CANDLE LIGHT

FOR EMPOWERMENT CBO

2026 – 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At Candlelight for empowerment CBO, our 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan outlines a clear path for lasting, measurable change. Over the next five years, we will implement integrated, community-led programs focused on prevention. These programs will strengthen families and expand educational and economic opportunities by directly addressing the root causes of vulnerability in our communities.

To support this work, we will strengthen our organizational systems to ensure continuous improvement and long-term sustainability. This includes reinforcing our governance, developing social enterprises, diversifying our funding through strategic partnerships and elevating our visibility to influence policy and inspire collective action.

By 2030, Candlelight aims to directly reach over 20,000 children, youth, women, parents and community leaders in Kilifi County. We will also indirectly impact thousands more through our advocacy and policy work.

Our progress will be tracked through a comprehensive set of indicators, including reduced cases of violence, higher school retention rates, increased household incomes and stronger community led safety networks. This plan, is our blueprint for achieving sustainable change and building a future where dignity and opportunity are universal rights.

Vision, Mission and Core Values

Although the mission statement remains unchanged, CLEC's 2026–2030 strategic framework contains a revised vision and core values informed by the organizations willingness to strengthen its current approach while taking on new initiatives. Through this framework, CLEC plans to scale up its interventions on the socio-economic challenges facing children and the youth to act as a strong advocacy voice for their rights. The framework also includes new areas such as mental health support. This new framework is supported by the following vision, mission and core values.

Vision Statement

A world where every child grows up safe, valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

Mission Statement

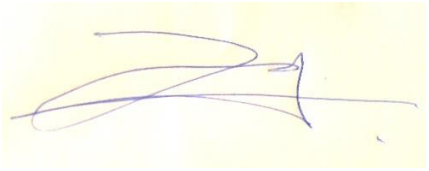
To prevent and end violence against children in Kenya's Coast region by creating safe, inclusive spaces where every child can grow, thrive and lead.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS

Chairperson of the board's remarks

It is with great joy that I present the Candlelight for Empowerment CBO Strategic Plan for 2026–2030. This document is more than just a roadmap, it is a great declaration of our commitment to the children, youth and women of Kenya's coastal region. The Board of Directors has been involved in the development of this plan, ensuring that it is practical, evidence based and aligned with the highest standards of governance and financial stewardship. We recognize that the challenges our communities face like violence, inequality and exclusion are deep rooted.

Our strategy is therefore focused on integrated, community led prevention programs that address root causes while simultaneously building the organizational resilience necessary for long term impact. Over the next five years, we commit to upholding our duty in strengthening internal controls and actively supporting the executive director and staff as they execute these ambitious goals. We call upon all partners, stakeholders and community members to join us in making this blueprint a reality. Together, we will ensure that every resource mobilized translates into tangible safety, dignity and opportunity for those we serve.



Chairperson, Board of Directors

Executive director’s remarks

This Strategic Plan, "Community Empowerment for Lasting Transformation," marks an exciting new chapter for Candlelight for Empowerment CBO. It is a shared vision, collaboratively designed and rooted in the needs and aspirations gathered from the communities of Kilifi County.

Our mission has always been to create safe, inclusive and empowering spaces. This plan advances that mission by focusing on five strategic priorities: delivering holistic programs (encompassing protection, education, health and livelihoods), strengthening governance, building financial sustainability, diversifying resources and amplifying our advocacy voice. We are moving beyond immediate response to set up protection systems within the very fabric of community life.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, the supportive Board and our invaluable partners. The task ahead is challenging, but our passion, proven community led approach and technical expertise make it entirely achievable. We are ready to transition this plan from paper to profound community impact, ensuring that by 2030, we will have demonstrably contributed to a future where every child and young woman can thrive, free from the cycles of violence and poverty.



Executive Director

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of the Candlelight for Empowerment CBO 2026–2030 Strategic Plan was a collaborative, evidence driven process designed to ensure that our priorities genuinely reflect the needs, realities and aspirations of the communities we serve. Guided by our values of inclusion, transparency and data informed decision making, we worked to build a plan that is both ambitious and achievable.

We began with a comprehensive situational analysis to understand the current challenges, opportunities and trends affecting children, youth and women in Kenya's coastal region. This included reviewing national and county policy frameworks, analyzing our program performance data and mapping gaps in service delivery. Particular attention was given to the five strategic priorities we aim to advance over the next five years, through strengthening family care and gender equitable norms, expanding access to inclusive education, promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive health rights and building household economic resilience.

Stakeholder engagement was at the heart of the process. We conducted community consultations with children, youth, parents, teachers, women's groups and local leaders to gather diverse perspectives. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews with government representatives, civil society partners and donors enriched our understanding of emerging needs, cultural dynamics and sustainable solutions. The planning team synthesized these insights with best practices from the child protection, education, health and economic empowerment sectors. Draft strategies and goals were then reviewed and refined by our Board of Directors, Dennis Zubler (Board Chairperson), Lilian Mamu (Executive Director, Board Secretary and senior leadership, Jeremiah Ngoja (Program Manager).

The resulting plan is a shared vision, rooted in lived experience, shaped by rigorous analysis and designed as a roadmap for deep, lasting change. It commits Candlelight to measurable progress by 2030, ensuring that our work continues to empower children, youth as well as women to thrive with dignity, opportunity and security.

Key takeaways from research

The development of the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan was grounded in a thorough Situational Analysis and extensive Consultations with beneficiaries, staff, board members, local government officials and partner CSOs. This process provided the evidence base for a comprehensive SWOT analysis, the findings of which directly inform our strategic priorities.

Situational analysis and Strategic Foundation: The SWOT analysis

SWOT	KEY FINDINGS	STRATEGIC PRIORITY INFORMED
Strengths	Community Trust & Proven Track Record: *Evidence:* High beneficiary satisfaction rates (90% in exit surveys) and strong community attendance at program events; 10 years of operational history. *Finding:* Trusted reputation and impactful program delivery (education, violence prevention).	Capacity Development & Partnerships: Leverage local credibility to recruit, train and transfer skills to community-based trainers and local partners, ensuring program sustainability and ownership.
	Committed, Skilled Team & Approach: *Evidence:* Low staff turnover among core program staff; staff led development of community led tools. *Finding:* Dedicated human capital and a highly effective community led approach.	Advocacy & Scaling: Utilize deep local knowledge to inform data driven advocacy and design context specific, scalable interventions.
Weaknesses	Funding Limitations: *Evidence:* Overreliance on a few large restricted grants; insufficient operational reserves. *Finding:*	Organizational Capacity & Sustainability: Prioritize the development of a Resource Mobilization Strategy focused on revenue diversification (including income generating activities).

	Need to expand unrestricted funding and diversify the financial base.	
	Systems and Capacity: *Evidence:* Reliance on manual data collection; lack of integrated cloud-based reporting systems. *Finding:* Need to enhance technological and data management systems and organizational capacity for efficient scaling.	Organizational Capacity & Sustainability: Commit to investing in robust M&E systems and mandatory staff professional development in digital literacy and advanced program management.
Opportunities	Public and Policy Environment: *Evidence:* Recent adoption of child protection legislation by the County Assembly; documented increase in public discourse on Gender Based Violence (GBV). *Finding:* Rising public awareness and supportive county/national policy frameworks for child rights.	Advocacy: Focus our advocacy efforts on policy implementation and accountability rather than just initiation, targeting key decision-makers with evidence-based briefs.
	Grassroots Funding: *Evidence:* Donor trends show increased interest in funding local CBOs and grassroots-led solutions. *Finding:* Growing donor interest in local, sustainable solutions.	Partnerships & Visibility: Actively build strategic linkages with international NGOs and global foundations to access diversified funding streams and technical support.
Threats	External Shocks: *Evidence:* Recent high inflation and increased frequency of localized drought/floods impacting target populations. *Finding:*	Economic Empowerment & Integrated Strategies: Shift towards integrated, multi sectoral strategies that link violence prevention/education with climate smart economic empowerment and livelihood diversification.

	Economic instability, high youth unemployment and climate change impacts on livelihoods.	
	Social Barriers: *Evidence:* Consultations highlighted deeply entrenched cultural norms around gender roles and persistent gender inequality. *Finding:* Enduring social and cultural barriers that perpetuate inequality.	Violence Prevention & SRHR: Embed gender transformative approaches in all programming, focusing on community level dialogue and male engagement to address root causes of inequality.

These insights reinforced the urgency of diversifying funding, investing in robust data systems and enhancing staff capabilities all of which are central to the goals and objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan.

ORGANIZATION HISTORY

Our Story: A vision born from crisis

Candlelight for Empowerment Community-Based Organization (CBO) was officially founded in 2021 in response to a deepening community crisis observed in Kilifi County, Coastal Kenya. The organization emerged from the intersection of community needs and a foundational commitment to child safety and empowerment. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, as established safe spaces were closed and traditional oversight structures were disrupted, cases of violence, abuse and neglect against children and youth increased across the region. Crucially, the crisis exposed a significant gap: most community interventions were focused on responding after abuse had occurred, while systems for prevention, early reporting and community level accountability were weak or non-existent.

Candlelight for Empowerment was established to fill this critical gap. Drawing inspiration from successful community led models, Candlelight adopted a holistic, integrated approach. Instead of focusing on a single activity, the CBO uses Integrated Programming (Education, Protection and Economic Resilience) as the vehicle for transformation, addressing the root causes of vulnerability and inequality that perpetuate harm.

For over four years, Candlelight has been dedicated to shifting mindsets, strengthening local institutions and ensuring that every child has the chance to grow up in safety and dignity in the Coastal region.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

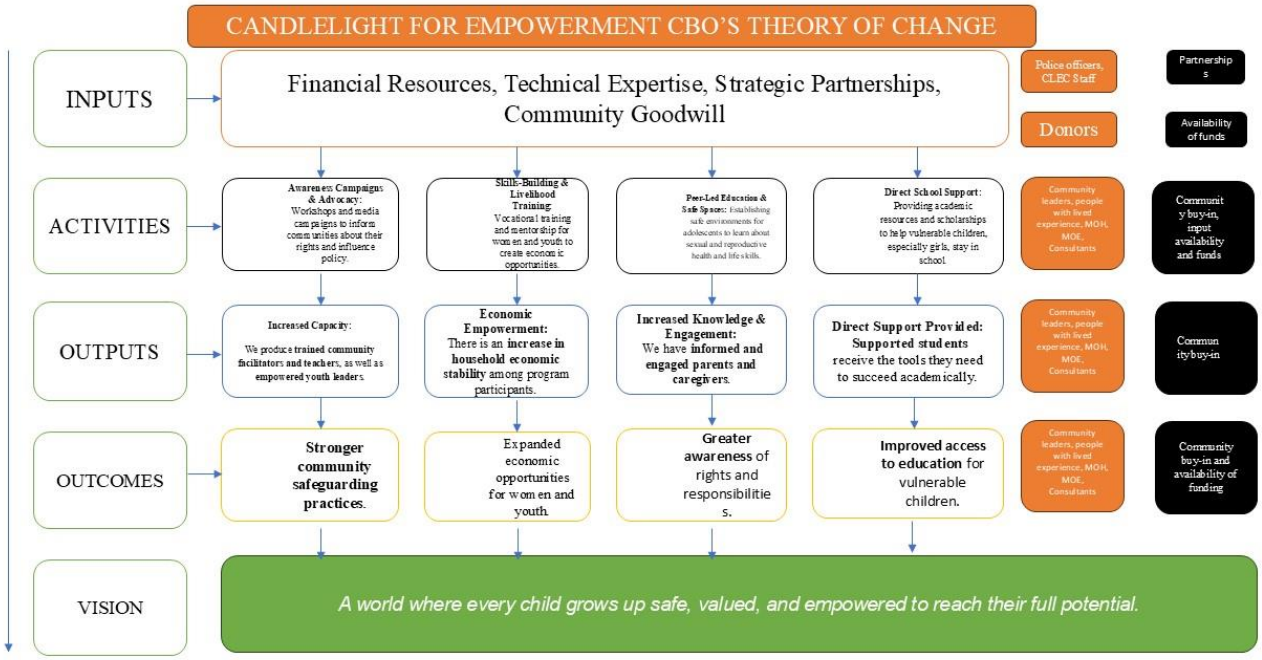
Our Core Values

At Candlelight for Empowerment CBO, our values are the compass that guides every decision, action and relationship. They shape our culture, define how we work and ensure our mission is achieved with purpose, integrity and lasting impact.

1. **Safety:** We prioritize the safety, protection and wellbeing of all beneficiaries, staff and partners above all else. We are firm in our dedication to safeguarding children, women and youth and consistently deliver our programs in a secure and dignified manner.
2. **Inclusion:** We champion for diversity and equity, ensuring that every voice regardless of gender, age, ability or background is respected, valued and actively represented in decision making and program design.
3. **Integrity:** We operate with honesty, transparency and accountability in all our processes. We safeguard the trust placed in us by communities, partners and supporters through ethical conduct and responsible resource management.
4. **Partnership:** We cultivate strong, meaningful collaborations with individuals, communities, institutions and organizations. We believe that shared goals, mutual respect and collective effort are essential for achieving transformative and sustainable change.
5. **Innovation:** We embrace creativity and evidence driven solutions, constantly learning and adapting to emerging challenges with approaches that are relevant, impactful and sustainable for the communities we serve.

THEORY OF CHANGE

At Candlelight for Empowerment CBO, we believe lasting transformation begins when communities are informed, equipped and united to protect and advance the rights of children, youth and women. Our Theory of Change is grounded in the conviction that combining community led solutions, evidence based programming and strategic partnerships can break entrenched cycles of violence, inequality and exclusion.



DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGY

Problem Statement:

Children, youth and women in Kenya's coastal region continue to face persistent and intertwined challenges, including widespread violence, limited access to quality education, inadequate adolescent sexual and reproductive health information and economic vulnerability. These issues are deeply rooted in harmful social norms, fragile protection systems and limited community capacity to both prevent and respond effectively to abuse. Without focused, sustained intervention, these challenges continuous cycles of poverty, exclusion and trauma, undermining the wellbeing and potential of entire communities.

Solution Statement:

Candlelight for Empowerment CBO addresses these complex challenges through a holistic, community driven approach that integrates violence prevention, education support, adolescent health and economic empowerment. Our strategy prioritizes prevention by strengthening protective environments within families, schools and communities. We empower children, youth, women and caregivers with the knowledge, skills and resources they need while actively engaging local leaders and institutions to challenge harmful norms and enhance accountability. By combining direct services with advocacy and capacity building, we create sustainable pathways to safety, dignity and opportunity.

Target Population:

Our programs primarily serve vulnerable children and youths, especially girls and young women in Kilifi County and surrounding areas, alongside their families and caregivers. We also work closely with community leaders, educators, health providers and local institutions whose involvement is vital for sustained change. Through inclusive and participatory approaches, we ensure marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, are reached and empowered.

Strategic Priorities:

To fulfill our mission and achieve sustainable impact, Candlelight for Empowerment CBO has identified five strategic priorities for 2026–2030. These priorities focus on delivering integrated, evidence-based programs, enhancing organizational capacity, securing long term sustainability, mobilizing diversified resources and amplifying our voice and influence. Each priority is anchored by clear objectives and action areas to guide our efforts over the next five years.

Strategic priority 1: Deliver integrated programs that prevent violence against children, youth and women

We are dedicated to implementing holistic, community driven programs that prevent violence and promote dignity, safety and opportunity for all. By integrating education, protection, adolescent health education and economic empowerment, we tackle the root causes of harm, hence strengthening families, fostering inclusive institutions and empowering communities so children, youth and women can thrive free from violence and exploitation.

1.1 Expand access to inclusive and equitable education

Deepen efforts to ensure marginalized children, particularly girls, teen mothers and children with disabilities have access to quality education. This includes school sponsorships, reentry and transition support, vocational training pathways and fostering safe, inclusive learning environments through positive discipline, antibullying initiatives and abuse prevention campaigns.

1.2 Prevent violence against children, youth and women

Address the underlying causes of violence at the household, school and community levels. Strengthen family-based care, promote positive parenting and gender equitable relationships and equip educators and caregivers with nonviolent discipline and conflict resolution skills. Engage men, boys, community champions and local leaders to cultivate cultures of protection and mutual respect. Ensure accessible, safe referral pathways for survivors.

1.3 Advance Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Enhance adolescent access to comprehensive SRHR information and services through peer education, safe spaces for girls and teen mothers and community mobilization to challenge harmful social norms. Integrate SRHR into schools and youth programs to reduce sexual violence, early pregnancies and related health risks.

1.4 Strengthen Household Economic Resilience, Women's Empowerment and Youth Livelihoods

Empower women, caregivers and out-of-school youth by providing vocational training, savings groups and income-generating activities that build financial security and agency. Promote household financial literacy and foster respectful spousal relationships to reduce poverty-related risks and gender-based violence, laying the foundation for safer, nurturing family environments.

Strategic priority 2: Strengthen organizational systems for effective governance and program delivery

Invest in our internal capacities to ensure quality, accountability and sustainability across all programs. Key focus areas include staff development, policy and procedure enhancement, governance strengthening and robust safeguarding and accountability mechanisms to maintain mission alignment and maximize impact.

Strategic priority 3: Strengthen organizational sustainability through income-generating activities

Reduce reliance on donor funding by identifying, developing and scaling viable social enterprises and service-based ventures aligned with our mission. Revenue generated will be reinvested to support core operations, program expansion and infrastructure, enhancing organizational resilience and independence.

Strategic priority 4: Develop and implement a sustainable resource mobilization and partnership strategy

Build a diverse and sustainable funding base by cultivating long term partnerships with donors, foundations, corporate entities and community stakeholders. Implement a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy encompassing grant development, donor stewardship and local giving initiatives to secure and scale our work effectively.

Strategic priority 5: Amplify organizational visibility and influence

Elevate our profile and impact through strategic communications, compelling digital storytelling and proactive engagement in advocacy and policy spaces. By highlighting community driven solutions and demonstrating evidence-based results, we aim to build trust, expand our reach and shape policies and practices at local, national and regional levels.

IMPACT MEASUREMENT

To ensure accountability and effectively track progress against our strategic goals, Candlelight for Empowerment CBO will implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework. This framework will utilize key performance indicators (KPIs) to guide adaptive management, demonstrate impact to stakeholders and drive continuous improvement across all program areas.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Target Outcomes:

This completed framework transforms the existing qualitative KPIs into a robust, quantifiable monitoring plan by incorporating Baseline Data, Annual Targets, Geographic/Stream Disaggregation and Reporting Specifications as requested by the donor.

PROGRAM PILLAR	STRATEGIC TARGET OUTCOME	ACTIVITY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	IMPACT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	BASELINE (2025)	ANNUAL TARGETS (2026-2030)	DISAGGREGATION & DATA SOURCES
1. EDUCATION ACCESS & RETENTION						
A. Enrolment & Retention	Sustained enrolment and retention of marginalized children in primary and secondary education, leading to completion.	Number of marginalized children enrolled and successfully retained in educational institutions annually.	Average % increase in marginalized children reporting high sense of belonging, educational aspiration and motivation to complete their schooling.	1,200 children retained; 55% reporting high motivation.	Target: Retain 2,500 children in 2026, with an incremental annual increase of 300 children through 2030 (Total: 4,000+ retained). Achieve 85% high motivation by 2030.	Disaggregation: Gender, Age (10-14, 15-18), Disability Status, Teen Mother status. Data Source: Verified School Registers, CBO Beneficiary Tracking System, Annual Longitudinal Motivation Survey.

B. School Environment	Creation of safe, nurturing and gender-responsive school environments free from violence and harassment.	Number of target schools adopting and fully operationalizing positive discipline and anti-bullying institutional policies.	Average % reduction in student-reported incidents of bullying, corporal punishment and gender-based harassment.	12 schools currently engaged; Baseline incident rate: 15 incidents/month (average across cluster).	Target: Achieve policy adoption and full compliance in 35 schools by 2030. Achieve 70% reduction in the institutional incident rate by 2030.	Disaggregation: School Name (Ward/Sub-County), Incident Type, Perpetrator/Victim Gender. Data Source: School/CBO Incident Logs (Monthly), Annual Student Safety & Climate Assessment.
2. VIOLENCE PREVENTION & PROTECTION						
A. Incident Reduction	Significant and measurable reduction in violence against children, youth and women across target communities.	Documented annual reduction in the reported incidence rate of violence (GBV, Child Abuse) within program communities.	Average % of community members reporting increased awareness, improved safety and demonstrated willingness to actively report or intervene in violence.	Baseline incident rate: 150 cases reported/year; 50% community awareness/ willingness.	Target: Achieve 35% annual reduction in the incident rate by 2030. Achieve 90% community awareness and willingness to intervene by 2030.	Disaggregation: County/Ward, Victim Age/Gender, Violence Type. Data Source: Consolidated Police/Hospital/Referral Partner Reports, Comprehensive Community Safety Survey.
B. Survivor	Universal access to high-	Number of survivors of	Average % of survivors accessing	120 survivors accessing comprehens	Target: 450 survivors accessing services	Disaggregation: Gender, Age, Service Type (Legal, Medical,

Referrals	quality, confidential and effective support services for all survivors of violence.	violence accessing complete, safe and effective multi-sectoral referral and support services annually.	services who report high satisfaction (4+/5 score) with the quality, confidentiality and effectiveness of support received.	ive services; 75% satisfaction reported.	annually by 2030. Achieve 95% reported survivor satisfaction by 2030.	Psychosocial). Data Source: CBO Centralized Referral Tracking Log, Post-Service Longitudinal Follow-up Survey.
3. SRHR FOR ADOLESCENTS & YOUTH						
A. Health Outcomes	Measurable reduction in negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes, specifically teen pregnancies and early marriages.	Percentage reduction in the incidence rate of teen pregnancies (ages 10-19) within program intervention areas.	Average % increase in adolescent girls reporting high levels of autonomy and confidence in making informed decisions about their bodies and future.	Baseline Teen Pregnancy Rate: 25%; 50% reporting high autonomy/confidence.	Target: Achieve a 15% annual reduction in the Teen Pregnancy Rate. Achieve 90% reported autonomy/confidence by 2030.	Disaggregation: County/Ward, Age (10-14, 15-19), Marital Status. Data Source: Local Health Management Information System (HMIS) Data Verification, Annual Adolescent Autonomy and Agency Survey.
B. Education &	Wide-scale adoption of	Total number of adolesce	Average % increase in adolescen	800 adolescents reached; 65%	Target: Reach a cumulative total of	Disaggregation: Gender, Program Stream (School-based vs.

Outreach	accurate SRHR knowledge and confidence in seeking health services among adolescents.	nts reached through intensive, peer-led SRHR education, safe spaces and digital outreach initiatives.	ts demonstrating 90%+ accurate knowledge of critical SRHR facts and reporting high confidence in seeking services.	achieving knowledge/ confidence benchmarks.	5,000 adolescents by 2030. Achieve 95% knowledge/ confidence benchmark by 2030.	Community Safe Space). Data Source: Program Attendance Records, Rigorous Pre/Post-Knowledge Assessments.
4. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT						
A. Skills Development	Enhanced economic capacity and self-reliance among women, caregivers and youth through high-demand vocational training.	Total number of women, caregivers and youth completing accredited training programs in vocational skills, financial literacy and Income-Generating Activities (IGAs).	Average % increase in beneficiaries reporting high confidence, functional ability and practical application in managing finances and pursuing new economic opportunities.	300 trained; 60% reporting high confidence/ ability.	Target: Train 750 new beneficiaries annually (cumulative total: 3,750+ by 2030). Achieve 95% reported confidence/ ability by 2030.	Disaggregation: Gender, Age (Youth/Adult), Type of Training (Vocational/Financial/Digital). Data Source: Training Registers/Certifications, Longitudinal Post-Training Confidence Survey.

B. Household Stability	Marked improvement in the resilience and long-term economic stability of beneficiary households.	Documented average percentage improvement in comprehensive household economic stability indicators among program participants.	Average percentage increase in verifiable household income strategically reinvested into essential human capital development (children's education, health, and nutrition).	15% average stability improvement; 10% income reinvested.	Target: Achieve 50% average stability improvement by 2030. Achieve 25% income reinvestment benchmark by 2030.	Disaggregation: County/Ward, Beneficiary Type (Woman/Youth/Caregiver), Household Size. Data Source: Bi-Annual Longitudinal Household Economic Survey, Structured Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).
5. ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY						
A. Capacity Building	Establishment of a robust, highly skilled, and resilient organizational structure capable of managing large-scale,	Annual completion rates of mandatory staff training, continuous professional development, and certification programs.	Average % increase in staff-reported confidence, competence and job satisfaction following participation in professional development programs.	90% completion rate; 75% average confidence increase.	Target: Achieve a 98% completion rate annually. Achieve 95% average confidence increase and satisfaction by 2030.	Disaggregation: Staff Role (Program/MEL/Finance/Leadership), Training Type (Governance/Technical). Data Source: Training Attendance Records, Post-Training Self-Assessment and Competency Survey.

	complex grants.					
B. Financial Resilience	Achievement of long-term financial independence through diversified revenue streams and maximized operational efficiency.	Proportion of total organizational revenue generated through self-sustaining Income-Generating Activities (IGAs) and diversified non-grant funding streams.	Average increase in the lead time (in months) the organization can sustainably maintain core operations without the influx of new grant funding.	10% IGA/Diversified Revenue; 2 months operational lead time.	Target: Achieve 35% IGA/Diversified Revenue by 2030. Achieve 6 months of operational lead time by 2030, demonstrating robust financial resilience.	Disaggregation: Revenue Source Type (Sales, Local Donation, Small Grant, Endowment). Data Source: Annual Audited Financial Reports, Quarterly Treasurer's Review.
6. ADVOCACY & INFLUENCE						
A. Strategic Outreach	Effective mobilization of political and public will to support pro-child, pro-woman policy reform	Total number of high-level strategic communications, digital storytelling campaigns and targeted advocacy engagem	Average % increase in key influential stakeholders reporting high familiarity with the organization's mission and policy	30 annual engagements; 55% stakeholder familiarity.	Target: Conduct 50 high-impact annual engagements by 2029. Achieve 90% key stakeholder familiarity and buy-in by 2030.	Disaggregation: Stakeholder Type (Gov't Official, CSO Partner, Media), Channel (Digital/In-person). Data Source: CBO Advocacy Log, Annual Stakeholder Perception Interviews.

	and practice change.	ents conducted annually.	recommendations.			
B. Policy Influence	Documented, sustained and measurable shifts in policy, institutional practice and resource allocation resulting from advocacy efforts.	Documented instances of policy, resource allocation, or institutional practice changes directly attributable to the program's advocacy efforts.	Number of documented policy or practice changes that are successfully sustained, implemented and fully funded two years post-advocacy effort.	5 documented shifts (e.g., successful budget line advocacy, policy review).	Target: Achieve 12 documented policy shifts/partnerships established by 2030. Ensure 8 of these shifts are successfully sustained and fully implemented two years later.	Disaggregation: Policy Level (County/National/Institutional), Area (Education/Health/GBV/Economic). Data Source: Formal documentation of policy/practice change (Official Gazettes, By-Laws), CBO/Partner Longitudinal Follow-up Report.

Integrated Strategic Operating Plan (2026–2030) for Candlelight for Empowerment CBO

This Integrated Strategic Operating Plan (2026–2030) details the high-leverage actions and robust institutional capacity required for Candlelight for Empowerment CBO to achieve its transformational goals. This plan serves as the comprehensive implementation roadmap, translating the vision into concrete, scalable programming across three core, mutually reinforcing Strategic Approaches.

1. Strategic Approach: Driving Systemic Policy and Legislative Reform

This approach focuses on influencing high-level policies and practices to secure sustainable, system-wide improvements for children, youth and women by addressing urgent social, economic and legal structural challenges.

Implementation Strategy & Phasing (2026–2030)

The core strategy focuses on evidence-driven policy formulation and sustained high-level legislative engagement. We will annually produce six (6) high-impact, evidence-based policy briefs and accompanying digital advocacy campaigns addressing systemic gaps (e.g., fiscal allocation for SRHR, mandatory GBV referral protocols, youth employment quotas). Furthermore, we will host two Annual Advocacy Weeks (totaling 50+ targeted engagements by 2029) to conduct targeted meetings and push for specific, measurable legislative amendments related to protection and empowerment, ensuring sustained visibility and pressure.

- **Timeline & Milestones:** Baseline legal and policy research is to be completed by Q4 2025. By Q4 2026, the goal is to secure four verifiable commitments from county and national authorities to formally review relevant policies or by-laws, targeting the eventual achievement of 12 documented policy shifts by 2030. The period 2027–2030 will transition to rigorous implementation monitoring and sustainability reporting of influenced policies.

Accountability & Resource Allocation

The Executive Director is Accountable (A) for high-level engagement and overall strategy, while the Program Manager is Responsible (R) for policy brief production and logistics. The Finance/Grants Manager is Accountable for securing dedicated advocacy grants and managing the cost center. Resource allocation includes a dedicated, detailed budget line item for 'Advocacy & Communications' covering institutionalizing research capacity, data analysis software, communication assets, and lobbying travel/logistics.

Monitoring and Reporting (M&E)

We will track the Policy Influence Index (PII), which measures the number of high-level meetings, media penetration, and, most critically, the enacted policy or legislative changes (Impact KPI). Reporting is conducted quarterly to detail engagement metrics. The Annual Performance Report includes a mandatory, dedicated section auditing the *implementation status* of all influenced policies and by-laws. The M&E Officer is Responsible (R) for tracking engagement metrics and verifying policy outcomes against official documentation.

2. Strategic Approach: Building Resilient Human Capital and Sustainable Self-Reliance

This approach is dedicated to institutionalizing skills, knowledge and confidence at the community level, empowering individuals to achieve sustainable, long-term economic and social resilience, directly enabling the target of improving stability for 4,000 households and securing a 60% income reinvestment rate.

Implementation Strategy & Phasing (2026–2030)

The CBO will deploy structured, accredited, and needs-based training through three core curricula:

1) Advanced Financial Literacy & Entrepreneurship

2) Community Governance & Leadership (focusing on local resource mobilization)

3) Comprehensive Violence Prevention & Safety Planning. We will also establish a formal 6-month Sustainable Mentorship Network (SMN), strategically linking trained beneficiaries with verified, successful community leaders and local business owners to ensure real-world application and job placement potential.

- **Timeline & Milestones:** All three training curricula will be finalized and externally certified by the end of 2026. The program will scale up to reach 750 new beneficiaries annually, aiming for a cumulative total of over 3,750 individuals trained by 2030 to directly impact 4,000 households. The Goal is full localization: By 2030, we will transition 75% of training delivery to certified Community Trainers (ToT), shifting CBO staff focus to quality assurance and advanced topics.

Accountability & Resource Allocation

The Program Manager is Accountable (A) for ensuring curriculum quality, content certification and the overall mentorship structure. Program Officers are Responsible (R) for direct training delivery and SMN coordination. Capacity Building includes mandatory quarterly high-fidelity

Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions for staff and key partners. Curricula will undergo an annual rigorous review cycle based on longitudinal beneficiary impact data.

Monitoring and Reporting (M&E)

We will track the Training Fidelity Index (TFI), which measures completion rates, disaggregated attendance and knowledge transfer via rigorous pre/post-test scores. Impact on self-reliance is tracked by monitoring the Self-Reliance Index (SRI), focusing on outcomes like the percentage of beneficiaries launching viable micro-enterprises and their one-year survival rates. Quarterly progress reports detail training completion and knowledge transfer, while the Annual Report includes comprehensive outcome data on SRI and economic empowerment indicators.

3. Strategic approach: Strategic coalition building for collective impact

This approach involves actively building and sustaining strategic, high-leverage collaborations to ensure comprehensive, community-led solutions that maximize resource efficiency and foster collective ownership, specifically ensuring the capacity to handle 450 annual survivor referrals and reach 15,000 community members with violence prevention messaging.

Implementation Strategy & Phasing (2026–2030)

The CBO will focus on Referral Network Strengthening by formalizing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with a minimum of ten (10) high-leverage Tier-1 service providers (e.g., specialist trauma centers, legal aid clinics, accredited vocational institutes) to guarantee seamless, high-quality client support and successfully meet the target of 450 survivors accessing services annually. We will also execute one major co-designed, co-funded joint initiative annually with a key government entity or anchor civil society organization (CSO) to maximize resource pooling and achieve mutual strategic goals, including reaching 15,000 community members with joint awareness campaigns to achieve 75% willingness to report/intervene.

- **Timeline & Milestones:** All ten Tier-1 service provider MOUs will be reviewed and formalized by Q2 2026. We will launch and execute one major joint project per year from 2026-2029. We plan to host a Bi-Annual Inter-Agency Policy and Practice Summit (first in 2028) to drive sector-wide alignment and resource commitments.

Accountability & Resource Allocation

The Executive Director/Program Manager is Accountable (A) for identifying strategic partners, negotiating MOUs, and ensuring high-level commitment. Program Officers are Responsible (R) for maintaining day-to-day linkage and referral pathways. The core Accountability Framework will be documented by developing a detailed RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted,

Informed) Matrix for all core programming activities and key external partners. This matrix is a critical Q1 2026 deliverable and will be reviewed annually.

Monitoring and Reporting (M&E)

We will track the Referral Success Rate (RSR) (percentage of referrals resulting in successful, verifiable client service access) and the number of active, performance-reviewed MOUs. The Partnership Leverage Ratio (PLR) will also be tracked, measuring the verifiable value of in-kind and financial contributions leveraged from partners against CBO investment. Referral pathways are tracked internally on a monthly basis, with partnership effectiveness and PLR reviewed quarterly with key stakeholders.

Integrated Results Framework and Impact Focus (2026–2030)

The Integrated Results Framework outlines the key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets that will guide Candlelight for Empowerment CBO in achieving its strategic priorities by 2030. It translates the organization's mission into measurable outcomes that reflect progress in education, protection, health and economic empowerment.

Performance will be tracked through regular surveys, follow-up assessments and programmatic and financial reports to ensure accountability, learning and adaptive management.

Programmatic Impact Areas

1. **Education Access**

   Impact Statement: Children, adolescents and teen mothers' access and thrive in safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.

   Target Outcome:

   By 2030, Candlelight will support 500 children (girls, boys and teen mothers) to enroll, remain and transition successfully through school. The organization aims to achieve 90 percent education access and retention in partner schools and a 90 percent reduction in student reported incidents of bullying and harassment, contributing to safer and more nurturing learning spaces.

   Responsible Officer: Program Manager

2. **Violence Prevention**

   Impact Statement: Communities are aware, proactive and responsive in preventing and addressing violence against children and adolescents.

   Target Outcome:

   By 2030, Candlelight will reach 15,000 parents, children, caregivers and out-of-school adolescents through awareness and capacity building initiatives. These efforts will strengthen community knowledge, accountability and collective responsibility to ensure that at least 75 percent of community members are willing and able to report or intervene in cases of violence, fostering safer and more protective environments for all children.

   Responsible Officer: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer

3. **Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**

   Impact Statement: Adolescents, particularly girls, demonstrate increased autonomy, confidence and informed decision-making regarding their bodies and futures.

   Target Outcome:

   By 2030, Candlelight will empower 10,000 adolescents through comprehensive SRHR education and mentorship enabling them to make informed life choices. The organization

targets a 70 percent increase in the number of adolescent girls reporting confidence and autonomy in making SRHR related decisions contributing to reduced early pregnancies and improved wellbeing.

Responsible Officer: Program Manager

4. **Economic Empowerment**
   Impact Statement:
   Households achieve improved economic stability and reinvest in the wellbeing and development of their children.

   Target Outcome:
   By 2030, Candlelight will strengthen the economic resilience of 4,000 households through livelihood training, savings groups and financial literacy initiatives. The goal is to achieve a 60 percent increase in household income reinvested in children's education and health contributing to sustained family wellbeing and reduced vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

   Responsible Officer: Program Manager

Overall Transformational Impact (2030 Vision)

By 2030, Candlelight for Empowerment CBO envisions empowered families, safer communities and equitable opportunities for every child to learn, grow and lead a life free from violence and discrimination. Through evidence-based programming, inclusive partnerships and sustained community engagement, Candlelight will contribute to a generation of resilient, educated and economically stable children and youth driving positive change across Kenya's Coast region.

Organizational capacity and sustainability

1. **Staff capacity:** The CBO aims to increase the average staff reported confidence and job satisfaction following professional development from a 60% average increase in 2026 to 85% average increase by 2030. The Executive Director (ED) is responsible for this target.

2. **Financial resilience:** The goal is to increase the average lead time the CBO can sustain operations without new grant funding from a 2025 baseline of 1.5 months to 4 months lead time by 2030. This is Finance Manager responsible for this outcome.

3. **Policy influence:** The CBO seeks to increase the number of documented policy or practice changes successfully sustained and implemented two years post advocacy effort from a 2025 baseline of 2 documented shifts to 5 sustained policy shifts by 2030. The Executive Director is responsible for this long-term impact area.

Conclusion

The 2026–2030 Strategic Plan for Candlelight for Empowerment CBO sets forth a clear and ambitious vision for fostering safer, more equitable communities where children, youth and women can flourish free from violence and exclusion. Rooted in evidence-based, community-driven approaches and anchored by our core values, this plan integrates prevention, empowerment and collaboration to tackle the root causes of the challenges we confront.

By enhancing our organizational capacity, cultivating strategic partnerships and securing sustainable resources, we commit to delivering impactful programs that promote dignity, opportunity and resilience. This plan serves not only as a strategic roadmap but also as a powerful call to action for our staff, partners and supporters to unite in driving meaningful and lasting change.

Together, we will build a future where every child's potential is fulfilled, every family is strengthened and every community stands steadfast in protection and progress.

Appendix



2026 – 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN