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INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY

What we do on International Widows Day

Since 2016, Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization has hosted annual International Widows Day celebrations in Kenya, dedicated to supporting widows and their families. These celebrations have provided a platform for empowering widows both economically and legally. During these events, widows receive essential resources and training to enhance their economic independence, alongside legal education and support to protect their rights. The celebrations foster a sense of community and solidarity, offering widows the opportunity to connect, share experiences, and gain invaluable knowledge to improve their livelihoods. Through these efforts, the organization aims to uplift and empower widows, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2024

This year, we hosted the pinnacle of our International Widows Day Celebration at Musungu



IWD 2024- VIHIGA COUNTY

Grounds in Vihiga County in which the main theme was “Accelerating the achievement of Gender Equality with emphasis on strengthening land and property rights.” We were honored by the presence of H.E. Mama Rachel Ruto. Several key speakers addressed the major challenges faced by widows, such as land disinheritance, discrimination, abuse, and difficulties in accessing justice. Our Founder urged the Vihiga County Government to ensure equitable distribution of County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) funds allocated for widows' groups and to develop specific products to empower widows in the county. Mr. Felix Wakatila,

Vihiga County Commissioner, emphasized the community's commitment to supporting widows and ensuring inclusivity in society. Ms. Anne Wang'ombe, Principal Secretary of the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action, reiterated the government's efforts to promote the welfare of widows. Governor Hon. Wilber Otichilo elaborated on county initiatives aimed at advancing widows' rights, while Hon. Harriette Chiggai, the President's Women Rights Advisor, delivered a speech highlighting national solidarity and collaborative efforts to empower widowed women. The event concluded with Her Excellency, First Lady Rachel Ruto, sharing insights into governmental



POST-IWD 2024- KILIFI COUNTY

strides to enhance widows' self-reliance and a closing prayer that left attendees with a sense of upliftment and hope.

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2023



IWD 2023- NAKURU COUNTY

On this day, June 23, 2023, we hosted a memorable event to celebrate International Widows Day in its theme was: PROSPERITY FOR WIDOWS, highlighting the tenacity, bravery, and hard work of widows. This day emphasized the need for research, statistics, and policies to address the violence, discrimination, and poverty faced by widows, aiming to empower them with access to education, work, healthcare, and lives free from abuse. Our event was made possible by our incredible sponsors and partners:

the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Stanbic Bank Kenya, Women Enterprise Fund, The Uwezo Fund, Anti FGM Board-Kenya, Ombudsman Kenya, FIDA-Kenya, Kenya Red Cross Society, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), Kenya Land Alliance (KLA), and Ukombozi Sacco LTD.

The event was graced by distinguished guests, including the Chief Guest of Honor, H.E Deputy Governor of Nakuru County, Hon. David Kones, and CEC Gender, Hon. Josephine Atieno Achieng. Their speeches emphasized the importance of policy and economic empowerment for widows, recognizing that economic stability is key to eliminating stigma and abuse, thereby promoting "Prosperity for Widows." We were also joined by development partners who included; Uwezo Fund and Women Enterprise Fund who has been instrumental in the backing of widows' groups across the country.



IWD 2023- NAKURU COUNTY

In the lead-up to International Widows Day, various Pre-International Widows Day celebration activities were organized to raise awareness and garner support for the cause in Kericho County Litein and Tebesonik on 13th June 2023 and 14th June 20-23 respectively . These activities included community outreach programs, workshops on financial literacy and entrepreneurship for widows, and advocacy campaigns to highlight the challenges faced by widows. Following the main event, Post-International Widows Day celebration initiatives, which were held in Meru County on 24th June 2024 and Kilifi County on 30th June 2024, focused on implementing the commitments made during the celebration, ensuring that the support for widows continues throughout the year.



PRE-IWD 2023 IN KERICHO COUNTY

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2022

At Come Together Widows and Orphans Organization, we view International Widows Day as an opportunity to celebrate the resilience and bravery of widows. We are committed to ensuring that this day is never overlooked but rather marked with significant events that bring widows together. In 2022, the celebration of International Widows Day was held in Siaya, where we gathered to honor the contributions and strength of widows. The theme for 2022, "Widows Deserve to Live a Dignified Life: Dignity, Economic Empowerment, and Social Justice for Widows," encapsulates the core message of the day. It underlines the need for dignity and respect for widows



IWD 2022- SIAYA COUNTY

while advocating for their economic empowerment and social justice.

International Widows Day is dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of widows globally. This special day seeks to highlight and address the multifaceted challenges faced by widows, including violence, discrimination, and poverty. It emphasizes the importance of conducting more research and gathering statistics to better understand these issues and to develop effective policies and programs. The ultimate aim of International Widows Day is to create resources and policies that empower widows, ensuring they have access to education, employment, healthcare, and live lives free from violence and abuse. By doing so, the day aims to help widows build better lives for themselves and their children, breaking the cycles of poverty and abuse that often follow the loss of a spouse.

During the Siaya event, we had the privilege of hearing from both State and Non-State Actors who shared their commitments and plans for improving the lives of widows. We particularly applaud the Ministry of Public Service & Special Programmes for their unwavering dedication to making widows a priority. Their active involvement and support are crucial in advancing the cause and ensuring that widows are given the attention and resources they deserve. The celebration in Siaya was a powerful reminder of the progress we must continue to make and the collective effort required to secure a dignified and empowered future for all widows.



Widows receiving Cheque from Governor Siaya County

The Siaya County International Widows Day event was marked by three significant milestones.

- ❖ Firstly, there was a disbursement of Ksh. 30 million to women groups, with Ksh. 24 million allocated to all women groups and Ksh. 6 million benefiting the Widows Groups through the Thamini Mjane Special Loan Product by the Women Enterprise Fund.
- ❖ Secondly, CTWOO had the honor of issuing Certificates of Appreciation to the Human Rights Defenders - Widows League, recognizing their invaluable contributions.
- ❖ Lastly, the Siaya County Widows Charter was handed over to Senator James Orendo by the Rona Foundation, a landmark moment for advancing the rights and welfare of widows in the county.



PRE-IWD 2022- KWALE COUNTY

In the lead-up to International Widows Day, a Pre-celebration event was held in Kwale County on June 16, 2022, with the theme "Dignity - Economic Empowerment and Social Justice for Widows," resonating well with our organization's milestones and the efforts of both State and Non-State Actors; the event, hosted by Tuwajali Wajane Kwale- was lit, and we applaud the Ministry of Public Service & Special Programmes for their amazing support in making widows matter, as the long journey has finally led to our voices being heard and action being

taken.

We concluded the International Widows Day with a Post-celebration event in Kilifi County, dedicated to continuing our mission of achieving dignity, economic empowerment, and social justice for widows. This event provided an essential platform for widows to share their experiences, receive support, and access resources to improve their livelihoods. Our commitment to advocating for their rights and well-being remains steadfast as we work towards creating a society where every widow is valued and empowered.

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2021



PRE-IWD 2021 IN GATUNDU, KIAMBU COUNTY

On this day, June 24, 2023, we celebrated International Widows Day, hosted by the Gatanga Widows, to honor the hard work, tenacity, and bravery of widows. The event saw tremendous support from diverse partners, including Kidus Foundation, Certified Homes Ltd, Spread Truth Africa, and notable dignitaries such as Hon. Sabina Wanjiru wa Chege, Hon. Titus

Wairate, Hon. Irungu Kang'ata, and MP Engineer Hon. Joseph Nduati Ngugi. Their speeches emphasized the importance of economic empowerment and social justice for widows, recognizing their unique challenges and advocating for sustained support and resources. Special thanks were extended to the Ministry of Public Service and Gender, represented by Chief Guest of Honor Hon. Linah Kilimo, for their unwavering support. The event was enriched by contributions from FIDA-Kenya, Global Fund for Widows, and other key organizations, ensuring widows' visibility and access to justice and economic opportunities. Thank you to all who made this day impactful and memorable.



Embracing widows during the IWD 2021 celebration in partnership with Kidus Foundation



Widows Training as a way of celebrating their IWD 2021

The Post-International Widows Day event was a resounding success, thanks to the partnership between the Kilifi County Widows Chapter (Hope and Dreams CBO) and our office. We are deeply grateful for the support of our esteemed partners: the Ministry of Public Service and Gender, Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), FIDA-Kenya, Global Fund For Widows, Kidus Foundation, Certified Homes Ltd, and Women Enterprise Fund. The presence of Hon. Linah Kilimo, whose words of wisdom were truly priceless, added a special touch to the occasion. Together, we have made a significant impact, demonstrating our collective commitment to making widows matter. planning such a wonderful event in partnership with our office. Your efforts truly made a difference, and together, we are making widows matter!

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2020

On June 23, 2020, due to the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our International Widows Day celebration was held online. The theme for this year was "Dignity: Economic Empowerment and Social Justice for Widows." This virtual event emphasized the critical importance of providing widows with the resources and opportunities needed to achieve economic independence and social justice. The discussions focused on the dignity of widows, advocating for their rights, and the necessity of creating policies that ensure their financial stability and protection against discrimination and violence. Despite the virtual format, the event successfully brought together participants and speakers committed to fostering a supportive and empowering environment for widows.

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2019



IWD CELEBRATION 2020

On
this

day, June 23, 2019, we celebrated International Widows Day with a vibrant and memorable event. At 6 am, widows from across Kenya, including over 1,000 from Nairobi, gathered at Taifa

Hall, Nairobi University to participate. The procession was flagged off by Hon. Safina Kwekwe Tsungu, then Principal Secretary of the State Department for Gender Affairs and now Principal Secretary of the State Department for Tourism. Her dedication to widows was deeply missed, but we were comforted knowing she left us in the capable hands of Professor Colleta A. Suda. The peaceful march, led by the Police Band and facilitated by the Traffic Police, proceeded smoothly to Nairobi University's Taifa Hall. The day was graced by government leaders, politicians, and esteemed women role models who have championed gender equality in leadership. Our Chief Guest, Cabinet Secretary Prof. Margaret Kobia, PhD, MGH, delivered a powerful speech emphasizing the importance of support and empowerment for widows. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain hopeful and prayerful for the opportunity to celebrate together again.

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2018

International Widows Day 2018, held at the KICC Grounds in June, was a significant event



IWD 2018

dedicated to advancing the rights of widows and addressing the challenges they face. The day focused on encouraging action to achieve full rights for widows by emphasizing the need for more research and statistics on the violence, discrimination, and poverty they endure. It aimed to develop effective policies and programs to tackle these issues and empower widows.

The ultimate goal of the day was to create resources and policies that

would grant widows access to education, work, healthcare, and lives free from violence and abuse. By doing so, the event sought to enable widows to build a better life for themselves and their children after the death of their husbands, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty and abuse.

The event was honored by the special appearance of Prof. Margaret Kobia, whose presence highlighted the commitment to making a meaningful impact in the lives of widows.