

Kenya Society of Care Leavers (KESCA)

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OUR STATEMENT ON ENDING ORPHANAGE VOLUNTEERISM

At KESCA¹, we strongly advocate for family-based care over institutionalization, aligned with [Kenya's National Care Reform Strategy \(2022–2032\)](#). Institutional care has long been associated with harmful effects on children, including abuse, developmental delays, and challenges in transitioning to independence. Despite these known harms, orphanages persist largely due to continued financial and volunteer support, including from international volunteers.

To our Dutch friends and global volunteers, we acknowledge your genuine intentions to make a difference. However, volunteering in orphanages sustains practices that ultimately harm children and delay the critical transition to family-based care systems.

Volunteering in orphanages often perpetuates cycles of dependency, *prioritizes institutional structures over the welfare of children*, and unintentionally fuels the orphanage industry. Many children in these institutions are not true orphans but have been separated from their families due to poverty or other preventable reasons. By volunteering or donating to these institutions, we risk reinforcing the very systems we seek to dismantle.

We urge Dutch volunteers and organizations to choose responsible placements that prioritize the best interests of children. Instead of orphanages, *support initiatives that strengthen families, promote community-based care, and empower vulnerable children to grow in safe, loving, and nurturing environments*. Consider contributing to programs that train foster families, support child-headed households, or provide resources for family reunification. These alternatives offer children the stability and care they need without confining them to the damaging cycle of institutionalization.

¹ [Read more about our Advocacy works](#)



Ending orphanage volunteerism is a crucial step in *global care reform*. As we advocate for this change, we also emphasize that alternative care systems must be developed responsibly to avoid repeating past mistakes. Every child deserves to grow in a family where their safety, development, and well-being are safeguarded.

We call on Dutch volunteers to align with this movement and help us end orphanage volunteerism by choosing to support family and community-based solutions. We strongly believe that together, we can create a future where no child has to grow up behind institutional walls!

Bonfas Maya, Chairperson,

Joel Muthee, Secretary.

KENYA SOCIETY OF CARELEAVERS.

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