

THE MONTHLY GRIND

Official Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya



Pope's October Prayer Intention.

Compiled by: Victor Emoja.

Pope Francis released his prayer intention for the month of October, in his prayer Intention, Pope was calling on everyone to pray that all Christians might be missionary disciples and open to the demands of the Church's evangelizing mission.

"Jesus asks us all, and you as well, to be missionary disciples. Are you ready?"

Pope Francis opened The Pope Video—containing his prayer intention for the month of October—with that invitation to all Christians.

The Pope said we are all invited to be open to Jesus' call and to live united to Him in the mundane events of our daily lives.

"Work, meeting other people, our daily duties, and the chance events of each day": These are the opportunities we have to allow ourselves to be "guided by the Holy Spirit," said the Pope.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- **AOSK ACTIVITIES FOR OCTOBER 2021**



AOSK JUSTICE & PEACE

On 3rd of October 2021 the AOSK JPC held an AGM metro meeting in the Archdiocese of Nyeri. The forum was attended by 97 participants drawn from 7 dioceses (Isiolo, Nyeri, Marsabit, Murang'a, Embu, Meru & Nyahururu). The intention of the meeting was to evaluate the implementation of the AOSK-JPC activities for the year 2021. It was also a time for planning the calendar for the 2022 activities and to receive reports from the previous activities within their AUs and to see the way forward of addressing the areas that need attention during our implementation. The participants gave reports from their AUs which reflected what they have been doing as AOSK. The AGM was graced with 40 sisters from 7 AUs who came to support women peacemakers and human rights teachers from their diocese. In the forum, Mr Patrick Thogo was awarded a certificate of the best Human rights teacher of the year 2021. Most of the reports highlighted SGBV issues and the intervention of bringing peace in families during conflicts. The participants expressed the presence of the sisters made them feel they are ready to network as a Church.



Ongoing forum during the AOSK-JPC AGM at the Archdiocese of Nyeri.



Mr. Patric Thogo being awarded the certificate of the best Human rights teacher of the year 2021.

On 18th October 2021 AOSK-JPC held another AGM meeting in the Archdiocese of Mombasa with 3 AUs present (Garissa, Mombasa, and Malindi). The 87 participants were drawn from WWA, HRT, Associates, and CJPC. During the meeting, the participants drew out their way forward on how to network as AOSK group and CJPC group particularly during this time of Kenyan forthcoming election. However, the Arch-diocese of Mombasa was surprised to receive the news of being the best AUs of 2021 and the celebration of two formidable women; Rev. Sr. Monica Kyule, SSJ, and Md. Patricia Loko for their achievement of being nominated the best sister and women peacemaker of the year 2021 for working in collaboration to fight against human rights abuses from Kilifi County.



The archdiocese of Mombasa receiving the Prize of being the best AUs.



Participants during the AGM meeting at the archdiocese of Mombasa



Sr. Monica Kyule receiving the Award of being the best Sister of the year 2021

Lastly, it was indeed a sad moment for the AOSK JPC team as they attended Trocaire partners close out meeting in Mombasa after 24 years of partnership. Trocaire has supported AOSK in different programs including the Social Economic Empowerment for women and girls living in Kibera informal settlement, Restorative Justice and Peace Building in Nakuru, Good Governance and Human Rights among others. We take this opportunity to thank the entire Trocaire fraternity for journeying with us for the 24 years. During the closing event AOSK was voted as the best organization which creatively presented its work and activities implemented in partnership with Trocaire for said period.



AOSK-JPC presentations during the women empowerment evaluation meeting in Mombasa.

AOSK-CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA (AOSK-CCCK)

One of the most contributor to the vulnerability of children around the world is separation from the love, care, and protection of their parents and families. Loss of parental care has many causes. Millions of children globally have already been separated or are at risk of being separated from their families due to poverty, diseases, disability, death, abuse, or any other cause.

Kwetu Home of Peace is one of the Charitable Care Institution (CCI) allied to AOSK-Catholic Care for Children in Kenya (AOSK-CCCK) that rescues, rehabilitates and re-integrates street connected boys back to their families. On 8th October 2021, Kwetu Home of Peace held a thanks-giving mass to celebrate the reintegration of 34 boys whose parents and guardians had come to pick them home after a process of rehabilitation at the Centre. The celebration brought together all the 34 boys who were being re-inserted to their families, the other boys still under rehabilitation, parents, guardians and invited guests.



Reintegration Ceremony at Kwetu Childrens home on 8th Oct 2021



The 34 re-integrated boys from Kwetu Childrens home receiving blessings from the priest

Sr. Jane Rose Nyongesa, the director of Kwetu Home of Peace, in her opening remarks, invited the children, parents and guest to the thanksgiving celebration and noted, “Today we are gathered here to celebrate the 34 boys who have successfully finished rehabilitation and are being reintegrated back to their families. The journey began in 2018, when we rescued these boys from the street and committed ourselves to rehabilitate and reintegrate them. Today as an institution, we are happy that parents are here to take their children and continue nurturing them, loving and raising them up. The family is the most Important Institution in the children upbringing, and therefore it’s our joy, the boys are re-united back with their families.”

Mrs Mary Anyango, a mother who was reunited with her son, Moses Otieno noted that, “As a mother it gives me joy and happiness to see my son after 5 years of separation, the reunification process today has given me a second chance to extend my motherly love and care towards Moses.” On his side Moses Otieno alluded, “During the few bonding times, we had with my mother, it feels excited when I have someone I can refer to as mother and the affection given by my mother which cannot be compared to anything else.”

Sr. Delvin Mukhwana (DHM) the Project Manager for AOSK-CCCK while giving her speech noted that, a scriptural basis for family care is bolstered by a strong academic evidence base, which consistently finds that children who are cared for by families are more likely to thrive than those in residential care. Residential cares are often promoted as more adequately providing material needs than some families’ do, without recognizing the vital social and emotional role that family relationships play in a child’s life. Regardless of the quality of care in residential settings, children often face isolation, loss of a sense of belonging, identity struggles, and difficulty-maintaining connections given the lengthy periods of separation from their families, therefore Sr. Delvin Mukhwana encouraged the parents to be the cornerstone of upbringing their children in a family set up.



Sr. Delvin Mukhwana, DHM and Rev. Fr. Erastus Chege addressing the children at Kwetu Childrens home during the Celebrations.

Its high time for all of us to stand up for the care reforms for the children by promoting families values, positive parenting and family support so that children are not separated from their families because of basic needs that can be received from families, so that, the rest of the family is enhanced in remaining together, than taking children in orphanages and rescue centres for years being held hostage in the name of support. The Catholic social teaching urges that, parents be supported in their effort to raise well-formed, healthy children. AOSK-CCCK program is funded by GHR foundation.



Boys being awarded with certificates of Completion after successfully finishing their period with Kwetu Childrens Home

AOSK SCORE ECD

Networking and advocacy are fundamental practices for sustainability in any given organization. The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK) was formed in September 2015 out of a realization that there was a gap in the coordination of various organizations and institutions engaged in Early Childhood Development (ECD) service provision, capacity development, research, and advocacy. Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya through SCORE ECD is a member of the network and collaborates in various ways to ensure that children access and participate in high-quality, holistic early childhood development programs.

The 4th blended National ECD Stakeholders conference took place at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology from 25th-27th of October 2021. The theme of the conference was; “Responsive Caregiving for Children from Diverse Circumstances: Innovations and inclusivity”. The objectives for the conference included, creating awareness on the need for integration of nurturing care practices in ECD service delivery, advocating for systemic change through policy, at National and County levels, pushing for increased sustainable investments of nurturing care in Kenya and lastly interrogating the social fabric and its impact on child development.



A group photo of the participants during the conference in Siaya County

The event was opened by the Siaya County deputy governor honorable Dr. James Okumbe and was graced by 6 first ladies from neighboring County governments. The event provided an opportunity for participants to discuss and share insights and status of ECD programs in Kenya, innovations, challenges. The outcome of the conference was to ensure establishment of holistic multi-sectoral approach towards ECD in Kenya which will enhance policy and practice on implementation of Nurturing Care. During the same event the ECD Network for Kenya Strategic plan 2021-2025 was launched. In attendance were the SCORE ECD teams from CRS, ACWECA, AOSK and congregations. The fifth biennial National ECD Stakeholders' Conference will be held in Turkana County. AOSK-SCORE ECD in Partnership with CRS are funded by Hilton foundation.

AOSK INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

The importance of insurance in modern society is unquestioned and has been recognized for many centuries. Insurance is practically a necessity to business activity and enterprise. Insurance also serves a broad public interest far beyond its role in business affairs and its protection of a large part of the country's wealth. It is the essential means by which the disaster to an individual is shared by many, the disaster to a community shared by other communities; great catastrophes are thereby lessened.



Mrs. Lucy Juma, the AOSK Insurance officer.

Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK) in the month of November 9th 2019 under the leadership of Sr. Pasilisa Namikoye, (LSOSF) the AOSK Executive Secretary established the AOSK insurance desk. The establishment of the AOSK insurance desk was in line with AOSK Strategic Plan 2018-2022 theme 4 on sustainability which envision to enhance the sustainability of the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya.

The AOSK insurance desk works continuously to achieve the following towards member congregations under AOSK; offering prompt and quality advisory in insurance matters, providing market information on new and existing insurance products to both existing and new member congregations, providing assistance to the insured congregation members on the occurrence of the unforeseen event that result into claims and as well as to operate profitably and at the same time ensuring customers satisfaction. AOSK insurance desk anticipate that by the end of the year, all member congregation under Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya will embrace and join AOSK Insurance as their sole insurance agent when it comes to issuance of insurance covers.

AOSK-CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA INSTITUTE

Institute of Catechetics and Pastoral Ministry

ONSITE LEARNING – FULLTIME PROGRAM FOR ICAPAMI

On 18th October, 2021 all ICAPAMI students were happy to resume their onsite lectures, except those in the monastery. Thus blended learning was the only alternative to cater for those who cannot leave the monastery to come to Chemchemi. The quest to learn theology by our sisters in the monastery has widen our horizon to extent our services to them. So now we are offering diploma and certificate in theology online for those who cannot study onsite.



Onsite lectures in Progress

On, 22/10/2021, ICAPAMI held an online meeting with the ICAPAMI Alumni group. It was a very exciting day for them to meet once again though partially. The alumni shared with one another what they are doing at present. They expressed their gratitude to AOSK for coming with this department of theology in catechetics and pastoral ministry which has empowered them in their ministry of evangelization.

During the forum, the Director of Chemchemi ya Uzima Sr. Luciana Wanyahoro welcomed the Alumni participants. She introduced them to the purpose of the meeting as follows; to keep connected as one family though we are far and working all over the world; to share our joys, achievements and challenges related to their work, thus mentoring each other. The participants introduced themselves in relation to; the countries where one is working, kinds of the work they are doing, the achievements/challenges, the relevance of the knowledge and experience they acquired in Chemchemi.

Sabbatical Program

As the Sabbatical program look forward to the end of the program, we also thank God for the far He has brought us and the achievements in the program. The month began well and all the planned activities carried out successfully to date. Workshop on Spiritual development and Discernment was well presented by Fr. Modestus of the congregation of the Apostles of Jesus. Also, program evaluation was done and majority appreciated what they have received since the semester begun and thus really grateful to God. Some highlighted areas of concern to help us improve the program.

On 22nd October 2021, all the participants had a privilege in the company of the program staff to the Marian International Shrine Subukia. This was a very enreaching experience participants expressed their gratitude towards the opportunity granted.



Participants during a Visit to Subukia shrines

The Integrative Spiritual Counselling Program

MY SUCCESS TESTIMONY AS A STUDENT OF THE DIPLOMA IN INTEGRATIVE SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING AT CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA INSTITUTE



This program merges the spiritual side and the psychological part furthermore it's quite beneficial to Human beings to whom spirituality is part and parcel of life. Psychology with reference to itself is not a complete entity and many unresolved issues leads the client to the beyond. Moreover, this is the spiritual aspect in itself and human beings in every way are highly spiritual.

After my sabbatical program in Chemchemi, I was requested to join this program against my wish because I was a happy Teacher. As vows dictate much to a religious, I joined the program 2019 due to vow of obedience and was to complete by 2020 but covid-19's way meant, our practicum progressed to 2021.

The program has led me to heights of forbearing especially, to the youth of today. From the knowledge and the practicums, I accommodate those that come to me because everybody has issues and I listening to others, being empathetic to them, not being of judgemental as I too learn to face myself so that "Me" that I was before the program and the practicums had a lot of failure in enabling others hide in me this is long gone.

The heart is love. This icon reminds me daily of how many lives are lost because of lack of love and concern. I have grown in my concern about others and mostly the youth, sick and the old. what I have fought in my life is aggressiveness and in case of a stressor, I give room quietly and find my root to stand like a tree.

For my Congregation, the Catholic Sponsorship, the lecturers and Chemchemi staff may God bless you all as I thank you for teaching me how to take care of myself.

By Sr. Theresia Abiona, SMK

Formation Testimony

A heartfelt thank you to AOSK Secretariat for all that you have done and what you are continuously doing to me. May God bless your generosity

2nd August, 2021 was a bright moment for me as I received good news to start my formation course under your scholarship. Sincerely, since then I have gained a lot that is helping me as an individual and I feel it will help me to help the young ladies aspiring to join our Congregation. So far, the program has empowered and benefited me a lot whereby I feel the structure of the program is well organized with rich inputs given by the various lecturers. Again, the formation course is helping me to discover myself and my role in the Church as a Consecrated Woman. I have discovered I have potentials that will be helpful to the Congregation, Church and the Society as well. So far, I feel well integrated from the inputs received whereby transformation is taking place in my life; spiritually, morally, psychologically and physically.

I am confident that at the end of this program, I will be of great benefit to the Congregation and be able to journey with the young ladies ready to serve God in our Religious family, since by then I would have been empowered and gained knowledge on how to empower them to become agents of transformation to the society as consecrated women. I promise to give back to the society after completion of my studies. With confidence am ready to be sent where my superiors will feel need

By Sr. Wilnus Nyomena Mauti, DSH



Ongoing formation classes at Chemchemi ya Uzima Institute

AOSK-HEALTH NETWORK PROGRAM

During the month of October, AOSK-Health network had a learning forum for all the sisters' vaccine ambassadors from the four countries conducting the COVID19 vaccine awareness project. This meeting was attended by four countries including Ghana, Zambia, Uganda and Kenya. In attendance was Vatican COVID-19 task force led by Sr. Carol, and Hilton Foundation represented by Sr. Jane Wakahiu. The lesson learned during this forum is that we have all suffered the same in terms of the pandemic. During the forum, Members representing each country shared their achievements and challenges they have experienced since the project was implemented. The fact that we share the common home, the Earth, so did we share the effects of the pandemic. The sisters in the four countries are in the forefront at encouraging people to go for the vaccine.

In the same month, 31 sisters went through a complete cycle of psycho-spiritual support sessions. This was very encouraging for the sisters to share their pain and support one another and receive support from the counselors. Another group of 35 sisters has started their cycle of 3 sessions which will end on 10th November.

Lastly, a documentary for the vaccine awareness campaign was done at Kalimoni Hospital and St. Joseph nursing home on 12th October 2021. During the activity, Sr. Emilia Ifoy was featured receiving her second jab of the AstraZeneca jab at the hospital. At the Kalimoni health facility, over ninety percent of the staff have received the covid-19 jab. The community around the facility has also been vaccinated recording a total number of over seven hundred people who have been vaccinated since the facility started administering the Covid-19 jab.



Sr. Emilia Ifoy from the Kalimoni Health facility receiving her second dose of the Covid-19 jab.

AOSK SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE (AOSK-SLYI)

The Sisters Led Youth Empowerment Initiative (SLYI), one among the projects at the AOSK funded by the Conrad Hilton Foundation, believes in the power of disadvantaged and vulnerable youth to change their status. The project uses two models in youth empowerment, that is, socioeconomic empowerment and psychosocial support. In October 2021, AOSK-SLYI implemented two landmark activities in its pilot phase, aimed at assessing and documenting the project outcomes.

In mid-October 2021, AOSK-SLYI held a reflective meeting aimed at evaluating the project implementation and its impact to the target beneficiaries as well as deliberating on the way forward. The meeting had an attendance of 75 representatives of all the stakeholders in the project including the 50 youth, 18 administrators 2 mentors and the 5 AOSK program staff. The participants attested to the positive transformation that was evident among the youth in the target communities.



AOSK Executive Secretary addressing participants during the annual reflective meeting.

The sisters not only transferred the acquired entrepreneurial skills, but also some have utilized them in initiating Income Generating Activities for their institutions and congregations. The psychosocial support has improved self-esteem of a number, some had started the journey to quit drugs and citing one of the youth in Mombasa who attended a youth forum where entrepreneurial skills were covered, she utilized them in starting poultry farming that has grown ever since. Courtesy of the entrepreneurial skills offered to the youth, some developed



Youth in a group discussion during the AOSK-SLYI AGM.

business ideas, were funded and are implementing them, which have improved their standards of living and reduced their vulnerability. The institutional support has seen an increase in enrollment in all the target sisters led technical training institutions. It is worth noting that the pilot phase of the project reached out to youth living with disabilities. The youth were able to come up with a group business idea just like their peers and were supported with seed capital to start their business. The AGM offered an opportunity for the youth to showcase their products.

The youth highlighted some of the challenges they encounter in implementing their businesses, among which include; limited market for their products, stiff competition, inflation which affects the pricing of their products and limited operation capital. In November 2021, AOSK-SLYI will follow up with the youth businesses, addressing some of the challenges raised by the youth during the AGM.



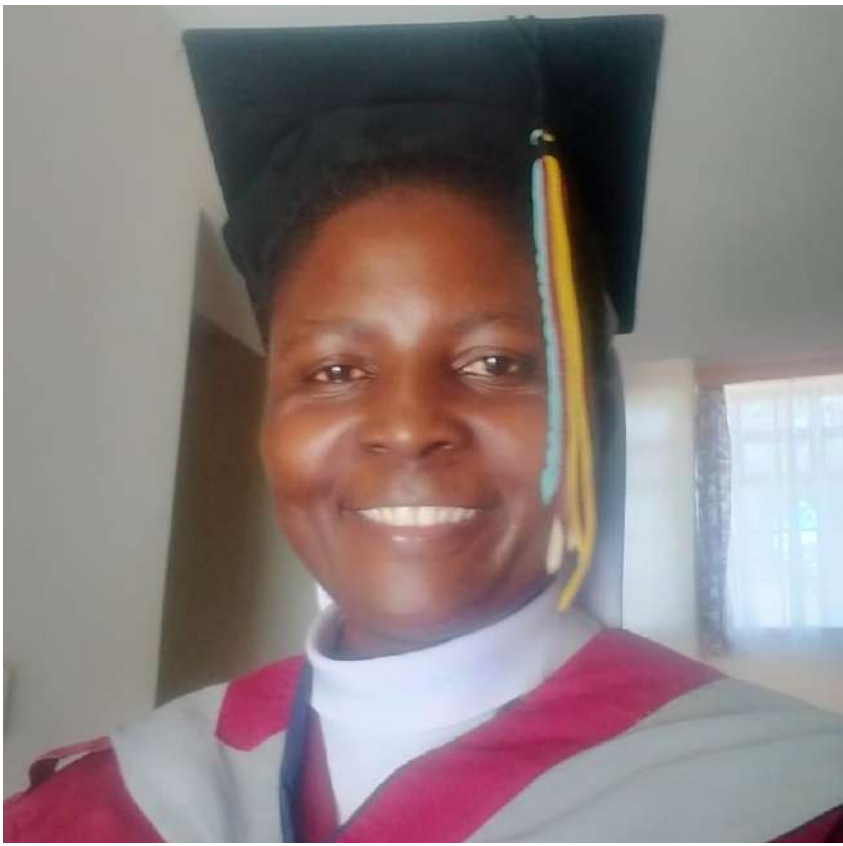
Youth group presentation during the AOSK-SLYI AGM.

AOSK Research

The project also carried out a situational analysis of the Sisters Led Youth empowerment initiatives in Kenya focusing on institutional training capacity, entrepreneurship training and seed capital, youth psychosocial support, institutional sustainability and community involvement. Data was collected from 144 respondents comprised of; youth, sister administrators, teachers, community representatives, youth mentors and parish priests. Data collection was mainly done online with a few site visits using questionnaires, Focused group discussions, direct observation and interview. The Findings from the data collected show that despite a significant improvement in the institutions training infrastructure, the institutions still lacked some equipment. The institutions had enough training capacity to accommodate even more youth. The youth were able to conceptualize, plan and are implementing their business ideas courtesy of the entrepreneurial skills impacted to them and the seed capital that was offered by AOSK-SLYI. The psychosocial support forums were essential in the social transformation of some youth in terms of reduced drugs and substance abuse, boosted self-esteem, improved social relationships reduced cases of early marriage, teenage pregnancy and criminality. Institutions however had few income generating activities, majority venturing into garment production. The community played a significant role in this by availing youth for technical training, creating a conducive environment for learning and business, availing essential community resources to the youth, giving social and moral support and consumed, buying and advertising the goods and services offered by the youth as well as taking part in key decision making affecting the institutions. The study recommended replication of the intervention, tuition support, scaling up the youth empowerment and establishment of institutional business models to holistically empower youth.

Graduation Ceremony

AOSK fraternity takes this opportunity to congratulate their members of staff and students who made it to the graduation of the year 2021 that was conducted at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa on 29th of October the year 2021. The member staff include, Sr. Lucia Mutuku, Sr. Hellen Simiyu, Sr. Catherine Mulwa and Sr. Brenda Nkamatte. Five students with degrees and three students with diploma are graduating from the institute of catechetics and pastoral ministry and from the institute of integrative spiritual counselling, five students are graduating with diplomas. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors.



Sr. Hellen Simiyu, SMK Head of finance Chemchemi ya Uzima Institute



Sr. Lucia Mutuku, DSH Head of formation Chemchemi ya Uzima Institute

END

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

AOSK is grateful for your continued support of our mission. Together we are making a difference!



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