



EQUALITY BULLETIN



Dreams Deferred:

How Capitation Delays Are Shutting the School Gates on Kenya's Marginalised Children

As school dropout rates soar in marginalised counties, the National Gender and Equality Commission raises a red flag, warning that delays in government capitation funds are fuelling educational inequality, particularly among vulnerable girls.

A fresh alarm has been sounded on the looming crisis in Kenya's education sector—one that risks pushing thousands of children, especially girls from marginalised communities, out of school. At the heart of the matter is the delayed disbursement of government capitation funds to public schools, a situation the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) says is fuelling systemic exclusion and inequality.

Speaking during a media briefing at the NGEC Annual Staff Summit held at FK Resort in Nyeri, Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa painted a sobering picture of the educational landscape in some of Kenya's most vulnerable counties.

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A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

As we mark the **20th edition** of the Equality Bulletin, I am reminded that progress in equality is not measured solely by the policies we draft, but by the lived realities we help transform. This edition captures that truth vividly — from the determined voices of Gen Z demanding inclusion, to the resilience of survivors of gender-based violence finding hope in county-led reforms, to our relentless advocacy for equal access to education for every child, regardless of their background or ability.

In recent months, we have stood at the intersection of advocacy and action. We have listened — truly listened — to Kenya's youth, not as tomorrow's leaders but as the changemakers of today. We have partnered with grassroots organisations like the Samburu Women's Trust to amplify indigenous women's leadership and ensure their rightful place in governance. We have worked alongside the Judiciary to bring justice to the people, breaking down the barriers that keep too many from claiming their rights.

This edition also celebrates our collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in strengthening county-level responses to gender-based violence. The commissioning of the Kajiado GBV Recovery Centre is a model of survivor-centred service delivery we hope to see replicated nationwide.

As we move forward, we remain anchored in our 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, committed to becoming a truly gender-transformative institution—one that leads by example, listens deeply, and acts decisively.

I extend my gratitude to all our partners, stakeholders, and communities whose voices and efforts continue to shape a more equal Kenya.

Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS

Chief Executive Officer

National Gender and Equality Commission



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Generation Equality: Kenya's Gen Z Speaks, and NGEK Listens

A historic youth-led forum at the National Gender and Equality Commission ushers in a new era of civic consciousness, accountability, and inclusion in governance.



Youth Participants during the forum

"We are not the leaders of tomorrow—we are the changemakers of today."

Those were the resounding words echoed across the main boardroom of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), as a cross-section of Kenya's Gen Z youth—unapologetic, informed, and impassioned—stepped up to the microphone. They were not just participants in a forum; they were protagonists in a new national narrative.

In a first-of-its-kind listening and reflection session, NGEK opened its doors and, more significantly, its ears to the pulse of Kenya's youth. The forum, hosted at the Commission's headquarters in Nairobi, brought together young people from public and private universities, persons with disabilities (PWDs), youth-led movements, and community advocates from across the country. From impromptu poetry to researched reform proposals, one thing was clear: Kenya's youth are no longer content with being seen; they demand to be heard.

At the session Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, Chairperson of NGEK, whose attentive presence set the tone for a forum that was both structured and sincere. "This Commission was established to uphold constitutional values for all—especially those often left behind. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to the youth, whose frustrations are real and whose voices must shape policy," she said.

The youth forum followed a wave of recent Gen Z-led protests across the country—organised, peaceful, yet powerful. What began as outrage over economic policies quickly morphed into a broader generational demand: fairness, transparency, accountability, and above all, inclusion. The NGEK recognised the moment for what it was—a generational political awakening—and responded with action rooted in its constitutional mandate.



Held at the Commission's main boardroom, the forum invited over 60 youth representatives aged 18–34, hailing from all 47 counties. The purpose? To create a safe, official platform for intergenerational dialogue and policy reflection.

Unlike traditional town halls or bureaucratic meetings, this was a participatory forum with open-floor sessions, and youth-led panels.

Topics spanned access to education, gender-based violence, mental health, digital equity, climate justice, and representation of PWDs and youth in governance.

Each speaker built upon the last, weaving a powerful tapestry of lived experiences, data-backed analysis, and radical hope.

"We are tired of performative inclusion. It's time for institutions to move beyond tokenism," said Esther Achieng, a student leader.

In hosting this youth forum, NGEK acted on multiple fronts of its mandate: public participation, monitoring of inclusion policies, mainstreaming youth perspectives, and fostering a culture of respect and constitutionalism.

The Gen Z protests that swept Kenya in mid-2025 were not mere outbursts—they were catalysts for reflection. For many youth, it was the first political action of their lives. For others, it was a continuation of quiet activism finally finding amplification. And for institutions like NGEK, it was a turning point—an opportunity to re-centre the people at the heart of public policy.



This shift is more than symbolic. It speaks to a growing demand for lived experience to shape law and governance. It also aligns with Kenya's constitutional call to public service that is equitable, representative, and transformative.

NGEK's listening forum is not a stand-alone initiative. It is part of a broader push to embed youth voices in the national agenda. In alignment with Article 55 of the Constitution, the Commission is developing mechanisms to ensure youth access to education, employment, and political inclusion. It is also auditing youth representation in public appointments and has pledged to strengthen accountability structures in counties with persistent marginalisation.

Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, NGEK Chairperson, who anchored the forum not as a distant authority figure, but as a listener — present, attentive, and reflective. "This Commission exists to ensure that no voice is left behind. Today, we are not just listening — we are learning, and we are leading together," she affirmed.

Power in Partnership: NGEC and Samburu Women's Trust Forge Path for Indigenous Inclusion

National Gender and Equality Commission teams up with Samburu Women's Trust to advance indigenous women's rights, leadership, and policy inclusion.

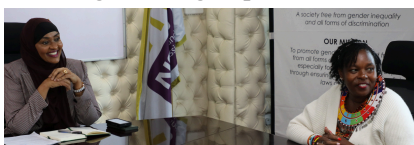


Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru and SWT Executive Director Jane Meriwas and her team

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has joined forces with the Samburu Women's Trust (SWT) to strengthen the participation of indigenous women and girls in Kenya's national development agenda.

In a high-level courtesy meeting held this week in Nairobi, NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa and Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru hosted SWT Executive Director Jane Meriwas and her team to discuss collaborative efforts aimed at promoting equality, capacity-building and leadership among marginalised and indigenous women.

The engagement marked a significant step in forging a working partnership between the state body and grassroots actors who are actively championing human rights and social inclusion. The meeting's focus was to explore long-term cooperation in the development, implementation, and monitoring of inclusive policies targeting minorities and marginalised groups.



Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa and SWT Executive Director Jane Meriwas

"This collaboration is a reaffirmation of our constitutional duty to ensure that indigenous

women are visible, heard, and included in every level of governance," said Chairperson Jaldesa.

The Commission and the Trust also agreed to establish joint mentorship programmes to prepare indigenous girls and young women for leadership roles and increased civic engagement.

Samburu Women's Trust is an indigenous women-led organisation that has operated at the grassroots level for over a decade, defending the rights of indigenous women and girls. As the secretariat of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC)—a network of over 80 women-led groups and individual activists across Kenya—SWT has emerged as a leading voice in policy advocacy and leadership development for pastoralist and marginalised communities.

Jane Meriwas, Executive Director of SWT, expressed optimism about the partnership.

"This is not just about visibility—it's about real access to power, protection of rights, and participation in nation-building," she stated.

Both parties underscored the importance of linking community knowledge with constitutional institutions to build inclusive and sustainable development models.

The partnership between NGEC and Samburu Women's Trust is a strategic alignment of law, policy, and community experience. It reflects the spirit of Article 10 of the Constitution—promoting inclusiveness, equity, and protection of the marginalised.

As Kenya aims to build an equitable society, the inclusion of indigenous voices—especially those of women—remains not only a moral imperative but a constitutional one.

Not Just Numbers: Kenya's Youth Deserve a Seat at the Table

At the Homa Bay validation forum, NGEC challenges Kenya to reframe youth policy as a constitutional justice mandate—not a charitable favour.

HOMA BAY, KENYA – In a brightly lit hall pulsating with anticipation, the voices of youth echoed through policy corridors once shielded from their lived realities. The date was momentous: the official validation of the Homa Bay County Youth Development Policy 2024. But the moment would be defined not by speeches or protocol, but by a firm, unapologetic declaration from the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC): "Youth are not passive beneficiaries. They are rights-holders, constitutionally entitled to equity, dignity, and voice."

Despite forming the vast majority, Kenya's youth remain systemically underrepresented in governance, public policy, and resource allocation. The Commission's message in Homa Bay was unequivocal—development for youth must be reframed as a justice-driven imperative, firmly rooted in the Constitution of Kenya 2010, not as a tokenistic gesture of goodwill.



"Policies must reflect more than aspirations. They must operationalise constitutional rights," NGEC Kisumu head Davis Okeyo affirmed. "Youth are not a demographic inconvenience—they are the cornerstone of Kenya's present and future."

As county governments roll out their policies in line with Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), the words delivered in Homa Bay remain a guiding star: Kenya's youth are not tomorrow's leaders. They are today's citizens, with rights enshrined—not promised—in the Constitution.

» CONTINUATION

Capitation Crisis Puts Kenya's Future at Risk: NGEC Sounds Alarm on Looming School Dropouts

NGEC warns of looming dropouts as school-level inequalities deepen; launches rapid education assessment and national research committee to anchor reforms.

A quiet but growing crisis is unfolding in Kenya's education sector—capitation delays are keeping thousands of children, especially in marginalised regions, out of classrooms. The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) has now stepped forward with a resounding call to action: unless the government accelerates disbursement of funds to schools, the nation's most vulnerable learners will be lost to a vicious cycle of inequality and poverty.



Commissioner Dr. Margaret Karungaru, Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa and Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyer during a media briefing

Speaking during a media briefing this week, NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa delivered a pointed warning: “We are witnessing a silent crisis. The delay in school capitation is more than an administrative hiccup—it is a systemic barrier to learning, especially for girls, children with disabilities, and those in marginalised counties.”

The Constitution of Kenya 2010, under Article 53, guarantees every child the right to free and compulsory basic education. But for many, especially in counties like Tharaka Nithi, Wajir, and Mandera, this promise rings hollow.

Capitation is the cornerstone of Kenya's free basic education policy, meant to cater to learning materials, utilities, and operational costs for public schools. Any delay, even by weeks, means schools cannot function optimally. For many already grappling with poverty, cultural constraints, or early pregnancy, these delays become the final push out of the classroom.

In places like Wajir and Mandera, where long distances to school and lack of basic facilities already discourage attendance, capitation

shortfalls compound the problem. Children walk kilometres to schools without meals, learning materials, or security. Girls are especially vulnerable.

“It's not just about money,” Jaldesa stressed. “It's about dignity, safety, and inclusion. When a school can't offer a safe environment or provide basic necessities, parents pull their children out—especially daughters.”

To tackle the structural barriers confronting Kenya's most at-risk learners, NGEC has announced a rapid response plan. Central to this plan is a Rapid Assessment initiative focused on six marginalised counties—beginning with Tharaka Nithi, Wajir, and Mandera.

The assessment aims to map school-level challenges that hinder access, retention, and transition for learners, with a gender and inclusion lens. This data-driven approach will inform national education strategies and policy adjustments.

Moreover, the Commission has launched the National Gender and Education Research Committee (NGERC)—a multi-stakeholder body that will generate robust, policy-ready research to steer reforms in the sector.

Perhaps the most chilling revelation from the Summit was NGEC's concern about the growing incidence of sexual abuse and harassment in learning institutions, often involving teachers as the perpetrators.

According to the Commission, cases are either underreported or handled internally by schools—shielding perpetrators from justice. NGEC has formally written to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) demanding immediate, decisive action.

Internally, the Commission is aligning its systems to match the gender-transformative agenda it champions. Under its newly launched 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, NGEC is placing people, purpose, and policy at the heart of its institutional culture.

“We must lead by example,” Jaldesa declared. “Becoming gender-transformative starts

with how we work, who we include, and how we serve.”

The theme of the Summit—“Becoming Gender-Transformative: Tools, People, and Purpose”—reflects the Commission's renewed focus on institutional accountability, inclusion, and human-centred service delivery.



NGEC Staff Halima Galma at the Staff Summit in Nyeri

It is part of a strategic shift to ensure NGEC's work not only identifies and addresses policy gaps but also delivers measurable change in the daily realities of the communities it serves

Education is one of society's most powerful equalisers. Without timely funding and safe learning spaces, Kenya risks losing a generation of learners—especially those from communities already on the margins.

Justice for All: Breaking Barriers, Building Equity in Garissa

NGEC and Judiciary join hands in community legal outreach to empower women, youth, and persons with disabilities in Kenya's north

GARISSA— In a decisive move to deepen access to justice among marginalised groups, the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), in partnership with the Kenya Judiciary and led by Hon. Justice John Onyiengo, convened a Court Users Committee (CUC) outreach session yesterday in Garissa. The initiative sought to bolster legal awareness, dismantle systemic barriers and equip women, youth and persons with disabilities with practical knowledge of their rights under Kenyan law.

At the Garissa Law Courts, a crowd of over 200 community members—including local activists, entrepreneurs and representatives of persons with disabilities—gathered in a packed hall. “Too often, justice remains a distant ideal for those who need it most,” Justice Onyiengo said. “Today, we bring the bench to the people, ensuring that knowledge of the law is not confined to courtrooms but shared across the county.”



Participants during Court Users Committee (CUC) outreach session

Kenya’s 2010 Constitution enshrines equality and non-discrimination as pillars of the republic. But constitutional promises often stumble in the face of local realities, especially in historically marginalised counties such as Garissa.

For many here, courtrooms feel worlds away—both geographically and socially. Women in particular, due to cultural, economic, and systemic constraints, rarely seek legal redress. PWDs, similarly, face infrastructural, communicational, and attitudinal barriers.

Recognising this, the NGEC’s Garissa regional office took an active role in -

facilitating the forum, aligning its engagement with its core mission: to promote gender equality and freedom from all forms of discrimination.

“We are here to listen, to learn, and to empower,” said Abdiwahab Mohamed, NGEC’s Garissa Regional head. “Legal awareness is the foundation of meaningful inclusion. If you don’t know your rights, you cannot claim them.”

Participants split into thematic focus groups. Women’s circles examined legal protections against gender-based violence under the Sexual Offences Act (2006) and the Protection against Domestic Violence Act (2015), while youth workshops covered rights to political participation under Article 55 of the Constitution. A specially tailored session for persons with disabilities demonstrated how to access Braille and sign-language services, as enshrined in Article 54.

This outreach couldn’t have come at a more critical time. With the country grappling with economic pressures, cultural conservatism, and a widening inequality gap, vulnerable populations are increasingly at risk of exclusion.

Decoding Dyslexia: Breaking the Silence, Building Inclusive Futures

NGEC partners with key institutions ahead of the Dyslexia Rising Africa Conference 2025 to champion education equity and uphold the rights of learners with disabilities.

In a country where the potential of millions of children is often overshadowed by systemic barriers, the silent struggle of learners with dyslexia is finally taking centre stage. Kenya is poised for a turning point in the fight for inclusive education, as the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) joins forces with the Bloom Dyslexia Centre and the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) to co-host the Dyslexia Rising Africa Conference 2025, scheduled for 20th–21st August 2025 at KISE headquarters in Nairobi.

More than just a two-day event, the conference is shaping up to be a historic reckoning with decades of exclusion, misdiagnosis, and underachievement experienced by children with dyslexia across the continent. The initiative represents a

bold push by NGEC and its partners to integrate equality, non-discrimination, and dignity into the educational framework of Kenya.

Dyslexia, a neurodevelopmental condition that affects reading and language processing, is not a new phenomenon. Yet, for many Kenyan children, it remains an undiagnosed and misunderstood challenge, often mistaken for laziness or lack of intelligence. According to international estimates, 1 in 10 people have dyslexia — but in Kenya, access to diagnosis, intervention and support is painfully limited, especially in rural and marginalised communities.

This lack of awareness often translates into punitive schooling experiences for children who simply learn differently. The trauma lingers—manifesting as low self-esteem, school dropouts, and a cycle of poverty and exclusion.

In a high-level planning meeting held at KISE, representatives from the Ministry of Education (Special Needs Education), Bloom Dyslexia Centre, KAIH, and NGEC laid the groundwork for what could be the most impactful conference on learning differences ever hosted in East Africa.

The conference will serve multiple functions: raising public awareness, showcasing local and international research, training educators and policymakers, and—perhaps most importantly—centering the voices of learners with dyslexia themselves.



The upcoming conference is also expected to explore policy gaps, curriculum adaptation, early detection frameworks, and teacher training needs. For NGEC, this is more than an awareness campaign—it is a call to action for government agencies and schools to invest in inclusive education.

Hope Beyond Harm: Counties Turn the Tide on Gender-Based Violence

NGEC and JICA's Transformative Initiative Builds County Capacity to Support Survivors and End GBV



Deputy Governor, Hon. Martin Moshisho Martine, Commissioners Caroline Lentupuru, Dr Margaret Karungaru and NGEN team pose for a group photo

Kajiado & Machakos Counties, Kenya — In a country where gender-based violence (GBV) remains a persistent and painful blight on the lives of thousands, a beacon of hope is emerging from the heart of Kenya's devolved government system. This hope is embodied in a groundbreaking project driven by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which seeks to strengthen county governments' capacity to prevent and respond to GBV.

Over recent months, NGEN Commissioners Caroline Lentupuru and Dr Margaret Karungaru led a rigorous assessment mission to Kajiado and Machakos counties to review the progress of this ambitious initiative — a pilot project designed to transform how counties manage the scourge of GBV through improved service delivery, survivor-centred care, and institutional collaboration.

At the core of this mission lies a conviction shared by leaders, survivors, and advocates alike: that gender-based violence is not merely a private tragedy but a violation of constitutional rights that demands public accountability, justice, and systemic change.

The Enhancement of County Governments' Responses to GBV project, implemented under a Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Governments of Kenya and Japan, represents a unique fusion of international expertise and local governance. It builds on Kenya's constitutional commitments, particularly under Article 27 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination, and the comprehensive mandate of NGEN to promote and safeguard these principles.



Machakos County Deputy Governor H.E. Francis Mwangangi, Commissioners Caroline Lentupuru, Dr Margaret Karungaru and NGEN team pose for a group photo

JICA's technical and financial support complements NGEN's regulatory and advocacy role, together aiming to create county-level systems that can offer timely, compassionate, and effective support to survivors while strengthening prevention mechanisms.

The highlight of the visit was the commissioning of a state-of-the-art GBV Recovery Centre at Kajiado Level 5 Hospital, a facility

fully equipped to offer medical treatment, psychosocial counselling, and referral services under one roof. This centre is more than a health facility; it is a sanctuary designed to provide survivors with dignity, safety, and hope.



state-of-the-art GBV Recovery Centre

Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru reflected on the significance of this centre: "This facility exemplifies what a survivor-centred approach looks like. It shows Kenya that we can offer healing with humanity and efficiency, ensuring survivors are supported holistically."

Deputy Governor Hon. Martin Moshisho Martine reiterated the county government's full backing of the project and committed to ensuring its sustainability. "We do not see this as a temporary intervention but as an integral part of Kajiado's health and social services. Our government will continue to allocate resources and policy support to this cause," he said.

later, Commissioners Lentupuru and Karungaru travelled to Machakos County, where they were hosted by Deputy Governor H.E. Francis Mwangangi. The meeting provided an opportunity to share progress updates and discuss sustainability strategies for the GBV elimination project.

H.E. Mwangangi expressed gratitude for NGEN and JICA's partnership and reiterated Machakos County's dedication to the fight against GBV. "Our people deserve safe homes and communities free from violence. Machakos County stands firm in its commitment to ensure this project's principles are embedded in our governance structures and budgets," he affirmed.

NGEC praised Machakos County for its proactive leadership and collaborative spirit, urging other counties to learn from their example.

While policy and infrastructure are vital, it is the human stories behind the statistics that illuminate the project's true impact. In both counties, survivors have shared accounts of how access to coordinated services has transformed their healing journeys.

One survivor in Kajiado, who preferred to remain anonymous, recounted her experience at the newly commissioned Recovery Centre: "Before this centre, I had to travel long distances, often feeling alone and scared. Now, everything I need — medical care, counselling, even legal advice — is here. It has given me strength to face the future."

Such testimonials underscore the urgency of replicating this model nationwide.

NGEC Urges Universities to Champion Gender Equality

Dr. Purity Ngina urges learning institutions to move beyond token gestures and create inclusive, safe spaces for all students.

At the Young Female Leaders Conference hosted by the AfriYouth Care Group (AYCG) in Nairobi, the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) made a powerful call to Kenya's universities to become active leaders in advancing gender equality.

Addressing the forum, NGEN CEO Dr. Purity Ngina underscored the importance of higher education in shaping a fair and inclusive society. She noted that while progress has been made, many institutions still treat gender equality as a formality, rather than a lived commitment.

"Universities should not only include women in their brochures or events," said Dr. Ngina. "They must embed gender equality in their leadership, research, and day-to-day life on campus."



NGEC CEO Dr. Purity Ngina at the AfriYouth Care Group (AYCG) in Nairobi

She highlighted NGEN's key contributions in promoting equality in the education sector, including the Education Sector Gender Policy and the TVET Gender Mainstreaming Model.

These initiatives are aimed at making learning institutions more responsive to the needs of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups.

Dr. Ngina also emphasised the need for safe and inclusive campuses where young women can freely express themselves, participate in decision-making, and thrive academically.

"Creating gender-responsive universities means having strong policies on issues like sexual harassment, ensuring female representation in leadership, and providing support for marginalised students," she said.

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