



# Securing Rights for Kenyan Children

Exploring A decade  
Achievements and Gaps in  
Childhood and Children's Rights

# Our Key Challenge to MDGs



*"Only as we move closer to realizing the rights of all children will countries move closer to their goals of development and peace".*

Kofi Annan (UNICEF 2004)

# Structure

- Introduction
- Childhood in Kenyan context
- Towards Children's Rights:  
Progress and Gaps
- Street Children
- Sustainable Response
- Conclusion
- Group Discussions
- Group Presentations/Plenary



# Children's Rights Today



Our Future is Now!

# Childhood in Kenyan Context



- Concept of childhood is socially constructed & cannot be detached from cultures, socio-economic background as well as class, gender, race & ethnicity
- Traditionally Kenyan children were born into a community & were 'protected by ancestors'
- Now the traditions are gone & left them deprived, excluded & vulnerable

# Childhood in Kenyan Context



- Deprived: water, food, good health, shelter, education, space & voice
- Excluded: planning going to school, inheriting wealth, choosing name, curriculum development & consultation while making laws
- Vulnerable: insecurity, sickness, being orphaned, sexual abuse, hazardous work, female genital mutilation, being involved in armed conflicts

# Childhood in Kenyan Context



Deprived



At Home in the Streets

Excluded

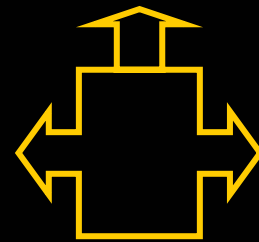


Non-formal Education

Vulnerable



Children Harvesting Sand



# Childhood in Kenyan Context



Change Agents

Creative

Participative

Energetic

Skilled

Caring

Motivated



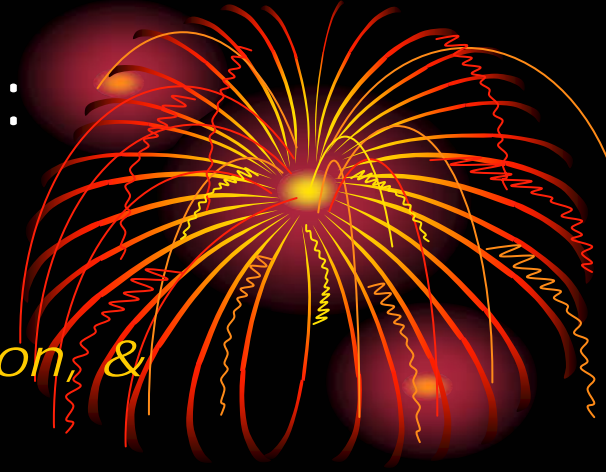


# Towards Children's Rights: Progress



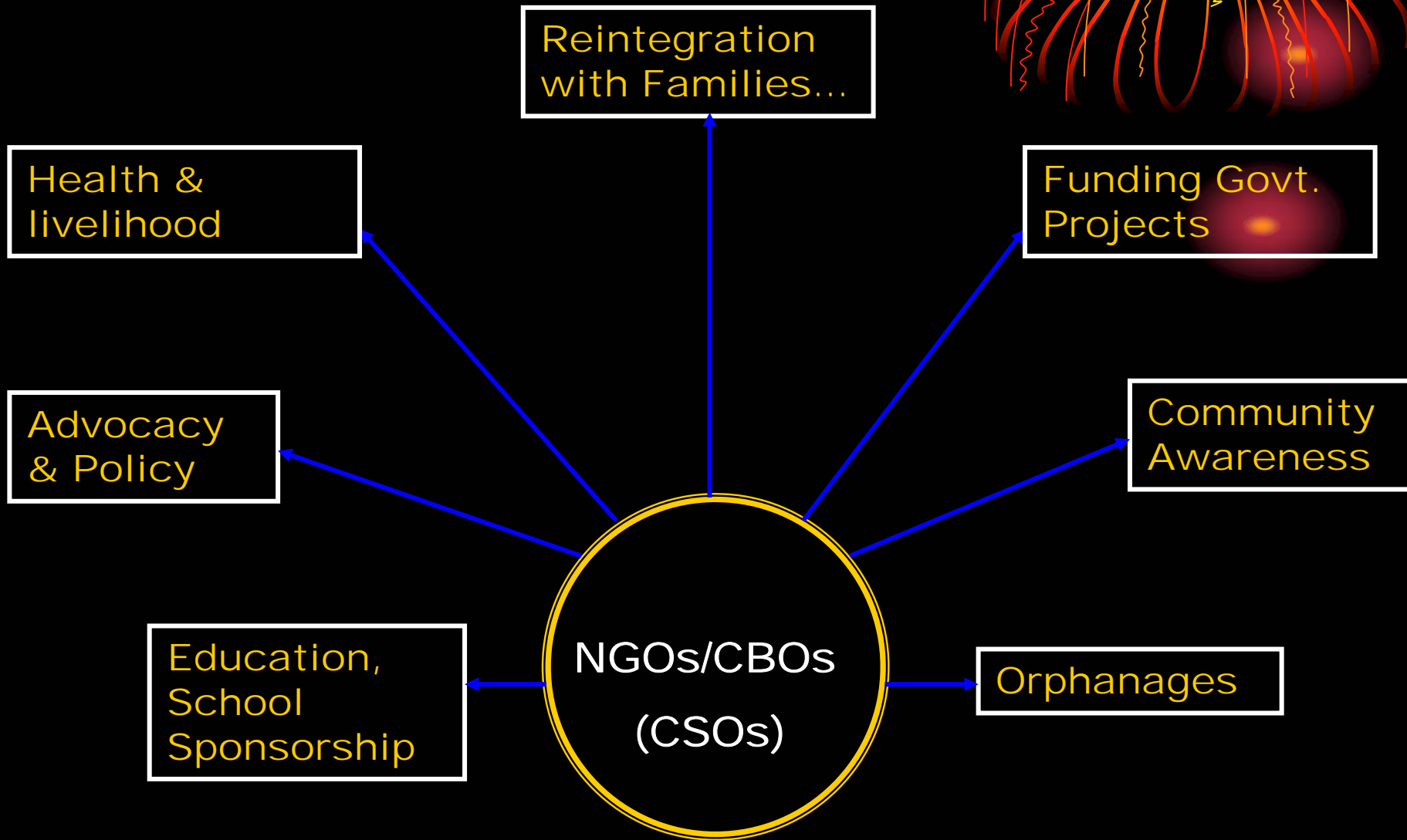
- **Legislations** (*Protection, Provision & Participation*)
  - African Charter on Rights & Welfare of the Child 2000
  - Children's Act 2001
  - Elimination of Worst forms of Child Labour 2001
  - Int. Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination 2001
  - Sexual Offences Act 2006
  - The refugee Act 2006

# Towards Children's Rights: Progress



- **Legislations** (*Protection, Provision & Participation*)
  - Free Primary Education
  - Drafting of National Guidelines for Children's Participation
  - Piloting Support for families housing orphans
  - Establishment of National Council of persons with disabilities
  - Reduction of cost sharing in provision of Health services
  - Diversion of Children in conflict with the law

# Towards Children's Rights: Progress



# Towards Children's Rights: Gaps

- National legislations are not harmonised to agree with other related laws (*i.e. Children's Act - Family Law*)
- Child witnesses of crime are not protected (*'Whistle Blowers Act'*)
- Adequate resources not allocated to enforce the laws: *corporal punishment in schools, child sexual abuse & incest*
- Lack of adequate health facilities for marginalised community (*arid & semi-arid*)
- Lack of national guidelines for programming for Children

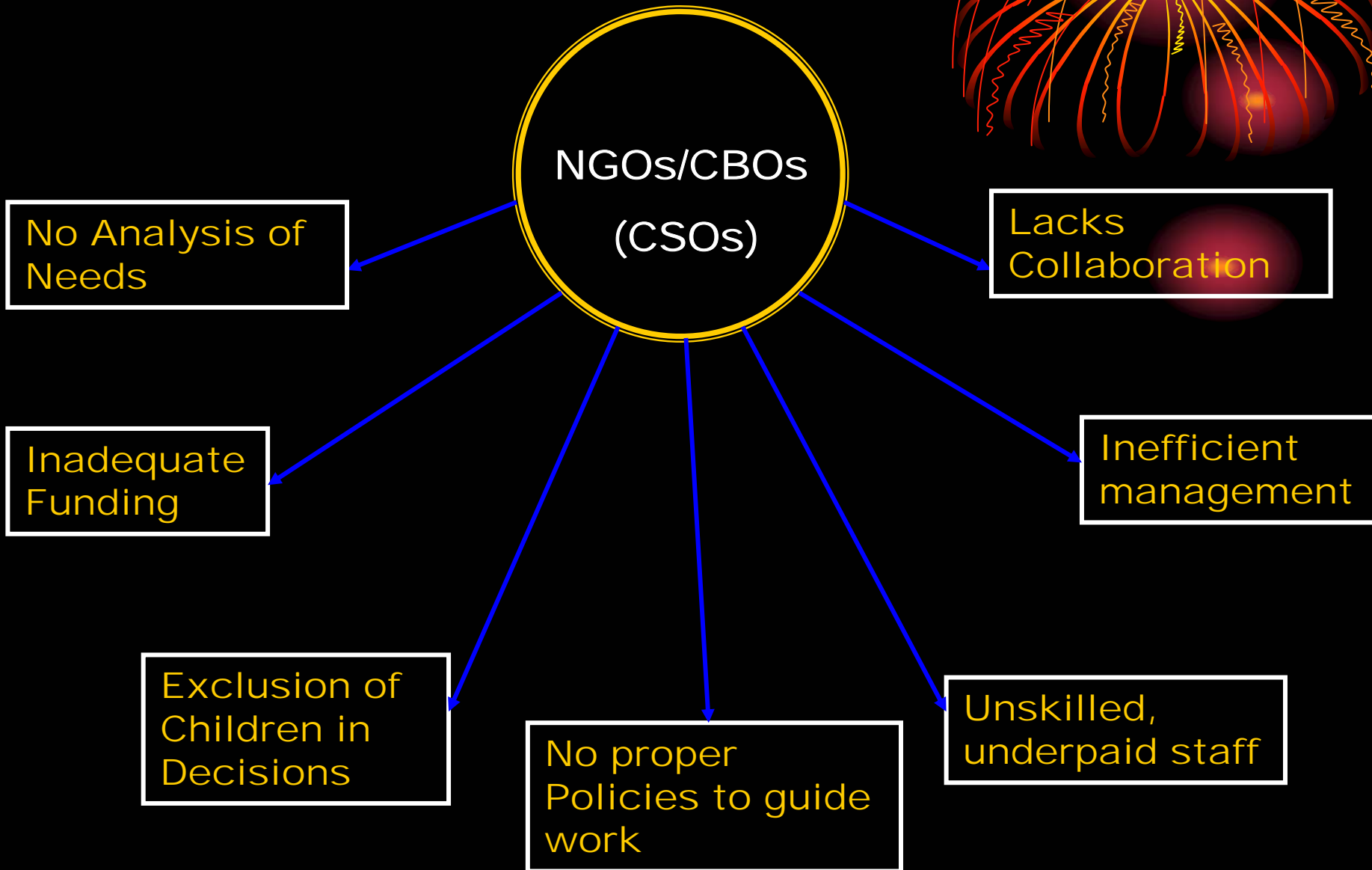
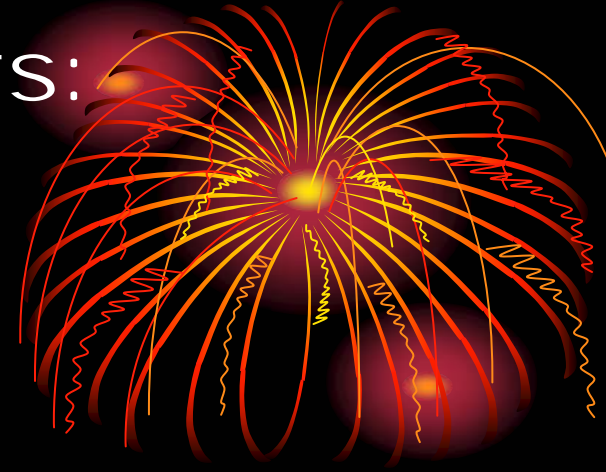


# Towards Children's Rights: Gaps



- Overcrowding in primary schools: *reduced quality of education due to ratio of teacher to child*
- Inability of the government to act upon perpetrators of harmful traditional practices (*FGM*)
- Though increased allocation of funds for social services, no clarity on what is due for children
- Refugee children are still suffering discrimination & inadequate provision
- Too many children's agencies: *600 (NGOs/CBOs), wastes & duplications*

# Towards Children's Rights: Gaps



# Street Children

- Street children is a social phenomenon thus, socially constructed & can be well understood within socio-cultural & economic context of each society.

- Definition

“those for whom the street more than their family has become their real home, a situation in which there is no protection, supervision from a responsible adult”.

- Judith Ennew 2000



# Street Children

- About 250,000 to 300,000 children live & work in the streets of major towns in Kenya
- The youngest would be about 6 years & oldest would be considered young adults
- 600 organizations are implementing programmes for street children: *feeding, counselling, non-formal education, vocational training, medical care, offering temporary shelter, or permanent shelter (orphanages), spirituality, sports, family reintegration, school sponsorship, capacity building, advocacy.....*





# Street Children: 'The Image'

- Think of an image of a mother with six children living in a village in Kenya next to a pond which breeds mosquitoes. The mother has only a few tablets of Malaratabs. Children are playing around & are bitten by mosquitoes but the mother gives one or two malaratabs she has.
- Some of the children live but some die. They play around & once again bitten by the mosquitoes & maybe this time they die, against the mother's effort & the Malaratabs.



# Street Children: 'The Image'

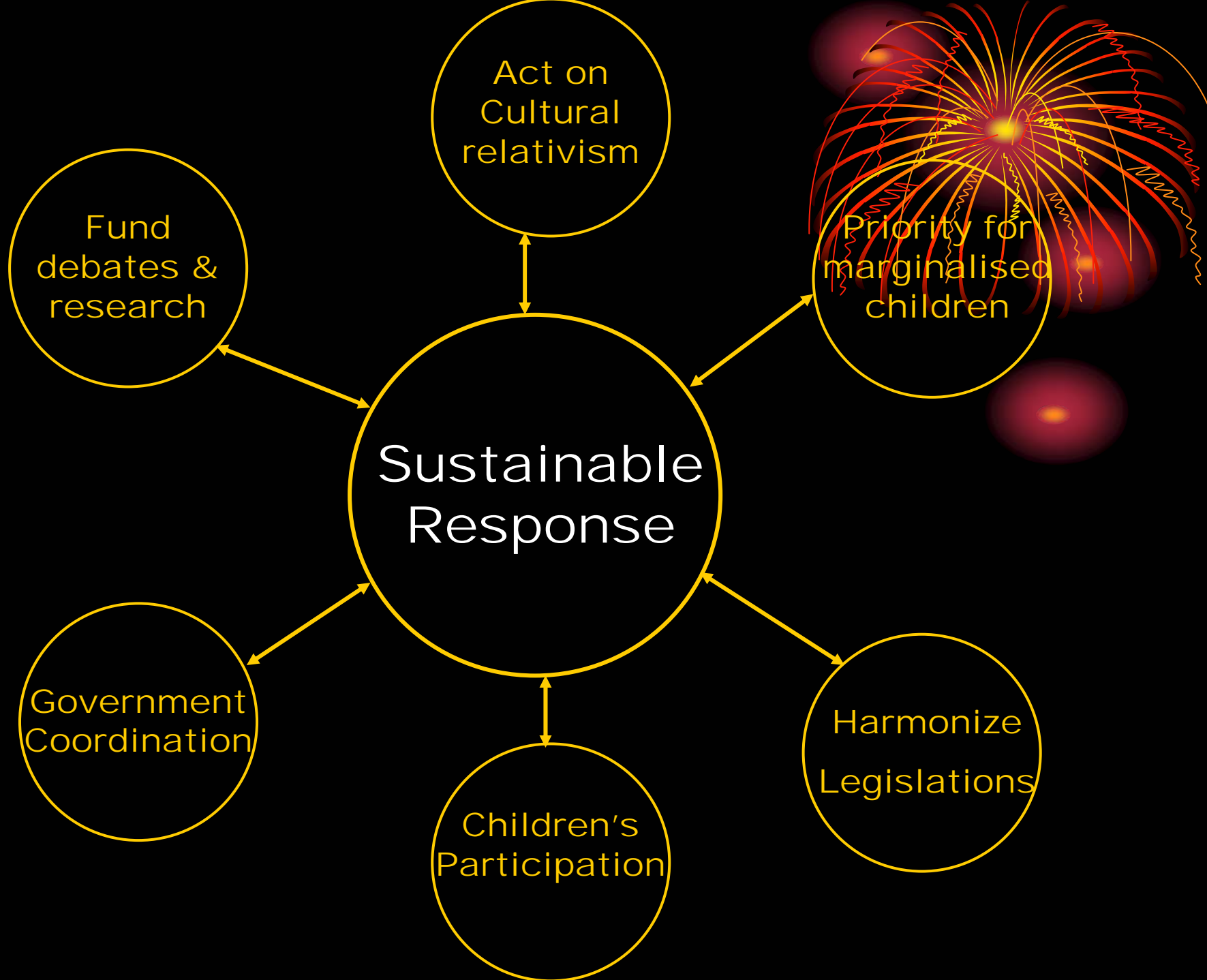


- In this image, the mother represents the NGOs & the pond is the society. The mosquitoes, the bad values of the society (child sexual abuse....). Children are just children.
- The few tablets of Malaratabs represent inadequate resources (skills, funds & facilities) of the organizations working with street children

# Street Children: 'The Image'

- We need to start with the pond that breeds 'bad values' not the mother & Malaratabs
- We need to be careful on focusing on the children in the streets & forgetting that there are other children in the contested situation in the community
- Aspirations of CRC should inform all our intervention processes: needs assessment, planning, implementing & evaluation.
- Involve children at all levels so that they can inform the interventions with their rich experience of street life.





# Signs of Hope



Nutrition Clinic

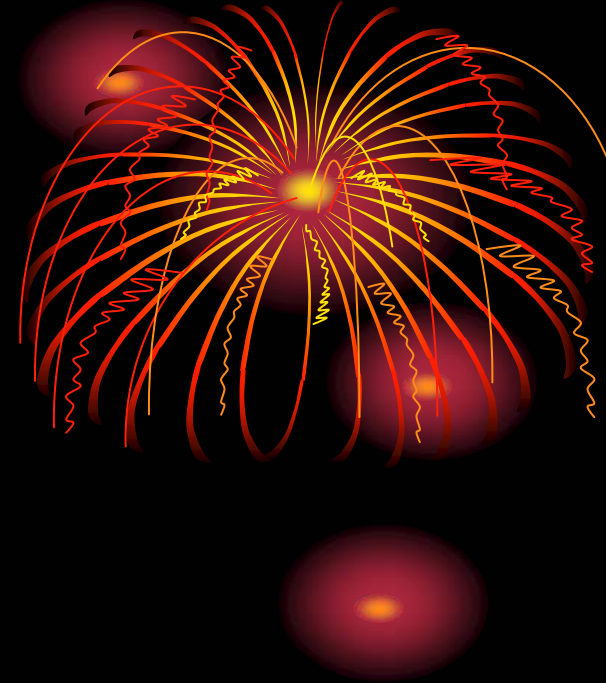


Children's legal aid awareness organised by Pandipieri street children program



Pandipieri community health program

# Signs of Hope



Pandipieri  
Centre

Community  
Health

Children's  
Services

Education

Income  
Generating

# Signs of Hope



Creative Arts Performance by Children from Dunga, Fishing Village



Children debating AIDS & VCT at Pandipieri

Your Feedback is Welcome. Asante Sana!

# Discursive Points



1. What would you consider as an 'ideal childhood'?
2. It is not a problem if children have to undertake work to support their families! Based on your work experience with children in Kenya or elsewhere, what are your views regarding this statement? .....*Why?*
3. What is your view on this statement: Street children have a right to use the street space to live and work? ..... *Why?*



# Discursive Points



4. Should Civil Society (NGOs/CBOs) continue to promote orphanages as their best reintegration strategy for deprived children in Kenya?  
..... *Why?*
5. In view of the past and current situation in Kenya, in what other ways would achievements of rights for all children be ensured?