

# RESULTS SUMMARY

## Meaningful Engagement of the Youth Sounding Board in the Leave No Youth Behind Project

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PROJECT	<b>Title:</b>	Leave No Youth Behind – Young care leavers claim their rights in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somaliland
	<b>Partner:</b>	SOS Children's Villages in Kenya
	<b>Country:</b>	Kenya
	<b>Period:</b>	2022-2025

**CHANGE**

The engagement of the Youth Sounding Board (YSB) has contributed to operational change with a strong impact on accountability and concrete advocacy results. The successful formation of the YSB concept has empowered care experienced youth to actively participate in strategic decision-making and advocacy, enhanced their personal and professional development and enabled their impactful participation in national youth forums and events. YSB members have built self-confidence and networking skills to leverage the influencing potential of the YSB.

**CONTEXT**

Considering the predominantly young, Kenyan population (approx. 60% below 30 yrs.), the space for youth influence on political decision making does not match the demographic representation. Care experienced youth (approx. 10-12 % of all youth) enjoy even less space for advocating their specific minority rights. Kenyan government basically welcomes youth participation, and youth-organized advocacy and activism is continuously increasing.

**CONTRIBUTION**

SOS Denmark and SOS Kenya have worked together to facilitate the formation of the YSB through a participatory process of supporting youth in exerting their potential, building awareness, skills and capacity to effectively and meaningfully contribute to the project's objectives. The project has supported YSB to engage in youth learning forums and active participation in international youth fora, including the #KenyaYouthConnekt.

IMAGES		
	YSB member, Dorcas, presenting a petition	YSB filming exercise

See next page for more details →

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ACTIVITIES

The Youth Sounding Board is comprised of 10 young people aged between 18-25 years of both gender and with practical experiences of growing up in different care options in Kenya. They operate under the mantra “Nothing about us without us” and meet regularly as per their terms of reference, to ensure that the young care leavers become resilient, self-reliant and contribute to the development of the communities. They are from the two locations where the project is implemented and are also regularly involved in the activities that support young care leavers, such as safe spaces providing mental health and psycho-social support, or the livelihood improvement through access to life skills, vocational training and internships called “Vijanaa na skills”. In addition they have been engaged in the advocacy activities bringing their lived experience to the forefront.

### LESSONS

The close involvement of the YSB has supported staff in better understanding the specific challenges the young care leavers experience, such as stigma and discrimination while also improving access to opportunities that help them become resilient and self-reliant. It has also improved documentation as the members have been closely involved in the data collection and reporting. Finally, engaging the YSB in the formulation of advocacy messages and policy dialogue with decision makers is a game changer that bring energy, legitimacy and new synergies to the programme. The YSB is a resource that adds value to other relevant youth programmes and organisational structures and that contributes to the sustainability of the LNYB and potentially impact the governance structure of SOS.

### EVIDENCE

Several YSB members have participated in the Review and learning meetings organised by SOS Denmark and the knowledge sharing with the young care leavers from the other countries has been inspirational. The active involvement and participation of the YSB has led to the progressive growth of YSB members’ personal and leadership space. One of the most notable outcomes is the significant boost in confidence, which has enabled them to engage more effectively in public forums and discussions. By sharing their knowledge and experiences with other youth as well as with organisations and decision makers, they have contributed to the development of the conceptual understanding and awareness of having grown up in the care system. Exposure to diverse experiences and perspectives has further enriched their understanding and approach to community issues. Their leadership skills and their personal growth is a social capital that with the right support is being successfully exchanged for political influence.

### DOMAINS

<i>Development strategy priorities:</i>	Democracy and human rights
<i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	X
<i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people’s rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people’s rights</i>	X
<i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	X
<i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i>	X