

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES



JAM SESSIONS - ALERT TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND ALL THOSE WHO VALUE CHILDREN

The National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) is a Semi-Autonomous Government Agency (SAGA), established under Section 30 of the Children Act, 2001. It is charged with the mandate of safeguarding the rights and welfare of all children in Kenya. The Council takes this opportunity to sound an alert regarding an issue called 'Jam Sessions' that is having a negative impact on the lives of children in Kenya.

Jam sessions are music extravaganzas held in clubs mostly frequented by young people in schools. It involves dancing and partying accompanied by all manners of vice which expose them to many dangers. It is mostly rampant in urban areas but it also happens in rural settings. Some of the students waiting to sit for national exams spend most of their weekends in the clubs, instead of studying.

Many start abusing drugs in these clubs as they are exposed to alcohol, cigarettes and even hard drugs. Drug peddlers are using the Jam sessions to enlarge their market by introducing the unsuspecting children to drugs who after a few days of free doses are permanently hooked. To fund their drug addiction thereafter, they start to steal from home and eventually graduate to serious crime.

While in these clubs, these children are also exposed to risky sexual practices thus exposing them to unplanned pregnancies and the risk of contracting HIV/AIDs and other sexually transmitted diseases. Adults take advantage of these naive children and solicit for unprotected sex with them leading to some dying while procuring abortion.

While leaving the clubs, the children move in groups, engaging in crime like snatching bags and mobile phones from unsuspecting members of the public and in the process inflicting injuries using knives and other crude weapons.

In other areas, some children seek permission to attend house parties, funeral night vigils, 'keshas', and religious camps some of which are venues for them to engage in all kinds of experimentation.

The Council hereby calls:

- For a **total ban** of Jam Sessions to protect our children.
- On parents and guardians to monitor the whereabouts of their children at all times and guide them on appropriate leisure activities.
- For strict enforcement of the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act - clubs which flout the rule of admitting children should be closed and their owners prosecuted.
- On the media, schools, religious organizations and prominent personalities to create awareness against the vice.
- For sensitization of children to be responsible for their behaviour.

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