



Vol. 31 | Post COVID-19 Recovery and Sustainable development

Vol. 31 Article 4 | May, 23 2026

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## Stakeholder Engagement and Implementation of Deinstitutionalization Programs for Children's Homes in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya

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**Cite as:** Musau, A. N., Luhombo, C. A., & Mutisya, M. S. (2026). Stakeholder Engagement and Implementation of Deinstitutionalization Programs for Children's Homes in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya. *International Journal of Social and Development Concerns (IJSDC)*, 31(4), 52–66. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20367125>

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**Abstract:** Despite Kenya's progress in care reforms, many children in need of care and protection continue to remain in institutional care, contrary to national and global policies that advocate for family and community-based care. This study specifically examined the influence of stakeholder communication on the implementation of deinstitutionalization programs in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County. The study was anchored on Stakeholder Theory and Systems Theory was used. The study adopted a convergent parallel research design. The target population was 516 participants. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 226 was determined, with 224 staff selected through stratified, proportionate, and simple random sampling, and two key informants selected purposively. Questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Pre-testing of research instruments was done and validity and reliability. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26 through descriptive statistics and ANOVA. Qualitative data were analysed thematically. The study found that, stakeholder communication had significant positive relationships with the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes. The study established that structured communication forums such as meetings, case conferences, and coordination platforms were commonly used and played an important role in facilitating information sharing and joint decision-making. Effective communication channels and timely updates were also found to enhance coordination, stakeholder alignment, and overall implementation efficiency. However, the findings also revealed challenges, particularly in the clarity of communication pathways and the consistency of feedback dissemination. These gaps occasionally affected coordination and reduced the effectiveness of information flow between stakeholders. The study recommends strengthening stakeholder communication through structured forums, regular updates, and effective feedback systems to improve coordination and programme implementation.

**Keywords:** Stakeholder engagement, implementation of deinstitutionalization, stakeholder communication programs, children's homes

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Deinstitutionalization of children is referred to as the process of moving children from institutional care settings into family and community-based care arrangements (Muraguri et al., 2024). Although this approach was widely recognized as the most appropriate child protection strategy, global implementation remained uneven and faced significant structural, financial, and cultural barriers (Shekhar & Rai, 2025).

It was estimated that between five and six million children worldwide still lived in institutional care despite the United Nations' recognition that every child had the right to family life (Naaz et al., 2022). Protection of the Rights of Children reaffirms that a nurturing family environment is essential for the full and harmonious development of a child (Asokan, 2021; Tripon, 2024). The resolution urges governments to reduce reliance on institutional care and invest in localized family support systems. While global policy directions are strong, critics argue that implementation often overlooks the preparedness of families and communities to absorb children returning from institutions. In many low-income settings, weak social protection systems and inadequate post-reintegration support make policy intentions difficult to sustain, suggesting that deinstitutionalization without sufficient stakeholder preparation expose children to new vulnerabilities.

Herczog (2021) argued that the success of deinstitutionalization programs depended heavily on stakeholder engagement during the transition process. Stakeholders include individuals, groups, or institutions that are influenced or are affected by project outcomes, including governments, NGOs, families, community leaders, faith-based organizations, and social workers (Shaukat et al., 2022). Montenegro et al. (2023) similarly noted that strong stakeholder engagement improve transparency, accountability, and cultural relevance in child care transitions. These studies agreed that collaboration enhance continuity of care and reduced reintegration risks. However, they differed in emphasis: Herczog focused on transition management, while Montenegro et al. stressed governance and accountability. Integrating both perspectives suggested that stakeholder engagement needed to be both operational and relational, ensuring not only service coordination but also trust and local ownership.

Stakeholder communication is considered a critical dimension of engagement because it determines how information is shared, how stakeholders participate, and how responsibilities are coordinated during program implementation (Elwy et al., 2022). Zheng (2024) defined stakeholder communication as the systematic exchange of information among actors affected by a program to promote clarity, collaboration, and accountability. Early communication help clarify stakeholder roles, expectations, and influence throughout the project cycle. In Moldova, Lisenco (2025) found that clear communication structures, regular consultations, and continuous feedback significantly improve deinstitutionalization outcomes by reducing resistance and strengthening coordination. However, this approach may be less transferable to African contexts where informal community systems, traditional leadership, and extended family networks often influence child welfare decisions more than formal communication structures.

In Africa, stakeholder communication systems are central to effective deinstitutionalization. In Ghana, Frimpong-Manso et al. (2024) found that involving families, community leaders, and child protection agencies are essential for designing appropriate transition strategies. In Rwanda, Kanyamanza and Nsabimana (2023) observed that structured communication strategies such as community forums and training workshops improve coordination among policymakers, caregivers, and staff. Similar patterns were reported in Nigeria and Malawi, where communication strengthened trust among child protection actors. Compared to European studies, African evidence places stronger emphasis on local participation and trust-building rather than formal administrative systems, suggesting that community legitimacy is often more important than institutional structure alone.

In Kenya, the National Care Reform Strategy for Children (2022) provides the policy framework for transitioning children from institutional care to family and community-based alternatives. Effective

stakeholder communication is essential in coordinating government agencies, children's homes, caregivers, foster parents, and communities throughout this process. The government aims to transition about 44,070 children from 902 charitable children's institutions and over 1,400 children from 30 statutory institutions into family and community settings, while more than 1,600 foster parents have been registered caring for 862 children (KNBS, 2022; Cheptoo, 2024; Muraguri et al., 2024). Studies in Nairobi by Kivuva (2023) shows that regular feedback between caregivers and child protection officers improved counseling and livelihood support for reintegrated children, while Embleton et al. (2014) and Waithera (2020) found better psychosocial outcomes among children in community-based care. However, Njoki (2019) and Ucembe (2019) identified poor governance, weak inter-agency communication and misconceptions about alternative care as major barriers.

In Kajiado North Sub-County, despite support from organizations such as Action Now Kenya, weak coordination, limited monitoring, poverty, and unstable livelihoods continue to hinder effective reintegration. Compared to stronger coordination models in Rwanda and Uganda, these gaps showed that policy adoption alone was insufficient without strong stakeholder communication which justifies the need for the present study.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Literature has shown that deinstitutionalization of children's homes is an important child welfare reform strategy aimed at ensuring children grow in safe, stable, and nurturing family and community environments rather than long-term institutional care. According to UNICEF (2021), family-based care promotes better psychosocial, emotional, and developmental outcomes for children compared to institutional care. Similarly, Muraguri et al. (2024) found that successful deinstitutionalization depends on strong support systems, adequate resources, and effective stakeholder engagement throughout implementation. In Kenya, the government introduced the National Care Reform Strategy for Children (2022) to support the transition of children from charitable children's institutions to family and community-based care, while the Kajiado County Child Care Facility Bill (2024) strengthens the regulation of childcare facilities and child welfare services (KNA, 2025). Despite these policy and programmatic efforts, deinstitutionalization programmes in Kajiado North Sub-County have continued to face major challenges. Reports indicate that many children's homes still operate under weak regulatory oversight, limited monitoring, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient staffing, and shortages of trained social workers and caregivers, which affect the quality of care and reintegration processes (NCCS, 2022; Ntayia, 2022; Mwikali et al., 2020). In addition, poverty, unstable household livelihoods, and weak community support systems have made family reintegration more difficult. These challenges have raised concerns about the sustainability and effectiveness of deinstitutionalization programmes in the area. Although previous studies have focused on infrastructure and human resource constraints, limited attention has been given to how stakeholder engagement influence programme implementation. Specifically, little is known about how stakeholder communication affects deinstitutionalization outcomes in Kajiado North Sub-County. This knowledge gap may lead to weak coordination, poor reintegration outcomes, and continued dependence on institutional care. Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of stakeholder communication on the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya.

### **1.3 Rationale for the Study**

The study focused on the influence of stakeholder communication on the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya. Recent reports indicate that despite the existence of the National Care Reform Strategy for Children (2022), the Kajiado County Child Care Facility Bill (2024), and ongoing government and NGO interventions, implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes continues to face challenges such as weak stakeholder communication, poor coordination, inadequate follow-up systems, and inconsistent reintegration outcomes for children transitioning from institutional to family- and community-based care (NCCS, 2022; KNA, 2025). In Kajiado North Sub-County, these challenges had contributed to uneven programme implementation and continued reliance on institutional care despite policy reforms. Therefore, the objective of this study was to generate empirical evidence and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on how stakeholder communication influences the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County. The findings were intended to support child welfare stakeholders including government agencies, children's home managers, social workers, community leaders, and development partners in strengthening communication systems, improving coordination, and enhancing reintegration outcomes for children in line with national and county policy frameworks.

### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

Stakeholder Theory was introduced by Edward Freeman (1984), and it emphasizes that organizational and programme success is achieved when the interests of all stakeholders are identified, balanced, and integrated through effective communication and decision-making processes (Freeman et al., 2020). The theory challenges traditional management approaches that focus mainly on output efficiency and instead promotes participatory communication processes where all relevant stakeholders are actively engaged in planning, implementation, and evaluation (Fares et al., Abbasi, 2021). Stakeholders such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations, employees, community members, and beneficiaries are therefore viewed as essential contributors to effective communication, accountability, and long-term sustainability. In relation to deinstitutionalization of children's homes, Stakeholder Theory is particularly relevant because it emphasizes coordinated communication among actors involved in transitioning children from institutional care to family and community-based care (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022). The theory is directly aligned with the study focus, where stakeholder communication facilitates the continuous flow of information among actors during planning and implementation. Stakeholder involvement is strengthened through communication that enables participation in decision-making and service delivery, while feedback mechanisms ensure continuous information exchange for monitoring and improvement of programme outcomes (Ramoglou et al., 2023). Through effective stakeholder communication, coordination among implementing actors is enhanced and duplication of efforts is reduced. Communication also promotes ownership, responsiveness, and inclusivity in decision-making processes, while feedback strengthens accountability and continuous improvement in child welfare interventions (Mahajan et al., 2023).

### **1.5 Review of Related Literature**

Proper communication with stakeholders is a decisive factor of successful deinstitutionalization programs in children homes. Effective communication that is well organized and timely promotes coordination, reduces misunderstanding, helps in joint planning and also improves accountability of stakeholders engaged in the child reintegration process (Baldini, 2021). The information sharing in both

formal and informal interactions take place through both formal (reports, digital platforms, workshops, and inter-agency meetings) and informal interactions to help stakeholders to respond effectively to emerging child welfare needs.

Brazilian experience proves that the organized forums of communication between social workers, governmental bodies, child protection agencies, and caregivers contribute greatly to the deinstitutionalization efforts in terms of coordination and transparency (Bastable et al., 2022). Frequent meetings of stakeholders would enhance the understanding of policy goals, institutional fit, and enhance accountability, leading to better reintegration outcomes in children (Lima et al., 2022).

Similarly in Chile has been enhancing deinstitutionalization by having multi-channel means of communication, such as digital means, email networks and inter-agencies communication systems (LaBrenz et al., 2025). These systems facilitate flow of information in real-time, lessen bureaucracy, and improve management of cases so that all actors are informed and engaged in the entire deinstitutionalization process (Perrigo et al., 2024; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2020).

In Australia, the timely exchange of case, policy and family assessment information between child welfare agencies has played a critical role in assisting planning of effective reintegration (Rogers & Karunan, 2020). The studies have shown that timely communication between the control case and communication leads to weakening of the case control, whereas timely communication ensures speedy delivery of services. Standardized reporting systems and national databases on child protection have consequently enabled the institutional to be moved to the family-based care (Forber-Pratt et al., 2020). The South African experience also underscores the need to have regular forums of communication as one means of establishing cooperation between government agencies, NGOs and caregivers (Smith & Williams, 2024). The frequent meetings and inter-agency workshops are effective in ensuring transparency and consistency to child welfare policies, yet they are limited by resource constraints and inconsistency in attendance, which suggests the need to engage in long-term engagement strategies (Degenaar et al., 2025; Moyo et al., 2020).

Multi-sectoral communication between government ministries, social workers and community leaders in Nigeria has assisted in accountability and responsiveness in deinstitutionalization reforms (Nwanze et al., 2024). Increased information sharing through the use of digital platforms, community radio, and formal reporting systems has enhanced participation in the stakeholders, but lack of access to communication technologies in the rural setting still limits full participation (Aladegboye et al., 2025). The deinstitutionalization initiatives of Ghana focus on the timely exchange of information by periodic reporting systems and online databases between the social welfare departments, child care institutions, and non-governmental organizations (Wright et al., 2024). Although these mechanisms have increased the speed of coordination and evidence-based decision-making, data flow delays by bureaucracy sometimes prevent responsiveness to child protection issues (Petrowski et al., 2022).

In Rwanda, organized dialogue systems enable frequent intercourse between social workers, community authorities and the NGOs to assist in joint planning, observation and accountability of deinstitutionalization programs (Kanyamanza & Nsabimana, 2023). Whereas the challenge of inconsistent attendance to community-level forums exists, the steady stakeholder participation has

enhanced policy knowledge and alignment in the child protection interventions (Murthi and Jayasooriya, 2020).

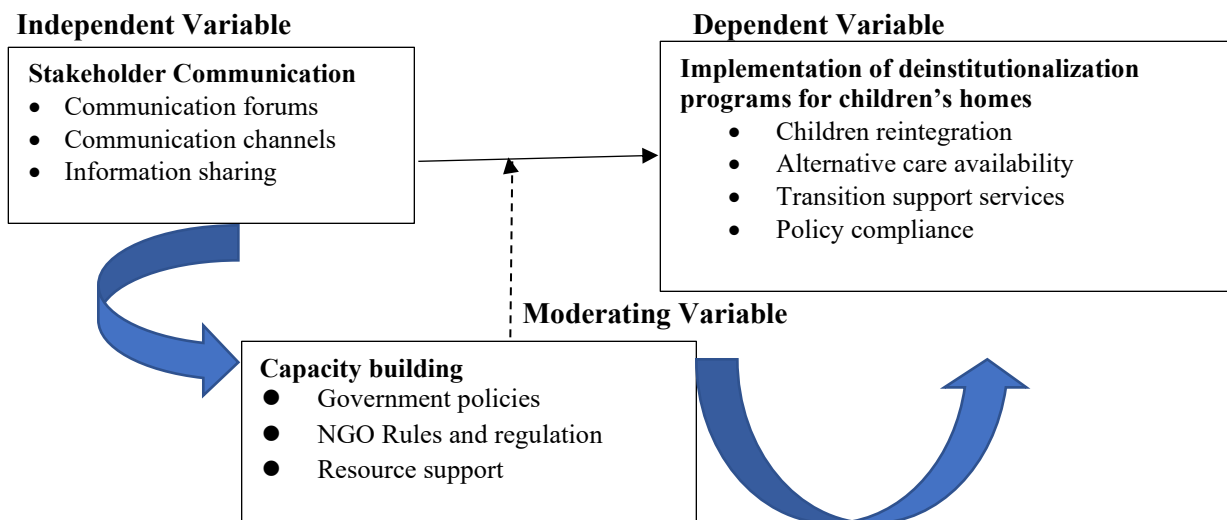
The case of Burundi shows that community-based communication approaches like local radio programs, newsletters, and social service committees are effective in improving coordination of caregivers, social services, and the local government. Although there are limitations associated with poor technological infrastructure in rural communities, the multi-level communication infrastructure has enhanced stakeholder integration and program success (Sindayigaya, 2022; Simon, 2023). In weak states like South Sudan, real time information sharing between the ministries in the government, the humanitarian agencies and the local organizations have played a crucial role in finding and assisting vulnerable children to be placed in family-based care (Wara, 2021). Nevertheless, the inefficiency of communication remains due to the political instability and infrastructural barriers that need to be reinforced with an enhanced data management system and inter-agency coordination (Janowski et al., 2020; Roy, 2021).

In Kenya, the stakeholder communication has been at the core of implementing the deinstitutionalization programs at the national and county levels. The Department of Children Services is hosting stakeholder forums where children are reviewed to determine the progress, share their experiences, and identify policy gaps to enhance accountability and coordinated child reintegration efforts in Nairobi County (Muthee, 2020). However, the lack of consistency in the involvement of the grassroots actor restricts inclusiveness in decision-making (Anzigale, 2024).

Digital and in-person communication networks have enhanced coordination in case management, family tracing and child follow-up in Mombasa County. Responsiveness of social workers has been increased by mobile communication devices and inter-agency meetings, with issues like lack of internet connectivity and digital illiteracy continuing to be a problem (Mutuku & Mutiso, 2020; Mutua, 2024). On the same note, in Kisumu County, the sharing of the data, between the children homes, the local government offices and the community-based organizations, have led to the lessening of the decision making delays and also the enhancing of access to the psychosocial and educational support to the reintegrated children (Nyamu, 2023). Nevertheless, the centralization of data and real-time reporting functions are necessary to complement monitoring and evaluation of the results of deinstitutionalization due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and inconsistent reporting (Cheruto et al., 2021).

## **1.6 Conceptual Framework**

A Conceptual Framework provides the orientation to the study and assists in seeing how the study contributes to the body of knowledge of the topic, how the elements of the study align, and how the study design and methodology meet rigorous research standards (Crawford, 2020). This section explored some of key concepts and variables both independent and dependent that guided this research. The identification of these variables helped in understanding the key concepts that was investigated by this research.



**Figure 1:** *The Conceptual Framework*  
 Source: *Researcher, 2026*

The conceptual framework shows the Interaction between the independent and dependent variables. It shows that stakeholder communication through communication forums, communication channels and information sharing could lead to the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes in children’s homes in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya.

**1.7 Research Methodology**

The study adopted a convergent parallel research design using a mixed methods approach integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The design was appropriate as it enables concurrent data collection, separate analysis, and triangulation of findings for a more comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena (Dawadi et al., 2021). A phenomenological approach guided the qualitative strand to capture stakeholders’ lived experiences regarding programme implementation. The target population comprised 516 respondents drawn from eight registered children’s homes, including home managers, caregivers, social workers, psychosocial support staff, community child protection volunteers, and two key informants. Stratified sampling was used to ensure representation across stakeholder categories, while simple random sampling was used in selecting staff respondents within strata. Purposive sampling was used to identify key informants due to their specialized knowledge. A sample size of 226 respondents was determined using Yamane’s (1967) formula. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26 through descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential analysis (Pearson correlation and hierarchical regression). Qualitative data, collected through interview guides, were analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form. Findings from both strands were integrated during interpretation to enhance triangulation and validity.

**1.8 Findings, Interpretations and Discussions**

The data were summarized using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, and correlation analysis was performed to test the relationships between variables. Qualitative insights

were used to complement quantitative results, which were based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

**Table 1: Responses on Stakeholder Communication**

n=220

Statements	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std Dvt
	F	F	F	F	F		
Our organization regularly holds communication forums with all stakeholders.	6.8 (15)	10.0 (22)	12.3 (27)	41.4 (91)	29.5 (65)	3.77	1.05
Stakeholders rarely meet to discuss progress and emerging issues.	35.0 (77)	30.5 (67)	14.1 (31)	11.4 (25)	9.1 (20)	2.29	1.12
We frequently use effective communication channels to share program updates.	4.5 (10)	9.5 (21)	13.6 (30)	44.1 (97)	28.2 (62)	3.82	0.97
Information between stakeholders often flows through unclear communication paths.	32.7 (72)	34.1 (75)	12.7 (28)	12.3 (27)	8.2 (18)	2.29	1.04
The management consistently shares timely information on program activities.	5.9 (13)	11.8 (26)	14.1 (31)	39.1 (86)	29.1 (64)	3.73	1.03
Stakeholders rarely receive updates on time to make informed decisions.	33.2 (73)	31.4 (69)	15.0 (33)	11.8 (26)	8.6 (19)	2.31	1.08
Communication across stakeholder groups is usually open and responsive.	6.4 (14)	12.3 (27)	16.4 (36)	38.2 (84)	26.8 (59)	3.67	1.06
Important messages are often delayed or lost between departments.	29.5 (65)	33.6 (74)	14.5 (32)	13.2 (29)	9.1 (20)	2.39	1.10
Feedback from meetings is consistently communicated to all stakeholders.	7.3 (16)	13.6 (30)	17.3 (38)	36.8 (81)	25.0 (55)	3.58	1.09
<b>Composite Mean and Standard Deviation</b>						<b>3.20</b>	<b>1.06</b>

Source: *Field Data, 2026*

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that stakeholder communication moderately influenced the implementation of deinstitutionalization programs in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County. The composite mean score of  $M = 3.20$  ( $SD = 1.06$ ) suggests that respondents were generally in moderate agreement that communication among stakeholders supported program implementation, although variations in responses pointed to inconsistencies in communication frequency, clarity of channels, and timeliness of information sharing.

On the statement that the organization conducts regular communication forums with all stakeholders, 91 respondents (41.4%) agreed and 65 (29.5%) strongly agreed, while 27 (12.3%) were neutral, 22 (10.0%) disagreed, and 15 (6.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of  $M = 3.77$  ( $SD = 1.05$ ) indicates that structured communication forums were generally in place. This suggests that formal meetings and coordination platforms were commonly used to facilitate stakeholder interaction in deinstitutionalization programs. The regression results further confirmed the importance of communication, showing that stakeholder communication had a significant positive effect on implementation ( $\beta = 0.487$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), implying that improved communication practices significantly enhanced program outcomes.

These findings are consistent with Lima et al. (2022), who observed that structured stakeholder forums improve coordination and information sharing in complex social programs. Similarly, LaBrenz et al. (2025) and Forber-Pratt et al. (2020) found that regular stakeholder engagement forums enhance collaboration, alignment of expectations, and accountability in child welfare interventions. From the perspective of Stakeholder Theory, these forums are essential because they provide an inclusive platform where all relevant actors participate in decision-making and influence program direction, thereby improving ownership and implementation effectiveness.

On whether stakeholders rarely meet to discuss progress and emerging issues, 77 respondents (35.0%) strongly disagreed and 67 (30.5%) disagreed, while 31 (14.1%) were neutral, 25 (11.4%) agreed, and 20 (9.1%) strongly agreed. The mean score of  $M = 2.29$  ( $SD = 1.12$ ) indicates that stakeholders generally met regularly to review progress. This implies that continuous engagement supported joint monitoring and problem-solving in deinstitutionalization programs. Bastable et al. (2022) similarly emphasized that regular review meetings are central to effective collaborative monitoring, while Petrowski et al. (2022) and Adu and Oudshoorn (2020) noted that such meetings enable early identification of challenges and coordinated responses. Within Systems Theory, these frequent interactions strengthen linkages between system components, ensuring that the deinstitutionalization process functions as an interconnected and adaptive system.

On the use of communication channels, 97 respondents (44.1%) agreed and 62 (28.2%) strongly agreed that effective channels were used to share program updates. The mean score of  $M = 3.82$  ( $SD = 0.97$ ) indicates that information dissemination was generally effective. This finding is reinforced by the regression result ( $\beta = 0.487$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that effective communication channels significantly enhanced program implementation. This aligns with Stakeholder Theory, which emphasizes that clear and accessible communication channels are necessary to meet stakeholder expectations, improve participation, and support coordinated action across actors.

Regarding clarity of communication pathways, 72 respondents (32.7%) strongly disagreed and 75 (34.1%) disagreed that information flows through unclear channels, while 28 (12.7%) were neutral, 27 (12.3%) agreed, and 18 (8.2%) strongly agreed. The mean score of  $M = 2.29$  ( $SD = 1.04$ ) suggests that communication pathways were generally perceived as clear, although occasional ambiguities existed. This finding is consistent with Systems Theory, which posits that weak or unclear communication linkages within a system can disrupt coordination and reduce overall system efficiency, particularly in multi-actor service delivery environments.

On timely information sharing, 86 respondents (39.1%) agreed and 64 (29.1%) strongly agreed that management provided timely updates, while 39 respondents (17.7%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean score of  $M = 3.73$  ( $SD = 1.03$ ) indicates that timely communication was generally practiced. This supports Kanyamanza and Nsabimana (2023) and Roy (2021), who argued that timely communication enhances responsiveness and informed decision-making. From a Stakeholder Theory perspective, timely information sharing ensures that stakeholders remain informed and engaged, which improves trust and commitment to program goals.

On whether stakeholders rarely receive timely updates, 73 respondents (33.2%) strongly disagreed and 69 (31.4%) disagreed, while 33 (15.0%) were neutral, 26 (11.8%) agreed, and 19 (8.6%) strongly agreed.

The mean score of  $M = 2.31$  ( $SD = 1.08$ ) indicates that most stakeholders received updates on time, although occasional delays were reported. This aligns with Systems Theory, which emphasizes that delays in information flow within a system can disrupt coordination and reduce the effectiveness of interdependent components.

On openness and responsiveness, 84 respondents (38.2%) agreed and 59 (26.8%) strongly agreed that communication was open and interactive, while 27 (12.3%) disagreed and 14 (6.4%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of  $M = 3.67$  ( $SD = 1.06$ ) indicates moderate agreement that communication was generally open. This finding supports Mutua (2024) and Mutuku et al. (2023), who observed that open communication enhances trust and strengthens relationships among stakeholders. Stakeholder Theory further reinforces this by emphasizing transparency, inclusivity, and shared decision-making as core elements of effective stakeholder engagement.

However, internal coordination challenges were still evident. On whether important messages are frequently lost or delayed between departments, 65 respondents (29.5%) strongly disagreed and 74 (33.6%) disagreed, while 32 (14.5%) were neutral, 29 (13.2%) agreed, and 20 (9.1%) strongly agreed. The mean score of  $M = 2.39$  ( $SD = 1.10$ ) suggests that while most respondents did not experience frequent communication breakdowns, some inefficiencies persisted. This finding aligns with Systems Theory, which explains that weak internal linkages can disrupt the flow of information and reduce system efficiency even when external communication is effective.

On feedback communication, 81 respondents (36.8%) agreed and 55 (25.0%) strongly agreed that feedback from meetings was shared with stakeholders, while 38 (17.3%) were neutral, 30 (13.6%) disagreed, and 16 (7.3%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of  $M = 3.58$  ( $SD = 1.09$ ) indicates moderate effectiveness in feedback dissemination. This supports Perrigo et al. (2024), who emphasized that feedback loops are essential for continuous improvement and adaptive program management. From a Systems Theory perspective, feedback mechanisms are critical regulatory components that enable systems to self-correct and improve performance over time.

Qualitative findings reinforced these results. KI1 noted that “regular communication keeps stakeholders updated on child progress and improves coordination during reintegration.” KI2 explained that “delays in communication between institutions and community actors affect follow-up and decision-making.” KI3 emphasized that “open communication builds trust and reduces misunderstandings.” KI4 highlighted that “structured reports and case conferences clarify roles and responsibilities.” KI5 observed that “communication delays between departments occasionally affect coordination efficiency,” while KI6 stated that “feedback is shared but not always consistently across all stakeholders.” KI7 concluded that “strengthening communication systems would improve accountability and overall program effectiveness.”

In general, both quantitative ( $\beta = 0.487$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and qualitative findings confirm that stakeholder communication significantly influenced the implementation of deinstitutionalization programs. Interpreted through Stakeholder Theory and Systems Theory, the findings demonstrate that structured, timely, transparent, and well-coordinated communication enhances stakeholder alignment, strengthens system interconnections, and improves the effectiveness of deinstitutionalization program implementation in children’s homes in Kajiado North Sub-County.

### *Inferential Analysis*

In order to understand the relationship between stakeholder communication and the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya, this study used one-way ANOVA.

**Table 2: ANOVA Output**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.624	1	18.624	48.72	0.000
Within Groups	31.176	30	1.039		
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.800</b>	<b>31</b>			

Alpha level = 0.05

Source: *Field Data (2026)*

The ANOVA results show that the difference between groups is statistically significant ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that stakeholder communication has a statistically significant influence on the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County.

The results, as presented in the ANOVA table, indicate a statistically significant difference in programme implementation across the groups ( $F = 48.72$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). This implies that stakeholder communication has a significant influence on the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that variations in stakeholder communication practices are associated with differences in programme implementation outcomes.

These findings suggest that the manner in which stakeholders communicate through information sharing, coordination meetings, reporting structures, and feedback channels plays a decisive role in shaping how effectively deinstitutionalization programmes are implemented. Effective communication among key actors such as government officers, children's home managers, caregivers, non-governmental organizations, and community stakeholders enhances coordination, ensures clarity of roles, and improves the timeliness of decision-making processes. Conversely, inconsistencies or weaknesses in communication systems are likely to constrain programme efficiency by creating delays, misunderstandings, and fragmented implementation efforts.

An in-depth interpretation of these results further shows that structured communication mechanisms such as regular stakeholder meetings, clear reporting lines, and continuous information sharing contribute significantly to programme effectiveness. Where such systems are well established, stakeholders are better able to align their activities, respond promptly to emerging challenges, and maintain continuity in service delivery. This enhances accountability and ensures that reintegration processes are carried out in a more coordinated and child-centred manner.

However, the findings also indicate that where communication systems are weak or irregular, programme implementation is negatively affected. Delays in sharing updates, limited coordination between institutions, and inadequate feedback mechanisms were identified as key challenges that undermine efficiency. These communication gaps reduce the responsiveness of stakeholders and slow down the reintegration process, thereby affecting overall programme outcomes.

In the specific context of Kajiado North Sub-County, the evidence demonstrates that stakeholder communication is a critical determinant of successful deinstitutionalization programme implementation. It not only facilitates coordination among actors but also enhances transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in service delivery. The implication of these findings is that strengthening stakeholder communication systems is essential for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes.

### 1.9 Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study, several important conclusions were drawn regarding the influence of stakeholder communication on the implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes in Kajiado North Sub-County. It was established that effective stakeholder communication significantly enhances programme implementation by improving coordination, strengthening collaboration, and facilitating timely decision-making among implementing actors. Structured communication platforms such as meetings, reporting systems, and coordination forums were found to promote information sharing, clarify roles, and support collective problem-solving in the reintegration process.

However, the study also revealed that the effectiveness of stakeholder communication is constrained by occasional delays in information dissemination, inconsistencies in inter-agency communication, and uneven feedback distribution. These gaps reduce efficiency in programme execution and may hinder timely responses to emerging child welfare needs. It was therefore concluded that while communication structures exist, their effectiveness depends on consistency, responsiveness, and inclusivity in information flow across all stakeholder levels. Strengthening these aspects is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of deinstitutionalization programmes in children's homes.

Based on these findings, the study recommended that formal communication mechanisms such as scheduled coordination meetings, case review conferences, written progress reports, and standardized feedback systems should be consistently implemented. These platforms would enhance accountability, reduce misunderstandings, and ensure that all stakeholders remain aligned to programme objectives. Therefore, the successful implementation of these recommendations requires a coordinated and committed effort from all stakeholders. Strengthening stakeholder communication systems is essential for improving coordination, enhancing accountability, and ensuring the sustainable success of deinstitutionalization programmes in Kajiado North Sub-County.

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