

Gov't shifts rehabilitation of street families to community care

BY IRUNGU MWANGI (KNA) lans by the government to formulate a policy de-signed to address rehabilitation of street families are in top gear

Once the policy is in place, the government will shift the focus of rehabiliting street families from children homes to family and community care. According to Ms Grace Mwangi, a board member of Street Family's Rehabilitation Trust Fund, there has been a remarkable increase of street families in Kenya hence the

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need to put in place water tight policies to re-integrate them to society.

She said the shift from the children homes care to family and community care will solve problems which arise when those placed in the homes at-

"We have had a problem with the street children who get to 18 years and are required to move out of the homes, with most of them back to the streets again. She said the policy which

is still in the draft copy, when

finalized will offer a coherent and sustainable framework for the rehabilitation of street families in Kenya.

She said the number of peo-ple living and connected to the streets in Kenya was 46,639 according to National census 2018

"The counties with the highest concentrations of street persons is Nairobi with 15, 337, Mombasa 7529, Kisumu 2,746, Uasin Gishu 2,147 and Nakuru 2,005," she said

Mwangi said most of the street persons were males at

72.4% and females at 27.6% majority being the youth at 45.3% followed by children at 33.8 and the older persons at 2.4%. She said the census also revealed that reasons for going to the streets were varied which included fear of being reprimanded, corporal pun-ishment, lack of school fees,

mistreatment by relatives and mental illness. Others include death of parents, domestic violence peer influence and being born on the streets. Mwangi said majority of the children who lived

on the streets with parents were below 10 years of age while 24 percent were orphans. 20 percent of the street persons did not know the whereabouts of their parents.

"On the basis of the census result, Mwangi said a deliber-ate stakeholder's engagement has been undertaken in 19 selected counties with response indicating several factors which lead to the phenomenon of street families

She said high in the list is poverty, family disintegration and loose social fabric, loss of

parents and caregivers, human trafficking, retrogressive cul-tural practices, child labor and exploitation. She said street families are

faced with difficulty in acqui-sition of identity cards which

shion of identity cards which make it hard for them even to get menial jobs. Mwangi was speaking at Kerugoya during a one-day public participation workshop on draft policy of exhibitation on draft policy of rehabilitation of street families. She said Kirinyaga county was among the counties with the least number of street families at 203.

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