

REPORT

WORLD ORPHANS DAY 2010



THEME: Towards Quality Care For Ovc: A Collective Responsibility

At: Sori Sports Ground

On: MAY 7th, 2010

Co-Hosted BY: ST. CAMILLUS DALA KIYE CHILDREN WELFARE HOME AND MERCY ORPHANS SUPPORT PROGRAM

MAY 2010

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AAC	Area Advisory Council
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
DO	District Officer
SCDK	St. Camillus Dala Kiye
DCO	District Children's Officer
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
MOSUP	Mercy Orphans Support Program
CBO	Community Based Organization
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization

OVERVIEW

World Orphans Day is marked every year on 7th May. The day was first commemorated in New York in 2002 with the aim of raising awareness and advocating for the needs of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). This day has been commemorated in other countries in subsequent years. In Kenya, the day was first commemorated in 2006. This was out of a growing concern to the crisis of millions of children who have been orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. The day also provides an opportunity to lobby the government and donor community to direct more resources towards OVC interventions.

Migori District joined the rest of the country in marking this day. The celebrations were held at Sori Sports ground in Karungu division. The event was co hosted by St. Camillus Dala Kiye Children Welfare Home and Mercy Orphans Support Program. The Guest of honor was the area District Officer, Mr.Kimutai. The occasion was graced by children and other stakeholders working with and for OVC.

This year's theme was, **“Towards quality care for OVC: A collective responsibility”**.

It was a day that various stakeholders identified and stood with OVC growing up deprived of education, basic needs such as food, water and shelter and are at high risk of HIV Infection, discrimination, exploitation and violence in the form of forced labor, prostitution and drug trafficking.

The following were some of the resolutions that were passed: -

- That every community member should take the collective responsibility of caring for the OVC
- That a supportive environment should be created for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS, through implementing awareness raising campaigns at selected levels through advocacy and social mobilization.
- That local structure that is mandated with overseeing the implementation of child rights are put in place.
- That all stakeholders should ensure access for OVC to essential services including but not limited to education, health care and birth registration.

Theme

The theme of this year's celebration was, **“Towards quality care for OVC: A collective responsibility”**.

Objective

To ensure quality care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children within the larger Migori district

Expected Results

- Sensitized community that is able to respond to the needs of OVC
- Sensitized community on child rights issues
- Greater access to basic needs for OVC
- Improved networking and collaboration between the government and other stakeholders working for and with children
- Improved care and support for OVC
- Reduced stigma and discrimination of OVC

Activities and actual results

1. Procession

The procession was flagged off by the District Children's Officer (DCO), Migori district. The procession started at around 10.30 am and was mainly focused along the streets of Sori Center. Those in the procession included children, representatives of provincial administration, caregivers and representatives of the organizations working for and with children in the greater Migori. Participating organizations and institutions were: RAPADO, Blue Cross, St. Camillus Dala Kiye, MOSUP, Marindi Children's Home, Hope centre, Macalder Mines Baby care, Msomi Academy, GOK and APHIA II Nyanza.

The participants carried a banner and sang songs, which bore educative and informative messages on the plight of OVC. The procession ended at about 11.00am.



Children taking part in the procession

2. Opening ceremony

The venue of the celebrations was Sori sports ground in Karungu Division. The master of ceremony was Mr. George Alambo of APHIA II Nyanza.

The celebrations kicked off with a word of prayer said by a staff of Msomi Academy. A number of pupils, students, teachers and other invited guests arrived in time ready to mark the occasion.



Participants follow the proceedings during the opening ceremony

3. Presentations by Children

The children presented different articles to mark this day. This consisted mainly of songs, choral verses, drama and dance that entertained participants present on the World Orphans Day. In total about 12 schools presented informative and educative items that mainly centered on the following: -

1. Urging the government to take a leading role in OVC Care and protection
2. Requesting the community members to take a leading role in care and protection of the OVC.
3. Promotion of Child rights
4. Advocating for a fair society that will be free from stigmatization and discrimination especially to the OVC and their caregivers.
5. Lamenting and warning people against HIV/AIDS being the main cause of deaths
6. Warning children to shun immoral practices that expose to risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other STIs



Children recite educative articles during World Orphans Day 2010

3. Speeches

3.1 DCO'S speech

Thanked MOSUP and Dala Kiye for accepting to co-host this year's World orphans day. He also thanked all the AAC members for their contributions with special regards to Msomi, Hope centre, Blue Cross, Macalder Baby care and Marindi Children's Home. He thanked all teachers for preparing the children to take part in world orphans day with very educative articles.

The DCO noted that the major idea behind this day is to join hands with OVC by listening to their plight. He decried high incidences of child abuse in Karungu and on this; his office in collaboration with MOSUP plans to initiate Karungu division area advisory council. The DCO then took the opportunity to read the national written speech where he stated that the government is in the process of developing a national policy on children and also reviewing the Children's Act 2001 to address the existing gaps in child protection. In this regard therefore, the government has further identified seven key priority areas in terms of response. These include:

- Strengthen the capacity of families to protect and care for OVC
- Mobilize and support community based responses
- Ensure access for OVC to essential services including but not limited to education, health care and birth registration
- Ensure improved policy and legislation are put in place to protect the most vulnerable children
- Create a supportive environment for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS, through implementing awareness raising campaigns at selected levels through advocacy and social mobilization
- Strengthen and support national coordination and institutional structures
- Strengthen national capacity to monitor and evaluate programmes effectiveness and quality.



DCO Migori district addresses participants during the celebrations

3.2 Issues that arose from the speeches by the three child guests;

- That community members should take a leading role in care and protection of OVC
- That orphans should not be subjected to any forms of discrimination
- That care and support of orphans is our collective responsibility
- That all parents and caregivers should ensure that orphans just like any other children are enrolled and retained in school
- That the government should be at the forefront in advocating for the rights of OVC.
- That people should restrain from behaviors that expose them to high risks of contracting HIV/AIDS.
- That despite the continued existence of most organizations addressing the plight of OVC, a good number of the OVC were still wallowing in despair.



Child guest from B. L. Tezza



Child guest from Msomi Academy

3.3 D.O, Karungu Division – Guest of Honor

Thanked the organizers of the event. He noted that in future events, the organizers of the day should incorporate the caregivers and guardians of the children since some of them were the perpetrators of child abuse. The D.O underscored the importance of networking and collaboration amongst all the stakeholders working with the children in ensuring that child rights are upheld at all levels.

The D.O further cautioned caregivers who were discharging their children with responsibilities that hindered them from pursuing their education that the government is going to take a very stern measure against them. Such responsibilities include selling of wares in the market and performing other commercial tasks along the beaches like picking and drying omena.

The D.O further cautioned the Karungu community against involving themselves in activities that would expose them at greater risks of contracting HIV/AIDS noting that this was the major contributing factor to the rising number of OVC in the area. He further warned that his office will take a very stern measure on child abusers especially on adults who sexually exploit young girls. The D.O decried high incidences of early marriages in Karungu and high rates of school drop outs. He challenged the children to be focused, uphold their morals and strive for a better future.

In conclusion, the D.O promised to work hand in hand with all the stakeholders to ensure that children are protected from all forms of abuse.

Other personalities who gave speeches during this day were Project Officer, MOSUP, Project Coordinator – Blue Cross and representatives from Macalder Mines Baby Care Centre and Msomi Academy.



D.O Karungu addressing the participants

4. Provision of Meals and Refreshments

Around 1000 children and other invited guests were refreshed. The children were given 300ml sodas and a half a loaf of bread each.



Children getting refreshed

Achievements

The following achievements were made based on the objectives:

- About 1000 children and guests were able to converge at Sori Sports ground to mark the world orphans day.
- There was adequate information that was shared on care and support of OVC.
- Children got plenty of pieces of advice from various speakers on the need to work hard in school.
- All the schools that were invited for the event managed to turn up
- There was a strong presence of provincial administration in the celebrations
- The OVC discovered that they too are recognized and respected.

Challenges

- Most community members especially the caregivers still do not comprehend the magnitude of the World Orphans Day and were therefore were not well represented
- Level of awareness on the enormity of World Orphans Day is still very low.
- Time management on the side of participants and other invited guests was poor.

Lessons Learnt

- That care and support of OVC demands a collective responsibility.
- That OVC are just like any other human beings and hence should not be discriminated against.
- That there is usually a day known as, “ The World Orphans Day”
- That HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in the region and people should therefore uphold their morals or risk being swept away by the scourge.

The way forward

- There is need for extensive sensitization on the local community on the existence and importance of world orphans day.

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