



## **VIHIGA COUNTY CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**In liaison with:**  
**THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, CULTURE, YOUTH SPORTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES,**

**&**

**AND THE DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN SERVICES  
COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF VIHIGA  
P. O. BOX 344-50300,  
MARAGOLI**

**To be enacted by:**  
**THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF VIHIGA,  
P.O BOX 344-50100,  
VIHIGA**

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## **FOREWORD**

Violence against children occurs in all parts of the world. It may be physical, psychological, or sexual. It can occur online or on the streets of neighborhoods, schools, and houses. This Strategy provides a vision and strategic framework to meet these challenges. Vihiga County acknowledges that child protection is a multidisciplinary, multisectoral issue that calls for the participation and dedication of all parties involved in order to advance children's general welfare by preventing abuse and exploitation; To prevent future occurrences, a well-structured and sustained case reporting and response procedure with fast and coordinated action is adopted. In respect to this, the County must now make a concerted effort to develop and implement a policy framework that will protect children from exploitation and violence in all its forms. Additionally, a central coordination mechanism bringing together government agencies and civil society organizations at all levels must be established, and a centralized management information system is necessary to ensure regular data collection on the incidence and prevalence of child protection issues.

This policy has been developed and designed through a diverse and intense process that encompassed organizing stakeholder forums, conducting Child technical Working Group meetings, setting priorities for the most important issues impacting the County while keeping in mind the laws and regulations that grant the County the authority to safeguard its children from harm. The main objective of this policy framework is to encourage collaboration among many actors and provide coordinated actions and responses through a constitutional process. The framework is intended to make it easier to harmonize and coordinate preventive child protection initiatives, as well as provide children with services.

By using a comprehensive and integrated strategy, it will improve networking and cooperation between different stakeholders, resulting in the provision of efficient services for underprivileged children. Kenya's dedication to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is consistent with the framework, which greatly helps the nation establish an effective system for protecting children. The framework was developed at a time when Kenya is undergoing a number of reforms, one of which is the 2010 Constitution, which fully guarantees children's rights. As such, it will play a crucial role in this process. Let's put protection within reach of every child.

**Hon. Meshack Mulongo Onzere**  
**County Executive Committee Member**  
**Department of Gender, Culture, Youth, Sports, Children & Social Services**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This Child Protection policy has been prepared through a participatory process involving Child sector and technical working group consisting of State and Non-State Actors in Vihiga County. The Department of Gender, Culture, Youth, Sports, Children & Social Services wishes to express gratitude and appreciation to the Governor of Vihiga County, H.E. Dr. Wilber Ottichilo and H.E. The Deputy Governor, Wilberforce Kitiezo for their continued support and dedication to eliminating child abuse and ensuring a safe environment for all. The group that worked on creating this policy framework was really dedicated and hardworking. Under the admirable direction of their County Executive Committee Members, I would especially want to thank the employees of the Department of Gender, Culture, Youth, Sport & Social Services and the Department of Health Services for their invaluable dedication and contributions.

We acknowledged the support from various partners. The development of this policy framework would not have been feasible without the financial and technical assistance from USAID Nuru Ya Mtoto, Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (KMET), IRODO, Access to Medicine Platform, Echo Network Africa (ENA) among other partners.

It is my belief that the Department will be able to prevent and effectively respond to Child abuse cases within the County based on this policy, thereby creating a secure environment for all County citizens. To those not mentioned here but contributed in one way or the other to the production of this policy I salute you.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Child:** As per the Constitution of Kenya 2010, read together with the Children Act, 2022, the term “Child” is defined as any person under the age of 18.

**Child Protection:** The term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or neglected.

**County Employees and Associates:** This includes all employees of the County Government of Vihiga, consultants, researchers, partners, stakeholders, interns, volunteers, board members, and agents working for and closely associated with the County Government of Vihiga.

**Child Abuse:** Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, bullying, child labour, domestic violence and exploitation including commercial sexual exploitation, child trafficking and all forms of child rights violation. Both boys and girls can be the victims of child abuse. Child abuse can be inflicted on a child by men or women, or by young people themselves. In some cases, professionals and other adults working with children in positions of trust abuse children.

**Working with Children:** Working in a position that involves regular contact with children, either as part of the person’s position description or due to the context of the work that brings the person into regular contact with children.

**Screening:** This term includes criminal record checks (often called “police checks”) which are conducted to determine if a person has any known criminal history. Additional screening measures may include: “working with children” checks, identity checks, verbal referee checks and targeted, behavioural-based interview questions.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Preamble**

The County Government of Vihiga, upon recognition that children deserve special treatment, has adopted measures in advancing and advocating for rights and welfare of children.

This policy defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years. Children hold a special place in society. Their nurture and well-being is the responsibility of key stakeholders such as parents, wider family, the state (National and County Government) and civil society. The county government of Vihiga is committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the articulation of children issues in the vision 2030 is a demonstration of this obligation. The County Government of Vihiga therefore adopts this policy as a framework to assist in enforcement of the salient provisions of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and Children Act 2022 among other national and international legal instruments addressing the plight of children.

This policy therefore serves as a guide to the County Government of Vihiga to implement the Children Act 2022 alongside other local and international legal instruments defining rights and welfare of children. More importantly, this policy will ensure that children rights are protected and advanced by all individuals and institutions coming into contact with children, so that every child in Vihiga County has a chance of realizing their full potential by growing in a safe, secure and stable environment.

### **Situational Analysis**

Violence against children (VAC) impacts their lifelong health and well-being. Globally it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect in the past year this is according to WHO 2022. Boys and girls are at equal risk of physical and emotional abuse and neglect, however, recent statistics points to the fact that girls are at greater risk of sexual abuse. Arguably, as children transition into adolescent age, they are likely to face peer violence, intimate partner violence and maltreatment as a result of exposure to intimate relationships and sexual advances. Children/youth exposed to violence have a higher likelihood of normalizing violence and becoming perpetrators themselves. Consequences of exposure for girls/women include increased risk of contraceptive non-use, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, STIs, low birth weight babies, substance abuse, self-harm and further victimization (WHO, 2021). Early pregnancy has immediate effects on girls' educational

opportunities, future implications for their social, health, and economic outcomes, and negative impacts on their children. Girls who are victims of violence experience anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts (United Nations Children’s Fund Kenya). Less than 8% of female VACS respondents reporting sexual violence subsequently received professional help. Among marginalized populations, a high prevalence of violence is linked with higher rates of HIV infection, in particular for transgender women (UN AIDS). GBV impacts public health and human rights (WHO).

Children in Sub-Saharan Africa face tragic aspects of childhood violence, including but not limited to defilement, and physical abuse. Recent statistics and research in Africa points to the fact that 1 out of 3 teenage girls aged 15-19 have faced sexual violence in their lifetime. Africa records highest number of teenage pregnancies and early child marriages globally, for example, 4 out of 10 girls aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18years. (UNICEF, 2021). Additionally, less than 51% of children under 5years have birth certificates in Africa.

In Kenya, child protection concerns vary from physical abuse, teenage pregnancies, gender based violence, FGM, child neglect, and many more. The concerns may differ from one cultural setting to another. According to the 2019 Violence Against Children Survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, 1 in 2 young adults in Kenya experienced violence as a child, with 46% of 18-24-year-old women faced at least one type of violence – physical, emotional or sexual during their childhood, as well as 52% of young men in the same age group, hence, the prevalence of child marriage among girls stands at 23%. Statistically, 5,500 women die annually during childbirth, 23% of girls marry before age 18, 40% of women do not have access to modern contraceptives, and 1.4 million girls/women have undergone FGM. During and after electoral periods, Kenya often sees a surge in SGBV and violence against children. Tensions run high, and women, girls and children bear the brunt of the violence. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights reported 201 sexual violence cases during the 2017 elections. Only 22% were reported to police, and 54% of reported crimes were perpetrated by security and law enforcement (UN Women). A number of factors contribute to SGBV and VAC, including community norms on gender roles, violence, and the value of girls, barriers to formal education, household poverty, lack of economic independence, the experience of violence, and social isolation. The root causes



of these vulnerabilities work in tandem to create the current situation of SGBV faced by young people in Kenya, especially young women/girls and children.

Vihiga County being one of the 47 devolved units in Kenya has in the recent past faced challenges attributing to high cases of child abuse. It is estimated the number of children in the County whose rights and welfare have been violated are about 3,120 in 2022 (CPIMS, 2023). Key child protection concerns in Vihiga County include, physical abuse, child neglect, street children, custodian disputes, child trafficking or abduction, teenage pregnancies, HIV new infections amongst adolescents, defilement, truancy, incest, and child in conflict with the law. For example, data extracted from CPIMS 2023 indicate that in 2022, 79 children were abandoned, 156 children were abducted, 59 were truancy cases, 453 cases of custodian disputes, missing children were 60, whereas, 2059 were recorded as neglect, and 84 faced physical abuse. Cases of teenage pregnancies and early child marriages have also been serious concerns in Vihiga County. In Kenya Demographic Health Survey Report, 2022, Vihiga County reports 8% of the national prevalence in teenage pregnancies. According to this report, there is a correlation between education levels and teenage pregnancy rates, whereby 38% of girls without education were found to be pregnant, while 20% of girls with primary-level education were also pregnant (KNBS, 2022). In Adolescent and Youth Sexual Reproductive Health Action Plan 2023-2028, estimated 35% of Vihiga County population consist of adolescents and youth faced by incidences of child pregnancy, child birth, HIV/AIDS, STIs, violence, mental health, malnutrition, alcohol and substance abuse, among others. KHIS 2021 report revealed that estimated 26% of women in Vihiga County presenting with teenage pregnancies and motherhood were adolescents aged 10-19years of age.

To avert the situation, the County Government of Vihiga has put in measures including legislative efforts to enhance child rights and welfare. However, there exist barriers hindering it from addressing the child protection concerns in totality. The child protection response mechanisms are still weak with challenges ranging from lack of institutionalization, inadequate human resource capacity to support child rights and welfare services, and underfunding. Most Child Protection programmes and interventions depend on donor funding, making the future of our children uncertain. The lack of a centralized, systematic mechanism for collecting data makes it difficult to measure impact for policy decision making, programming, and financing. The police force is lacking technical know-how on forensic investigation, adequate equipment, appreciation of the

special nature of VAC crimes, and an understanding of human rights (NGEC). The County Government of Vihiga has enacted laws and established guidelines on VAC, however, this commitment is tested in the face of emergencies, including COVID-19 (HRW). Therefore, there is need for deliberate efforts by partners, and likeminded stakeholders coming together to support Vihiga County initiatives in providing safe and secure environments for children. Such initiatives include the development and implementation of the County Child Protection Policy whose purpose is to provide a framework to operationalize child protection and welfare programmes in the County.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Kenya demographic health survey, 2022 reports that 35% of children in the country have experienced violence against their rights and welfares. All children are vulnerable to violence, CPIMS 2022 data indicates that 3,120 children have their rights and welfare violated in Vihiga County. This shows that there are issues that preclude the Vihiga child from fully enjoying child Rights as provided for in the local statutes and international conventions. In Vihiga County there are many child protection programmes that have been implemented in the county. With all these programmes children in Vihiga County are still vulnerable to all forms of abuses. Children in Vihiga county face severe risks that exposes them to vulnerabilities such as child marriages, abandonment, child truancy, child neglect, custodial disputes, physical abuse /violence, defilement, teenage pregnancies, child trafficking and child labor. Adolescents and youth are the majority 35% of the population of Vihiga County (census 2019), and contribute greatly to new STIs, HIV and infections. This is further evidenced in the AYSRH action plan 2023/2028.

### **The Policy Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives and Guiding Principles**

The policy goals stated herein are based on the key pillars of Child Rights as articulated in the COK 2010, the Children Act, 2022; ACRWC 1990 and (UNCRC), 1989. These are **Survival Rights, Development Rights, Protection Rights and Participation Rights.**

#### **Vision**

To be an extraordinary County in providing an atmosphere within which protection and transformation of children; support and strengthening family life, and inter agency relationship allowing children reach their full potential in a safe and nurturing environment.

#### **Mission**

To proactively and responsively protect, as well as provide care beyond limits to children through sensitive investigation and appropriate action, love, advocacy, education, rehabilitation and family support; with commitment to valuing every child, their families and working together with like-minded institutions devoted to safeguarding rights and welfare of children in Vihiga county.

#### Goal

To realize efficient and effective child protection mechanisms where the child rights and welfare are adhered to.

#### Objectives

The specific objectives of this policy include:

- (i) To provide an effective and efficient implementation framework of addressing issues related to the children's rights and welfare in a holistic and focused manner.
- (ii) To act as a standard reference which will be used to coordinate related policies, programs, strategies, plans and legislations that are geared towards the promotion of children rights and welfare in Vihiga county.
- (iii) To provide the required standard and direction in establishing child protection structures and mechanisms while mobilizing resources for action.
- (iv) To act as criteria for evaluating and monitoring the implementation of various legislations, policies and programmes on issues related to children within the County.

#### Guiding Principles

This policy shall be guided by the following principles:

- (i) The best interest of the child is of paramount importance in all situations.
- (ii) To ensure that all children in the county are treated with respect, human dignity, accountability, non-discrimination, equity and equality in relation to all issues concerning them.
- (iii) To ensure accessibility of services and participation by children in decision making processes on issues that affect them
- (iv) To commit every individual adult to take responsibility to protect the rights of the child regardless of the individual's relationship with the child.
- (v) Child governance principle
- (vi) The child safeguarding principle

## **Legal Framework for Child Welfare and Protection**

### **International legal framework on child rights.**

Kenya has ratified various international treaties and conventions that provide for the welfare and protection of the rights of children. They are:

- i. The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- ii. The Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict;
- iii. Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography signed but not yet ratified).
- iv. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- v. The Hague Convention;
- vi. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- vii. ILO Convention No. 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour;
- viii. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime);
- ix. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Some of the regional Conventions that Kenya is a party are:

- i. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)
- ii. African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) together with its Protocols on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 2(6) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, these international and regional treaties and conventions form part of the laws of Kenya.

### **National legal framework**

#### **The Constitution of Kenya, 2010.**

The Bill of Rights under Chapter 4 provides for the protection and safeguards the fundamental rights and freedoms for every person including children: specifically, the right to life, equality and freedom from discrimination, protection from slavery, servitude and forced labour, freedom of association, access to justice, fair hearing, among others.

The Constitution explicitly provides that the rights of every child under Article 53 are the right to: a name and nationality from birth; free and compulsory basic education; basic nutrition, shelter and health care; to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and protection from hazardous or exploitative labour; parental care and protection, which includes equal responsibility of the mother and father to provide for the child, whether they are married to each other or not; not to be detained, except as a measure of last resort, and when detained, to be held for the shortest appropriate period of time; and separate from adults and in conditions that take account of the child's sex and age.

Article 53 (2) of the Constitution provides that a child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. It is therefore the responsibility of the county government of Vihiga and parents to promote and protect the rights of children in the best interests of children to give effect to Article 53.

Articles 10 and 27 call for inclusivity, equality and freedom from discrimination on the basis of age.

### **National legislation**

#### **The Children Act No. 29 of 2022.**

Provides for parental responsibility, fostering, adoption, custody, maintenance, guardianship, provision for children in need of care and protection; makes provision for the administration of children's institutions; and giving effect to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and for connected purposes. The Children Act reiterates the principle 'of the best interest of the child. It is therefore a responsibility of the county government of Vihiga to allocate resources for realization of children's rights by supporting the structured programmes that promote child welfare and protection.

#### **The Sexual Offences Act, 2006**

Provides for sexual offences, their definitions, prevention and the protection of all persons (including children) from harmful sexual acts, and for connected purposes. Examples of sexual offences include; rape, defilement, sodomy, gang rape, pornography, sexual harassment, among others. The Sexual Offences Act seeks to protect children at risk of sexual abuse, from being subjected to sexual abuse or having to witness sexual acts. It prescribes stiffer penalties for sexual offenders especially for the offence of defilement depending on the complainant's age.

### **HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act, 2006**

Provides measures for the prevention, management and control of HIV and AIDS, the protection and promotion of public health and for the appropriate treatment, counseling, support and care of persons infected or at risk of HIV and AIDS infection (including children) and for connected purposes.

Section 32 of the Act provides that no educational institution shall deny admission or expel, discipline, segregate, deny participation in any event or activity, or deny any benefits or services to a person/child on the grounds only of the person's actual, perceived or suspected HIV status.

### **The Employment Act, 2007.**

This is an Act of Parliament that declares and defines the fundamental rights of employees, provides for basic conditions of employment of children, and to provide for matters connected with the foregoing.

The Employment Act provides for the nature and conditions under which children can work. Section 56 prohibits employment for a child aged below 13 years, while recognizing that children aged between 13 and 16 years can be employed to do light work in as long as the work is not harmful to their health or prejudice the child from attending school or education training programs. Section 53 of the Act prohibits the employment of children in worst forms of child labour including domestic work, prostitution, engaging the child in drug trafficking, among others. The Act creates a duty on any person with information that a child is engaged in child labour to report to the police or labour officer who has a duty to investigate and provide a report within 7 days.

The Act also provides for creation and maintenance of a register for all children in employment that shows their date of birth, date of entering and leaving employment.

### **Witness Protection Act CAP 79**

Provide the framework and procedures for giving special protection, on behalf of the State, to persons in possession of important information and who are facing potential risk or intimidation due to their co-operation with prosecution and other law enforcement agencies.

### **Teachers Service Commission Act**

Provides that any person who subjects a child to torture or other cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment, including corporal punishment, commits an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to the offence under the Prevention of Torture Act.

### **The Counter Trafficking in Persons Act, 2010**

This is an Act of Parliament to implement Kenya's obligations under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime particularly its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; it provides for the offences relating to trafficking in persons including children. The Act criminalizes acts that promote child trafficking including adopting, fostering or guardianship or offering a child for adoption, fostering or guardianship for purposes of trafficking.

### **The Penal Code**

Aimed at protecting children from acts and omissions, which amount to child abuse, including assault, abduction, kidnapping, abortion, etc and prescribe a penalty against any person found guilty of such offences e.g. child trafficking.

### **The Basic Education Act, 2013**

This is an Act of Parliament to give effect to Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and other enabling provisions; to promote and regulate free and compulsory basic education; to provide for accreditation, registration, governance and management of institutions of basic education; to provide for the establishment of the National Education Board, the Education Standards and Quality Assurance Commission, and the County Education Board and for connected purposes.

It is the responsibility of the county government to put measures in place through structured programmes to ensure all children and youth of school going age within the county attend and stay in school to complete basic education.

It is the responsibility of every parent whose child is Kenyan, to ensure that the child attends school regularly as a pupil for physical, mental, intellectual or social development.

Section 26(1) of the Act provides that it is the roles of the county government to provide the funds required for the development of the necessary infrastructure for institutions of basic education and

training used for conducting preprimary education, childcare facilities, home-craft centers and village polytechnics.

### **The Persons with Disabilities Act**

Provides for the rights and rehabilitation of persons including children with disabilities; to achieve equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities;

### **Subsidiary legislation**

The Children's Act has empowered, the Minister responsible for matter relating to children to pass Regulations that will assist to promote children rights and wellbeing. The exercise of this power has led to the enactment of the following regulations:

#### **The Children (Adoption) Regulations, 2005**

The Children (Adoption) Regulations govern and oversee the adoption of children including the registration of adoption agencies, assessing of persons wanting to adopt children, the whole adoption process, etc.

#### **The Children (Charitable Children Institutions) Regulations, 20**

The Children (Charitable Children Institutions) Regulations regulate the establishment and operations of children homes and orphanages.

The Guardianship of Children (Practice and Procedure) Rules, 2002 govern and oversee the process of appointment of guardians for children whose biological parents have passed away.

The Children (Practice and Procedure) (Child Offender) Rules, 2002 makes provision for handling of children in conflict with the law within the justice system in accordance with the best interest of the child principle.

The Foster Care Placement Rules These Rules provide for the appointment of foster parents, the process of placing a child with foster parents.

The National Children Policy provide a framework for addressing all issues relating to children's rights and welfare in a holistic and focused manner, to provide a monitoring and evaluation criterion for the implementation of various legislations, policies and programmes relating to children. The objective of the policy is to have a country where the best interests of the child are



paramount in the progressive and maximum attainment of the survival, development, participation, and protection of every child in Kenya

### **The National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children**

The National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children seeks to protect orphans and vulnerable children from all forms of abuse, exploitation and discrimination. It expressly recognizes the need for gender sensitivity and inclusiveness in the development and implementation of all responses to orphans and vulnerable children.

#### **Legislative and policy implementation challenges**

- a) Legal illiteracy and inadequate skills, knowledge and awareness among all stakeholders  
i.e. parents, teachers
- b) Discriminative social justice, norms and stereotypes on intersex persons and children living with disabilities.
- c) Inadequate public participation of children in matters pertaining to their wellbeing.
- d) Inadequate awareness of children on their rights and obligations.
- e) Ineffective enforcement of various legislations.
- f) Limited resources and infrastructure.
- g) Inadequate rehabilitation structures for children in conflict with the law.
- h) Poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- i) Poor reporting mechanisms on child abuse.
- j) Failure of parents to enroll children in schools and provide the basic needs

## **CHAPTER TWO: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, WELFARE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Survival Rights**

All children have a right to be born, nurtured and to grow in a conducive and secure environment. All children regardless of their socio-cultural, economic and political status have a right to the highest attainable standard of health and appropriate healthcare and services.

- (a) It shall be the obligation of the County Government of Vihiga to ensure provision of adequate and quality health services to all children during ante-natal and post-natal periods and throughout the child's lifetime.
- (b) The County Government of Vihiga shall liaise with players in the private and public sectors, parents and other caregivers to ensure that children access quality preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative services.
- (c) The County Government of Vihiga and all stakeholders shall mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDs and other diseases on children and embrace reproductive health concerns through:
  - i. Reduction of infant and child mortality.
  - ii. Prevention and management of childhood illnesses, disabilities, injuries and domestic accidents.
  - iii. Provision of services and Information on the importance of quality family planning, ante-natal and post natal care, safe child delivery, breastfeeding, immunization, good nutrition, HIV prevention, adolescent and young person's health, safe drinking water, environmental hygiene and sanitation.
  - iv. Provision of child friendly counseling and testing services and access to age-appropriate anti-retroviral drugs.
  - v. Promotion of nutrition and health feeding programs.

### **Development Rights**

The county Government of Vihiga shall ensure, Developmental Rights are provided to the children which include and not limited to: education, play and leisure, cultural and artistic activities, access to appropriate information, social security and parental care.

## **Education**

The County government of Vihiga shall ensure that all children in ECDE get quality, relevant, accessible, and affordable and child friendly education in a secure and safe environment.

It shall be the responsibility of the County Government of Vihiga and parents/guardians to ensure utilization of free and compulsory basic education. The County Government of Vihiga shall ensure that all children within the County access quality Early Childhood Education (ECDE) through:

- i. Provision of equitable, quality and adequate educational facilities.
- ii. Standardization of early childhood curriculum within the County as set out by the Kenya institute of curriculum development.
- iii. Elimination of all barriers to accessing free basic education.
- iv. Promotion of appropriate and child friendly physical education (games, sports) and other types of recreational as well as cultural and scientific activities in schools, community centers and other institutions.
- v. Promote Non-Formal Education (NFE) for children unable to access formal education.
- vi. Promote access to vocational training to children who are unable to access secondary school

## **Leisure, recreation and play**

The County Government of Vihiga shall ensure that all children within the County have access to adequate and appropriate leisure, recreation and play for their holistic development, growth and exploitation of their talents through provision and maintenance of child friendly playgrounds, talent centers, and parks among others.

County government of Vihiga shall ensure they provide disability friendly sports and recreational facilities.

## **Social security, parental care and access to information**

The County Government of Vihiga shall ensure that appropriate social norms, values and attitudes are imparted in the children within the County through:

- A. Encouragement of foster care, adoption, kinship, Kafaalah, guardianship supported child headed households, supported independent living, care in the emergency situations, temporary shelter, institutional care and after care as alternatives to family care services.
- B. Advocating and promoting programs on positive parenting (quote act on family).

## C. Provision life skills and age-appropriate information at all levels of child development

### **Cultural and artistic activities**

It is the duty of the County government of Vihiga to encourage positive cultural and artistic development among all the children within the County through:

- (i) Encouragement and institutionalization of regular cultural events to foster positive cultural values.
- (ii) Promotion of positive cultural and artistic activities in the school.
- (iii) Promote sporting, talent search and other related activities.

### **Protection Rights**

The County Government of Vihiga has a direct impact on children as well as adults. The County recognize her duty to ensure that advice and or support is available to help County employees, Associates, Partners and Institutions to play their part in protecting children, and to ensure that such advice and support is available to all involved.

The County, through this Policy, affirms the right of those who have suffered child abuse to receive a compassionate and response. Children, in particular, need someone to turn to when they are being abused. Often, they do not know where to go for help. Child protection rights are fundamental requirements and enables of children growth and development. Thus, as part of its response to the issue of safeguarding children, the County Government of Vihiga has a laid down a set of principles, structures, procedures and guidelines necessary for prevention and response of child protection issues in Vihiga County.

In line with this policy, the County shall appoint personnel to coordinate child protection rights in Vihiga County. Hence, the County Child Protection Focal Person will work in liaison with the Directorate of Children Services, Area Advisory Council and other like-minded institutions and stakeholders to coordinate reporting and response activities relating to protection of child rights and welfare, and shall from time to time be relied upon to produce data to inform evidence-based interventions in the best interest of the Child. This position shall act as delegated responsibility from the Executive, and shall undertake on behalf of the County Leadership, special responsibilities for keeping children safe.

As soon as there is an allegation or suspicion of any form of abuse within Vihiga County area of jurisdiction, the County Child Protection Focal Person shall be informed and shall make immediate contact with the County Leadership so that the approved procedures set out in the County Child Protection Policy can be followed.

The County Government of Vihiga will work together with likeminded institutions and partners to realize every child's right to health, education, security and protection among others, and will work with children and their families to help them achieve immediate and lasting changes in their lives. Vihiga County Government is committed to protecting children, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language, origin or religious belief.

The work of Vihiga County is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNHRC) which states that children should be protected from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse.

### **Common Types of Child Abuse:**

1. **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, and drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/caregiver reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

2. **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

- a) Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

- b) Emotional abuse in school may occur when the young person is constantly criticized, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.
3. **Bullying** may come from another child, young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.
- a) Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping),
  - b) Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages),
  - c) Emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In school, bullying may arise when a parent or teacher pushes the young person too hard to succeed.

4. **Neglect** occurs when an adult or caregiver fails to meet the child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.
5. **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, sex for money, commercial sex work, pornography, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse. In school, activities which might involve physical contact with children or young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the teacher over young students, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

### **Indicators of abuse:**

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognize a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such

recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following indicators:

- a) an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- b) unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- c) another child, young person or adult expressing concern about the welfare of the child
- d) a child or young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- e) inappropriate sexual awareness
- f) unexplained changes in a child or young person's behavior e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- g) engaging in sexually explicit behavior
- h) difficulty in making friends or going out with friends
- i) distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- j) being prevented from socially associating with other/loneliness
- k) losing weight for no apparent reason
- l) a child displays variations in eating patterns including over-eating, or loss of appetite
- m) the child may become increasingly unkempt or dirty

**Indicators/Signs that a child is bullied may include:**

- a) unexplained drop off in performance
- b) behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctant to go to school, church, trainings or usual events
- c) a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions
- d) physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes

**Reporting process:**

In line with this policy, the County Government of Vihiga will ensure that her staff, partners, associates, civil society groups, and any other person coming into contact of the child is clear on steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety and security of children within Vihiga County.

In incidences of sexual abuse (SGBV), whether defilement, sexual assault and many more, the child should be taken to hospital for forensic medical examination and or medical assessment and treatment within 72hrs, and such incidents must be taken to the police for appropriate action.

The reporting procedure may take the following steps;

### **1. Incident reporting:**

Any allegation, belief, and or suspicion of child abuse whether present or past by the County Employee, Associate, Partner or Child's family member must be reported immediately to the relevant authorities for appropriate investigation and action.

Any incident reported by the child shall be taken seriously and listened to carefully. Once such an allegation is made, there should be immediate response that protects the child from further potential abuse or victimization. Where appropriate, the family of the of the child victim should be informed of the allegation and action proposed, and the family be consulted where possible as the process to be followed. This process will be steered by the County Child Protection Focal Person or the Directorate of Children Services in close collaboration with investigative agencies/authorities, depending on where the incident occurred.

Reported cases of child abuse must be investigated to logical conclusion, within the framework of this policy and applicable laws.

### **2. Documenting the Incident**

Within 24 hours of incident disclosure, the County Government Employee, Associate, Institutions or Partners receiving the disclosure, needs to have fully, and diligently documented the allegation, including the evidence gathering, time, place, and witness statements. This report will possibly be used in court if charges are forthcoming.

Documentation should include:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number (where applicable)
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information



- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents (witness statements)
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details of the suspect.

### 3. **Guidelines for responding to a child making an allegation of abuse**

A child who is abused will occasionally confide in an adult whom the child feels that he/she can trust. The important thing to remember is that if a child does approach you, he/she is doing so in the hope that you will act to stop the abuse happening, even if you are asked not to do anything with the information.

In this case, if a child begins to inform you about abuse, it is important that you carefully listen and do the following;

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully and take the complaint seriously
- Ask questions for clarification only if what the child is saying is unclear to you
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, he/she has done the right thing
- Tell the child he/she is not to blame for the abuse
- Let the child know you will do what you can to help
- Report the child's disclosure to relevant authorities to commence investigations immediately.
- As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using his/her own words to describe the abuse. Sign and date this record and pass it onto the Investigative Agencies/Authorities for appropriate action.
- Follow-up to logical conclusion to ensure justice is served to the child victim.

If a child confides in you, and or tells you about an incident of abuse, it is because they trust you, and therefore you **MUST NOT**;

- Dismiss the concerns
- Panic
- Probe for more information/ask other questions
- Tell others whom are less concerned. Observe confidentiality.
- Make negative comments about the accused person
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Disclose details of the allegation to anyone else – even to persons named in the allegation.

**Importantly,**

Find an opportunity to explain that it is likely that this information will need to be shared with others, and at the end of the discussion tell the complainant what you plan to do next and with whom this information will be shared.

It is important that everyone in the organization is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the child protection agencies following a referral to them of the concerns about the child.

All reports should be submitted to the County Child Protection Focal Person and relevant authorities immediately after being received by individuals and institutions coming into contact with children.

Failure to report a case of child abuse is a crime, punishable by applicable laws with severe consequences including prosecution in a Court of Law. Anyone is responsible to report a child violation or abuse case.

**4. Responding**

The County Government of Vihiga in collaboration with state and non-state actors will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse. Such actions will be coordinated to yield better results, and this policy will be cited alongside other applicable laws, regulations and statutes while responding to child protection concerns.

In responding to child abuse, the following considerations will apply;

a) **Distance the alleged perpetrator**

In a case involving County Employee or Agent (Contractor, Volunteer, Intern, Board Members, etc.) the best interests of the child may warrant the standing down of a County Government Employee or Agent while an investigation commences. Up until conclusion, County employees who step aside to pave way for investigation will be entitled to full pay and a just process that does not pre-suppose guilt or innocence. The allegations should not be discussed or communicated to other people until such have been considered and a decision made by the County Executive. The decision made should be documented and filed in a dedicated file. This policy will apply to any County Employee or Agent under investigations for child abuse, regardless of their stature and position. Any employee or agent found culpable of child abuse will face dire consequences including but not limited to dismissal from employment, termination of contract and prosecution.

b) **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is crucial to a fair and effective reporting procedure. It is unacceptable and potentially defamatory for concerns of child abuse (and abusers) to be spread throughout the organisation rather than being directed through a formal complaints process. All participants must understand the importance of following the set reporting lines when concerns arise. Confidentiality protects the child, the notifier, the respondent and the organisations, and ensures a fair and proper process.

c) **Reprisal**

The County Government of Vihiga will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal or retaliation against any employee and associate who reports any form of abuse or exploitation, provides any information or other assistance in an investigation.

d) **Counselling support**

Professional counselling support will be made available to all parties involved.

## **5. Investigation of complaints**

Physical and/or sexual abuse of a child is a crime. Government Institutions and Agencies shall be required to notify authorities when there are reasonable grounds for reporting abuse, particularly if the allegations are made by and involve minors within the jurisdiction of Vihiga County. The Ministry of Health and the National Police Service will take lead in forensic investigations. During investigations, the Directorate of Children Services will ensure safety and security of child victims.

Allegations made will need to consider legal framework or internal procedures to investigate and followed up to their logical conclusion. The County Government of Vihiga will work closely with investigative agencies, like minded organizations and government institutions including the Judiciary and Office of the Public Prosecution, the Law Society of Kenya, and the County Attorney to ensure proper investigation is conducted on each case, cases prosecuted in accordance with the Law, and victims access justice in the shortest time possible.

Internal investigations will consider a confidential, thorough, impartial and prompt process. The investigation may consist of interviews with witnesses and others as appropriate, collection of information about the alleged conduct, gathering of documentation, or other procedures as appropriate. The individual alleged to have violated this policy would have the opportunity to present his or her view of the events in question. The County Government of Vihiga will hold its determination until the investigation is completed.

Witness Protection Act will be adhered to during the entire process of investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION**

### ***1. Who can report?***

- Child or young person
- Parents or adults
- County Employees & Associates
- The Civil Society Organizations and Partners
- Government Institutions and Agencies

- Community Health Promoters, Local Administration, Nyumba Kumi and Village Elders

**2. *What to report?***

Allegations, disclosures or observations of child abuse or suspected breaches of the Child Protection Policy or Code of Conduct

**3. *When to report?***

All concerns must be reported within 24 hours, or as soon as possible. In cases of SGBV, such cases shall be reported to health facilities and forensic medical examination conducted within 72hrs.

**4. *Who to report to?***

All reports must be reported to Kenya National Police Service, the Gender Desk, Directorate of Child Services, the County Child Protection Focal Person, the Child Hotline 116, the GBV Hotline 1195, School Heads and other relevant authorities/agencies. Whoever receives such reports or allegations concerning child abuse has the responsibility to launch investigations immediately.

**5. *What will happen?***

The situation and information will be assessed/investigated and a confidential report will be made in compliance with this County Child Protection Policy and within the context of local, national and international legislation, laws and treaties safeguarding rights and welfare of children.

**Possible outcomes:**

Once a case is successfully reported, investigated and documented, the following outcomes will be expected;

- Criminal matter or child protection report made to a Child Protection Authority within the jurisdiction of Vihiga County.
- Victim's and alleged perpetrator's safety needs assessed and responded to.
- Breach of this County Child Protection Policy and/or Code of Conduct resulting in performance management or termination of association.
- Feedback shall be given where possible to those directly involved or affected, protecting confidentiality and privacy.
- Debriefing/counselling to be offered if needed.

## **Child Protection Policy Implementation Strategy**

Vihiga County Government will implement its Child Protection Policy alongside the County Government Code of Conduct through;

**1. Child protection capacity building:**

The County Child Protection Focal Person, the Directorate of Children Services, and the County Multispectral Working Groups and partner including Civil Society Organizations will enhance awareness of child protection issues among County Employees, Associates, Contractors, and Members of the Public through policy promotion, dissemination, collaboration, advocacy and civic education and training.

**2. County Planning and Execution**

In the County Integrated Development Plans and Budgets, the County Government of Vihiga will prioritize child protection and welfare activities, programs and concerns. The CIDP and Budgets will be aligned to the needs of children, and shall take into consideration the principle of child participation, involvement and engagement in key decision-making processes.

**3. Child Protection Code of Conduct:**

Outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for people to whom the Code applies in relation to children with whom we come into contact with. A breach of the Code may result in termination of employment/association.

**4. Compliance:**

County Employees, and associates are required to sign a written statement agreeing to comply with the County Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

**5. Mandatory reporting of alleged or suspected cases of child abuse:**

Reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and as quickly as possible and will meet County and National legislative requirements. Any person who intentionally makes a false or malicious allegation will face disciplinary action.

**6. Risk management:**

Effective child abuse prevention strategies will be incorporated in all Vihiga County plans, program designs, activities, budgets and emergency responses.

**7. Recruitment and County staff management practices:**

The County Public Service Board will screen and monitor to ensure prospective and current employees do not pose a risk to children. Criminal record checks (police checks) will be

considered, where available, particularly for positions working directly with children. Additional screening measures can include “working with children” checks, identity checks, verbal referee checks and interview questions. All employees will be required to have met the requirements of Chapter 6, and particular, obtaining Police Clearance Certificates at the point of recruitment. Every employee will be required to sign and abide by the conditions of the Child SAFEGUARDING policy and Code of Conduct.

## **PROCEDURES**

The County Government of Vihiga acknowledges that **her commitment** to child protection is based on the following principles:

- a) Promoting and protecting the best interests of children at all times
- b) Zero tolerance of child abuse – mandatory reporting of confirmed or suspected child abuse incidences
- c) Child protection is a shared responsibility between the County Government of Vihiga, its partners and the communities in which it works
- d) The views of children and young people will be respected at all times, and their voices heard and used to inform child protection policy implementation and program development.

It shall be the responsibility of the County government of Vihiga:

- (a) To ensure that all children living in any part of the County including children with disabilities, special needs and living in the street are protected from any harm that may interfere with their growth and development.
- (b) To establish family-oriented programmes, children rescue and rehabilitation centers for children living in the streets and ensure that the facilities are distributed equitably within the County.
- (c) To promote public awareness on child rights.
- (d) To coordinate relevant programmes or support initiatives from different subsectors that encourages child participation through forums like County Children Assemblies.
- (e) Shall incur expenditure in or about the temporary care of any child in need of care including his maintenance in a place of safety or in return of any such child to his parent/guardian or to the area of residence.

- (f) To ensure the orphans and vulnerable children are provided adequate housings in tandem with the prevailing houses in the community to avoid them living in abject poverty.

### **A. Identity and registration**

Every child including children with disabilities, special needs and those living in the street has a right to identity and registration at birth through naming, right to nationality and the continued preservation of identity.

The County government of Vihiga shall:

- (i) Lobby and disseminate information on importance of child registration at birth.
- (ii) In liaison with national government, ensure that all mothers get notifications which enable them get birth certificates

### **B. Drugs and substance abuse**

The County government of Vihiga shall protect all children living in the County from drugs and substance abuse through:

- (i) Legislation and enforcement of laws on drug use and abuse.
- (ii) Establishing or lobby for the establishment of rehabilitation and rescue centers well equipped with qualified personnel and related facilities.
- (iii) Strengthen school outreach programs units on drug and substance abuse

### **Physical abuse**

The County government of Vihiga protect all children living in the County from physical violence such as hitting, kicking, beating, bites, burns as well as corporal punishment, among others through:

- (i) Enforcement of laws on corporal punishment and other forms of cruel and degrading punishments.
- (ii) Advocating for alternative forms of disciplining children.
- (iii) Legislation of laws to protect children from physical abuse

### **C. Child labour**

The County government of Vihiga shall protect all children living in the County from work that threatens their well-being which include health, education growth and development through:

- (i) Legislation and enforcement of laws protecting children from child labour



- (ii) Ensuring adequate provision of social protection services especially access to education for all children as well as life skills.
- (iii) Sensitization of communities on child labour and its consequences
- (iv) Disseminate information on the appropriate and marketable vocational skills to children who are unable to attend secondary level education.
- (v) County government in liaison with national government to enforce basic education act (2013).

### **Child trafficking**

The County government of Vihiga shall ensure that all children are protected against all forms of sale, trafficking and abduction through:

- (i) Rescuing, rehabilitation and re-integration of all vulnerable children.
- (ii) Enforcement of anti-trafficking law in liaison with government agencies and institutions.
- (iii) Promote the provision of social protection services to vulnerable families.

### **D. Child sexual abuse and exploitation**

The County government of Vihiga shall ensure protection against child sexual abuse and exploitation through:

- (i) Enforcement of legislations on child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- (ii) Government to develop and incorporate curricula with focus on life skills especially in vocational training centers.
- (iii) Facilitating the provision of efficient child protection systems to receive and respond to cases of child sexual abuse.
- (iv) Establish and equip shelters for children who have been abused.

### **E. Child neglect**

Neglect is a key contributor of illness and death in young children if not prevented. The County government of Vihiga shall ensure that children are brought up in conducive environment and protected from neglect through:

- (i) Provision of psycho-social support for parents and families among others.
- (ii) Ensuring the existence of social protection policies and programmes.
- (iii) The county government of Vihiga in liaison with national government to raise awareness on child negligence.

### **F. Children of internally displaced families and refugees**

The County government of Vihiga shall put in place measures to protect all children living in the County (including refugees) from all forms of threat through:

- (i) Ensuring minimal disruption of essential services such as education, water, sanitation, shelter and health for children of internally displaced and refugee families.
- (ii) Advocacy and awareness relating to the rights of children among refugees and internally displaced communities together with programs aimed at instilling camaraderie and fostering good relations with the surrounding community's peoples in a bid to reduce discrimination.

#### **G. Children affected by disasters, wars and conflicts**

The County government of Vihiga shall put in place measures to protect all children living in the County from calamities such as landslides, flashfloods, war and conflict through:

- (i) Provision of disaster preparedness measures with particular attention to children, pregnant and nursing mothers through capacity building in preparedness, response, rehabilitation and reconstruction, mitigation and management of disasters.
- (ii) Supporting and strengthening child protection mechanism for areas prone to conflict.
- (iii) Ensuring existence of post trauma counseling services to children and families affected by conflict.

#### **H. Children and the law**

Section 26 of the Children Act 2022 requires that institutionalization of children in conflict with the law shall only be used as a means of last resort and such children ought to be placed in alternative measures such as placement with family or in an educational setting and or home. This is a welcome provision as it will foster a paradigm shift from Kenya's over-reliance on institutionalization as a child care and child protection model to a preference towards non-institutionalization of children who are in conflict with the law. This provision allows Kenya to adhere to its international obligations under Article 37(b) of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, which also advocates for non- institutional means of dealing with children in conflict with the law. It further ensures that the Children Act is aligned with Article 53(f) the Constitution which advocates for the detention of children as a means of last resort.

In the same breadth, this provision will go a long way to complement the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, 2015, which were enacted to reduce reliance on institutional care, enhance family and community care, and provide harmonized national guidance for child care and protection. Additionally, the Act further expressly provides and offers children an opportunity for diversion. Diversion envisages the channeling of disputes involving child offenders outside the formal court processes into informal community-based structures. The primary objective of diversion includes inter alia;

- a) Utilizing alternative methods of holding children accountable for their unlawful acts or omissions resulting in harm to other persons;
- b) Promoting the rehabilitation of the child, and re-integration of the child into the family and community; and
- c) Providing an opportunity to those prejudicially affected by the unlawful conduct of the child to express their views concerning such conduct

In this respect, the County government of Vihiga shall liaise with judiciary to ensure that children are protected in matters concerning the law through:

- i. Supporting child friendly and gender responsive court facilities.
- ii. Supporting provision of legal representation in court on children matters.

#### **I. Negative impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Media**

The County government of Vihiga shall ensure that children are protected from harmful information, ICT and media through:

- i. Enforcement of the laws on the use of the media and ICT by children.
- ii. Formulating clear guidelines and regulations on pornography and other criminal related exposures.
- iii. Supporting awareness programs on the dangers posed by uncontrolled media and pornographic materials.

#### **J. Retrogressive cultural beliefs and practices**

The County government of Vihiga shall ensure that all children are protected from retrogressive and repugnant cultural beliefs and practices through:

- (i) Provision of IEC programs to discourage retrogressive and repugnant cultural beliefs and practices.
- (ii) Enforcement of legislation and plan of action against child marriage.
- (iii) Provision of child friendly rescue centers/safe spaces for those rescued from retrogressive and repugnant cultural beliefs and practices like incest and taboo children.
- (iv) Supporting legal process that will ensure property of deceased parents transcends to orphaned children regardless of their age or sex.

#### **K. Negative influences and harm by caregivers**

All children deserve quality care, nurture and protection against any dangers posed by those entrusted with their care. While girls are the most affected, children with disabilities have not been spared. The County government of Vihiga shall put in place measures to protect children against harm by parents/guardians through:

- (i) Effective dissemination and implementation of the Sexual Offenses Act, 2006 and the Persons with Disability Act, 2003.
- (ii) Provision of IEC materials to raise awareness on the rights of the children and forms of child abuse by caregivers.
- (iii) Provision of a free and accessible channel to air complaints of child abuse especially for right claimers.

#### **L. Orphans & Vulnerable Children (OVC)**

The County government of Vihiga shall give measures to protect orphans & vulnerable children through:

- (i) Strengthening structures, procedures, mechanisms including community system to protect orphans & vulnerable children.
- (ii) Provision of treatment, care and support to children including their parents and caregivers.
- (iii) Provision of essential needs such as housing, medical care, safety and security, clothing, food security and safety nets to orphans and vulnerable children.

#### **Children under Community Care, Adoption, Foster Care and Charitable Children Institutions (CCIs)**

Although community care, adoption, foster care and charitable children's institutions have been found to be viable alternatives for childcare, all children living under these arrangements shall be protected against any possible abuse and exploitation. This shall be achieved through:

- (i) Undertaking reasonable efforts to avoid the separation of siblings while placing children for adoption, foster care, guardianship, kinship and Kafaalah.
- (ii) Strengthening CCIs operation as the last resort and temporary measure for children as they await appropriate placement and alternative family care within the community.
- (iii) Strengthen community support structures and systems that protect rights and welfares of orphans and vulnerable children.

#### **Participation Rights**

##### **Children's right to assemble, demonstrate, petition and demonstrate in public life:**

The Children Act 2022, under section 28, now explicitly recognizes children's right to assemble, petition and demonstrate in public life which was not provided for under the Repealed Act. This means that children are now able to assemble and demonstrate on matters touching on children though the exercise of this right is subject to the rights of others. Further the infringement of this right can be enforced through the institution of proceedings in court. This gives credence to Article

8 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

The implication, thus, all children shall participate in all areas relevant to their gender and age through:

- i. Facilitate provision of appropriate and accurate information at all stages in their growth to enhance their participation in regard to expression of opinion through facilitation of children assemblies at ward level, Sub County and County level.
- ii. Facilitate provision for appropriate forums to promote association and expression of opinion for all categories of children, at all levels, with proper representation by region, age and gender.
- iii. Popularization of the already existing child participation guidelines to the public.

## **CHAPTER THREE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PROTECTING CHILD RIGHTS AND WELFARE**

### **Duties and Responsibilities of Children**

In pursuant to Article 31 of the African Charter, as read together with section 30 of the Children Act 2022, children have the following roles and responsibilities, which shall include but not limited to the following:

- a) Work for the cohesion of the family.
- b) Respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and assist them in case of need provided that the child's best interest remains paramount
- c) Serve the national community by placing their physical and intellectual abilities at its service
- d) Preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity
- e) Preserve and strengthen the positive cultural values of their community and their relationships with other members of that community
- f) Attend school unless prevented by factors beyond their ability
- g) Not discriminate against other children on account of ethnicity, race, disability, gender, social status or other grounds
- h) Protect the environment
- i) Not abuse or harm other children
- j) Not destroy any property
- k) Not to steal and obtain things by false pretense

### **Duties and Responsibilities of Parents**

Children Act No. 29 of 2022, being an Act of Parliament to give effect to Article 53 of the Constitution; to make provision for children rights, parental responsibility, alternative care of children including guardianship, foster care placement and adoption. In a nutshell, the Act gives effect to the provisions of Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya and advances the concept of the best interest of the child as the primary consideration in every decision touching on children. It has elaborated and expounded on a myriad of aspects such as prioritization of family-based care like fostering adoption, custody, maintenance, guardianship, kingship and Kafaalah that was not as intricate in the now Repealed Children's Act, No. 8 of 2001.

Under Section 31 of the Children Act, "*parental responsibility*" is defined as all the duties, rights, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and the child's property in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child. Such duties and responsibilities include but not limited to:

- a) the duty to maintain a child, and in particular, the duty to maintain the child and, in particular, to provide the child with basic nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation facilities, clothing medical care, including immunization, basic education, general guidance, social conduct and moral values

- b) the duty to protect the child from neglect, neglect, abuse, discrimination or other differential treatment;
- c) the duty to provide parental guidance in religious, moral, social, cultural and other values that are not harmful to the child; determine the name of the child; procure registration of the birth of his or her child; appoint a legal guardian in respect of the child; receive, recover, and otherwise deal with the property of the child for the benefit, and in the best interest of the child; facilitate or restrict the migration of the child from or within Kenya; and upon the death of the child, to arrange for the burial, cremation of the child or any other acceptable method of interment.
- d) the duty to ensure that, during the temporary absence of the parent or guardian, the child shall be committed to the care of a fit person.

However, in Section 31(3), the Act prohibits any person with responsibility over a child never to affect;

- a) any obligation which such person may have in relation to the child, such as statutory duty to maintain the child; or
- b) any rights which, in the event of the child's death, such person may have in relation to the administration of the child's estate in accordance with the Law of Succession Act.

Further, Section 32 of the Act stresses on equal parental responsibility, whereby;

- a) Subject to the provisions of Children Act, the parents of a child shall have parental responsibility over the child on an equal basis, and neither the father nor the mother of the child shall have a superior right or claim against the other in exercise of such parental responsibility whether or not the child is born within or outside wedlock.
- b) A person who has parental responsibility over a child shall at all times have the duties, powers and responsibilities as are prescribed in the Act or any other written law.
- c) A person with parental responsibility over a child shall not act in any way that contravenes any order of a court of competent jurisdiction made with respect to the child under the Act or any other written law.
- d) A person who has parental responsibility over a child may not relinquish or assign such responsibilities to another person.
- e) Nothing in subsection (4) of the Children Act prevents a person from making temporary arrangements, during his or her absence, to allow a fit person to exercise his or her parental responsibilities over a child for and on his or her behalf.
- f) The making of the temporary arrangements referred to in subsection (4) by a person shall not affect or limit that person's liability arising from his or her failure to exercise his or her responsibility under this section.

Notably, Section 35 of the Children Act 2022 grants extension of parental responsibility beyond the child's eighteenth birthday under the following conditions;

- a) parental responsibility in respect of a child may be extended by an order of the Court after the date on which the child attains the age of eighteen years if the Court is satisfied, either of its own motion or on application by any person, that special circumstances exist with regard to the welfare of the child that would necessitate the making of such extension.
- b) the special circumstances referred to in subsection (1) include cases where the child is in need of extended parental responsibility by reason of special needs arising from severe disability or developmental disorder.

- c) an application under this section may be made either before or after the child has attained the age of eighteen years by the parent; any person who has parental responsibility over the child or by a relative of a child; the Secretary; or the child.

On **guardianship** the Act is clear. Although the Repealed Act recognized that non-Kenyan citizens would be eligible to apply for guardianship of a minor born in Kenya or a resident, the Act, under Part X, now mandates that only Kenyan Citizens are eligible to apply for the guardianship of a minor. This move could be attributable to recent uproar in the country concerning inter- country adoptions which necessitated the imposition of a moratorium premised on allegations that the said adoptions were fueling child trafficking. This locks out foreigners from seeking guardianship of minors and they can only now fall back on inter- country adoptions. The Act further provides that only in exceptional circumstances can a guardian appointed by court be able to remove the said minor from the jurisdiction of Kenya. However, these exceptional circumstances that the court ought to consider are not elaborated nor expounded. Perhaps these circumstances would be elaborated in the Rules that ought to be formulated by the Chief Justice on guardianship to offer more guidance on the matter.

### **Adoption**

The Children Act 2022, explains types and circumstances under which in the absence of parental responsibility, an adoption may apply. The Act has provided for the various types of adoptions which include;

- a) Kingship adoption - This involves the adoption of a child by a person who is a relative of the child;
- b) Local Adoption - This involves an adoption where the child is resident in Kenya; or the adopting parent or parents are Kenyan nationals' resident in Kenya; and
- c) Foreign Adoption - This involves an adoption where; the adopting parent or parents are Kenyan nationals with dual citizenship; the adopting parent or parents are foreign nationals whether or not resident in Kenya; the adopting parent or parents are not Kenyan nationals but are biologically related to the child; and or the adopting parent or parents were once Kenyan nationals but have lost their nationality by operation of the law of the host country to which the prospective parent or parents have a nationality.

The Act further makes provision for children who are eligible for adoption being;

- a) Child who is an orphan,
- b) Child who is abandoned and the parents or guardians cannot be traced within a period of three years and;
- c) Child offered willingly for adoption by their biological parents.

With respect to persons who are eligible to adopt, the Act recognizes that an adoption order can be made in favour of a sole applicant and or two spouses jointly. In the same breadth, those prohibited from adoption are sole male applicants unless they are blood relatives of the said child. Although the Repealed Act expressly prohibited homosexuals from adoptions, the new Act is silent on this issue altogether. Although the Act recognizes inter- country adoptions i.e., adoptions of children in Kenya by spouses who are not citizens of Kenya, it is curious to note that the inter-country moratorium is still subsisting rendering inter-country adoptions unviable. This is explicitly reflected in the 7th schedule of the Act which provides that the terms of the moratorium on inter-country and resident adoptions issued on 26th November 2014 shall apply to matters relating to inter-country adoption under the Act.



### **Duties and Responsibilities of CSOS and Development Partners**

- i. To collaborate with the county government in order to sync activities for proper coordination. The county government shall coordinate the existence and operations of CSOs operating within the county.
- ii. To share information with the county government and give updates of its operations, and work in tandem with the county governments plan.
- iii. To advocate for effective governance, policy implementation and meaningful resource utilization, and programs in the best interest of the child.
- iv. CSOs and other non-state actors are responsible for complementing state action, and catalyzing change by mobilizing and increasing demand for public services such as education, child protection, healthcare, child safety and security, setting the agenda for the best practice and public engagement.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of The County Government of Vihiga**

CA Section 61,62,63

- Provide data to aid evidence-based programs
- The government is the main duty bearer in ensuring a protective environment for children and therefore holds the primary responsibility in allocating resources and ensuring the availability of structures to offer preventive and responsive child protection services through various government departments, agencies and authorities
- County government institutions are also charged with the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of laws and policies and taking lead in coordinating all work related to child

## CHAPTER FOUR: CHILD RIGHTS GOVERNANCE

### Introduction

Child Rights Governance is a global initiative of the United Nations that focuses on creating and/or strengthening the governance infrastructure – that is the systems and mechanisms that need to be in place to effectively make children’s rights a reality.

The purpose of the Child Rights Governance is to support State and Non-State programmes and strategies, to encourage all levels of Government to move forward faster in fulfilling children’s rights; holding them to account for what they have or have not done; and mobilizing civil society and possibly other actors to promote and defend children’s rights and children’s agency as citizens. Child Rights Governance operates within two strategic objectives:

2. Strengthened Government institutions and mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of children’s rights
3. Increased awareness and capacity in civil society and among children to promote children’s rights and hold duty bearers accountable

### Conceptual Framework

Children’s Rights have been established throughout the UN Human Rights Treaty Body System, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and extended through the two International Covenants of the International Bill of Rights and many of the other treaties that have come into force over the past 70 years. At the present time the main point of reference for children’s rights is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three optional protocols.

Article 4 of the UNCRC makes it clear that once a country becomes a State Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (i.e. it has ratified the UNCRC), it has an obligation to put into place the means by which children’s rights can be realized. The Committee on the Rights of the Child’s General Comment No5ii sets out concrete steps that all governments must take to put in place the infrastructure necessary to implement the Convention. These obligations are what are known as the ‘General Measures of Implementation’ of the UNCRC and form the core focus of any CRG programme and analysis.

### County Government measures of implementing UNCR Child Right Governance programmes and analysis:

In recognition of the UNCRC treaties, and the Government of Kenya’s commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the County Government of Vihiga will put in place measures of implementation of UNCR Child Governance programmes and analysis. Such measure will include the following:

- a) *Ensuring that legislation is fully compatible with the Convention, and removal of reservations and ratification of UNCRC’s optional protocols and other human rights instruments for children, (including regional instruments).*

Vihiga County Government will review County legislation and ensure that laws, policies and regulations are compatible with the rights set out in the CRC. Additionally, the County Government of Vihiga will review and withdraw any reservations made on Convention

articles and to ratify other relevant international instruments such as the three Optional Protocols.

- b) ***Ensuring that there is a systematic process of assessing new laws, policies or programmes for their impact on children's rights ("Child Impact Assessments")*** A Child Impact assessment can be described as a prior assessment of the impact which a decision about laws, policies or programmes may have on all children or specific groups of children affected by it. It makes the best interests of the child a primary consideration in government decision making.

- c) ***Developing a detailed, comprehensive County strategy or agenda for children, based on the Convention, and taking into account policies of decentralization.***

In order to promote and protect the rights of the child at all levels, the County Government of Vihiga and its partners will develop a comprehensive County strategy for children based on the CRC. The strategy must set realistic and achievable targets and must include adequate allocation of human, financial and organizational resources.

- d) ***Ensuring adequate resource allocation and making children "visible" in budgets.***

The County Government of Vihiga will through CIDP, allocate adequate budget resources for children "to the maximum extent of their available resources". Steps shall be taken at all levels of governance including County departments to ensure that economic and social planning and decision-making, and budgetary decisions are made with the best interest of children as a primary considerations and that children are protected from the adverse effects of economic policies or financial downturns.

- e) ***Developing permanent mechanisms in County government to ensure the effective coordination, monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation.***

Full implementation of the CRC and County Child Protection Policy requires effective coordination both horizontally between County Government departments, and agencies and vertically between different governance levels, from Ward to Sub County and County levels but also between County Government of Vihiga and private sector and or partners in effective child protection and welfare initiatives' implementation processes.

- f) ***Developing training, education and capacity-building for all those involved in the implementation process.***

The County Government of Vihiga will ensure that awareness raising on the CRC and child related policies should be geared towards adults and children alike. In other words, while designing and developing training materials including IECs, the text of such policies should be widely available and presented in locally understandable language, for example, publishing a child-friendly version of the policies. Additionally, the County Government reports and data on child protection should be easily and widely accessible by the general public. As part of the process of creating awareness, children need to learn about their rights and the responsibilities in key decision making processes. Lessons of rights and welfare of children should be incorporated into the school curriculum at all stages. Furthermore, education should extend to training and capacity building of personnel working with children. These include child psychologists, teachers, health and social workers, the police and others.

- g) ***Creation of a mechanism or process to ensure all County Government agencies and non-state actors (e.g. the private sector, faith-based organizations, NGO/civil society) respect the Convention on Rights of Children.***

The County Government of Vihiga reaffirms its obligation to ensure that all parties (private sector, civil society organizations and development partners operate in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Children; and in particular, the best interest of the child

principle shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private bodies. Further, the County Government of Vihiga will establish a permanent monitoring mechanism or process aimed at ensuring that all departmental agencies and non-state partners comply with policies safeguarding rights and welfare of children.

h) ***Promoting co-operation and co-ordination with civil society - with professional associations, non-governmental organizations, children and so on.***

The County Government of Vihiga recognizes that the implementation of UNCRC and other policies, laws and regulations relating to children rights is an obligation of the Government. However, government institutions may need to engage all sectors of society, including children themselves. The NGOs, CSOs, the Media and in particular children and young people shall participate and be directly involved in the process.

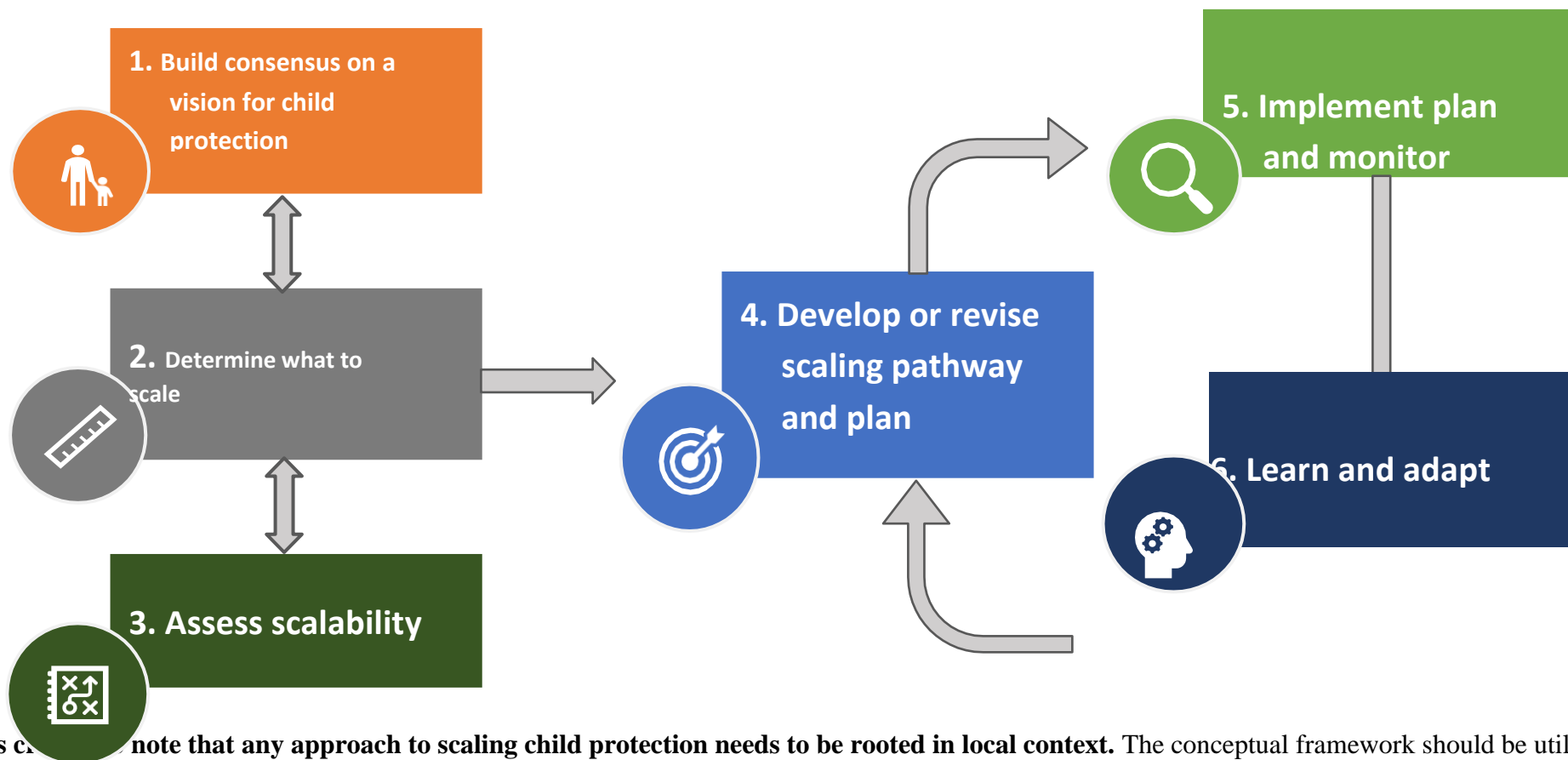
i) ***Ensuring the development of appropriate indicators and sufficient data collection on the state of children.***

The County Government of Vihiga will use different methods for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on child protection issues. These may include interviewing children directly and asking them for their opinions and views. However, it is important that data are not only collected, but also properly analyzed, evaluated and the outcomes used to influence policy change.

j) ***Creating statutory children's rights institutions and structures:***

The County Government of Vihiga acknowledges that establishment of independent human rights institutions and structures for children should not substitute, but rather, be complementary to, self-monitoring governmental institutions. These institutions should be geared towards promoting and safeguarding the rights of the child. Consequently, the County Government of Vihiga in collaboration with other actors will establish independent human rights institutions and referral structures for children including County and Sub County Child Protection Networks, Child Protection Watchdogs, Child Protection Lobby Groups, Area Advisory Councils, Focal Points on Children's Rights within the County Government structure of governance to lobby and support in promoting child rights and welfare in Vihiga County.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework for scaling up child protection in Vihiga County.



It is crucial to note that any approach to scaling child protection needs to be rooted in local context. The conceptual framework should be utilized in ways that reflect the situation on the ground and should not be applied in a uniform fashion. (UNICEF Model)

**Table 1: Policy Objectives and Strategies**

<b>Policy Objective 1:</b> <i>To prevent child mortality and promote children's health including street children in Vihiga County.</i>	
<b>Broad Strategies</b>	
1.1	Increase access to and improve provision of reproductive and maternal health care services
1.2	Promote essential newborn care practices in the home, and health facility level
1.3	Prevention and better management of childhood illnesses/conditions
1.4	Increase effectiveness of health systems to improve maternal, neonatal and child health
1.5	Improve provision of and access to Child and Adolescent-Friendly Health Services
1.6	Improve access to GBV prevention and response, HIV prevention, care and treatment services for children and adolescents
1.7	Develop and promote evidence-based interventions to improve food security and nutrition at County, community and household levels
1.8	Increase access to and improve provision of WASH services and facilities
<b>Policy Objective 2:</b> <i>To promote nurturing care, stimulation and holistic development and learning for all children.</i>	
<b>Broad Strategies</b>	
2.1	Ensure equitable access to quality Early Childhood Development (ECDE) for holistic development for all children
2.2	Improve access to and strengthen the provision of equitable and quality primary and basic education for all children
2.3	Increase access to and improve provision of relevant training and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education
<b>Policy Objective 3:</b> <i>To prevent, respond to, and protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect</i>	
<b>Broad Strategies</b>	
3.1	Scale up the provision and improve access to family strengthening and support services to vulnerable families including OVCs and Child Headed families
3.2	Improve permanency planning for children who are deprived of family care through quality alternative care services for children living outside family care
3.3	Strengthen capacity of the County child care and protection sector for effective response to prevent, and protect all children against all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect
3.4	Strengthen the capacity of the local institutions and community child care and protection structures for effective response to prevent, and protect all children against all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect

3.5	Strengthen a County response for prevention of, and removal of children from all forms of child labour and trafficking
3.6	Develop and implement Child Rights Governance and Safeguarding measures for prevention and protection of all children in school from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse
3.7	Develop and implement a County response for prevention of, and removal of all children living and working on the street
<b>Policy Objective 4:</b> <i>To promote the right of all children to be heard and express their opinions in all matters involving and affecting them, according to their developing capacities.</i>	
<b>Broad Strategies</b>	
4.1	Ensure observance and implementation of the domesticated international and regional standards on child participation
4.2	Ensure that children are valued as key stakeholders and members of society, without discrimination
4.3	Put in place nationally recognized governance processes, guidelines and mechanisms that enable child participation to be deliberate, systematic and accountable
4.4	Ensure inclusion of especially vulnerable children in child participation mechanisms through targeted measures
4.5	Ensure that children and children's issues are visible and heard in local and national government processes
4.6	Reduce negative attitudes and beliefs on child participation and promoting positive cultures, practices and beliefs
4.7	Create an evidence-based and enabling learning environment to facilitate and inform effective child participation processes, with data collection and evaluation as a basis for future initiatives
<b>Policy Objective 5:</b> <i>To strengthen systems for planning, programming and delivery of quality child care and protection</i>	
<b>Broad Strategies</b>	
5.1	Strengthen leadership and governance structures in the County
5.2	Strengthen social services workforce
5.3	Increase financing and budget allocation for children services
5.4	Harmonize and strengthen Coordination and networking mechanism involving likeminded partners and institutions
5.5	Strengthen social service delivery models and mechanisms in the County
5.6	Promote evidence based planning and programming for children in all departments and sectors

## **CHAPTER FIVE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

### **Rationale**

The implementation plan seeks to operationalize Vihiga County Child Protection Policy by:

- a) Providing an operational framework to guide the County Government stakeholders and its partners in coordinating, planning, implementing and monitoring programmes for children;
- b) Being a strategic instrument to assist with identification, mobilization and allocation of resources towards the County objectives for children;
- c) Guide the County Government of Vihiga, government agencies, private sector, donors, international NGOs, CBOs, and faith-based organizations (FBOs) in contributing to the objectives and strategies, and achievement of prioritized targets;
- d) Increasing strategic coordination and collaboration across sectors and departments with responsibility for children to ensure optimization of resources and benefits for children, and;
- e) Helping align international and national support with County priorities and plans for children.

### **Priority Intervention Areas and Actions**

The specific priority intervention areas are: child survival, child development, child care and protection, and child participation, and systems strengthening. The key actions will be identified based on consultation with relevant stakeholders and the policy implementation stages.

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**Table 2: Implementation and Stakeholder Engagement Matrix: Priority Areas and Key Actions**

<b>Priority Intervention Area 1: Child Survival, Health and Nutrition</b>			
<i>Policy Objective 1: To prevent child mortality and promote children's health.</i>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Other partners and stakeholders</b>
1.1 Increase access to and improve provision of maternal health care services.	1.1.1 Strengthen and expand programs to reduce unmet need for family planning and increase opportunities for healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies 1.1.2 Support and promote safe delivery of all newborns by skilled health personnel 1.1.3 Ensure universal access to quality antenatal and postnatal care services to improve perinatal and maternal outcomes 1.1.4 Improve emergency obstetric care coverage and quality to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity 1.1.5 Improve early diagnosis of maternal mental health problems and provision of psychosocial support (PSS) in maternal and child health services, particularly during the sensitive postnatal period 1.1.6 Strengthen family and community based support for women seeking appropriate care before and during pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum period 1.1.7 Promote male involvement in maternal and child health service planning and delivery 1.1.8 Advance community mobilization efforts to build capacity of women, families, and communities to actively engage with each other and with health service providers to improve the quality of services, and to hold health systems accountable. 1.1.9 Improve capacities of health service providers to provide quality, respectful, gender-responsive healthcare to women – including through training on new-born care and safe motherhood.	Dept. of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> </ul>
1.2 Promote essential new-born care practices in the home, and in health facilities.	1.2.1 Provide training for health workers on Integrated Management of Neonatal Childhood Illnesses 1.2.2 Promote evidence-based behaviour change and communication efforts to improve essential new-born practices at family and community levels.	Dept. of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based</li> </ul>

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<p>1.3: Prevention and better management of childhood illnesses/ conditions.</p>	<p>1.3.1 Strengthen access to and ensure optimal utilization of immunization and other preventive services</p> <p>1.3.2 Develop support mechanisms within communities for disease prevention, early detection and health seeking for childhood illness</p> <p>1.3.3 Scale-up the Integrated Community Case Management and referral of childhood illness approach</p> <p>1.3.4 Strengthen the capacities of families, community health promoters and primary healthcare providers to promote health, prevent disease and manage common childhood illnesses.</p> <p>1.3.5 Improve the quality of child health services provided at the facility and community levels</p> <p>1.3.6 Develop and strengthen child-centered programmes to deliver specialized services to infants and young children with developmental delays, disabilities and complex medical challenges.</p> <p>1.3.7 Provide children with disabilities with assistive devices based on their needs</p>	<p>Dept. of Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> </ul>
<p>1.4: Increase effectiveness of health systems to improve maternal, neonatal and child health.</p>	<p>1.4.1 Strengthen supply chain management to improve the availability of life-saving reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health Commodities</p> <p>1.4.2 Address gaps and constraints in human resource for health</p> <p>1.4.3 Strengthen the capacity of the health system to prevent and respond to violence against children, including capacity to identify, refer and provide comprehensive care and treatment to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused</p> <p>1.4.4 Strengthen early identification, diagnosis, referral, treatment and support for children with special needs, including, but not limited to physical and/or mental health disabilities, and provide an appropriate continuum of care.</p> <p>1.4.5 Ensure that orphaned and vulnerable children benefit from provision of integrated basic health services provided by Children Act 2022 and other applicable laws</p> <p>1.4.6 Develop, test and refine metrics that assess gender norms and behaviours, service availability, equity and quality of maternal and prenatal care, coverage of key interventions, and maternal morbidities</p> <p>1.4.7 Strengthen M&amp;E and information systems to improve maternal and child health outcomes.</p>	<p>Dept. of Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> </ul>

<p>1.5: Improve provision of and access to Adolescent-Friendly Health Services.</p>	<p>1.5.1 Review and implement a minimum package of Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) services for all levels of the health system</p> <p>1.5.2 Build the capacity of health service providers to deliver adolescent responsive services</p> <p>1.5.3 Promote behaviour change among adolescents through comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, and life skills education through school and community-based outreach interventions</p> <p>1.5.4 Ensure equitable access to mental health, services for all adolescents, and strengthen rehabilitation services for all adolescents with addictive behaviours.</p>	<p>Dept. of Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> </ul>
<p>1.6: Prevention of HIV infection among children and youths, and improving access to HIV care, treatment, adherence and viral suppression services.</p>	<p>1.6.1 Strengthen the integration of elimination of Mother to Child Transmission into Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) services</p> <p>1.6.2 Provide accessible and comprehensive HIV services for children and adolescents (early infant diagnosis, prevention, HTS, linkage to treatment, adherence and viral suppression)</p> <p>1.6.3 Strengthen systems and structures that support positive health outcomes for children and adolescents on HIV treatment</p> <p>1.6.4 Mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on families and children.</p>	<p>Dept. of Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> </ul>
<p>1.7: Develop and promote evidence-based interventions to improve food security and nutrition at household and community levels.</p>	<p>1.7.1 Promote sustainable food production and implement resilient agricultural practices to increase productivity in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable manner</p> <p>1.7.2 Promote and support adoption of post-harvest handling and storage technologies at the household and community levels</p> <p>1.7.3 Strengthen early warning information systems to provide accurate and timely information on the food and nutrition situation, at national and district level</p> <p>1.7.4 Design and implement comprehensive and context-sensitive social protection systems for food security and nutrition</p> <p>1.7.5 Support the establishment of emergency food reserves at County level</p> <p>1.7.6 Engage communities to promote the adoption of healthy nutrition behaviours, community-based growth monitoring and linkage of malnourished cases to care</p>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> </ul>

	1.7.7 Integrate management of severe and moderate acute malnutrition into routine health services and improve scale and quality of community-based management of acute malnutrition. 1.7.8 Support local production of ready-to-use therapeutic and complementary foods.		
1.8: Increase access to and improve provision of WASH services and facilities.	1.8.1 Scale up evidence-based WASH interventions in schools, communities and health facilities. 1.8.2 Promote public-private partnerships for innovative sanitation technologies and maintenance of WASH facilities. 1.8.3 Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.	Dept. of Health Dept. of Water and Environment	- Civil Society Organizations - Development Partners - Private Sector - International NGOs, - Faith Based Organizations
<b>Priority Intervention Area 2: Child Development</b>			
<b>Policy Objective 2: Promote nurturing care, stimulation and holistic development and learning for all children.</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Other stakeholders and partners</b>

<p>2.1. Ensure equitable access to quality Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) for optimal development.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Promote positive child development through culturally relevant parenting education and support; with focus on infant stimulation, parental care and early relationships</p> <p>2.1.2 Promote and scale-up family based/ community based ECDE service delivery models and pre-school programmes</p> <p>2.1.3 Provide for comprehensive early assessment of children to establish and provide for their special learning needs</p> <p>2.1.4 Recruitment, and provision of in-service training for all ECDE teachers for inclusive learning</p> <p>2.1.5 Promote inclusive and equitable play opportunities for all children</p> <p>2.1.6 Establish early learning centres at all existing primary schools to facilitate access and ease transitions for young children</p> <p>2.1.7 Provide and promote crèche and day care facilities for children of working mothers and single parents.</p> <p>2.1.8 Develop and implement support systems that address delayed social, cognitive and emotional development through primary caregiver support, education, counselling</p> <p>2.1.9 Develop a County curriculum framework for ECDE to promote play based, experiential and child friendly learning institutions</p> <p>2.1.10 Develop quality standards and specifications for all types of ECDE provision</p> <p>2.1.11 Strengthen quality assurance of informal and formal early education and care programs and services</p>	<p>Dept. of Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- National Government</li> </ul>
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	<p>2.1.12 Provide professional development opportunities, and rewards and incentives for ECDE service providers at all levels</p> <p>2.1.13 Promote and support research and innovations in Early Childhood Development and Education</p> <p>2.1.14 Develop mechanisms for regular collection, compilation and analysis of the data on ECDE.</p>		
<p>Strategy 2.2: Improve access to and strengthen the provision of equitable and quality primary and secondary education</p>	<p>2.2.1 Ensure that all children of school-going age are enrolled and access school by enforcing Basic Education Act</p> <p>2.2.2 Provide for early and comprehensive assessment of enrolled children to identify and provide for children with special learning needs within the inclusive class.</p> <p>2.2.3 Ensure that children with special education needs are provided for with appropriate learning aids, devices and equipment such as hearing aids, reading glasses, Braille materials, and appropriate ICT equipment and software, as well as for co-curricular activities.</p> <p>2.2.4 Provide for in-service training for all school heads and curriculum teachers and vocational training instructors to inclusively manage and effectively impact knowledge and skillset in children.</p> <p>2.2.5 Ensure safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all children</p> <p>2.2.6 Design and roll out an education system which is not primarily based on standardized and test-based approaches; which take into consideration continuous assessment, participation and creativity</p> <p>2.2.7 Improve the relevance and quality of education by regularly revising and adapting curricula to comply with the recognized international standards as well as children's individual needs</p> <p>2.2.8 Improve the quality of teaching through recruitment, deployment and motivation of teachers and instructors through targeted in-service training, regular school inspection, and teacher monitoring</p> <p>2.2.9 Promote and support innovations for inclusive education (e.g. innovations and technology to produce learning materials in formats accessible to children with special needs)</p> <p>2.2.10 Strengthen efforts to eliminate gender disparities and promote equal access to learning opportunities, including promoting the increased uptake of science subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) by girls</p> <p>2.2.11 Promote programmes for supporting to children from extremely poor households to meet their direct and indirect schooling costs such as school fees, school uniforms, textbooks, bursaries, girls' dignity pack, school feeding programme as well as special equipment for children with disabilities such as wheel chairs, hearing aids, laptops with appropriate software, etc.</p>	<p>Dept. of Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- Ministry of Health</li> <li>- Dept. of ICT</li> </ul>

	<p>2.2.12 Promote in-kind transfer schemes, including food for education schemes for critically vulnerable children and young people in schools</p> <p>2.2.13 Ensure access to quality education for children residing in institutional settings such as rehabilitation centres.</p> <p>2.2.14 Develop and implement school re-entry programs for teenage mothers and school drop-outs</p> <p>2.2.15 Promotion of appropriate and child friendly physical education (games, sports, play equipment) and other types of recreational as well as cultural and scientific activities in schools, community centers and other institutions</p> <p>2.2.16 Expansion of the school-based feeding program to all schools in Vihiga County</p>		
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<p>2.3: Increase access to and improve provision of relevant training and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Promote and expand vocational and technical and alternative skills training, giving priority to out-of-school children, youth, and adolescents, over-age children and children in street situations, young people with disabilities, as well as young people and youths in hard-to-reach areas such as street children, and marginalized communities.</p> <p>2.3.2 Provide educational opportunities to develop relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>2.3.3 Develop and implement a model of vocational and skill-oriented training for children and young people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Dept. of Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- Ministry of Health</li> <li>- Dept. of Children Services</li> </ul>
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**Priority Intervention Area 3: Child Protection, Security and Safety****Policy Objective: To prevent, respond to, and protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Other partners and stakeholders</b>
Strategy 3.1. Scale up the provision and improve access to family strengthening and support services to vulnerable families	1.1.1 Expand household economic strengthening (HES) programs for vulnerable families that are appropriate to their unique needs and context, with a focus on improving caregiving environments and ability to provide for children’s basic needs 1.1.2 Develop and implement programmes that mitigate economic vulnerabilities associated with child exploitation 1.1.3 Develop and implement child-sensitive social protection programmes to support and protect families at-risk 1.1.4 Develop and implement parenting education and support programs 1.1.5 Expand provision of social and specialized services for families at risk or in need, including preventative, supportive and rehabilitative services 1.1.6 Provide specialized support for families whose children require special attention due to certain conditions (e.g. mental health, addiction, disability, etc.) and/or situations (e.g. early child marriage, teenage pregnancy, FGM etc.).	Dept. of Gender, Social Services and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Civil Society Organizations</li><li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li><li>- Private Sector</li><li>- International NGOs,</li><li>- Faith Based Organizations</li><li>- Ministry of Health</li><li>- Directorate of Children Services</li><li>- Directorate of Social Protection</li></ul>

<p>3.2. Improve permanency planning for children who are deprived of family care through quality alternative care services for children living outside family care</p>	<p>3.2.1 Strengthen the capacity of the County level Child Focused Institutions (Child Protection Networks, Area Advisory Councils, Sector Technical Working Groups etc) to better lead, plan, implement and monitor childcare reform agenda in Vihiga County</p> <p>3.2.2 Establish Alternative Care Committees in all Sub Counties to ensure functionality of gate keeping</p> <p>3.2.3 Development of basic minimum standards for alternative care service provision for children</p> <p>3.2.4 Develop and enforce a comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy and clear guidelines and protocols for closure and/or transformation of alternative care institutions (children homes, children rescue centres) to assure and ensure effective community based care for children deprived of family care</p> <p>3.2.5 Ensure that licensing, regulation, monitoring and inspection processes are in place to ensure the quality of alternative care services and foster care</p> <p>3.2.6 Design and or review the County Framework for Alternative Care to ensure it is consistent with the UNCRC Guidelines and protocols on Child Protection and Welfare</p> <p>3.2.7 Ratify The UN Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Adoption, and strengthen efforts to regulate and track domestic adoption</p> <p>3.2.8 Promote and support measures to improve the collection, analysis, and use of data relating to alternative care</p> <p>3.2.9 Support permanency planning of care including identification, documentation, tracing, and sustainable reintegration of children into their family from alternative care setting</p> <p>3.2.10 Develop County level system for identifying, enumerating, and documenting children deprived of family care, including approaches that can be used rapidly in emergencies</p>	<p>Dept. of Social Services, Gender and Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- National Police Service</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- Directorate of Social Protection</li> </ul>
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<p>3.3: Strengthen capacity of the County child care and protection sector for effective response to prevent, and protect all children against all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect</p>	<p>3.3.1 Support the development and strengthening of civil registration system, to ensure universal birth registration.</p> <p>3.3.2 Develop and roll out a County case management system, with protocols on the support of children in adversity to ensure a coherent and coordinated service delivery approach.</p> <p>3.3.3 Develop and implement institutionalized in-service training mechanisms for relevant individuals and institutions involved in provision of child protection services.</p> <p>3.3.4 Ensure sufficient resources are available to social service and justice workforce to carry out their mandatory functions.</p> <p>3.3.5 Strengthen mechanisms and services for early identification, diagnosis, referral, treatment and support for all children exposed to any form of violence, exploitation, abuse and/or neglect including children affected by emergencies</p> <p>3.3.6 Strengthen the capacity of the justice law and order sector institutions to enforce GBV/VAC-related laws and eliminate impunity for violence against children</p> <p>3.3.7 Develop and implement interventions to address cyber-crimes, including online childsexual abuse and other internet-based child protection risks and violations.</p> <p>3.3.8 Develop and implement rehabilitation programs targeting perpetrators of violence with the aim of reducing recidivism and kangaroo courts.</p> <p>3.3.9 Develop measures to prevent children from coming into contact with the law, and promote rehabilitative and restorative approaches for children in contact with the law, including diversion and alternatives to detention.</p> <p>3.3.10 Promote a child-friendly and gender-sensitive justice system for child victims and witnesses, and children in conflict with the law.</p> <p>3.3.11 Prevent trafficking of children and implement specific measures for rescue and rehabilitation, re-integration of children and prosecution of traffickers.</p> <p>3.3.12 Support the use of technology to improve child protection responses and systems.</p> <p>3.3.13 Strengthen networking and coordination across all sectors (state and non-state actors) to foster commitment towards child protection.</p> <p>3.3.14 Develop a mechanism for assessment of institutions performance on child protection service delivery</p> <p>3.3.15 Build a partnership with the media to develop and roll out a sustained County level campaign to increase awareness on, and a call to action to stop violence against children</p>	<p>Dept. of Social Services. Gender and Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- National Police Service</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- Directorate of Social Protection</li> <li>- Dept. of Health</li> <li>- Nyumba Kumi Initiative</li> <li>- Dept. of ICT</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>
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<p>3.4: Strengthen the capacity of grass root organizations and community child protection structures for effective response to prevent, and protect all children against all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect</p>	<p>3.4.1 Provide support for institutions to have safe alternative care spaces for temporary safeguarding of children in emergency need such as lost children, rescued children from offenders, children being processed in the crime justice system, and others</p> <p>3.4.2 Strengthen capacity of relevant County Government Employees and institutions especially County Child Protection Focal Persons, Social Protection Officers, Probation Officers, the Kenya Police Service and other child focused agencies to effectively carry out monitoring and inspections for enforcement of relevant child protection policies, laws and regulations, and compliance of service providers to set guidelines</p> <p>3.4.3 Promote the use of, and strengthen the capacity of para-legal, court users, Child Protection Volunteers, and other community-based child protection structures to promote and provide child protection services.</p> <p>3.4.4 Strengthen the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect their most vulnerable children, including children with disabilities and OVCs.</p> <p>3.4.5 Support families and communities to identify child protection risks and provide appropriate responses.</p> <p>3.4.6 Improve the functionality and community use of the child helpline 116 and GBV hotline 1195 alongside Police 999 for reporting and referral of violence against children.</p> <p>3.4.7 Promote formation of community based child led VAC monitoring committees to monitor and report all acts of violence, exploitation and abuse against children within the community</p> <p>3.4.8 Support programs especially for out-of-school youth that promote behaviour change and positively impact cultural and social norms to reduce violence against, and exploitation and abuse of children.</p> <p>3.4.9 Promote behaviour change to eliminate harmful practices, including early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation, teenage pregnancies, child abuse, child neglect and child labour.</p> <p>3.4.10 Raise awareness at County, Sub County, Ward and communities, and in all settings on the impact of violence, on the safety, well-being and development of children, and develop programmes to help children understand risks and their rights to protection.</p> <p>3.4.11 Engage men, youth, and boys as allies in interventions to prevent violence against, and exploitation and abuse of children.</p>	<p>Dept. of Gender, Social Services and Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- National Police Service</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- Directorate of Social Protection</li> <li>- Nyumba Kumi Initiative</li> <li>- The Media</li> <li>- NGEEC</li> </ul>
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<p>3.5: Develop and implement measures for prevention and protection of all children in school from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse</p>	<p>3.5.1 Foster positive and progressive attitudes and behaviour towards the protection of children against violence in schools in all its forms in Vihiga County.</p> <p>3.5.2 Promote formation of school based child led VAC monitoring committees to monitor and report all acts of violence, exploitation and abuse against children</p> <p>3.5.3 Promote child participation and empowerment to prevent and report cases of violence in school and seek appropriate support for recovery and effective re-integration into the school system.</p> <p>3.5.4 Strengthen the capacity of key institutions to provide appropriate prevention and response services that address the needs and interests of children.</p> <p>3.5.5 Strengthen research and knowledge management for evidence based policy advocacy on violence against children in schools in Vihiga County</p> <p>3.5.6 Strengthening coordination, collaboration and partnerships among actors in the prevention and response to violence against children in schools</p>	<p>Dept. of Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- National Police Service</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>
<p>3.6: Develop and implement a County response for prevention of, and removal of all children living and working on the street in major towns within Vihiga County</p>	<p>3.6.1 Establish street children Task Force within the Department of Gender, Social Services and Children to sustainably handle issues of rehabilitation, reintegration and resettlement of children living and working on the street.</p> <p>3.6.2 Establishment of transitional homes for the rehabilitation of street children</p> <p>3.6.3 Support a County-wide awareness campaign on issue of children in street situations</p> <p>3.6.4 Establish and strengthen Alternative Care Initiatives to support the reintegration of children living and working on the streets.</p> <p>3.6.5 Roll out an operation for removal, screening, rehabilitation and resettlement of all children living and working on the streets in major towns within Vihiga County.</p>	<p>Dept. of Gender, Social Services and Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- National Police Service</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- Directorate of Social Protection</li> </ul>

3.7 Strengthen economic livelihoods of young people	<p>3.7.1 Promote and expand alternative entrepreneurial-led approaches for financial inclusion for youth and teenage mothers ensuring household economic resilience</p> <p>3.7.2 Strengthen youth participatory agro-enterprise approaches for household economic resilience with relevant value chain systems.</p> <p>3.7.3 Establish (in partnership with the private sector and financial institutions) provide accessible and affordable credit schemes (Loans, and grants), and financial literacy programmes in Vihiga County to support young entrepreneurs in management training, employability skills, business capital, mentorship, networking connections and solutions.</p>	Dept. of Trade and Enterprise Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Financial Institutions</li> </ul>
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**Priority Action Area 4: Child Participation**

**Policy Objective 4: To promote the right of all children to be heard and express their opinions in all matters involving and affecting them, according to their developing capacities**

Strategies	Priority Actions	Lead Department	Other partners and stakeholders
4.1: Ensure observance and implementation of the domesticated international and regional and national standards on child participation	<p>4.1.1 Review all the laws and applicable policies to identify gaps and innovate solutions to fix the gaps</p> <p>4.1.2 Remove legal and policy barriers to the full recognition of child's right to be heard and respected in key decision making processes</p> <p>4.1.3 Involve and engage children in law reform processes, implementation and monitoring through their participation</p> <p>4.1.4 Ensure that County law, policies and regulations that provide for access to justice for children where their rights are violated</p> <p>4.1.5 Enact County legislation to domesticate all international and national standards that have been ratified</p> <p>4.1.6 Involve children in reporting to treaty bodies, including in the validation of County Government and CSO reports</p> <p>4.1.7 Ensuring that children are able to give evidence to the widest possible extent in justice processes</p> <p>4.1.8 Translate laws into local languages and disseminate to children, their families and communities</p>	County Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>

<p>4.2: Ensure that children are valued as key stakeholders and members of society, without discrimination</p>	<p>4.2.1 Develop programs to raise awareness and develop understanding about children’s views, their rights and participation in society.</p> <p>4.2.2 Establish and strengthen children assemblies, children clubs, and associations</p> <p>4.2.3 Build capacity of stakeholders at all levels, including families and communities on child rights and meaningful child participation, to help children express their views in a safe and supportive environment where they feel valued and respected</p> <p>4.2.4 Develop mechanisms to promote and amplify children’s voices through formal and informal, sustainable and influential, local, national and international structures; utilizing media, technology and advocacy related to matters that concern children.</p> <p>4.2.5 Support inclusive child-led initiatives, processes and programmes to build children’s confidence to participate and link with other children and their communities on matters that concern them.</p> <p>4.2.6 Engage and involve children in planning for events and activities, and in particular commemoration of events like Day of African Child, International Disability Day, International Day of Girl Child, etc)</p>	<p>County Attorney</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- Dept. of Education</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>
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<p>4.3. Put in place County recognized governance processes, guidelines and mechanisms that enable child participation to be deliberate, systematic and accountable</p>	<p>4.3.1 Develop County child participation guidelines and an implementation manual  4.3.2 Ensure that Children’s Parliaments, Associations and Assemblies are institutionalized e.g. through giving them a legislative basis  4.3.3 Promote and incorporate child participation as a standard practice into all government processes affecting children e.g. education and health policy design and implementation  4.3.4 Ensure that children’s views are taken into account in the development of all, policies, and programmes e.g. in Constitutional reform, legal developments, County plans of action, budgets and emergency reduction strategies  4.3.5 Establish/strengthen formal and informal structures to enable systematic participation of children (Children Representative Council in learning institutions, Child Rights Clubs, Student Associations. Children Assemblies etc.).  4.3.6 Ensure mechanisms are put in place to monitor and evaluate the processes and the outcomes of child participation  4.3.7 Ensure the Human Rights Institutions have mechanisms in place to facilitate access to justice by children, including channels for them to lodge complaints and receive feedback</p>	<p>Directorate of Children Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- The Judiciary</li> <li>- Dept. of Education</li> <li>- County Assembly</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>
<p>4.4: Ensure inclusion of especially vulnerable children in child participation mechanisms through targeted measures including Child Rights Governance</p>	<p>4.4.1 Ensure processes and mechanisms of governance are accessible to children with special needs such as children with disabilities, nomadic children or children in rural or remote areas, and children living or working on the street and refugee children in refugee settings  4.4.2 Strengthen the understanding of the views and capacities of vulnerable children  4.4.3 Develop systems to ensure the fair, transparent and representative participation of all children in all processes  4.4.4 Strengthen capacity of children’s leaders at all levels to understand and appreciate the need for child participation of all children</p>	<p>Directorate of Children Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- County Assembly</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>



<p>4.5: Ensure that children and children's issues are visible and heard in County government processes</p>	<p>4.5.1 Develop mechanisms at different levels in communities, faith-based settings, schools and government offices, to ensure children's views are taken into account by the formal, political and policy-making processes, and that timely feedback to the children is always provided.</p> <p>4.5.2 Ensure that children are provided with the opportunity to be heard in all legal and administrative proceedings; either directly or through a representative.</p> <p>4.5.3 Strengthen and promote children's meaningful participation in County government decisions related to children's concerns across sectors, including planning, reviewing, budgeting and programming</p> <p>4.5.4 Ensure all County government departments and public entities to have a link for children on their websites, which provides them with child-friendly information on policies, legislation and programmes.</p>	<p>Dept. of Gender, Social Services and Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- International NGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- County Assembly</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>
<p>5.6: Reduce negative attitudes, norms and beliefs on child participation and promoting positive cultures, practices and beliefs</p>	<p>5.6.1 Increase children's visibility in civic engagement by openly endorsing and reinforcing their status as citizens and active members of society capable of and entitled to civic engagement e.g., calling for children to express views on laws or constitutional reforms through schools, associations, clubs or other settings where they often find themselves</p> <p>5.6.2 Ensure that administrative and civil law processes are fully compliant with child participation principles, and that decisions makers regularly listen to and reflect children's views in their decisions</p> <p>5.6.3 Engage with cultural and traditional leaders to influence their attitudes to child participation</p>	<p>Dept. of Gender, Social Services and Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSO</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- INGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> <li>- County Assembly</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> <li>- The Media</li> </ul>

<p>5.7: Creating an evidence-based and enabling learning environment to facilitate and inform effective child participation processes, with data collection and evaluation as a basis for future initiatives</p>	<p>5.7.1 Document and share good practices of effective child participation</p> <p>5.7.2 Ensure that research tools and methodologies systematically create opportunities for children’s perspectives to be considered</p> <p>5.7.3 Establish national benchmarks and targets against which to measure the extent of children’s participation, such as the number of policy and legal provisions directly attributable to children’s participation</p> <p>5.7.4 Develop impact assessment tools for evaluation of children's participation in both formal and informal child participation structures</p> <p>5.7.5 Ensure data collection on child participation, and ensure that such data is disaggregated by age, sex and socio-economic situation</p> <p>5.7.6 Ensure that ethical considerations are fully accounted for in research processes that involve children</p> <p>5.7.7 Ensure that child participation is reported on in the sector specific reports.</p>	<p>County Attorney &amp; Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSOs</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- INGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- Dept. of ICT</li> <li>- Directorate of Children Services</li> </ul>
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**Priority Action Area 5: Systems Strengthening****Policy Objective 5: To strengthen systems for planning, programming and delivery of quality child care and protection**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Other partners and stakeholders</b>
5.1: Strengthen County leadership and governance structures	<p>5.1.1 Conduct reviews of all relevant policies, laws, guidelines and standards to ensure that they address the rights, needs and concerns for all categories of children</p> <p>5.1.2 Promote development of workforce-supportive policies and legislation</p> <p>5.1.3 Strengthen organizational and leadership capacity of state and non-state actors to plan and deliver effective social welfare and child protection services</p> <p>5.1.4 Develop and enforce accountability and ethical codes of practice for all agencies, institutions, CSOs, private sector agencies operating in Vihiga County as a standard norm for their commitment to protecting children from exploitation and abuse.</p>	Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- CSOs</li><li>- County Attorney</li><li>- County Child protection Focal Person</li><li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li><li>- Private Sector</li><li>- INGOs,</li><li>- FBOs</li><li>- County Depts.</li><li>- County Assembly</li></ul>

<p>5:2: Strengthen social services workforce</p>	<p>5.2.1 Systematically assess and address social service workforce gaps at County, Sub County and Ward level</p> <p>5.2.2 Ensure recruitment and placement of adequate frontline social service staff at county government, alternative care institutions, police and other critical service points</p> <p>5.2.3 Support opportunities for staff training and professional development of formal and informal frontline workforce</p> <p>5.2.4 Improve the remuneration, career pathways, and training of the formal social service workforce to improve performance, job satisfaction, advancement and retention</p> <p>5.2.5 Streamline social service workers' caseload and roles in the best interest of the child</p> <p>5.2.6 Ensure adequate resources for social service workers to engage with communities and families so as to effectively identify children's needs and make appropriate referrals</p> <p>5.2.7 Strengthen capacity of social work training institutions - in carrying out client satisfaction assessment, curriculum reviews, development and adaptations to keep their training relevant to the current needs</p> <p>5.2.8 Develop/strengthen a gatekeeping system to prevent unnecessary separation</p>	<p>Office of the Governor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSOs</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- INGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- County departments</li> <li>- County Assembly</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> <li>- Office of the County First lady</li> </ul>
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<p>5.3: Increase financing and budgetary allocation</p>	<p>5.3.1 Assess funding and financing status for County Government of Vihiga, CSOs and alternative care institutions to determine funding gaps</p> <p>5.3.2 Support County Governments and Child Care and Protection Institutions to develop Resource Mobilization Strategies for Child care and protection services</p> <p>5.3.3 Ensure that County Government of Vihiga and Child care institutions have comprehensive, functional financial management systems, financial controls, procedures and processes for budgeting and spending resources for child care and protection work</p> <p>5.3.4 Provide adequate financing to ensure continuity and sustainability of services.</p>	<p>Development Partners (Donors)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The office of the Governor</li> <li>- National Government</li> <li>- INGOs</li> <li>- CSOs</li> </ul>
<p>5.4: Strengthen coordination and networking mechanism</p>	<p>5.4.1 Establish a coordination mechanism for all actors in child welfare and protection at County, Sub County and Ward levels to develop and implement policy, share information, network, and coordinate services</p> <p>5.4.2 Develop a referral mechanism for effective identification of vulnerable children, referral and provision of services</p> <p>5.4.3 Support joint comprehensive mapping and needs assessments</p> <p>5.4.4 Support joint support supervision and quality assurance</p> <p>5.4.5 Support periodic joint programme reviews and sharing of lessons and good practices</p>	<p>Office of the Governor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSOs</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- INGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- County Gender Advisor</li> <li>- County Assembly</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> </ul>
<p>5.5: Improve social service delivery models and mechanisms</p>	<p>5.5.1 Review and ensure a comprehensive package of child sensitive social protection services that addresses social, health, education, nutrition, psychosocial and economic vulnerabilities that children face in Vihiga County</p> <p>5.5.2 Map and assess the County child protection system</p> <p>5.5.3 Support legal documentation and birth registration of all children in Vihiga County</p> <p>5.5.4 Promote citizens' engagement</p> <p>5.5.5 Organize community groups to protect children and promote positive social norms</p> <p>5.5.6 Promote the use of para-legal to improve case management and/or augment the delivery of services to children and families.</p>	<p>County Attorney</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSOs</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- INGOs,</li> <li>- FBOs</li> <li>- County Assembly</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> </ul>

<p>5.6: Promote evidence based planning and programming for children</p>	<p>5.6.1 Update and upgrade the existing OVC and Child Information Management System) to improve access to and availability of quality administrative data, information-sharing and county tracking of outcomes;</p> <p>5.6.2 Improve the interoperability of existing management information systems, including the Health Management Information System (HMIS), Education Management Information systems (EMIS), County Government Information Communication System, and other child welfare-related management information systems such as the Alternative Care Management Information System, and the Child Helpline Case Management and GBV Information and Data Management systems.</p> <p>5.6.3 Invest in rigorous research based on the priorities identified in the County Child-Focused Policy Research Agenda.</p> <p>5.6.4 Develop a robust M&amp;E system that drives systematic research and analysis and dissemination of data on child protection at both County, Sub County, Ward and community levels</p> <p>5.6.5 Ensure that evidence is used to inform and improve policies and programming for children.</p> <p>5.6.6 Strengthen the capacity of the social service workforce to use the data in planning, coordination, and service delivery.</p> <p>5.6.7 Improve the consistency between the county level key performance indicators for child policy and data collected by research department.</p> <p>5.6.8 Invest in systems for data protection (including data collection, data storage, processing and sharing)</p>	<p>Directorate of Children Services</p> <p>Dept. of ICT and Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSOs</li> <li>- Development Partners (Donors)</li> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- INGOs,</li> <li>- Faith Based Organizations</li> <li>- County Attorney</li> <li>- Office of the County First Lady</li> </ul>
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## **Approach to Implementation**

The implementation of the Vihiga County Child Protection Policy will be underpinned by a “whole-of-government’ approach, led by and coordinated by the Department of Gender, Social Services and Children, to ensure better outcomes for children in Vihiga County. This will ensure that children’s issues are integrated within and across County Government departments, agencies and non-state actors working for and with children. This will result in a concerted, all-inclusive and coordinated implementation and monitoring approach. The Policy will be implemented in an integrated and result-oriented manner, in partnership with CSOs, FBOs, the Media, development partners, academic and research institutions, private sectors, communities and families. The roles of the various stakeholders shall vary according to their mandates and functions.

## **Guiding Principles**

### **Rights Based Approach**

This policy is based on recognition that all human beings, adults and children, have rights and responsibilities. Children virtue of their age and needs are entitled to specific rights, including education, health, survival, development, protection and participation.

### **Best interest of the child Approach**

The best interests of the child must be the primary consideration in all actions that directly or indirectly affect children. In addition, the policy recognizes that children have responsibilities in accordance with their evolving capacities in line with the Constitution 2010 and Children Act 2022 alongside other applicable laws, policies and regulations.

### **Family-centered Approach**

Children’s well-being is largely dependent on the ability of families to effectively care for and protect them. Children need a secure and nurturing environment to ensure their survival, development, protection and participation. Families must be adequately supported and resourced to care for their children and ensure the fulfilment of their rights. When parents are not able to care for their children the policy prioritizes a commitment to family-based alternatives and community environments for the care and protection of all children.

### **Child-centered Approach**

Kenya is a signatory to and has ratified the UNCRC which provides a child-centered framework provision of services to children, protection of their rights and their (children) participation in matters and decisions that affect their lives. As a matter of principle effort shall be made to:

- Recognize critical time frames in childhood and adolescence including assisting children and young people as early as possible – early in the life of the child and early in the onset of the problem;
- Take into account the developmental needs of children and young people in all interventions;
- Provide children and young people with appropriate opportunities to participate in all aspects of child protection interventions which affect them; and
- Promote a collaborative approach to the care and protection of children, including the strengthening of networks that are critical to their wellbeing.

### **Non-discrimination Approach**

This policy is for all children in Vihiga County without exception. No part of the policy excludes children based on gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, circumstances, age, colour, status of residency or political orientation of the family. Nonetheless, to promote greater equality in terms of outcomes, most vulnerable children (such as children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, children with disability, children out of school, orphaned and vulnerable children, sexually abused children and children outside family care) will require additional and tailored support.

### **Child participation Approach**

All measures will be undertaken to support the rights of all boys and girls to participate and express their views in all matters affecting them in accordance with their gender, age, maturity, and capability. In addition, the views of children shall be given due respect in decision-making processes.

### **Strengths and resilience-based approach**

The policy shifts the focus from delivery systems that mitigate the manifestations of specific problems to approaches that identify and address root causes of vulnerability and risk, build resilience, recognize individual strengths, and empower children and families. Interventions should take into account the specific risks children face, depending on factors such as age, gender, and specific needs.

### **Multi-sectoral**

Children's needs are multi-sectoral and interconnected, requiring coordinated and collective action and partnership across sectors (e.g. health, education, judiciary, social development) and among stakeholders, including individuals, families, local communities, government agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations, child protection networks, lobby groups, faith-based organizations, media, and the private sector. The County Government of Vihiga shall facilitate the active involvement and participation of stakeholders in securing and ensuring fulfilment of the rights of the child.

### **Life-course approach**

The policy will ensure that a life-course approach is taken and that at all ages and stages of development, children's evolving capacities, and sensitive periods and key windows of development are considered in implementation and assessment.

### **Prioritize prevention and early intervention**

Prevention and early interventions should be prioritized in order to improve child outcomes across the four priority intervention areas. This means focusing more resources on prevention, intervening at a young age, early in the onset of difficulties, or at points of known increased vulnerability such as school transitions, adolescence, among others. This will require:

- Ensuring that families are effectively supported to protect and nurture their children;
- Fostering resilience in individuals, families and communities to become more self-sustaining, able to protect children from harm, and able to provide stable environments in which children can thrive;
- Ensuring vulnerable children receive timely and optimal support to meet their developmental, educational, safety and wellbeing needs.



## **CHAPTER SIX: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

### **National-Level Leadership and Coordination**

Effective implementation of the strategies and activities outlined in this Policy requires stepped-up coordination and more robust leadership, at national and County levels of governance. The National Council for Children shall collaborate with the Directorate of Children Services, Directorate of Gender, and National Government Agencies to support the County Government of Vihiga in coordination, leadership and effective implementation of this policy in partnership with various national and county level stakeholders, in accordance to their primary mandates. Within the governance structure of Vihiga County, the lead department responsible for child welfare and protection is the Department of Gender, Social Services, Children and Culture.

The Department in collaboration of State Department for Gender, and Directorate of Children Services shall coordinate the implementation of the policy, report on progress, and oversee the development of implementation strategies and plans. The Area Advisory Council, County Child Protection Networks and Sector Working Groups will work in partnership with child focused institutions and or organizations to advise on and monitor the implementation of child related policies.

### **Key Stakeholders**

Policy implementation will involve different departments, government agencies, local NGOs, the private sector, INGOs, FBOs, CBOs, NGECC, academic and research institutions, donors and other stakeholders, and communities, families and children/youth. The roles of the various stakeholders shall vary according to their mandates and functions.

### **Inter-agency and Inter-Sectoral Collaboration**

#### **National Level**

The National Children Council shall ensure cross-government commitment, accountability and costing for shared actions. The Council shall monitor progress and ensure that the principles of this policy are respected in all sectors and at all levels in the formulation and implementation of laws, policies, and programmes affecting children.

#### **County Level**

At the County level, multi-sectoral working groups, Child Protection Networks, Child Protection Task Force shall be established to coordinate child rights and welfare activities at the County Level. The Directorate of Child Services, Directorate of Gender and other Government Agencies will work in collaboration with the department of Gender, Social Services, Children and Culture to:

- a) provide oversight and evaluation of child welfare service providers, regardless of whether these are private, public or the voluntary actors;
- b) establish functional accountability and knowledge-sharing mechanisms;
- c) support institutions in developing strategies for the implementation of child friendly activities, programs and budgets that promote child well-being;
- d) monitor and coordinate county implementation of the planned child policy targets in conjunction with development partners and civil society organizations, and in accordance with all related policies and strategies.

## **Finance Mechanisms and Costing**

For effective implementation of the County Child Protection Policy, the County Government of Vihiga may require to put in place an implementation plan with cost for each thematic area of child welfare and protection. The Finance Mechanism and Costing is a 5year resource mobilization plan and or strategy by the County Government to ensure there is adequate budget to implement, monitor and evaluate policy activities. The Policy implementation plan will be costed through consultative process and in collaboration with development partners, civil society organization and child focused organizations. The Finance Mechanism and Costing will take into account County Finance Management Act 2015, and will use the standard costing classifications and in full compliance with the Government of Kenya procurement guidelines, human resource post establishment and Chart of the Account used in the planning sector and departments. This includes market prices for goods and services, and the County capital investment aligned with the County Integrated Development Plan 2022-2027, and for each fiscal year. The costing process will be completed during the policy's technical working group workshop and other key stakeholders. This will involve sharing of tools and sharing of instructions as the participants unpack the implementation activities and cost for each thematic area. This exercise will be consolidated, reviewed and analyzed by the County Executive in order to generate the overall costing for the County Child Protection Policy.

The intent of costing the Policy is to determine the amount of funding needed to implement the prevention and response activities delineated under the priority areas: Child Health and Survival, Education and Development, Childcare and Protection and Child Participation.

The cost for each thematic area and overall budget is presented in tables: 5.1 Cost Implementation Plan. It's anticipated that the County Government of Vihiga will finance the implementation of the County Child Protection Policy, with contributions from the private sector, international organizations and development partners. An annual work plan will be prepared before each fiscal year. Activities will be prioritized and funding sources for each activity identified to determine what will be available. Formal commitments for each activity will be obtained from key stakeholders and partners. Based on the available funding, the budget will be allocated across the policy objectives and key action

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## 5.1 Costed Implementation Plan

**Table 3: Overall Cost of the Implementation Plan**

<b>Thematic Area Costing (In Kshs)</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Child Health and Survival						
Education and Development						
Childcare and Protection						
Child Participation						
Systems Strengthening						
<b>TOTAL</b>						
<b>Cost per year in %</b>						

## Child Survival and Health

Child Health and Survival (in Kshs)							
Strategic Objective	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL	in %
Increase access to and improve provision of reproductive and maternal health care Services							
Promote essential newborn care practices in the home, and in health facilities.							
Promote high quality Integrated Management of Neonatal Childhood Illnesses							
Increase effectiveness of health systems to improve maternal, neonatal and child health.							
Improve provision of and access to Adolescent-Friendly Health Services.							
Prevention of HIV infection among children and youths, and improving access to HIV care, treatment, adherence and viral suppression services							
Develop and promote evidence-based interventions to improve food security and nutrition at household and community levels.							
Increase access to and improve provision WASH services and facilities.							
<b>TOTAL</b>							

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**Education and Development**

<b>Education and Development (in Ksh)</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>in %</b>
Ensure equitable access to quality ECDE for optimal development.							
Improve access to and strengthen the provision of equitable and quality primary and secondary education.							
Increase access to and improve provision of relevant training and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education.							
<b>TOTAL</b>							

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## Childcare and Protection

Childcare and Protection (in Ksh)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL	in %
Expand access to family strengthening and support services to vulnerable families.							
Improve the quality alternative care services for children outside family care.							
Strengthen the capacity of the national child protection system to effectively prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.							
Strengthening community systems and practices in preventing and responding to VAC.							
<b>TOTAL</b>							

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**Child Participation**

<b>Child participation (in Ksh)</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>in %</b>
Ensure that children are valued as key stakeholders and members of society, without discrimination.							
Ensure that children and children's issues are visible and heard in county government processes and reflected in program outcomes.							
Ensure tracking, monitoring and feedback of child participation in all the programs.							
<b>TOTAL</b>							

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## Systems Strengthening

System Strengthening (in Ksh)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL	in %
Strengthen leadership and governance structures							
Strengthen social services workforce							
Increase financing							
Strengthen coordination and networking mechanism							
Improve social service delivery models and mechanisms							
Promote evidence-based planning and programming for children							
<b>TOTAL</b>							



## **CHAPTER SEVEN: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of the Implementation Plan**

The County Government of Vihiga, led by the department of Gender, Social Services, Children and Culture, shall assess the effectiveness of implementation through monitoring and reporting on progress over time. Monitoring and evaluation of the County Child Protection Policy shall be anchored on results-based management, a logical framework and aligned to the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System under the department of Finance and Economic Planning. Policy implementation will be monitored using indicators drawn from existing County Government plans, strategies, and commitments, and further elaborated in a monitoring and evaluation plan that aligns to the costed action plan using the matrix provided on the page that follows. For each priority area of policy, specific indicators have been selected related to the policy objectives, strategies and activities identified, as seen in the logical framework that follows. The activities outlined in the implementation matrix lead to certain outputs, outcomes and indicators as shown in the framework.

The Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) shall be updated to improve access to and availability of quality data, information-sharing and county tracking of outcomes. Measures will also be undertaken to strengthen administrative data sources and improve interoperability of existing data across the different sectors, including health, education, National Police Service, Civil Society Organization, etc. The County will establish a single registry that will link various stand-alone Information Systems for better coordination and control of Statistical Production, Development, Compilation and Dissemination. To ensure sound use of data the capacity of the service providers including healthcare workers, social workers, child protection volunteers, community health promoters, planners and statisticians at the County, Sub County, Ward and Community Level will be invested in. Planning for data collection and management will be done with full involvement of Statisticians and Research personnel to facilitate development of high-quality statistics, coordinate dissemination of statistical reports, and timely production of statistical abstracts for the child protection sector.

### **Reporting on Progress**

The department of Gender, Social Services, Children and Culture in collaboration with the Directorate of Children Services, and other government agencies, and in consultation with the department of Health, and stakeholders will prepare and submit an annual report to the Office of the Governor, and National Child Council on the progress made with implementation of the County Child Protection Policy. This report shall be made available to the other partners, civil society organizations, County departments, government agencies, as well as the public and shall also be available in a child-friendly version that can be easily accessed by children of different ages.

## Logical Framework and Monitoring Matrix

	Baseline	Target	Data Source	Frequency	Reporting
<b>Policy Objective 1: Prevent child mortality and promote children's health</b>					
<b>Health Outcome: Ensure optimal child survival and development</b>					
Health Strategies:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to and improve provision of reproductive and maternal health care services</li> <li>• Promote essential newborn care practices in the home, and health facility level</li> <li>• Prevention and better management of childhood illnesses/conditions</li> <li>• Increase effectiveness of health systems to improve maternal, neonatal and child health</li> <li>• Improve provision of and access to Adolescent-Friendly Health Services</li> <li>• Improve access to HIV prevention, care and treatment services for children and adolescents</li> <li>• Develop and promote evidence-based interventions to improve food security and nutrition at county, community and household levels</li> <li>• Increase access to and improve provision WASH services and facilities</li> </ul>					
<b>OUTCOME INDICATORS</b>					
Maternal mortality ratio					
Under-5 mortality rate (# per 1,000 live births).					
Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000					
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births					
Percentage of women age 15-19 who have given birth or are pregnant with their first child					
Adolescent birth rates per 1,000 women					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Girls aged 10-14 years</li> <li>b. Women aged 15-19 years</li> </ul>					
Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years					
Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prevalence of wasting among children under 5 years</li> <li>b. Prevalence of overweight among children under 5 years</li> <li>c. Prevalence of under-weight among children under 5 years</li> </ul>					
Mother-to-child HIV transmission rates					

Proportion and number of adolescents and children living with HIV (disaggregated for under one year, 10-19 and 0-14 years)					
<b><u>Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health</u></b>					
By 2027, strengthen and scale up provision of and access to quality high-impact maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health interventions, focusing on integrated and innovative approaches					
<b>OUTPUT INDICATORS</b>					
Proportion of women attending antenatal care visits					
Proportion of births delivered in a health facility					
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (doctor, nurse, midwife, and auxiliary nurse/midwife)					
Proportion of mothers and babies receiving postnatal check-ups within 2 days of delivery.					
Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods					
Percentage of children aged 12–23 months who are fully immunized by the appropriate age of 12 months					
Proportion of health facilities providing basic or comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care					
Number of newborns that receive at least one dose of Chlorhexidine (CHX) to the cord on the first day after birth (within 24 hours of birth)					
Care for Child Development (ECD) concepts and key interventions integrated into maternal child health guidelines					
Proportion of health workers in Vihiga County that are trained in maternal child health and care for child development					

**HIV and AIDS**

By 2027, capacity strengthened to improve quality, access and utilization of prevention of vertical transmission of HIV (preventing new infections in children), pediatric, maternal and adolescent, PMTC care and treatment services in Vihiga County.

**OUTPUT INDICATORS**

Proportion of HIV-positive pregnant women who receive ART to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission					
Proportion of children born to women living with HIV tested for HIV within 6-8 weeks of birth					
Proportion of infants born to HIV-infected women provided with ARV prophylaxis to reduce the risk of early mother-to-child transmission in the first 6 weeks					
Proportion of HIV+ women who need ART that are on ART					
Proportion of adolescents and children who need ART that are on ART (disaggregated for under one year, 10-19 and 0-14 years)					
Proportion and number of adolescent girls and boys (15-19 years old) who have been tested for HIV					

**Nutrition**

By 2027, scale up high-impact child nutrition interventions, with a focus on the first 1,000 days of life, to reduce stunting and other forms of malnutrition

**OUTPUT INDICATORS**

Proportion of children who started breastfeeding within an hour of birth (early initiation)					
Proportion of children exclusively breastfed up to 6 months					
The proportion of children receiving micronutrient supplements between the ages 6 to 59 months					

**Adolescent health and development**

By 2027, improve access of adolescents to information, life skills and essential services to reduce their vulnerability to HIV, teenage pregnancy, child marriage and violence

**OUTPUT INDICATORS**

Number of health facilities providing Adolescent-Friendly Health Services					
Unmet need for family planning among adolescents					
Proportion of adolescents with comprehensive knowledge about AIDS					

**Clean water and sanitation**

By 2027, sustain improvement of access to and use of safe drinking water and improved sanitation and personal and environmental hygiene practices, including in schools and with particular attention to girls in Vihiga County

**OUTPUT INDICATORS**

Proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services					
Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand washing facility with soap and water					
Proportion of households in that have access to an improved source of drinking water					
Pupil to latrine/toilet stance ratio in primary schools (by sex)					
Proportion of people hand-washing with soap					
Proportion of primary schools with functional gender-sensitive (separate latrines for girls and boys) sanitation facilities					

**Policy Objective 2: Promote nurturing care, stimulation and holistic development and learning for all children****Education and Development Outcome:****An effective and efficient well-resourced formal and non-formal quality education system that is inclusive, relevant and accessible to all boys and girls with increased school retention, completion and achievement rates****Strategies:**

- Ensure equitable access to quality ECDE for holistic development for all children
- Improve access to and strengthen the provision of equitable and quality basic education
- Increase access to and improve provision of relevant training and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education

**OUTCOME INDICATORS**

Proportion of children ages 36-59 months who are attending an early childhood education programme					
Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, cognitive, learning and psychosocial well-being. a. Physical development domain b. Learning domain c. Social-emotional d. Literacy-numeracy domain.					
Pre-primary gross enrolment rate (%)					
Number of appropriately qualified ECD educators and practitioners					
Net enrolment ratio (primary, secondary) a. Primary school b. Secondary School					
Net school attendance ratio (NAR) a. ECDE Centres b. Vocational Institutions					
Gross attendance ratio (GAR) a. ECDE Centres b. Vocational Institutions					
Retention rate at final year of basic education					

Re-enrolment rates					
Transition rates					
Number of children achieving agreed upon benchmarks for numeracy and literacy in ECDE					
Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training enrolment ratio					
Completion ratio					
<b>Early Childhood Development</b>					
By 2027, strengthened County capacity to coordinate, manage and scale up quality integrated early childhood care and development programmes, with a focus on the most deprived and vulnerable children					
<b>OUTPUT INDICATORS</b>					
Culturally relevant, play-based, age-appropriate curriculum guidelines for educating the very young, including safe, indigenous, low-cost resources for play, learning and stimulation (0–3 years) are in place					
Norms and standards and programming guidelines for ECDE in formal and informal settings in place					
Proportion and number of parents and caregivers practicing early learning (age specific) and stimulation					

<b>Quality education</b>					
By end-2027, ensure equitable access, quality and sustainability of primary education that is inclusive and innovative to impart relevant knowledge and skills					
<b>OUTPUT INDICATOR</b>					
Number of schools that meet the basic requirements and minimum education standards					
<b>Policy Objective 3: To strengthen the capacity of families to care for children, prevent unnecessary child-family separation, and ensure quality alternative family based- care for children deprived of parental care</b>					
<b>Care Outcome:</b> The percentage of children living within appropriate, permanent, and protective family care is increased					
<b>Strategies:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale up the provision and improve access to family strengthening and support services to vulnerable families</li> <li>• Improve the quality alternative care services for children living outside family care</li> </ul>					
<b>OUTCOME INDICATORS</b>					
Ratio of children in residential versus family-based care					
Number of families graduated from family / parenting strengthening schemes					
Number and percentage of children living in income poverty.					
<b>Family strengthening</b>					
All vulnerable and at-risk families are identified and supported to create a safe and nurturing environment, by 2027 in Vihiga County					
<b>OUTPUT INDICATORS</b>					
Number of children benefiting from a government social protection programmes e.g. cash transfer initiatives					
Percentage of government expenditure on social protection (% of GDP)					
Percentage of households receiving household economic strengthening (HES) support					



**Deinstitutionalization**

A comprehensive de-institutionalization strategy is developed and enforced by 2027 in Vihiga County

**OUTPUT INDICATORS**

A comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy that includes protocols for closure and/or transformation of residential care institutions is in place					
Existence of minimum quality standards for all alternative care services, including for family reintegration, foster care and adoption,					
No. and percent of sub counties and Wards with functional alternative care Task Force					
Number of children (0-17) in formal alternative care settings					
Number of Rescue Centres or Safe Spaces that meet Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards outlined in the Children Act 2022					
Number of institutions closed in the last 24 months					
Number of children leaving residential care for a family placement					
Number and Percentage of families supported with reintegration services					

**Policy Objective 4: Protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect**

Outcome 1: The percentage of children who experience violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect is reduced

Outcome 2: The percentage of children who receive appropriate care and protection after experiencing violence, exploitation, abuse, or neglect is increased

Strategies:

- Strengthen the capacity of the national child protection system to effectively prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect
- Strengthen community systems for prevention and to VAC

**OUTCOME INDICATORS**

Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority					
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Proportion of children aged 1-14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month					
Prevalence of violence against children in the previous 12 months a. Physical violence b. Sexual violence c. Psychological violence (Emotional)					
Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 years and before age 18 years a. before age 15 years b. before age 18 years					
Proportion of girls aged 15-19 years who have started childbearing					
Proportion of women and girls aged 15-49 years who have undergone FGM/C.					
Proportion of juveniles diverted from formal judicial proceedings					
Number of cases diverted after investigations					
Proportion of juveniles receiving non-custodial sentences					
Number of children on remand in the last 12 months					
Percentage of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour					
Percentage of children involved in worst forms of child Labour and trafficking					

4.1 Ensure an integrated national child protection system that prevents and responds to violence, exploitation, abuse, discrimination and neglect and ensures the care of vulnerable children by 2027

**OUTPUT INDICATORS**

A national case management system developed, with protocols on the support of children in adversity to ensure a coherent and coordinated service delivery approach.					
Number of families enrolled in statutory case management					
Number of functioning Child Protection Structures					
Number of prosecutions for child protection offenses					
Proportion of the districts with trained community development officers, probation and welfare officers in child protection					
Proportion of districts with child help line services linked to functional referral and case management systems					
Existence of a coordination mechanism for child protection at the national and subnational level					
Number of children removed from hazardous child labour and enrolled in formal or informal education					

4.2 Ensure, by 2027, a child-friendly and responsive justice system which (as an integral part of the child protection system) effectively and efficiently protects and serves all children, and operates in the best interest of children

**OUTPUT INDICATOR**

Existence of a tested/costed model for delivery of child-friendly justice services					
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**Policy Objective 5: To protect and advance the right of all children to be heard and express their opinions in all matters involving and affecting them**

Outcome 1: Children meaningfully participate in decision-making and are supported to express their views in all matters affecting them.

Outcome 2: Children and children's issues are visible in County governance structures, legislation, policies, budgets, services, programmes and decision-making processes

Participation Strategies:

- Ensure that children are valued as key stakeholders and members of society, without discrimination
- Ensure that children and children's issues are visible and heard in County government processes
- Ensure tracking, monitoring and feedback of child participation in all the programmes

**OUTCOME INDICATORS**

Rate of children's involvement in decisions that concern and affect them at home, in school, in community, in media, at policy level					
Level and quality of awareness and understanding of children's participation in society					

**Output 5.1 Build structures and mechanisms for child participation in key institutions and processes**

**OUTPUT INDICATORS**

National and County Child Protection Policies reviewed and updated					
Number of policies and legislations available in a child friendly version					
Number of County government departments that have website links for children on the specific department					
Number of policies and legislations developed that actively involve and consider the views of children					
Existence mechanisms, structures and processes for supporting children's expression in different settings (at County, Sub County, Ward and Community Level)					

Number of schools with active school councils run by and for Children					
Numbers of children participating in school councils, assemblies and associations					
Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local community services are in place					
Children are represented in forums, including through their own associations, at school, county, and community level					
Quality, quantity and sustainability of institutional structures and mechanisms established for child participation in different settings					