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Message from CEO

The relatively new and little known International Widows Day was silently marked on June 23. Absent in statistics, unnoticed by researchers, neglected by national and local authorities and mostly overlooked by civil society organizations – the situation of widows is, in effect, invisible.

In its quest to alleviate the effect of ill-health and poverty among the community it serves Omega Foundations inevitable works with widows and as such must recognize their plight in a society that has little regard for a woman without a husband.

No woman should lose her rights when she loses her husband – but an estimated 115 million widows live in poverty, and 81 million have suffered physical abuse worldwide. In the areas that OF operates, widows face a myriad of challenges such as forced remarriage, property inheritance, stigma and discrimination, rape and sometimes even murder by close family.

The resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly during the declaration on the International Widows Day reads in part:

“Recalling also the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁶ in particular article 3, according to which parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women.”

OF in collaboration with its paralegal volunteers as well as local administration strives to advocate for the rights of all widows so they can enjoy better lives and realize their great potential to contribute to our world.

OF also recognizes that the economic empowerment of women, including widows, is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty and works to empower them socially and economically.

**WILFRED OWUOR,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.**

OF highlight of CSO/Partners Symposium

Dramatically improved governance, enhanced financial management, diverse and substantial new funding streams, robust M&E systems and revitalised communications and branding programs are some of the attributes that saw OF feted at the FANIKISHA CSO and Development Partners Symposium recently.

OF was applauded by FANIKISHA as having shown tremendous organisational transformation since the institutional strengthening project begun a year ago.

The symposium also saw the launch of the Omega Foundation case study conducted by FANIKISHA in May aimed at showcasing the effect of institutional strengthening on OF and its affiliates.

Speaking at the symposium, OF CEO Mr. Wilfred Owuor demystified the notion that IS was a management role “IS thrives on teamwork and dedication without which all else is futile,” he reiterated.

The symposium brought together Kenyan Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), their international NGO counterparts and development partners who fund CSO work in Kenya to discuss local capacity building for civil society organizations to enhance CSO contributions to health outcomes of Kenyans and ultimately Kenya’s Vision 2030.

Since the inception of IMARISHA project, OF has administered strategies and innovations including donor education and staff involvement to institution-



OF CEO Wilfred Owuor addresses participants at the symposium

FANIKISHA Chief of Party Dr. Daraus Bukunya noted that 0-10% of Kenyan CSOs budget is spent on IS thus reducing their capacity to develop sustainability and are thus vulnerable and unable to compete effectively with INGOs.

The three-day event was concluded with 10 FANIKISHA CSO getting an opportunity to share with others their experience around IS and related areas. The marketplace consultants also had the same for each IS category. This (face-face marketplace) mainly focused on innovations and experience in providing and receiving institutional strengthening among and outside FANIKISHA project.

KOP trustees document OF successes

A section of the Kenya Orphan Project (KOP) trustees was recently at OF to document the successes it has achieved since its partnership with KOP began.

KOP is a UK registered charity committed to supporting the health and education of orphaned and vulnerable children in Africa. Their projects and partners are currently focused in Western Kenya.

OF's Kochogo Integrated Child Development Centre was built by the work and fundraising effort of KOP student groups in 2005. Since then KOP funding has maintained the supply of meals to children who otherwise may not have any other source of regular food. It has also installed a bore hole suitable to supply clean, fresh water to the facility and the local community.

In 2006/7 KOP initiated a feeding program in Kunya Primary School providing 600 children with two meals a day, enabling them to focus on learning. This number has increased and while main-

-taining this important program, KOP also funded a new fresh water borehole and a water management system at the school.

Alendu Primary School was a new project for KOP in 2009. KOP helped with the building of new classrooms and a new admin block. KOP funded the installation of a new fresh water bore hole and an ongoing water management system. These are the OF projects that KOP has funded since 2005.

During the visit the trustees whose documentation would help in resource mobilization back in the UK conducted interviews with OF staff and beneficiaries visited these projects and conducted interviews. "These interviews will have immense effect when shown to audiences in the UK by clearly showing the work that KOP does with communities in Kisumu," said Ben Mason one of the trustees.

OF meets potential affiliates-

OF recently organized a 3-day Pre-Bidders Workshop to bring together the 14 successful affiliates to read, discuss and issue out RFA and commence working on the affiliates' specific application/proposals.

OF has signed a USD 2.5 Million for a 2½ years programmatic grant to support service delivery addressing social determinant of health with interventions focusing on HIV and AIDS through its affiliates.

The 2 ½ years programmatic grants from USAID FANIKISHA is to be sub-granted to between 7-12 affiliates to deliver high quality HIV and AIDS project that will improve quality of life for PLHIV and reduce new HIV infections in 11 Counties in North Rift, Western and Nyanza Regions of Kenya.

From May 2013 after the introduction of the Programmatic Grant to potential affiliates, Omega Foundation has engaged the affiliates through 2 major steps: 1, Review of their Expressions of Interest and 2, Non-USAID Pre-award Survey [NUPAS]. The two major phases has identified 14 organizations to be issued with Request for Applications [RFA] during the scheduled workshop.

LOL:) On the Office Notice Board

SICK DAYS:

We will no longer accept a doctor statement as proof of sickness. If you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to work !!!

"There is strength in numbers."

-African Proverb



Participants at the OF Pre- Bidders Workshop

It is against this background that OF invited the 14 affiliates for a three-day Pre-Bidders workshop aimed discussing and issuing of the programmatic RFA, in-depth review of specific standard provisions of USAID funding and budgeting as well as commencement of application process by the Affiliates. At the end of the workshop, the affiliates were expected to submit zero-draft applications.

Harvard University collaborates with OF

Harvard University's history, quality of education, academic influence, and wealth have made it one of the most prestigious universities in the world.

It was therefore an honour for OF to host two of its students for a 5-week Summer Program to be taught and have a practical understanding of community and child health the Kochogo Integrated Child Development Centre.

The students: Nicole Baker-Greene and Jasmine Gipson interacted with the children at the centre as well as the staff, board and surrounding community in order to clearly understand the needs of the children vis a vis their psychological development.

The students acknowledged that early childhood

development is key to children's physical and psychological health with play as a central component which allows children to explore imagination, creativity, establish relationships and express emotion.

Thus, they developed a Social Workers Guide dubbed F.R.E.E to Play which is to empower children by building self image and social development and expanding the current functions of the feeding centre.

This guide will provide a comprehensive resource for administering programming.

Through collaborations such as these, OF hopes to create a sustainability strategy for the centre as well as learn for the innovations such as the Social Work-

Youth Peer Providers trained

OF recently trained 29 Youth Peer Providers (YPP) reproductive health (RH) awareness creation, commodity provision and RH rights advocacy. This was in preparation for Closing the Gap Project.

OF has partnered with Planned Parenthood Global to run a two-year project named Closing the Gap delivered in three Counties namely Siaya, Kisumu, and Migori.

Closing the Gap is a sexual reproductive health project funded by Planned Parenthood Federation of America to enhance Reproductive Health Services. OF will implement this at Kadinda Health Centre and Port Florence Community Hospital in Kisumu County.

The YPP training was aimed at introducing the pa-

rticipants to the YPP model, equipping them with knowledge and information on RH services and facilitation and information transfer skills.

Speaking at the training, OF Head of Programs Mr. Harun Kodiaga applauded the participants for choosing to volunteer their services noting that the success of the project rested with them.

The 4-day training saw the participants demystify some RH notions that would hinder the delivery of services among the targeted communities.

"I have learnt a lot from this training. The candid discussions on RH instilled confidence in me. Thanks," said Agnes Tako, one of the YPPs.

CBOs receive IGA grants

A total of KES. 200,000 was recently given to CBOs by OF for business expansion capital. The nine CBOs from Muhoroni, Otonglo and Rabuor currently run small scale poultry and horticulture farming that are not sustainable.

The event was attended by Equity Bank Branch Manager Mr. Tom Kuyo who advised the groups on alternative sources of business financing promising that the bank would train any interested group on financial management and offer loan services.

OF CEO Mr. Wilfred Owuor urged the groups to continue working smart in order to make the most with the grants. "This grant is a debt that you owe

OF. The only way to repay it is by ensuring that your IGAs thrive and that OVCs are kept in school and well fed."

Also present at the event was the Area Chief and a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture.

"The linkage that OF has given us has really helped us. Initially we only planted maize which did not yield much but today we are involved in agribusiness and cultivation of orphan crops which have good market and are nutritious." beamed Noah Ogonga of Oweyi Support Group.



A YPP seeks clarification at the training