

Concept Note: International Day for Street Children Nairobi County– Participation

Introduction

The International Day for Street Children is an annual observance on the 12th of April that highlights the rights, challenges, and resilience of street children around the globe. This year, under the theme "**Participation**," the event seeks to empower street children by ensuring their voices are heard and integrated into decisions affecting their lives. Emphasizing participation means shifting from passive observation to active inclusion in policy dialogue, program design, and community actions.

Background

Street children are among the most vulnerable groups in society, often facing neglect, discrimination, and limited access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and legal protection. Traditional approaches have sometimes marginalized these children, viewing them as subjects rather than active agents of change. The theme "Participation" aims to reverse this trend by:

- Recognizing street children as key stakeholders in the development and implementation of solutions that affect them.
- Promoting mechanisms that enable them to share their experiences, insights, and recommendations.
- Building platforms that facilitate dialogue between street children, government entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local communities.

Objectives

1. **Empowerment Through Inclusion:**
 - Enhance the self-esteem and agency of street children by providing opportunities for active participation in decision-making processes.
2. **Capacity Building:**
 - Equip street children with skills and knowledge through workshops, leadership training, and mentorship programs that foster active citizenship.
3. **Policy Advocacy:**
 - Advocate for policies and practices that prioritize the rights and needs of street children by using participatory research findings and testimonials as evidence.
4. **Awareness and Sensitization:**
 - Increase public awareness about the challenges street children face and the importance of including their perspectives in community development efforts.

Key Activities

1. **Participatory Workshops and Focus Groups:**
 - Organize interactive sessions where street children, community leaders, and service providers collaborate to identify critical issues and co-create sustainable solutions.
2. **Peer Leadership Programs:**
 - Develop and implement training programs that build leadership skills among street children, enabling them to represent their peers in community and policy forums.
3. **Community Forums and Dialogues:**
 - Host public events where street children can directly interact with policymakers, NGO representatives, and community members to voice their concerns and share ideas.
4. **Art and Cultural Exhibitions:**
 - Utilize creative mediums—such as theater, music, and visual arts—to allow street children to express their experiences and perspectives, fostering empathy and understanding within the broader community.
5. **Documentation and Advocacy Campaigns:**
 - Collect and disseminate stories, data, and insights from street children to advocate for their rights at local, national, and international levels.

Implementation Strategy

- **Stakeholder Engagement:**

Collaborate with local authorities, NGOs, schools, and community organizations to ensure broad-based support and resource mobilization. Inclusion of street children in the planning and execution phases is crucial for the authenticity of the event.
- **Participatory Planning:**

Establish advisory committees that include representatives of street children. Their input will guide event logistics, the development of training modules, and the design of interactive sessions.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Develop participatory monitoring frameworks that involve street children in evaluating the impact of the event. Feedback mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups, and public discussions will ensure continuous improvement and accountability.

Expected Outcomes

- **Enhanced Agency and Self-Confidence:**

Street children gain practical skills and confidence, positioning them as active contributors in society.
- **Strengthened Networks:**

Improved connections between street children, civil society, government agencies, and community members, leading to more coordinated and effective support systems.
- **Informed Policy Recommendations:**

Data and testimonies gathered through participatory methods inform policy recommendations and interventions tailored to the needs of street children.

- **Increased Public Awareness:**

Broader community engagement fosters a more inclusive societal approach to addressing the challenges faced by street children.

Conclusion

This International Day for Street Children, themed "Participation," is a call to action to redefine how society engages with its most vulnerable members. By ensuring that street children are not just recipients of aid but active participants in shaping their futures, we lay the groundwork for more inclusive, sustainable, and transformative change. The success of this initiative depends on collaborative efforts, shared commitment, and the genuine empowerment of street children as agents of their own development.

This concept note provides a structured framework to ensure that the event not only commemorates street children but also catalyzes meaningful and inclusive change by promoting their participation at all levels.