



COME TOGETHER WIDOWS AND ORPHANS ORGANIZATION (CTWOO)

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INTRODUCTION

On **2nd December 2023**, our organization hosted a **Graduation Ceremony** at **Murema Primary School in Kasarani, Nairobi County** which marked a significant milestone for Bethel Widows. This annual event, held every December, serves as a joyous celebration of our Widows' achievements. The widows, having successfully completed their **Skills Training in Tailoring, Hairdressing, and Bakery** are always lucky to have the necessary tools and platforms to achieve Economic Independence through skill development.

Furthermore, this event signified our active participation in the global 16 Days of Activism campaign through our dedication to addressing various forms of violence that these widows face. Our main focus while participating in this global campaign has always been to make the Voices of the Widows Heard and to ensure that they live in Dignity and Respect. During this ceremony, our primary focus resonated with the acknowledgment of widows as one of society's most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Through skill development and economic empowerment, our mission has been to provide a tangible pathway for all widows, granting them the means to break free from the cycle of financial dependence that often subjects them to Economic Exploitation.

This graduation ceremony marked our unwavering commitment to empowering widows, not just with skills but with a renewed Sense of Dignity and Economic Urgency. Through these efforts, we aim to reshape narratives and dismantle the barriers that perpetuate vulnerabilities, offering widows a tangible route to independence and self-sufficiency.



"ADVOCATE. INSPIRE. EMPOWER"



WELCOMING REMARKS BY PASTOR ROSE- CHAIR LADY, BETHEL WIDOWS



Pst. Rose making a welcoming remark during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2023 held in conjunction with Bethel Widows Graduation Ceremony in Kasarani Nairobi County

She began by extending a warm welcome to the participants of the event and her congratulatory message to her group members for their remarkable achievements as resilient and empowered women.

In her opening remarks, she mentioned Bethel Widows as a group that consistently benefits from the annual skills training, with its members graduating yearly. She emphasized the significance of the training, highlighting how it has contributed to the Economic Empowerment of the widows.

She also mentioned the crucial role played by the Women's Empowerment Fund (WEF) products. She acknowledged WEF as a beacon of support that has actively supported the group's Income-generating activities. She emphasized that this practical impact that is offered by WEF goes beyond theory and it therefore directly enhances the lives of widows and offers them tangible avenues for sustainable livelihoods.

Concluding her welcoming message, Pastor Rose conveyed a sense of pride and optimism. She highlighted the collective strength of Bethel Widows, emphasizing that their annual achievements are a testament to the resilience and determination embedded within the group. Through these welcoming remarks, Pastor Rose set a tone of celebration, recognition, and empowerment which created a sense of shared accomplishment among the widows and the entire participants during this event.



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ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT BY WOMEN ENTERPRISE FUNDS (WEF)
COORDINATOR KASARANI CONSTITUENCY MR. VICTOR

Mr. Victor stated that Financial Independence is not just about money but rather a tool for breaking the chains of vulnerability. He mentioned that by empowering women economically, Women Enterprise Funds fosters resilience and offers a pathway to a future

free from the shackles of financial insecurity. He emphasized that WEF's focus extends beyond the immediate impact on individual women since it catalyses societal change, uplifting families and communities.

This Economic Empowerment Session left a lasting impression, driving home the message that economic empowerment is a powerful strategy for breaking free from the cycle of violence associated with economic dependency.

Her clear and concise messages were positively received by the widows as she emphasized the tangible impact of Economic Autonomy in improving their lives and in mitigating the vulnerabilities they face.



Mr. Victor- WEF Coordinator Kasarani Constituency empowering Bethel Widows during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Kasarani, Nairobi County



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SPEECHES

DR. DICKSON- REPRESENTATIVE GRASS INTERNATIONAL COMPANY



Dr. Dickson giving a speech during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign held in conjunction with Bethel Widows Graduation Ceremony in Kasarani, Nairobi County

In his uplifting speech, Dr. Dickson gave a powerful message to the graduates, urging them to forge meaningful connections and not overlook valuable assistance. He reminded the widows that in their journey ahead, they should remember that connections can be the key to unlocking opportunities. He urged them to never underestimate the power of collaboration, for it is through shared efforts that they truly thrive.

He also highlighted the importance of community support. He encouraged the widows that they are not alone in their journey and advised them to cherish the support of their community, as it is a valuable resource.



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DR. DIANAH KAMANDE FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR- CTWOO



Dr. Dianah Kamande giving a speech during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign held in conjunction with Bethel Widows Graduation Ceremony in Kasarani, Nairobi County

In her speech, she emphasized that it is impossible to turn a blind eye to the harsh reality that widows often endure **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**. She mentioned that GBV is a pervasive issue that demands collective attention and action thereby emphasizing that by addressing GBV, Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization not only champions the rights of widows but also fosters a safer and more equitable society.

She also talked about the role of Skills Training in addressing Economic Exploitation. She

expressed, **“Economic vulnerability is a harsh reality for many widows, making them susceptible to exploitation”**. She stated that Skills training is not just about acquiring technical abilities; it is a tool for breaking free from the chains of economic dependency. She further clarified that by empowering widows with skills, our organization focuses on providing them the means to navigate the challenges of economic exploitation and establish a foundation for Self-Sufficiency.”

She concluded by stating that our mission as Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization is rooted in the belief that every widow deserves Dignity, Respect, and the Opportunity to thrive. She urged the stakeholders who were present to stand together in the commitment to empowering widows and creating a future where they can live free from violence and economic exploitation.



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MR. ELIUD – KASARANI CONSTITUENCY MP'S OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE



Mr. Eliud speaking to widows during the Post 16 Days of Activism Campaign held in conjunction with Bethel Widows Graduation Ceremony in Kasarani, Nairobi County

His speech emphasized the pivotal role of Educating and Empowering widows for societal progress. He began by commending Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization for its unwavering commitment to Empower Widows. He mentioned that Education is the cornerstone of societal advancement, and when widows are empowered, the entire community benefits. He stated that it is heartening to witness initiatives that prioritize the uplifting of women, recognizing the transformative impact it has on the fabric of our society.

He mentioned that empowered widows are great advocates for change who will stay committed to breaking the cycle of violence

and contributing to the creation of safer communities. He concluded by saying that as we celebrate the achievements of widows through education and skills training, we need to recognize that empowering a widow is not just about individual success but about building a society free from violence and inequality.

CONCLUSION

The support from **United Nations Population Fund Agency (UNFPA)** through the provision of IEC materials (T-shirts) played a pivotal role in the success of this campaign. These T-shirts bore a bold message: **"ENOUGH! GBV HURTS"** therefore served as a rallying cry. This message helped in doubling our efforts to combat violence against widows. It resonated with the global campaign's theme, providing a powerful visual tool to communicate the urgent need for change and solidarity in the face of Gender-Based Violence.

Reflecting on the impactful messages and achievements highlighted throughout this graduation ceremony, it is evident that the empowerment of widows extends beyond mere skill development; it is a catalyst for a profound societal shift towards inclusivity and justice. The speeches delivered provided an intricate connection between Education, Economic Empowerment, and Community Support which collectively contributed to the crucial task of breaking the cycle of Violence and Vulnerability. This event provided a platform that envisioned a future where widows not only endure but thrive.



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PHOTOS



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