



John and friends at Kodiaga Prison Primary school enjoy playing the Olympics on breaks.

Country strategy paper:

Kenya country programme 2023 – 2027

Introduction

The government of Kenya has been advancing the cause of children's rights through the implementation and ratification of various international and regional instruments affecting the child's rights. Such include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), and the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, among other instruments. Nonetheless, huge gaps exist in the fulfillment of children's rights, especially in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL). The Committee on the Rights of the Child has, for instance, raised concerns such as the ongoing harmful cultural practices, like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage, child malnutrition, inadequate access to healthcare, lack of access to water and sanitation; inadequate access to inclusive education for children with disabilities, among others. Additionally, the negative impact of climate change,

combined with population growth and unsustainable development projects, is adding further pressure on children's access to water and sanitation and their food and nutrition security in arid and semi-arid lands

ERIKS has worked in Kenya for over 30 years as a child rights organization, supporting development and humanitarian assistance projects with different **Partner Organizations (PO)** that have enhanced and provided life-long opportunities for thousands of children. Over this period, different country strategy papers have been developed, each bringing in essential lessons that have promoted innovation and adaptability for successful interventions of the ERIKS programme in the country. This strategy (2023 – 2027) builds on the previous strategy (2019 – 2022). Its overarching objective is to ensure that children in the targeted communities are protected from

all forms of abuse and discrimination by promoting awareness of and the capacities for child participation, providing equal opportunities to both girls and boys from ASAL areas to participate meaningfully in claiming their rights and enhancing capacities of the moral and legal duty bearers to take actions to prevent and respond to all forms of violations of children's rights.

Thematically and geographically, this strategy does not present a major shift from the previous strategy's focus on education, protection, and health in the ASAL communities. Nonetheless, learning from the period under review, the need to increase the focus on the triple nexus is considered, as conflicts and disasters (mainly droughts) exacerbate underdevelopment in the ASAL areas. Interventions will therefore be designed as integrated development projects to overcome multidimensional child poverty and vulnerability, including peace and conflict, resilient livelihoods, and most importantly, an increase in child participation and citizen engagement in claiming their rights through social accountability approaches. The strategy is anchored in the intentions and principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of

the Children (UNCRC), largely in articles 12, 13, 18, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 36, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 16. It seeks to promote the realization of children's rights as outlined in the UNCRC in a way that supports children and the other rights-holders to be aware of their rights, claim them, and hold the duty bearers to account, while also enhancing the opportunities for children to equal participation, non-discrimination, and empowerment.

The development of this strategy adopted a participatory approach with different stakeholder engagement. The goal of the participatory process was to ensure that no one was left behind in perspectives related to the child rights situation, the state of the civil society space, feedback on the previous country strategy implementation, and the envisaged future programmes in the country. The consultations for the strategy were done with children, moral duty bearers, legal duty bearers, and Partner Organizations. The strategy was finalised and approved by ERIKS board in 2023 April, and it is expected to act as a guideline for the interventions running up to 2027.

Strategic orientation

The role and contribution of ERIKS

ERIKS added value in the country stems from its rich experience in working through the partnership model with different like-minded organizations. This enriches programming within the organization by collaboratively designing, implementing, and generating important lessons through the child rights-based approach, which is then scaled up and replicated in different areas and countries of the world where ERIKS is working. ERIKS' focus on reaching the **most marginalized and in-need populations** is among the factors that make the biggest difference: the current approach, which targets the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) counties in Kenya, has proved to be highly relevant considering the high level of social, political, and economic marginalization in these areas.

Taking into account the different factors that impede development in the ASAL areas, such as the effects of **climate change**, conflicts, and gender inequalities, ERIKS in Kenya is seeking to strengthen climate **resilience** in the ASAL areas through Disaster Risk Reduction interventions. As ERIKS' work continues to be implemented in areas constantly affected by droughts, ERIKS has built a strong humanitarian-development nexus in its projects, finding a stable complementarity between humanitarian response interventions and ongoing development interventions. As such, with its partners, it will continue to strengthen community-based disaster risk reduction approaches in all its interventions in the ASAL areas, which reduces the risk of resource-based conflicts and acts as a platform for peaceful co-existence.

ERIKS continues to strengthen the **gender transformative** approaches in all its interventions, from project design to evaluations, ensuring that women and girls have equal op-



Kame with her daughter Gumato walking home from fetching water in Marsabit County.

portunities to participate in all social-economic and political activities within their communities – just as men and boys. Other than this, in the new strategy, ERIKS integrates **conflict and peace** programming in its development work in Kenya, alongside the requisite technical capacity development for its PO. Partly, this could be through integrating religious education and interfaith dialogues in programming, as **faith** leaders promote development in their societies and are potential catalysts for peace and reconciliation.

ERIKS builds **sustainable long-term partnerships** with partner organizations that go beyond funding to co-creating innovative development projects that have seen ERIKS transform life-long opportunities for thousands of children each year. Also, ERIKS provides capacity development to ensure that its PO use relevant methods and have functional systems for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning.



Christine, a Community facilitator in Kisumu West Sub-County, during a parental engagement session.

Providing **technical support** to PO provides versatility for ERIKS, enabling it to spread its influence at different levels, grassroots and national. While working with grassroots organizations, ERIKS conducts organizational assessments and works with the partner organization to enhance the partner organization's capacities in implementation, grant management, and compliance based on the gaps identified during assessments. During this strategy period, ERIKS will seek to strengthen the aspect of PO-PO collaboration within the country partners' portfolio for synergy by taking more deliberate actions to facilitate such cooperation among partner organizations: For instance, through consortia as an approach to promote cross-learning, replication of best practices and scaling up of innovations.

As for **organizational development**, ERIKS invests in the capacity strengthening of the PO to ensure the organizations have good governance structures and functional systems for management, administration, and internal control. This has contributed immensely to the growth and stability of grassroots organizations, including their ability to manage larger grants for new projects and the potential for collaborations with other development partners. ERIKS, though, acknowledges that capacity gaps continue to exist and thus the commitment to continue with the capacity development of partner organizations through the strategy period.

Following ERIKS registration in Kenya, in 2022, ERIKS will take a more active role at the national level civil society

organizations' networks through active participation as well as in investing resources to support the formation and coordination of joint mechanisms in the advocacy for children's and young people's rights.

Learning and strategic choices

Geographic focus: For the next five years, ERIKS will continue to prioritize interventions in the ASAL areas of Kenya. At the same time, national-level advocacy-based interventions related to children's rights will be considered. As at December 2022, ERIKS' interventions in Kenya are implemented in 11 counties: Turkana, Laikipia, Isiolo, Kajiado, Narok, Marsabit, Kiambu, Busia, Machakos, Nairobi, and Kisumu. The different interventions are currently implemented by eight (8) Partner Organizations, some of which are grassroots organizations and others national and international organizations.

Thematically, the ERIKS Kenya programme will work in the four thematic areas Education with a focus on children with disabilities in the ASAL areas, Maternal and Child Health and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), Protection against all forms of abuse and violence against children, and Humanitarian assistance. As was learnt from the previous strategies, the needs in the ASAL areas are immense, and it is hard to achieve sustainability through filling gaps. In exceptional circumstances, however, ERIKS supports partners in filling gaps when the bridge-building is a prerequisite to achieve progress in advocating for child rights, and this is done in dialogue with the main duty-bearers. Resource-based conflicts are also prevalent in all the ASAL counties where the current projects are implemented and under these circumstances, harmful cultural practices such as underage marriages thrive, and the others like female genital mutilation keep evolving in trends.

Besides, child participation in the communities is limited. As such, **advocacy, resilience building, and child participation** approaches will be more amplified in the supported interventions during this strategy period. At the same time, parental engagement approaches will be integrated into ERIKS interventions – in education and protection as mechanisms for preventing violence against children and promoting their rights. In the local context, resilience building is a mechanism to secure the livelihoods of vulnerable households, to enhance women, boys and girls' participation, to reduce resource-based conflicts and as an avenue for engaging with the county governments in planning for policy actions in relation to disaster risk reduction. This is also in line with ERIKS' Development Policy that sees livelihood initiatives becoming even more important in the programme countries: Livelihood is one aspect that is included in ERIKS' resilience approach where ERIKS sees sustainable livelihoods as key to being able to deal with shocks and stresses, through integration with resilience actions within communities.

On partnership, ERIKS in Kenya has had a diverse portfolio of partners ranging from international organizations that are registered in Kenya as National organizations, local national level organizations and community-based organizations. This has seen the country's programme succeed in delivering programmes across the national and subnational levels. At the national and county levels, advocacy has been geared to-

wards influencing policies in education, gender, child protection and Anti-FGM. In contrast, community-based organizations have driven sustainable impacts at the grassroots level. In its core approach, ERIKS' added value in its partnerships has been its rich experience in child rights programming which has helped strengthen the capacity of grassroots organizations to advocate for the rights of children in the communities. It also enhances capacity development through organizational capacity assessments, which are a foundation for partners to improve organizational capacity gaps. In the new strategy, ERIKS will continue to strengthen the capacity of its partners in child rights programming and organizational development while also paying critical attention to child participation, the perspectives of the gender transformative approach, climate change and resilience, and the role of religion in conflict transformation and development.

ERIKS will also review the landscape of its partnerships in Kenya in line with its position paper on partnerships by prioritizing its collaboration with Kenyan national civil society organizations and community-based organizations in order to attain a balance in the partners' portfolio. These organizations are in the greatest need of donor funding opportunities to facilitate their organizational development compared to international organizations. As such, 3 new local Partner Organizations will be added to the country's portfolio during the strategy period. More importantly, ERIKS will strive to balance the partnerships by recruiting new PO in case an existing partner is phased out for any reason.

Another important focus on partnerships in this phase will be to strengthen the capacity of local partners in humanitarian response while also maintaining partnerships with organizations that have a higher capacity to deliver timely humanitarian interventions. Regarding human resources, the country's representation is increasing to provide closer and more effective support to the partners based on needs and the developments that will take place during the strategy phase. Following the successful registration of ERIKS in Kenya in 2022, ERIKS will focus on establishing its independent operations in the country from 2023, increasing its visibility, networking and advocacy as a child rights organization.

For Aid efficiency and effectiveness, ERIKS will increase its focus on strengthening local inter-partner collaborations. This can be through forming consortia amongst the existing partners as an approach to promote cross-learning, replication of best practices, and scaling up innovations. This will be an innovative approach and it will also be a new opportunity for capacity strengthening on interagency collaborations amongst the smaller organizations that do not have similar experiences in programme implementation and fundraising. To amplify the application of ERIKS' core approaches; the child rights-based approach, child participation, resilience, and partnership, ERIKS will endeavour to co-create projects with the partners to ensure that the projects are uniquely tailored to the local contexts and with a greater evident focus on the child rights-based approach. With regards to the child rights-based approach, ERIKS will seek to ensure that



Rania (to the right) and her friends participate in an integrated child club at Garbatula Primary school.

children are protected from all forms of discrimination in the realization of their rights and that the most disadvantaged or marginalized children are given priority in all interventions. Training and capacity development will also be provided to the partners on these approaches. More importantly, in selecting partners, ERIKS will strive to select the partners whose greatest focus is working with children.

Additionally, looking into the nature of the partners that ERIKS will work with (mostly local, national and Community-Based Organizations), ERIKS will continue to explore the possibilities of implementing **core support** and **programme support** for organizations. Currently, all the partners are funded on a project level, which means that in most cases, the relationship between ERIKS and some partners barely goes beyond the project that ERIKS is supporting. Programme Support will be critical to supporting partner-to-partner collaboration, while on the other hand, core support will enhance the capacities of the partner organizations by improving flexibility and project quality.

For **sustainability**, two-pronged approaches will be adopted. One of the key approaches will be the deepening of interventions through area-integrated development programming¹. As already mentioned, among the most important lessons learnt in the previous strategy phase is that the social exclusion in the ASAL areas limits the opportunities for children to enjoy their rights or have them fulfilled by the moral duty bearers. Further, consultations with the children and their guardians in developing this strategy revealed complex and yet multidimensional child poverty in ASAL areas. Integrated development projects as a solution will bring together different intervention aspects that will sustainably address child poverty and vulnerability while sustaining the impact, including resilient livelihoods. Research from the field in Uganda shows a connection between poverty and children's

susceptibility to maltreatment and neglect, as well as the protective benefits of household economic security on the well-being of vulnerable children.² Further data from the effects of a nutrition-focused livelihoods program on Child Health and Nutrition in Burkina Faso study revealed that the program reduced chronic malnutrition in children under five by a third, driven by a 22% drop in food insecurity relative to the reference group.³ Nonetheless, to maintain ERIKS' focus on children, livelihoods will not be a primary intervention focus; but will be adopted as a mechanism to complement key thematic interventions such as health. As such, these components will be applied to strengthen the fulfilment of children's right to food, reduce malnutrition among children under 5, and strengthen resilience against drought. This will further reduce the reliance of children and their households on relief. In instances where livelihoods need to be a key approach, ERIKS will explore working in consortia with organizations that have stronger capacities in livelihoods interventions, and it will also encourage partner organizations to mobilize resources for resilient livelihoods, to complement child-focussed interventions, such as increasing the quality of parental engagement, e.g. (in education, in child rights work etcetera.), and children engagement in advocacy.

The second approach will be continuing the long-term partnership with the PO for sustainability. The PO can implement interventions in one area by continuing with long-term partnerships until a change is realized. This is to create sustainable behaviour change and ownership in the communities through the enhanced social capital⁴ created by long-term interventions. At the same time, this will prevent a challenge that local organizations face, where development partners support 'pilot' phases of projects that sometimes never continue beyond the pilot phase.



Simon in Laikipia County is more independent and happier thanks to a prosthesis.

¹ Area Development Projects, Poverty Reduction, and the New Architecture of Aid <https://www.oecd.org/derec/sweden/35200611.pdf>

² Livelihoods, Economic Strengthening and Child Protection in Western Uganda: Preliminary Findings from Evaluation Research <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/5669.pdf/>

³ The Impact of a Nutrition-Focused Livelihoods Program on Child Health and Nutrition in Burkina Faso <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/impact-nutrition-focused-livelihoods-program-child-health-and-nutrition-burkina>

⁴ Integrated Area Development Projects: Working Towards Innovation and Sustainability <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/39670475.pdf>

Country outcomes

The following outcomes have been defined for ERIKS' work in Kenya during this strategy period:

OUTCOME AREA 1: Partnership

- 1.1.1. Partnership Country outcome:** Partner organizations adopt a coordinated response to child abuse and neglect in collaborations characterized by shared values and mutual learning
- 1.1.2. Governance and management Country outcome:** Partner Organizations have good governance structures and functional systems for management, administration, and internal control.
- 1.1.3. Programme approach Country outcome:** Interventions supported by ERIKS are evidence-based, relevant, and effective for the realization of children's rights
- 1.1.4.** Partners organizations are **adopting** child-centered disaster risk reduction approaches and are **developing** organizational **environmental policies**

OUTCOME AREA 2: Intervention – Long-term development and humanitarian assistance

CHILDREN

- 2.1.1. Protection outcome:** Girls and Boys from ASAL are participating meaningfully in claiming their rights and are enjoying protection equally from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and all forms of violence.
- 2.1.2. Health outcome:** Girls and boys are enjoying access to quality and affordable healthcare and safe spaces for psychosocial health and wellbeing.
- 2.1.3. Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction:** Girls and boys are participating in the development and implementation of child-centred disaster risk reduction plans
- 2.1.4. Education:** Children from poor households and children with disabilities from the ASAL areas, enjoy their right to quality and equitable education

LEGAL DUTY BEARERS

- 2.2.1 Protection: Legal duty bearers** are taking measures to **prevent and respond** to violations of children's rights and all forms of gender-based violence on children
- 2.2.2 Education and Health:** County and the national governments are developing child-friendly budgets and policies to increase access to quality education, water, sanitation and hygiene services and adolescent friendly SRHR services
- 2.2.3 Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction:** The government is taking the lead in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation, and is coordinating with relevant actors.

MORAL DUTY BEARERS

- 2.3.1 Health, education and protection:** Parents and caregivers are actively involved in their children's education and are providing equal opportunities to both boys and girls.
- 2.3.2 Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction:** Moral duty bearers are engaging in promoting peaceful co-existence and environmental protection to reduce the risk of disasters.

ERIKS

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