



Kenya Children's News

April 2024



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KCC Unveiled

With your help, Kenya Children Centres (KCC) has been supporting disadvantaged children in Kenya for over 20 years. Our work is described briefly on our website, in weekly Facebook posts and in these bi-annual newsletters. We thought you might like some more detailed information that would help you understand the need for our support..

Welcome to 'KCC Unveiled', a new blog on our website, where each story is a call to action and an opportunity to share our hope for the children's future. We invite you to join us on a journey through the complexities and contradictions of Kenya, through the challenges faced by the most impoverished of Kenyans, and through the services that we deliver, to see how your donations improve the lives and prospects of over 2,000 Kenyan babies and children.

[Take a look at the stories already posted on the website](#) and give us your comments. A new story is published on the blog every few weeks and I have included one about our abandoned baby home in this newsletter.

Kujali Abandoned Baby Home

Abandoned babies are a major issue in Kenya. Recent statistics show that 40% of girls between 15 and 19 in poor communities become pregnant, with many even younger, barely teenagers. Sadly it is often through defilement and rape. Keeping the baby can resign the girl to a continued life of poverty and therefore many babies are abandoned. To rescue and improve their life prospects, Kenya Children Centres funded the creation and day-to-day operations of a dedicated Abandoned Baby Home in the Kujali Children's Centre.

Governed through the local Children's Office against the requirements of the Children Act 2022 and operating in alignment with the National Standards for Charitable Children's Institutions, Kujali works closely with the local Children's Office to address the issues of abandoned babies and to give the babies the best possible chance of a future.



The Kujali compound sits on an acre of land in Ngoingwa, near Thika, which was donated by a local women's cooperative. The purpose-built Abandoned Baby Home occupies the top floor of the main building, providing a loving, safe and secure environment, alongside some of the other Child Welfare Programmes run by Kujali – short-term residential care for children placed by the Courts and our centre for Teenage Mothers.

Since it was opened in 2019 the Abandoned Baby Home has taken in 36 babies. 14 have been reunited with their families, 11 have been adopted and one fostered. One sadly died.

We asked Rachel, the manager at Kujali, to explain how a baby is placed at Kujali. These are her words:

"The Abandoned Baby Home looks after babies from 0 months up to two years of age. It also looks after neglected or street babies who may be placed in the Home for temporary care and protection.

Admission into the Home is a clearly defined process. If the baby is abandoned on the streets, whoever saves

the baby must report it to the police, who record it in their Occurrence Book (OB) and issue an OB number. This is for security because child trafficking is on the rise. The baby is immediately taken to a hospital and admitted to their Baby Unit for observation and treatment until they are stable, pending placement at Kujali through the Children's Office and the Court.

If abandoned in the hospital, the hospital Social Worker reports to the police who issue a Police letter. Once the child's life is out of danger, the hospital Social Worker notifies the Children's Officer and requests them to identify a home where the child can go to receive love, care, and protection.

The Children's Officer calls Kujali's manager to see if there is space for a new admission and, if yes, she uses the Police Letter and any other available information to write a Placement Letter to facilitate the placement of the baby into the care and protection of Kujali.

A Committal Order from a Magistrate must accompany the placement. This protects Kujali in case a mother reports to the Police that her baby has been stolen.

The Kujali Nurse and Caregivers receive the baby in the home in a loving manner, change the baby's bedding and clothes, and introduce them to the other babies in the home.

The Nurse checks the general condition of the baby and, in case of any deformity, abnormality or major illness refers them back to the health facility for a check-up. The Kujali Social Worker notifies the Children's Officer about the issue.

If the baby is between 0 and six months we begin to feed them Cow & Gate Formula No.1. If the baby is six months or older immediate weaning begins in addition to Cow & Gate Formula No. 2.

As soon as the child is in our care one of our Social Workers tries to trace the baby's family using any information provided by the hospital (discharge summary), Police letters and the Subcounty Children's Officer placement letter.

The key reason for tracing is to see whether, even in the mother's absence, there might be a next of kin willing to care for the baby since it is better for the child if they can grow up in a family and not an institution.

If our Social Worker cannot trace the mother or family, they notify the Children's Officer to get permission for the baby to be put up for adoption and allow us to prepare the necessary documentation.

Kujali engages a local adoption agency (Buckner), which then begins the process of adoption or fostering. Buckner identifies prospective parents who are ready to adopt a baby or babies and manages the process. This involves the matching of photos for resemblance purposes, then bonding takes place within Kujali under the supervision of the Nurse and the Caregivers for 3 consecutive days before the final adoption day. Because many of the babies that we care for have disabilities, one of the reasons for their abandonment in the first place, adoption can be very difficult, if not impossible. In these cases, we look for foster parents or more suitable homes that can give them the specialised care that they need as they grow.

Once the baby has been adopted or fostered, the agency continues to guide the new parents through the legal court process until they finally receive the appropriate certificate issued through the court."



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