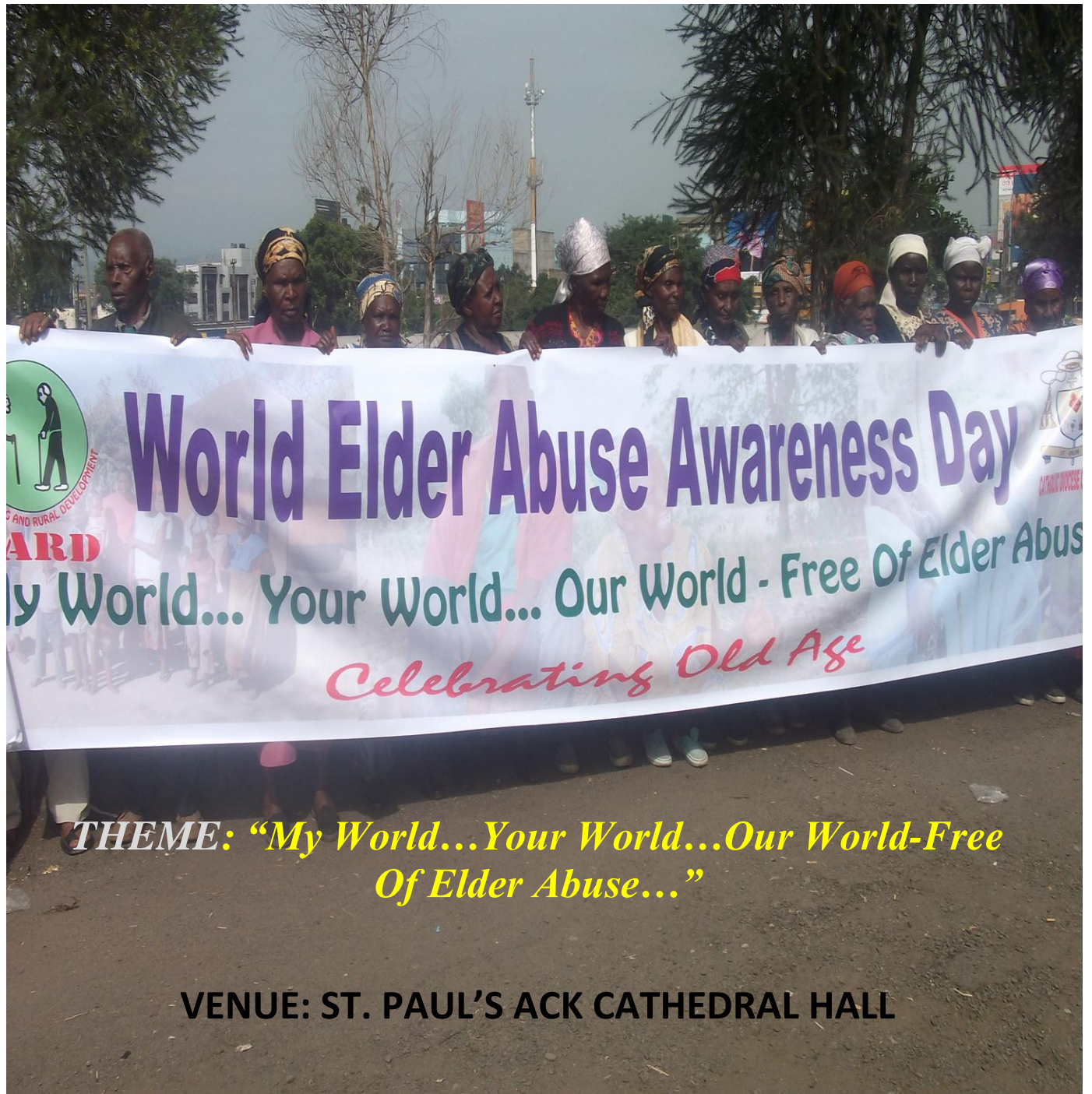


# WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY



**THEME: "My World...Your World...Our World-Free  
Of Elder Abuse..."**

**VENUE: ST. PAUL'S ACK CATHEDRAL HALL**

**DATE: 15<sup>TH</sup>, JUNE, 2012**

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## **A REPORT ON THE WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY HELD ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE 2012**

### **Background**

Centre for Ageing and Rural development (CARD) started as a community based organization in 2008 with the aim of empowering and promotion of interests of older persons through research, policy analysis and the dissemination of information. CARD efforts are geared towards alleviation of poverty and to improve the livelihood of the older person's especially older women. The organization envisions a society that appreciates, strengthens, develops, and promotes the wellbeing of the older persons and recognizes them as productive and contributors to development. Its mission is championing the welfare and rights of older persons by empowering them through sustainable development programs, research and rural development.

The organization is currently working with the elderly from the following mapped areas; Free area, Kaptembwa, Mawanga, Rhonda, Manyani, Mogotio and Solai in Nakuru county. The above are low income areas thus identification for participation was done based on the poverty levels which are high in the above mentioned locations.

The World Elderly Abuse Awareness Day 2012 was the 7<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the event globally and the 1<sup>st</sup> of its kind in Kenya. In preparation for the event CARD partnered with the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru (CDN) to plan for the day. CDN has been a leading organization championing for the wellbeing of the elderly persons in the society thus a suitable partner.

The main objective and expectation of the day was to create awareness on the various forms of abuse faced by older persons in the society. This was further reinforced by the theme of the day;

***“My World...Your World...Our World-Free Of Elder Abuse...”***

### **Planning and Mobilization**

In the initial stages of planning, letters were dispatched to various agencies including supermarkets, bakeries, banks and other potential donors; the requests were meant to create awareness with regards to the event and also to ask for material and financial support from the various identified local donors.

Brainstorming and planning meetings were held between CARD and CDN select-staff in preparation for the event; matters including budget, resource mobilization, administration, follow-up of the fundraising letters and venue among others were discussed.



#### Introduction of guests and staff members from CARD by the Director

Among the guests invited included: Koigi Wamwere, former MP of Subukia (Guest of honor), Mr. Isa Mbogo from SUPKEM, Joseph Mwangi (Representative from PC'S office), Caritas nurses, Mrs. Grace Kibuku (women activist and founder of AGAPE2000) and Madam Pauline (CDN Representative), representative from the Gender and social department.

The older person participants during the event were mobilized from free-area, Kaptembwo, Baruti and the rest came from the CDN older persons group.

From free-area, we had 25 participants (10male and 15 female); from Baruti, we had 5 male and 15 female; from Kaptembwa, we had 15 female and 5 male; from CDN, we had 35 participants in total whereas 5 were male and 30 were female while another group of 30 were either invited by friends or found interest to join the rest in commemorating the day bringing the total number of the older persons participating to 130 participants. It was evidenced that there were more female older persons than men.

Of all the potential local donors we had requested for support towards the success of the day, only 2 responded and came on board and those were Molo milk and super loaf whose generous contribution proved to be very essential in ensuring that all the invited participants were treated to refreshments during the event. Molo milk contributed 3 crates of milk while super loaf gave out 3 crates of bread.

#### The D-day

By 8.30 A.M, a good number of the older persons had already converged at the Railway grounds where the procession was to start joined by all the staff members from CARD, the board members including the chairman and a few other officials from CDN and other members of the public who also included the band that had been contracted to provide entertainment and publicity.





**The Director welcoming participants who had already arrived**



**Beginning of the procession led by the band**

The procession then went on as had been planned through Kenyatta Avenue, Moi Avenue and then ended at St. Paul's University grounds where all the guests converged for a series of photo sessions before going ahead to settle in the hall where the event was to take place.

The event proved to be a successful exercise that not only brought together stakeholders in the field of older persons welfare but also was able to highlight the plight of the same group of people to the general public who from the responses gathered had been impressed with the efforts our organization and its partners were putting towards realizing the vision and mission of an equally representative society that acknowledges the plight of the older persons in the society including abuse and discrimination towards them.

The meeting thereafter proved to be an interactive one with the old persons expressing their sentiments to the guests and the challenges they face in the society including

- Abuse and human rights violations including physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Discrimination
- Lack of social support from the government and local based organizations
- Neglect and burden to raise orphaned grandchildren
- Health and old-age related diseases and illnesses which in most cases go unattended to.
- General poverty including lack of enough food, shelter and clothing further compounded by low or lack of income to sustain themselves.



Older persons letting their sentiments known to the whole world

Majority of the guests who spoke stressed the need to strengthen local government mechanisms to provide for financial support through pensions and cash transfers to older persons. The government was widely blamed for the plight that majority of the older persons are currently going through and were challenged to put mechanisms to reduce the age limit for beneficiaries of the cash transfer fund from 80 years to at least 60 years which is a recommended age bracket according to the UN guidelines.

More efforts needed to be put in place to ensure economic and social independence of the elderly in the society and to ensure that they adequately participate in all areas of development in order to give them the opportunity to make informed and independent decisions. These sentiments were further reinforced by the guest of honor who added that the older persons in IDP camps were worse off and were virtually a forgotten lot yet they required special attention to address their needs and went ahead to acknowledge the efforts that CARD were putting in place to ensure that all older persons irrespective of race or religious background were attended to.



The guest of honor, Hon.Koigi Wamwere giving his speech



The Director CARD Kenya addressing the press

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Efforts also needed to be geared towards setting up centers for the abandoned and neglected elderly persons with an immediate need to improve and support ALMS home for the aged which is currently run by the municipal council of Nakuru and which is at the moment at a bad state and needs support to provide good and healthy living conditions.

There was also need to create awareness among the elderly on the various available channels to seek help in cases of abuse as majority of them attested to the fact that they were not well aware and informed on the available legal channels to follow when faced with abuse cases thus need for training and seminars on the same.

### **Challenges**

- Inadequate finances and funds to facilitate the event. This further resulted to working with a limited budget that could not sufficiently facilitate the various needs including transport and other logistic problems in terms of coordination.
- Gender imbalance. The participant congregation had more women than men thus failure in terms of achieving gender equity and equal representation of both the genders in participation with matters regarding and affecting both groups
- High expectations from the elderly; Majority of the older persons had expected that the event would be accompanied with monetary benefits and thus expected a lot from us in terms of assistance yet the finances available weren't even enough to cover for their transport reimbursements; this was a real disappointments.
- Low mobilization due to logistics and transport challenges due to lack of proper mode of transport i.e. vehicle, motor cycle.
- We could not brand older persons and ourselves due to lack of T-shirts and Name tags.
- We also faced challenges with regards to local donor identification and resource mobilization which in turn resulted in poor fundraising towards the facilitation of the event.

### **Recommendations**

- Transport and communication facilitation should be given to the persons responsible to facilitate the effectiveness and success of future events.
- Provision of branding and identification facilities on the material day such as T-shirts, Caps, identification tags and ribbons.
- Identification and emphasis on local donors to finance any future events thus a thorough fundraising mechanism needs to be put in place to ensure that the organization does not depend solely on external donors only.
- Proper mobilization so as to ensure that the ratio of men to women is balanced to ensure equal participation and representation.

### **Achievements**

The target number of the expected participants exceeded expectations with over 200 people participating in the event which was also given a wide media coverage (refer to the PEOPLE daily, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2012 – Pg 7).



The intended message was conveyed appropriately with those who attended showing delight of the efforts that had been put towards the same; this included a band that made up the procession and the final ceremony making sure our presence was felt in the entire town. Placards relaying the messages carried by the elderly were a clear sign that they had come out in large numbers to show their support for the initiative made towards championing for their rights and wellbeing and above all recognition in the society.

It was the delight of the organization to have achieved more than was expected even with the lean budget and any future support from various stakeholders will be gladly welcomed to ensure a society that appreciates, empowers and embraces older persons as part and parcel of the society.



Participants together with the guest of honor and the Director CARD Kenya posing for a photo after a successful day