

# REPORT

## THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD 2008



Theme: “PROMOTING CHILD PARTICIPATION”

Celebrated on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
at Alendo Primary School, Karungu Division,  
Migori District

BY

ST. CAMILLUS DALA KIYE CHILDREN WELFARE HOME

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

HIV	Human Immuno – Deficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
DO	District Officer
DCO	District Children Officer
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
AEO	Area Education Officer
CBO	Community Based Organization
NGO	Non – Governmental Organization
AAC	Area Advisory council
MOSUP	Mercy Orphans Support Program
DK	Dala Kiye
RAPADO	Rural AIDS Prevention and Development Organization

## OVERVIEW

The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child declared June 16<sup>th</sup> of every year “The Day of the African Child”. This year’s theme was “**Promoting Child Participation**”. On this day, Africa remembers the gallant youths who rejected a system of education introduced by apartheid regime then, it also serves as a commemoration on what ought to be done for the children on the continent to improve their lives. It is the day that we remember the deaths of hundreds of black South African children who died through shooting by the policemen, of then apartheid regime. It brings to the fore the grim reality of the brutality with which the police used to disperse the unarmed youths protesting for their rights.

Today children in Africa still suffer the same fate, as they are ravaged by hunger, disease, malnutrition and all other forms of injustices visited upon them by those who should be infact taking care of them. Marking the day honors and celebrates the initiatives taken to improve the life chances of children throughout the African continent. The day serves as an instrument to encourage similar exemplary initiatives in promoting the rights and improving the well being of children.

In Kenya, the day was marked in the back drop of the post election violence which left many children homeless and some orphaned. It was therefore a time to remember and address the plight of these children. Statistics now indicate that a child in Africa under the age of five years dies every 30 seconds from malaria; others are orphaned through the unrelenting HIV/AIDS scourge.

Migori district joined the rest of the continent in marking this very important day. This year’s event was marked at Alendo Primary School and was co-hosted by Mercy Orphans Support Program and St. Camillus Dala Kiye Children Welfare Home, both child – focused organizations that operate within the District. The celebration brought together children from a number of schools in Migori District and they used it as a platform to call for their involvement in issues that affect their lives.

This year’s celebration was unique in that the children who steered the day’s program from the onset till the end.

The following were the resolutions that were arrived at during this year’s celebrations:

- That children rights are also human rights
- That children have the right to education
- That children have a right to be heard and listened to
- That children should desist from activities that expose them to the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.
- That children should be involved in all levels of decision making especially in issues that have direct impact on their lives.

## Theme

This year’s celebration brought the children together and provided a platform to deliberate on issues affecting the African child, under the theme: ***Promoting Child Participation***

The Day also draws attention to the lives of African children today.

## Objective

To promote child participation in all issues that affect their lives.

## Expected Results

- Increased resource allocations to bodies dealing with children at all levels, from social ministries to local communities.
- Fight against corruption.
- Trained and sensitized personnel working with children.
- Proficient justice systems set up to protect children from any violation of their fundamental rights.
- Improved child participation in all cadres of life.

## ACTIVITIES AND ACTUAL RESULTS

### 1. Processions

This served to jump start the day's celebrations. There were twin processions that started at Bondo Kosiemo and Kogore centres. Each procession covered a distance of 3km. The procession at Kosiemo was flagged off by the District Officer, Karungu Division while the one from Kogore was flagged off by the area Chief, South East Karungu. By 9.00AM, participants drawn from various schools in Karungu division had assembled at the two points full of anticipation for the big day. Majority of the participants were children and they came in their numbers as a sign of solidarity with the rest of the African children. When the processions proper kicked off at 11.00AM the participants who were numbering in their hundreds took to the streets chanting slogans and singing songs in rhythm with the drum beats that echoed from some of the marching children. On the lead were a group of children carrying a huge banner that bore the day's theme, "Promoting Child Participation". The procession snaked its way through Sori – Rodi Kopany road and curious on lookers could not resist joining in the fray.



*Fig. 1: Part of the procession during DAC 2008 Celebrations*



*Fig. 2: The procession of DAC 2008 arrives at Alendo Primary School*

## **2. Opening Ceremony**

The procession reached Alendo Primary School at around 11.30P.M and the participants were received jubilantly by hundreds of participants who were already seated at the venue. Tens of invited guests had also arrived ready for the ceremony.

The opening ceremony started after a word of prayer from one of the religious leaders in attendance and was presided over by three students from B.L Tezza Complex Secondary school in their capacity as the Masters of ceremony. They welcomed all those present and briefed them of the day's program.

### **Presentations by the Children**

This being their day, the children were given an opportunity to show case their talents and they did not disappoint those in attendance. The children were drawn from a number of schools from Migori District. The children presented various articles ranging from songs, dances, plays, poems and choral verses. All the articles presented by the children touched on the following:

- Advocating for child protection
- Demonizing all forms of abuse vented on the children
- Advocating for equal right of participation for the children
- Calling for inclusion of the children in all levels of decision making
- Educating the children on the dangers of engaging in premarital sexual
- Deploring all forms of child labor



*Fig. 3: Pupils from Aringo primary school recite a choral verse*



*Fig. 4: Foster children from St. Camillus Dala Kiye entertain participants*

## **Speeches**

After about an hour of nerve racking entertainment session from the children, the ceremony moved a notch higher and the next item in the program was speeches from several invited guests. The day being commemorated in the honor of the children, there was also the presence of child guests. Some of the guests that gave speeches included the DCO Migori district, Deputy DCO, D.O Karungu division, representatives drawn from different organizations that are working with the children within Migori district, Area chief among a host of other guests.

### ***Head Teacher – Alendo Primary School***

It was in order for the first chance to be given to the Head teacher of Alendo primary school owing to the fact that the occasion was being marked in his school. The Head Teacher therefore took the opportunity to welcome all those present to his school and thanked them for turning up in large

numbers in a show of solidarity with the children. He went ahead and gave a brief history of his school and the enrolment status. He observed that the day was of great significance to the children and called upon all those present to see into it that all the resolutions passed in this day will be taken seriously.

#### ***Area chief – S.E Karungu Location***

Took the opportunity to welcome all those present. Challenged all present to take the issues regarding child rights seriously and that his office will not tolerate those who abuse the children in any form. He called for cooperation amongst the community members and more so in addressing insecurity in the area that its rate continue to soar with the passing of each day.

#### ***Project Officer, Mercy Orphans Support Program (MOSUP)***

MOSUP and St.Camillus Dala Kiye Children Welfare Home were the host organizations of this year's event within Migori district and so it was imperative that one representative gets the opportunity to address the gathering. The Project Officer started by observing that the day was of great significance to the African children and more so to the children hailing from Migori district. He narrated on how MOSUP and DK have been at the forefront in advocating for child rights within Migori District and challenged other stakeholders to come out boldly and join the band wagon. He noted that children suffer from all manner of abuse ranging from sexual assault, child labor and even being denied the opportunity to access education. He observed that MOSUP and DK will continue to work with all like minded organizations in ensuring that issues that tend infringe in child rights are addressed.

#### ***Deputy DCO – Migori District***

Started by observing that he was enthralled by the massive turn out .He reminded all those present of that the day's theme, "Promoting Child Participation" was of great significance and observed that African children were still not fully represented in major levels of decision making and this he attributed to the traditional beliefs that relegated the children to the periphery even when it comes to the decisions that are affecting the children.

#### ***District Officer – Karungu Division***

The D.O noted that he was delighted by the large turn up and praised the hosting organizations for job well done. He informed the gathering that the government have put in place measures that will ensure that the children are protected and warned the perpetrators of child abuse that stringent measures will be taken against them. He stressed that children have a right to equal participation on various issues ranging from education, role definition among a host of other things.

#### ***Child Guest***

This being a day that have been reserved to commemorate the struggles of the African child, it could therefore not be complete without active involvement by the children. This year's child guest was from RAPADO, an organization that also strives to address the needs of OVC within Migori district. The child guest was full of praise for the fellow children for coming out in large numbers to mark this year's event. He observed that the occasion was very colorful owing to the active role that have been

taken by the children and used this to stress for the need to enhance child participation. He called on the government to be very strict with organizations and individuals who violate the rights of children.

### ***Guest of Honor – DCO, Migori District***

The guest of honor for this year's event in Migori District was the DCO. He started by commending the organizers of this year's event for job well done. He noted that it was not an easy task to mobilize the whole district to converge together for a particular event. More so he was impressed by the large number of people who had turned up for the celebrations adding that this was a sign of solidarity with other children whose rights continue to be curtailed by each passing day. He was also pleased by the fact that it was the children themselves who were in control of the day's program and this was a true reflection of this year's theme of, "Promoting Child Participation." He also noted that the government and especially the Children's department have put up legislations that help promote child rights.

The following issues were highlighted by a number of speakers:

- That the government should take an active role in promoting child rights
- That more opportunities should be availed to the children
- That child rights are also human rights
- That community members are still very reluctant to grant children with freedom to express themselves
- That all children have the right to education
- That most children are deprived of their rights owing to the antiquated traditional beliefs that put adults at the vanguard of every other issue.

### **Provision of Meals and Refreshments**

This formed yet another very important event of this day. After the end of speeches, it was now time for the organizers to see into it that the participants are well fed. About 3500 participants received a 250ml packet of milk and a half a loaf. The cost of the meals and refreshments were shared equally between MOSUP and DK. At the end of it all, the participants were well fed.



*Fig. 5: Children have their meals during DAC 2008 Celebrations*

## **Achievements**

Having marked the day, the following achievements were made based on the objectives;

- Over 3500(most of them being children) were able to converge at the venue on time to jump start the processions.
- Over 3500 (Most of them being Children) were able to arrive at the celebration venue ready to start the ceremony proper.
- All the invited guests turn up for the celebrations.
- Adequate information on child rights was passed to all those present.
- Children took a leading role through out the celebrations.
- The children had the opportunity to show case their talents
- Participants were well entertained and well fed.

## **Challenges**

- Most schools could not present all their items due to overwhelming number of schools that turned up to mark the Day of the African Child.
- There was a general time lag in the program owing to the late arrival of guests.
- Some of the participants and more so children had to walk for long distances before they could reach the venue of celebration.

## **Lessons learnt**

- That Children have a right to be heard.
- That children rights are also human rights.
- That there should be equal treatment for all irrespective of race, age, sex and religion.
- That children should be at the vanguard in advocating for their rights.
- That society should shun practices that tend to violate the rights of children.

## **The Way Forward**

- Extensive mobilization and sensitization still needs to be done to bring out the significance of the Day of African Child.
- The invited guests and all the participants must always be time conscious.
- Adults should be sensitized on the value of the Day of African Child.