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THE SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM IN HOMA BAY COUNTY: EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

County:	Homa Bay County		
Sector/s:	Gender, Youth, Sports, Talent Development, Culture, and Social Services	Sub-sector/Theme:	Social Services
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Target Audience:	Counties Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)		
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Introduction

Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya guarantees all Kenyans economic, social, and cultural rights. It binds the State to provide appropriate social security to persons who are unable to support themselves and their dependents.

Notably, the eradication of extreme poverty is no longer seen as a development issue only but a human rights issue as well. There is now broad consensus among



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policymakers that social protection is a powerful strategy to fight poverty and promote inclusive growth.

Social protection encompasses a range of policies and programs implemented by governments and other organizations to support individuals and communities in meeting their basic needs, protecting them from risks, vulnerabilities and promoting their well-being. It is designed to ensure that people have access to essential services, resources and social security throughout their lives. According to the 2019 National Population Census, approximately 2.2% of the population in Kenya (equivalent to 0.9 million individuals) live with some form of disability. ¹The prevalence of disability is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas, with 2.6% (0.7 million) of people living in rural areas and 1.4% (0.2 million) residing in urban areas reporting a disability.

²Homa Bay County has a significant disability prevalence rate of 14%. To tackle the challenges encountered by Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), the County Government has taken proactive steps through its Department of Gender, Youth, Sports, Talent Development, Culture, and Social Services to improve their living standards. A central component of these efforts is introducing a comprehensive Social Protection Program designed to empower and support PWDs. Through this program, the County has distributed assistive devices such as wheelchairs and crutches to enhance their mobility. Additionally, PWDs in the County have received equipment and various tools of trade to strengthen their businesses, thereby promoting self-sufficiency and reducing dependency levels. The Social Protection Program has supported 80 people, with two beneficiaries chosen from each of the 40 wards.

¹ <https://www.socialprotection.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/STATUS-REPORT-ON-DISABILITY-INCLUSION-IN-KENYA-2021.pdf>

² Data sourced from the CEC Gender, Youth, Sports, Talent Development, Culture, and Social Services. Mentioned as the resource person.



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Donated equipment/tools of trade for supporting PWDs businesses in Homa Bay County

Implementation of the practice

During the 2022/23 financial year, the County Government of Homa Bay allocated Ksh 3.2 million towards funding the Social Protection Program. This allocation would go towards purchasing various tools of trade including sewing machines, salon and barber equipment to support PWDs in establishing small businesses and enhancing their mobility with assistive devices. In a partnership with SDA Lake Victoria Field Church, the County Government received a donation of 120 tricycles, priced at Ksh 43,000 each and valued at Ksh 5,160,000 in total, to support the advancement of the Social Protection Initiative.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH), the County has identified individuals with severe disabilities, particularly those with visible disabilities and provided equipment to 80 out of the total registered population of 1,400 PWDs. Out of the Ksh 3.2 million allocation, the County has procured additional equipment, which includes 30 tricycles, 50 wheelchairs and laptops. These resources have played a vital role in



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supporting individuals with computer skills to establish cybercafes as part of their entrepreneurial ventures.

To ensure proper utilization of the donated equipment and prevent PWDs from selling the donated items, the County through the Department of Gender, Youth, Sports, Talent Development, Culture, and Social Services, conducts regular field visits for monitoring purposes. The County has implemented continuous sensitization efforts to mitigate the stigma associated with disability and encourage mass registration. These efforts aim to raise awareness, educate the public and promote inclusivity.

For sustainability, the County is in the process of formulating a policy paper focused on social protection, aimed at ensuring the continued support and well-being of the targeted population.

Results of the practice

1. Assistive devices have significantly enhanced mobility for PWDs empowering them to actively engage in everyday tasks and participate more fully in society.
2. Continuous sensitization efforts are effectively dispelling the stigma surrounding disabilities and enabling families to encourage the inclusion and participation of their disabled members.
3. With the donation of equipment, the County Government of Homa Bay has enabled PWDs to own businesses hence becoming more independent.
4. The economic empowerment efforts have improved the living standards of families, where a person with a disability serves as the breadwinner.

Lessons learnt:

Continuous registration of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), including home visits, is essential for the County, as it ensures comprehensive data collection beyond hospital records provided by the Ministry of Health (MoH). This approach helps to ensure that individuals who are unable to visit healthcare facilities are not overlooked and are accurately counted in the registration process.



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To fully address the challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), the County Government of Homa Bay needs to allocate a larger budget to the department. This ensures sufficient resources and support systems are in place to facilitate the active participation and inclusion of PWDs within the community.

Implementing a monitoring and evaluation strategy is crucial for County Government officials to ensure the utilization of donated equipment to PWDs for their intended purposes. This monitoring approach enables accountability, transparency, and the efficient allocation of resources, thereby maximizing the impact of the government's support for PWDs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the continuous sensitization efforts undertaken by the County have played a crucial role in mitigating the stigma associated with disabilities and promoting mass registration. Through awareness campaigns, community engagement, and collaboration with other partners like SDA Lake Victoria Field who donated 120 tricycles valued at Ksh 5,160,000, the County has fostered a more inclusive and accepting society. Additionally, the provision of assistive devices, tools of trade and economic empowerment initiatives have supported individuals with disabilities to participate actively in daily activities, own businesses and become more independent. As a result, families with a PWD as the breadwinner have experienced improved living conditions.

Photos



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