

# NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya

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*“And let us pray for a more widespread culture of nonviolence, which will progress when countries and citizens alike resort less and less to the use of arms.”*

## Pope’s April prayer intention: ‘For a non-violent culture



In his prayer intention for the Month of April 2023, Pope Francis urged everyone to pray and work for a non-violent culture that promotes peace. As the church marked 60 years since Pope St. John XXIII published his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Pope Francis called on Christians to pray for a nonviolent culture. He recalled that “war is madness” which is “beyond reason”. “Any war, any armed confrontation, always ends in defeat for all,” Pope Francis contrasted a conflictual mentality with one based on non-violence. “Living, speaking, and acting without violence is not surrendering, losing, or giving up anything, but aspiring to everything,” he said.

Nonviolence can offer a guide for our actions, “both in daily life and in international relations.”

“Let us remember that, even in cases of self-defense, peace is the ultimate goal, and that a lasting peace can exist only without weapons,” Pope Francis added.

Pope Francis wrapped up his intention video with the heart of his prayer appeal.

“And let us pray for a more widespread culture of nonviolence,” “which will progress when countries and citizens alike resort less and less to the use of arms.”

## THE AOSK LEGAL DESK

### The Right to Public Participation.

Public participation is defined as an open, accountable process by which an organization consults with interested and affected parties before coming up with a resolution. It ensures their contributions; opinions and input, are welcomed before an important decision by authorities is made. The principle of public participation is based on the fundamental human right to hold and express their opinion and to seek, receive and impart ideas as enshrined in Article 33 of the Kenyan Constitution which provides for the freedom of expression.

When done correctly, public participation can bring the government closer to its citizens, produce more transparent public policies and decisions and enable citizens to hold government leaders more accountable. This is provided for under Article 35 of the Kenyan Constitution which talks about access to information. The final element is access to justice, and this is provided for under Article 48 of the Constitution. The Constitution provides a firm legal foundation for the enhancement of participatory governance through devolved structures at the county level. Public participation is an integral part of Kenya's legal positivism, out of the accepted wisdom that the authorities in charge of various institutions in the

government will do better if they are exposed consistently to public views. Besides, the public is likely to feel better and be more positively won over to accept outcomes if they are invited to express their opinions and facts. Among the key elements of public participation, as discussed, is access to information and this should be provided in a comprehensive and timely manner as laid down in Article 35 of the Constitution. One of the national values provided under Article 10(2) is public participation in governance. This has the effect that the people have a right to have their opinions heard by the authorities before enforcement or execution. Under the article, public participation is regarded as a matter of national importance, which has to be fulfilled by authorities before making their decisions.

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



## HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA (HASK)

### Addiction

For the past months, HASK has been talking about mental health as one of the non-communicable diseases that are on the rise globally. From Mid-March all along to April HASK conducted NCD's awareness campaigns in coordination with the Health facilities that are under HASK. During the campaign period, Facilities screened for diabetes, hypertension, and other diseases, they also screened for mental health.



### *Patients at Muthale Mission Hospital during the NCD week Courtesy of HASK*

In the March newsletter's update, it was highlighted that drugs and substance abuse is one cause of mental illness. Addictive behavior affects more than 970 million people globally at least by 2019, and the number is still rising especially post-COVID-19. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), addiction is a "chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences". In other words, addiction is an uncontrollable or overwhelming need to use a drug, and this compulsion is long-lasting and can return unexpectedly after a period of improvement. Individuals can develop addictions to illicit street drugs, prescription medications, and even activities such as gambling, sex, shopping, fashion, stealing, etc.

"Although addiction used to be thought of as a sign of moral weakness, it is now understood by the majority of those in the substance abuse and addiction treatment sphere to be a condition that arises in association with changes in the brain caused by the use of addictive substances", said Br. Pius a lecturer at Tangaza University college while addressing students. This is because nearly all addictive drugs either directly or indirectly activate an area of the brain, the nucleus that is normally stimulated by naturally rewarding activities important for survival like eating or spending time with friends. Once addiction has secured this space which was naturally occupied by family, friends, and work it may never go back. Drunks will produce the rewards faster than normal stimulation thus preferred. If an individual with drug dependence stops taking that drug suddenly, that person will experience predictable and measurable symptoms, known as withdrawal syndrome, and this will create craving and the more they use the more they are hooked. The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan Report published by the National Authority for Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) revealed that at least 626,000 primary school children have indulged in alcohol. 508,132 have used alcohol; 369,155 used khat/miraa 349,613 and for prescription drugs 314,869, for tobacco; 162,863 for bhang/cannabis; 49,945 for inhalants e.g., glue and petrol; 26,058 for heroin; and 23,887 for cocaine," the report reads in part. Among the symptoms are Changes in appetite, Changes in mood, Fatigue, Irritability, Muscle pain, Restlessness, Runny nose, Shakiness, Sleeping difficulties, Sweating, Vomiting. However, there is hope, treatment is possible if only we can all join hands and work to help the young people.

## AOSK SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

### Psycho-Social Forums

Psychosocial support is the process of facilitating and strengthening resilience within individuals, families, and communities to recover from and adapt to critical adversities with potentially damaging long-term impacts. Psychosocial support thus promotes the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructure. In any psychosocial forum the Aspects of well-being include: biological, material, social, spiritual, cultural, emotional, and mental, and accordingly, psychosocial support after disasters or other traumatic events should promote five essential principles; a sense of safety, Calming, Self- and community efficacy, Social connectedness, and Hope.

One of the components of The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya - Sisters-Led Youth Empowerment Initiative is Community Outreach. The goal of the project is to enhance skills development and job-creating opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged youth between the ages of 15 and 25. One of the objectives to achieve this goal is to support the institutions in carrying out awareness forums and offering psycho-social support to the youth in crisis and improving community-based outreach programs for the disadvantaged and vulnerable youth. Through this activity in the previous years, the youth who have been reached through the psychosocial forums have shown great behavioral changes; some who were using drugs and substance abuse had sought help and gone for rehabilitation, others have mended their relationship with their parents and elders in the community, some are practicing abstinence after learning about sexuality and healthy relationships. Indeed, the psychosocial

forums have helped to change the behavior of many young people in society. And the more this is consistent the more we can help keep the young people on the right track and aware of the negative effects some of the contemporary issues can have in their lives. During the month of April 2023, various technical training institutions carried out various psychosocial forums in 18 parishes where they reached over 4,000 youth. The topics tackled during these forums included; mental health, Youth engagement to counter violent extremism and radicalization in social life, Peaceful co-existence, guidance and counseling, stress management, Healthy relationships, Coping with stress, Ways of overcoming temptation, Good health, Human Trafficking, Drugs & Substance abuse, Sexuality (LGBTQ), Drug and Substance Abuse and The boy-girl relationship, Self – Awareness among other issues Which we believe will create more awareness among the youth on contemporary issues that affect them and help them aware of the ways they can mitigate the issues for better wellbeing and right decision making in life.



*AOSK-SLYI youth during a Psycho-social forum at the Catholic diocese of Ngong in April 2023*

## AOSK CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA

### CCCK 'What is the spirit calling us to do?'

**S**peak up for those who cannot speak for themselves and for the rights of all who are destitute. Proverbs 31:8. Pope Francis put it right that the protection of the fundamental rights of children to grow up in a family environment, to receive nutrition, education, and support are duties of the family and society so that they are not overlooked or denied to any child in any part of the world. All those practices that violate the dignity and rights of children must be denounced.

Fundamental truth put it that when we know better we do better. It is evident that no change is easy, but progress always requires a willingness to change. Leaders and those responsible for children transition-

ing from residential care to a family model of care tend to experience many challenges during the process. This varies from fear of what will happen to the children outside the institutions, will they have their basic needs met? and what will happen to the staff and assets.

The consolation is that transition to the family is possible. Gradually those in charge of charitable care institutions, Leaders and the society at large are recognizing an over-reliance on the residential care model. The first option, therefore, is to help children stay in their biological families and prevent separation. Family can be a developmental catch-up whereby when children are moved to the family from group care there is a significant im-

provement in growth and development. Therefore, the family can be viewed as a treatment for the lost development in residential care. Change can be slow and intimidating, however the results are so motivating as child well-being is increased, family empowered, impact is increased and cost per child decreased as they are supported by families rather than residential care. Consequently, we are called to embrace the paradigm shift that children do better in families. Let us be part of this movement by supporting children in families either through advocacy, financial support or even fostering a child. Remember that God desires children to be in families, that's how he designed

## AOSK JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

### AOSK JPIC response to climate change

**K**enya has faced myriad of challenges and impacts of climate change. In the recent past most counties were hit by drought which negatively impacted crop yields specifically Kenya's staple foods like maize and beans and livestock farming especially in the pastoralist communities. With the looming impacts of climate change coupled with the lack of sustainable adaption and mitigation strategies, the impacts are already felt and

with the Business as Usual scenario the effects would be felt many years to come

In response to the Pope's call on Laudato Si "Taking care of Mother Earth", AOSK JPIC through the support of the Superior Generals of Ireland engaged Peacemakers, Human rights Teachers, and Sisters in Planting over 8000 trees in 17 AOSK Units, AOSK JPIC is also engaging learners in schools in waste management., in his call to Ken-

yans to respond to climate change President Ruto said” *We have messed up our natural resources (forest). Blatant encroachment and destruction of our forests has become the norm. We have gone further to even convert our agricultural plantations into housing estates. Development is good but it shouldn’t be at the expense of our environment...we endeavor as a country to plant 15 billion trees in 10 years. This projection is achievable bearing in mind that every Kenyan just needs to plant 300 trees to realize this target”*



*Environmental clubs in Schools taking care of mother Earth.*

## Active Non-Violence

**N**onviolence is neither a passive acceptance of oppression nor a violent opposition to it. Instead, nonviolence is active. Nonviolent action implies a commitment to utilizing nonviolent and creative means to resist violent forces in order to influence and encourage social change.

Active nonviolence is a way of life, a positive and powerful force for social change, and a means of building a global community committed to the well-being of all. It is a virtue that recognizes the truth of our equal dignity and ultimate unity. It is a process for ending violence without violence or lethal force; for transforming conflict; and for protecting the vulnerable. Active nonviolence is a stand for justice and a method for helping to create it. It pursues this goal, not with passivity or violence, but with creative engagement and determined resistance. Mobilizing courageous and creative people-power, nonviolence does not escape conflict but actively and powerfully engages and

## PAX CHRISTI

transforms it. People throughout the world have used active nonviolence to end injustice and foster reconciliation, resist war and build peace, safeguard the infinite worth of the human person, and to care for creation.

The sisters in Kenya who were trained in active nonviolence and imbued with positive values became agents of change in their communities and significantly contributed to the restoration of a culture of peace, reconciliation, and tolerance, and the improvement of the living conditions of the whole communities.



*The youths listening to the presentation by Sr. Catherine Njagi on Active non-violence*

## AOSK SCORE ECD

During the month of April, AOSK SCORE ECD was amongst the three AOSK projects funded by Conrad Hilton to participate in a three-day workshop at Jacaranda Hotel organized by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The three projects present were; AOSK SCORE ECD, AOSK Sisters led youth initiative (SLYI), and Religious against Human Trafficking (RAHT). The objective of the workshop was to develop a common agenda for social and policy change and to outline opportunities for social behavior change and policy advocacy for early childhood development, youth empowerment and to

counter-human trafficking. The workshop was attended by 24 sisters drawn from the three projects.



*Sr. Pauline Acayo CRS SCORE ECD regional coordinator addressing the participants during the workshop at Jacaranda Hotel in Nairobi.*

## AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA INSTITUTE

### Institute of Psycho-Spiritual counselling

Have you ever been to a place and you find out that you cannot express your experience through words but only by your presence? On 14/04/23 the ISC Diploma students visited Mother Teresa Home at Huruma to spend their day serving the residents at the Home: Many children (called children due to the reality that they did not develop and thus remained like children while in reality some of them are adults) who are physically, intellectually and psychologically challenged, a number of women (young and elderly) who are equally 'challenged in many ways' and Young Teenage Mothers who have found shelter at the Home.

The services offered included feeding the children and women, being present to the Children, reaching out to the infants who have been born at the home, and listening to the Teenage Mothers. The experience was not easy especially staying calm and being present to the Mothers who are 'challenged in many ways' and feeding the children who

do not talk at all and have different ways of being fed. Their beautiful smiles were consoling. The following is a shared experience of 2 of our students: *"The experience was challenging and an element of growth for me as an upcoming counsellor, a religious and a Christian. The presence of the children challenged me to gratitude for how God has created me not because I am so special but to praise HIM in the state I am in. In my life as a religious woman, I felt challenged by the great impact that the Sisters are making in the lives of children and young mothers who are abled differently and I felt that theirs is truly an extraordinary vocation and truly I observed their spirit of prayer which led me to an awareness of God in their lives. As a counselor, I experienced the woundedness of the human person. Disability, rejection and that desire to be shown that you are something despite your nature. I am touched by the fact that as a Helper in counseling, I am supposed to reach out and promote wellness"* (Sr. Christine Mwanyalo)

*“It was a great privilege to be with those special people of God who really depend on others for care... It opened my eyes to count myself so lucky and blessed because God granted me good health of mind and body” (Sr. Caroline Okello)*

The invitation from the class is ***“Spare a few minutes of your time and spend it by being a presence to the people who are not privileged like us: physically, intellectually, mentally***

## Sabbatical Program

### Gratitude is my attitude: Sr. Franca (Sabbatical Alumni) August-December 2021.

**T**here is a saying that `` wherever God has destined one to be, he or she will definitely get there``. When and how? Is what may not be actually revealed. I never knew where destiny was leading me at the initial stage of my journey. I felt I was abandoned and left alone forgetting the words of Jesus to His disciples at the washing of the feet in the gospel of St John 13:79(you do not know what I am doing now, but you will understand later).

I will also quote the psalmist that “tears may come at night, but joy comes in the morning”. At the end of every season of darkness, light must surely follow. The story of my journey began on the 4th of August to 4th of December 2021. A four-month refresher program at St Anselm Sabbatical in Chemichem Ya Uzima, Kenya, Nairobi. The program for the year was tagged ‘Come as you are``. Indeed, I went as I was but I came back at the end renewed, whole, hearty, healthy, and happy.

The time was a period whereby I came across and encountered people from different nationalities and my interaction with them gave me a new orientation of what life is all about. The different courses, growth groups, community pairing, and my one-on-one weekly activities also had a positive impact on my life as a person.

Although the way may be lonely and a dark shadow falls, I came to know at the end that my father (God) planned it all. Despite the roughness of the road, God has given me another reason to live and smile as well. With my life`s experience, I must join my voice with that word of St Paul`s second letter to the Corinthians (2nd cor 1:4) `` Blessed be God the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of all encouragement, who encourages me in my every affliction, so that I may be able to encourage those who are in or may be going through the same affliction with the encouragement with which I myself have been encouraged by God.

The leadership of the sabbatical program and cooperation among the program team members was another tremendous eye-opener to my learning, love, gentility, affirmation, and peaceful appearance before us. Thank you, sisters, for being our role model

Glory to Him who is able to do so much more than I can ever think of or imagine, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen.



## AOSK INSURANCE AGENCY

### Public Liability

**T**his is a type of insurance meant for businesses of all sizes and cuts across a variety of industries. Public liability covers you if a client or member of the public claims they have been injured, or their property damaged, because of your business activities. This type of insurance is designed to protect business owners against claims that result in legal proceedings. If a claim does become a legal matter, a policy will cover the cost of these expenses, including any compensation you are required to pay.

Public liability claims can arise from several circumstances, but negligence is the main trigger. A customer might trip on an uneven surface at your premises or a member of the public could injure themselves on a piece of your equipment. It will also cover claims of property damage. For instance, if you accidentally knock over a mug of coffee, or damage a client's laptop during a meeting, your policy will cover the associated compensation costs. It's also important to note that some trading authorities and other organizations might require you to have a certain level of public liability insurance in place. Therefore, a policy doesn't only protect you from previous mistakes – it can also help you secure new business opportunities.



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