

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

As the world marked the International Day of the Girl Child, it was vital to note that globally, more than 140 million children of school-going age are not enrolled in school: nearly 60% being girls. Research has found that dropping out of school by a girl guarantees a 90% chance of living in poverty as an adult. Statistics are even grimmer.

Closer home, at least one in five girls and women in Kenya has been beaten or sexually abused in their lifetime. Among children, the national survey of 2012 indicates that 32 per cent of girls have experienced sexual violence. It is against the background of these facts that the day was feted even as more heart-wrenching statistics were reported like the national prevalence of FGM that stands at 27.1 per cent and early marriages and maternal deaths of girls shooting to an all-time high.

It is important to note that although the Government has moved to institute legal measures to support the girl child, the Sexual Offences Act, the Counter Trafficking in Persons Act, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act among other laws can only do enough to protect the girl child. We must act now, and lay emphasis on the education of the girl child.

Because of institutional and cultural barriers, even when girls are in school, perceived low returns from poor quality of education, low aspirations, or household chores and other responsibilities keep them from attending school or from achieving adequate learning outcomes. The transformative potential for girls and societies promised through girls' education is yet to be realized.

I believe that the fulfillment of girls' right to education is first and foremost an obligation and moral imperative. There is also overwhelming evidence that girls' education, especially at the secondary level, is a powerful transformative force for societies and girls themselves: it is the one consistent positive determinant of practically every desired development outcome, from reductions in mortality and fertility, to poverty reduction and equitable growth, to social norm change and democratization.

WILFRED OWUOR,

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

Staff retreat: A breath of Fresh Air

OF recently took part in a team building exercise aimed at fostering teamwork and helping staff relax.

Teams of participants are taken by qualified and sensitive facilitators through a series of tasks during which they stumbled, restarted, succeeded and celebrated before reviewing the lessons learned from their successes and failures and moving on to the next task.

They found out what it really means to plan, lead, listen, and coordinate. Above all they developed trust in each other, accepted each others' strengths, protected each other from their weaknesses, and shared the load.

The learning was dramatic and guaranteed, and the proof was there for them to see as they progressed from task to task, becoming highly effective leaders in high performance teams.



OF staff in a challenge during the retreat

"This retreat has left me rejuvenated, I feel younger. I look forward to next year!" said a jubilant Boss Otieno .

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Message from the Chief Executive Officer**
- **Staff retreat: A breath of Fresh Air**
- **OF Attends 1st Annual M&E Conference**
- **OF Affiliates Sign Grant, Finally on Board**
- **OF begins a series of Reproductive Health Radio Talk Shows**
- **Paralegal training to be improved By Sharon Atieno- Economic Empowerment Officer**
- **OF in KNASP III review**

**Omega Foundation,
Busia Road, Milimani Est.
P.O. Box 3246-40100,
KISUMU- KENYA.**

Tel: 0716 527990

0734 527990

info@omegafoundation.or.ke

www.omega-foundation.org

OF Attends 1st Annual M&E Conference

In an effort to learn M&E best practices from the Ministry of Health and other implementing partners, Omega Foundation's M & E Manager Ivy Nafula attended the 1st Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Best Practices Conference.

The conference was aimed at promoting sharing and cross-learning of M&E best practices among health stakeholders like OF.

Strengthening the capacity of organizations to realize program efficiency and effectiveness through shared learning of what works and what does not work was also a keynote during the conference.

The participants were urged to develop a sustainable plan for documenting M&E best practices among health stakeholders in Kenya in order to promote continuous learning; encourage partners to share the processes and results of their activities through conferences and journal publications.

Of importance to note during the conference was that projects being presented were not sustainable since they were based on donor funds which run for a specific duration.

There were also foreseen challenges in replicating some of the innovative approaches due to the cost implications that are related with the approaches. Partners were urged not to only document what worked but also to document activities that didn't work so as they act as learning points to other partners.

There was need to also document inputs and resources that are needed to achieving replication of the approaches.

The participants agreed that there was need to decentralize such conference and organizing them at a county level for more information sharing on an annual basis



OF M&E team in a mentorship session with an affiliate

OF Affiliates Sign Grant, Finally on Board



OF CEO and affiliate heads pose for a photo after signing the Wezesha Project sub-agreements

Omega Foundation recently held an Affiliate Grant signing ceremony and orientation workshop to mark the beginning of the much anticipated Wezesha Project.

The grant was signed by heads of the eight affiliate organizations OF intends to work with under the project. They are : Nyarami VCT, SCORE, OGRA Foundation, SOY ARC, Mildmay Kenya, HOVIC, NOWA Foundation and WEAEP.

In his opening speech, Omega Foundation's CEO Wilfred Owuor acknowledged that the process had been rigorous and time consuming; but whose collective aim was to reach communities with service delivery. He reiterated the need for the affiliates to start engaging as much as possible with OF, extensive consultation and share experiences as well as lessons learnt.

The District AIDS and STI Coordinator (DASCO) for Kisumu East Mrs. Eunice Kinyua - took the participants through MOH reporting forms used for reporting

HIV/AIDS indicators.

"The Ministry of Health is phasing out form 711A, but it is still being used in some facilities and so you still needed to understand it in case you came across facilities that use it for reporting." she reiterated.

OF staff took the participants through pertinent issues in project implementation such as: cost share, procurement documentation and property management, HIV and OVC service delivery indicators, documentation of program, CSO health portal, branding and marking.

"Our commitment to deliver our mandate in the Wezesha Program marks the beginning of a long and strong relationship with OF," commented George Cottina of SCORE.

Gilbert Otieno from Fanikisha also appreciated the participants and urged them to cooperate with OF in order to make the implementation of the program easier for both parties.

If you want to go quickly, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.
~ African proverb

OF begins a series of Reproductive Health Radio Talk Shows



OF's George Onyango and MoH's Peris Akello in studio during the maiden radio talk show

OF has begun a series of radio talk shows to mobilize and sensitize the Kisumu County community on the importance on Closing the Gap Project including intervention areas in order to improve the uptake of the Reproductive Health Services.

The weekly talk show will also mobilize and sensitize Kisumu County audience on Omega Foundation projects and specifically, Closing the Gap Project intervention areas.

The guest speakers and OF staff will share with the audience the RH situation in Kisumu County and

discuss the importance of family planning in relation to development and also address Reproductive Health concerns including myths, misconceptions and half-truths from the audience through call-in sessions.

Six talk shows each lasting 1 hour will be aired for six weeks within the months of October and November 2013 through a local vernacular radio station with significant coverage and listenership within Kisumu County.

Paralegal training to be improved

By Sharon Atieno— Economic Empowerment Officer

Although paralegals play a big role in addressing legal issues at the community level, they have not been legally recognized by the Ministry of Justice. Moreover, they face a lot of challenges in discharging their day to day duties and at times follow ups of cases become cumbersome. They therefore need a platform to help champion their issues.

In Light of this predicament, a number of advocacy-focused CSOs Kisumu County including Omega Foundation came together to discuss the possibility of helping the paralegals in the county in establishing an umbrella association/network and the CSO's forming a consortium in order to leverage on the opportunities presented by individual organizations. This will also increase visibility and voice for advocacy in community access to social and economic justice.

It is unfortunate that trained paralegals in Kisumu do not exist in the national Paralegal Support Network (PASUNE) database thus casting doubt on their the eligibility and recognition. also mapping had not been conducted to know the distribution of paralegals across the County for ease of coordination and referral, making it difficult for the government to work with them.

The disorganization that exists currently impedes the acceptance of the paralegals to represent the community in various Government institutions like Court User Committee, Prisons, Case committees among others .

NALEAP is carried out to ascertain the relevance of paralegals in relation to community access to social and economic justice. If the pilot study indicates that paralegals do not add any value to access to justice at community level, then that will be the end of the efforts that CSO's have put in training the paralegals.

Because of the disparity in the paralegal training curricula the government and even other legal institutions are skeptical about the credibility and ability of the paralegals to handle legal matters.

In order to counter these bottle necks, Kisumu County Paralegal Network was formed, and is currently supported by 12 CSO's. This provided an arena for the CSO's to table their unique competencies, influences and resources in support of community access to Justice

OF in KNASP III review

Omega Foundation in conjunction with The National AIDS Control Council (NACC) and other development partners is currently taking part in the review of KNASP III .

NACC has organized for the above meeting aimed at validating the regional pillar reports during the life of KNASP III, planning for HIV response in a manner that takes into account the constitutional requirement of public participation by bringing the people together to review the progress made over the last four years.

The fourth generation KNASP is enshrined in four pillars: 1) health sector HIV service delivery, 2) sectoral mainstreaming of HIV, 3)Community-based HIV Programs and 4)governance and strategic information.

In the spirit of devolution, the review will get the people at the devolved levels to fully understand their role in social and economic development of their respective counties through their inescapable and indispensable role in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Involving partners like Omega Foundation in the review process of health policy documents will promote democracy and accountability in the ownership of the response at county level.

"Its an honour for OF to play a part in crafting a document that will see the streamlining of HIV interventions in Kenya," said Harun Kodiaga OF Head of Programs.

“Procrastination is the thief of time”
- Anonymous