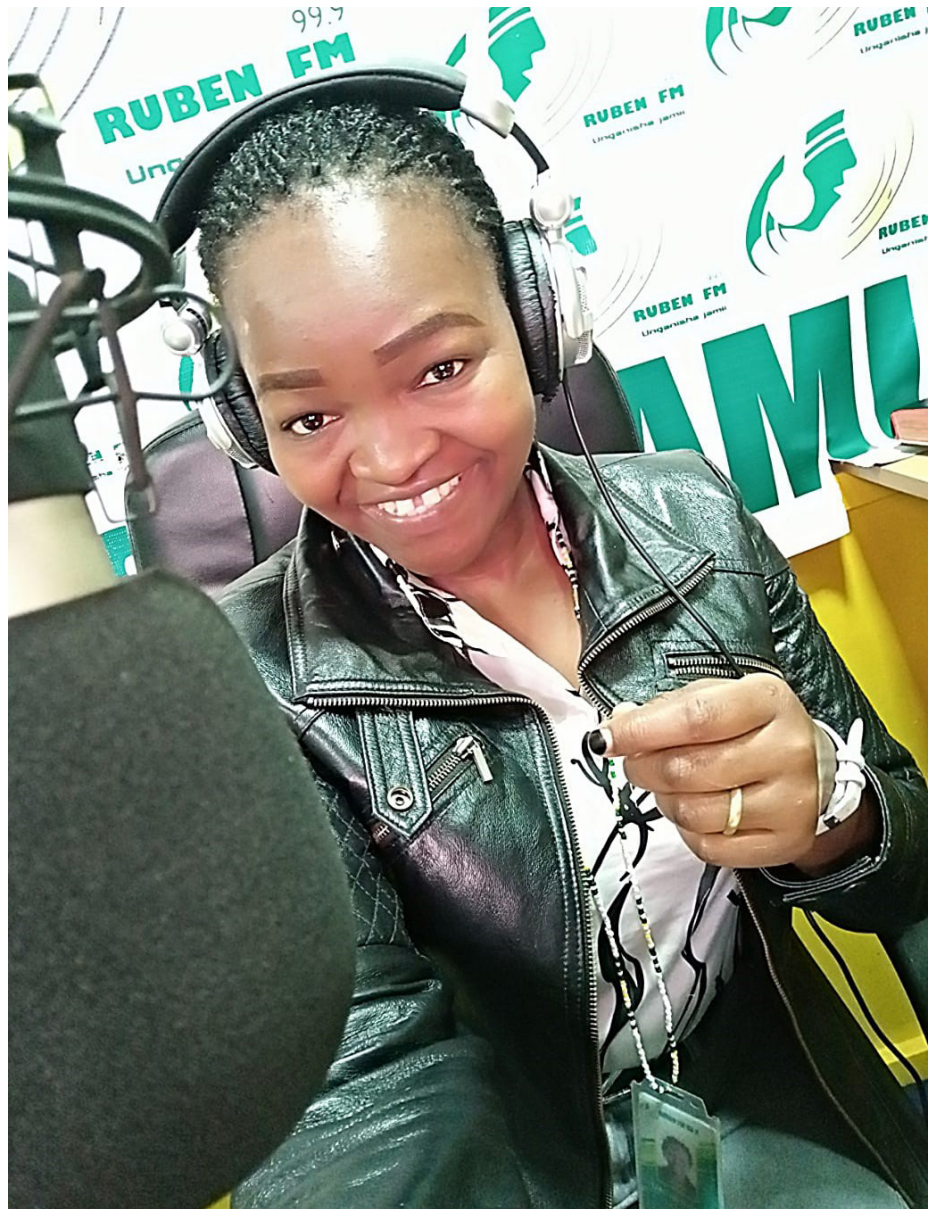
She is now in a boarding school. Her mother is the one taking care of the baby Joyce had,” said Rose Mbithe, a Community Health Promoter who followed up on Joyce’s case.

Community engagement initiative

The Centre for Behavior Change and Communication (CBCC) is running an innovative out-of-school program in partnership with Ruben FM in Mukuru kwa Ruben, Nairobi County. These discussions address factors contributing to high school dropout rates and emphasize the community’s role in mitigating these issues.

Ruben FM, through the ‘Makala ya Tumaini’ program, has been collaborating with CBCC to educate the community on addressing and solving factors contributing to high school dropout rates. The program, which airs every Thursday from 11 AM to 12 noon, has covered various topics targeting out-of-school children, aiming to create a supportive and trusting classroom environment to retain them in school.

According to UNICEF, approximately 1.13 million children of primary school age (6-13 years old) are not in school across Kenya. The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA) Report 2023 indicates that the



percentage of school-aged children (6-15 years) who are out of school increased from 7.5% in 2021 to 7.5% in 2023.

The Kenyan Constitution, Chapter Four, Articles 43, 53, 54, 56, 57, and 59, guarantees every child the right to free and compulsory education, including quality services and access to education institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities. Despite these provisions, many children in Kenya are denied access to education due to disabilities, poverty, nomadic lifestyles, teenage pregnancies, early marriages, peer pressure, and other home-related issues, often leading to child labor to support their families.

Education is a fundamental right for every child, both in Kenya

and worldwide. While significant challenges remain in ensuring all children in Mukuru Kwa Ruben and similar areas receive an education, community initiatives, legal frameworks, and individual efforts from community and social workers are vital steps towards addressing these challenges.

This report aims to highlight the ongoing efforts and challenges faced in addressing the issue of out-of-school children in Nairobi’s Mukuru Kwa Ruben. It underscores the importance of continued community engagement and support to ensure that every child can access and benefit from education.