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WORLD AIDS DAY THEME: STOP AIDS KEEP THE PROMISE (LEADERSHIP)
TWAVEZA WORLD AIDS DAY REPORT

It is now 9 year since AIDS was declared a national disaster in Kenya. The disease continues to pose major challenges to all sectors of our economy thus affecting the development achieved in the years.

During World Aids Day Minister of State for Special Programs Hon John Munyes noted that impressive strides have been witnessed in the HIV/AIDS national response, consequently there has been a decline in the HIV prevalence rate from 14% in the year 2000 to 5.1% in 2007. The Minister encouraged the community members to avoid complacency which may easily reverse the gains that have been realized

However, despite the progress we have made we need to be more vigilant than ever before and also focus on the effects of HIV/AIDS in as much as we fight the scourge we also have to address the effects to achieve a wholesome result, it is due to this that FOCUS a youth initiative together with other partners organized a campaign dubbed the “**TWAVEZA CAMPAIGN**” meaning “**We Can**” with also a reminder to the community that our children are our responsibility “**Watoto Wetu Jukumu Letu**”

This campaign which took place at the Ruiru Municipal Stadium brought together centers supporting orphans and primary schools from the region attracting a total of over 500 children all excited and rearing to go despite the chilly and rainy morning with the main aim of giving the children a platform to air their views.

The day’s events started with a walk form the District officer(D.O s) office around Ruiru, which was flagged of by the Area Chief Mr. Ngugi. Who talked about the importance of the community coming in to help the children in the fight against the scourge, he also stressed the importance of having the community members get tested as a way of helping in the prevention. The walk went upto Masaku Market and back to the Stadium where the main event took place.

The presentations through use of theatre, music, dances, and art which were greatly entertaining and very insightful then started at 11am and they were basically done by the children for it was actually meant for them to come up with the issues, which they brought out clearly as their presentations touched on some of the ways HIV/AIDS is spread that really affects the children, these included among others sexual abuse, infection while caring for their sick parents, stigma by the community, ignorance and peer pressure. The children also touched on the importance of involving them in the fight for they are also affected. Thus issues such as education in sexuality decision making, life skills among others came up as a way of equipping them and preventing more infections. They proved that theatre was a very powerful tool for addressing social, cultural and development issues

The event then came to an end with speeches from the guests in attendance and these included the Area Chief, aspiring M.P. from the region, the director of one of the children centers and a representative teacher from Thiririka Primary and finally the chairman of TWAVEZA partners Mr. Hilary Mabubi who emphasized on the needs of the children which he said were not only food, shelter, and clothing but he instead insisted on the soft issues that most interventions overlook but are very instrumental in the care and support of children, these include emotional, mental, spiritual and social needs he also added that most of these needs didn't necessarily require money but the commitment of the community members. He finally said that this was just a starting point of more activities to come and a very strong indicator that the children can take a leading role in the fight against HIV/AIDS and we as the community can address our own issues if only we are determined and vigilant the event thus ended with a prayer from the pastor of Ruiru Bible Baptist church Rev Christopher Ochieng.

We would thus like to give our sincere thanks to those who supported the event these are Safaricom Foundation who supported us with T-Shirts, C.C.F (CHRSTIAN CHILDRENS FUND) Kenya Weaving the Safety Nets Program who supported us with lunch for the children and Dawaline, Medivet, Lewis Wellington Hospital, B.T.L and Jacaranda FOSSA all who gave in a donation to make the day a success.

We would also like to thank the CACC (CONSTITUENCY AIDS CONTROL COUNCIL) office for their support in helping us solicit for support and thanks to the CACC coordinator for the great support she gave us during the preparation for the event.

It is with this in mind that we hope for more support in any oncoming event

Thank you and May God Bless you all.

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