

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya.

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Pope's July prayer intention: For a Eucharistic life



Pope Francis's Prayer Intention for the month of July was dedicated to the Eucharist where he asked us to place the Eucharist at the centre of our lives.

In his message, Pope Francis began by saying, "If you are the same at the end of Mass, as you were at the beginning, something is wrong."

In his prayer intention, the Holy Father invited us to see the celebration of the Eucharist not as an obligatory ritual, but rather as an encounter with the Risen Jesus, for "the Eucharist is the presence of Jesus," which is "profoundly transforming."

Pope Francis insisted that "it is Christ who offers Himself, Who gives Himself for us," which leads to "our lives being nourished by Him, to nourish the lives of our brothers and sisters."

AOSK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

From 3rd -8th of July 2023, The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya conducted its Annual General Meeting. The Five-day meeting was conducted at the AOSK Chemchemi ya Uzima Institute with more than one hundred AOSK superiors and delegates from different congregations attending. During this Meeting, A lot of issues concerning the Association were discussed by the superiors. Superiors were also empowered on different topics that would help them strengthen their leadership roles in the congregations they are serving. Also during this AGM, AOSK acknowledged the Superior of the Year and the woman peacemaker of the year 2023. Sister Adelina Muthoni Muguna,NSA was privileged to Scoop the Award of the AOSK Superior of the year

2023. Sr. Adelina once served the Association as a chairperson from the year 2016-2018 and she was recognized for her dedication and commitment to AOSK activities.

Ms. Patricia having been trained by AOSK JPIC as a Peacemaker, she emerged the best AOSK Peacemaker of the year,2023. Patricia Loko has been championing for human rights advocacy and networking with Civil Society and the Government to enhance respect for human rights. She has been at the forefront of fighting injustices in the community and bringing up cases of abuse, especially among women and girls.



Superiors Following up Presentations during the AOSK AGM 2023



Ms. Patricia Loko receiving the award as the AOSK peacemaker of the year 2023



Cake Cutting time to mark an end to the AOSK AGM 2023

AOSK SISTERS-LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Youth empowerment is a process where young people are encouraged to take charge of their lives. They do this by addressing their situation and then taking action in order to improve their access to resources and transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values, and attitudes. The Sisters-led youth empowerment initiative is a program implemented by the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya through the support of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. During the month of July 2023, the AOSK-SLYI program was honored with a visit by a team from the Conrad Hilton Foundation. Amongst the Conrad Hilton Foundation team was the Foundation President and CEO Mr. Peter Laugharn, Mr. David Haroz, Mrs. Flavia Draganus, Rev Sr Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, and Sr. Agnes Njeri. During the visit, the Hilton Foundation team was able to meet with eighty AOSK-SLYI Alumnae and six technical institution administrators at Marengoni community vocational college. During the visit, the AOSK-SLYI team was able to share with their donor the impact of the program for the last three years of its implementation. At the end of the Presentations from both the administrators and the beneficiaries, The Hilton Foundation President and CEO Mr. Peter was very delighted by the achievements and Promised that Hilton Will continue to extend its support by ensuring that the less fortunate in society are supported.



Guests from Hilton Foundation being received by Youth at Marengoni Vocational Training Institute



Guests from Hilton Foundation following up presentations from the AOSK SLYI beneficiaries



Youth Pausing for a group Photo with guests from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Monitoring evaluation accountability and learning workshop at Sagana getaway resort.

This was a three-day workshop that brought together the management, program, and monitoring and evaluation team from three countries entailing Kenya, Zambia, and Uganda to learn the best practices for monitoring and evaluation of the various programs implemented by the associations of the three countries. Since the three countries implement similar programs, it was an opportunity for the teams to learn, benchmark, and even identify regional programs that can be implemented together for better impact and contribute to the SDGs in the three countries. Some of the key areas addressed during the meeting were; Sharing of

Associations' MEL practices, Going Digital in M&E, and Action Planning where the three associations and ACWECA committed to continuing enhancing the MEAL in their programs, Institutionalization of MEAL knowledge, strengthening the MEAL policy environment, joint programming and resource mobilization, embracing technology in project MEAL, peer-to-peer mentorship among MEAL officers, regional learning and harmonization of MEAL systems and research in the ACWECA region. Generally, there was a lot of learning across the associations from the sharing and significant investment in MEAL.



Monitoring and Evaluation team from the three Countries Pausing for a group photo

HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA

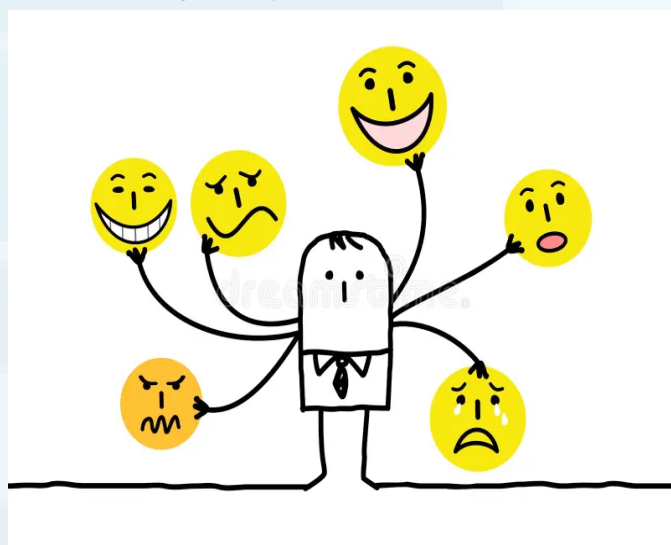
In the month of July, HASK organized a virtual campaign on mental health awareness for over 200 sisters. Among the topics discussed were depression and bipolar disorders, which are mood disorders. Globally, 46 million individuals are diagnosed with bipolar disorder. A mood disorder is a psychological condition that impacts an individual emotional state. The individual goes through prolonged periods of extreme happiness, extreme sadness, or both. Certain mood disorders also involve other persistent emotions such as anger and irritability. While it is normal for one's mood to fluctuate depending on the circumstances, for a mood disorder diagnosis, symptoms must be present for several weeks or longer. Mood disorders can lead to changes in behaviors and can hinder one's ability to carry out daily tasks. There are numerous mood disorders, but only two are prevalent and relatively consistent worldwide. These include depression and bipolar disorder.

Depression can be categorized as either major or clinical and is characterized by feelings of sadness or hopelessness. It can result in difficulties in cognitive functioning, impaired memory capacity, eating disorders, and sleep disturbances that persist for at least several weeks. Major depression is chronic and can worsen over time. It can become severe when combined with psychotic disorders, especially if the individual starts experiencing hallucinations and delusions, which can trigger suicidal ideation.

On the other hand, bipolar disorder, unlike depression, is a lifelong mood disorder and mental health condition that causes intense fluctuations in mood, energy levels, cognitive patterns, and behaviors. There are several types of bipolar disorder, and in all of them, the individual will experience episodes of either hypomania or mania, as well as depression. Mood disorders are more common in females than males, and more common among adults than in children. All people including children may be affected by the condition. There are various factors that can cause mood disorders including biological where the amygdala, which is a region in the brain regulating emotions and feelings, enlarges. This alteration impacts mood stability. Other factors include genetics and family history

alongside other environmental factors such as stress, trauma, and childhood mistreatment.

All in all these conditions are manageable and can be brought under control. A combination of talk therapy and medication is typically very effective. Essential medications employed include antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and antipsychotics. In talk therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), psychodynamic therapy, and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Most importantly, understand that there is optimism for those experiencing mood disorders, you simply need to acknowledge that you require assistance.



Different moods experienced by an individual

JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Women Deliver Conference 2023

Women Deliver Conferences convene thousands of decision-makers from diverse fields, including civil society, government, the private sector, and international agencies, alongside women's rights organizations and movements, youth-led and LGBTQIA+ organizations, and advocates representing the intersectional identities of girls, women, and underrepresented populations in order to identify solutions, bolster accountability, and drive change. The theme of Women Deliver 2023 was Space, Solidarity, and Solutions. Women Deliver convening catalyze conversations with stakeholders from around the world, break barriers, address challenges, and identify opportunities to advance gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and improve the wellbeing of girls and women, in all their intersecting identities.



Thousands of global leaders and women religious who attended the Women Deliver 2023 Conference (WD2023) in Rwanda's capital city of Kigali have called on all countries to emulate Rwanda regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. The conference at Kigali was focused on gender equality, health, and the rights and well-being of girls and women. The convening has attracted more than 6,000 people across 165 countries, including religious Sisters, Civil society, world leaders and women's rights organizations. WD2023 sought to adopt a greater focus on partnerships than ever before by building bridges between diverse actors and bringing country-level advocates' perspectives to bear, both in-person and virtually, every step of the way.

What was outstanding in the conference was the need to create synergy globally to have inclusive solutions for safe spaces, challenge injustices and create structures that enhance gender equality and have women be more visible. In his opening remarks, the president of Rwanda said *“women and girls have a share of burdens in various spheres which include health, economic, climate. We must challenge ourselves to do things differently with a commitment to tackle the biased attitude embedded in our economic, social, and political systems.”*

Technology should work for all instead of creating further inequalities. Change is difficult but can be attained with consulted effort. Women do not have to justify themselves to access justice because that is simply their human rights.



Women of Faith Fellowship joining the team in the opening ceremony at Kigali Convention Centre.

Pax Christi International

The main objective of the Pax Christi Programme was to train Sisters and Youth on active non-violence, peacebuilding, non-violent communication, and trauma healing. This is by providing them with the tools and skills necessary to become trainers themselves in their own local communities reaching out to youth and members of religious communities, empowering them to be artisans of peace and accompany victims of violence in their communities. To this extent, 32 Sisters from Nairobi and Coastal regions were trained to be peace ambassadors and in turn, reach out to their fellow sisters in Communities and youth with a message of Active non-violence and peacebuilding.

At the time of the inception of this project in Kenya, the Country was approaching her General election on August, 9th 2022, which for several years had been marked by violence, destruction of property, and loss of lives. Therefore, it aimed at training young people in active nonviolence as key to obtaining long-lasting peace in the Country.

The projects helped Communities to know where and how conflicts arise. It enabled the Church groups to know how to resolve peacefully their internal conflicts. Those who actively participated have learned and internalized the whole concept of active nonvi-

olence. This has helped them to become ambassadors of peace in the society. They accepted that conflict is inevitable where people live because of the differences and by its very nature conflict exists in all spheres of life but can be resolved non-violently. All need to accept that each person is unique. Positive conflicts create awareness and develop a positive mindset, otherwise, conflict destroys and brings negative impact. There is a need to accommodate and co-exist regardless of tribe, culture, race, or nationality. Participants practiced non-violent communication, many trainees were able to open up with ease and share their past wounds in trust than never before.



Sr. Annastasia Ndanu discussing about Active Non-violence with a group of youth and Sisters at Gisen.

African Network Against Violence & Discrimination of Women, First Steps

World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation (WUCWO) and the World Women's Observatory (WWO) hosted lay and religious women delegates from across the continent, with the intention of building a network geared at responding to issues of gender-based violence (GBV). The workshop was hosted in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania from the 3rd to the 6th of July 2023. This workshop happens as a sequel to a meeting that took place in Nairobi, Kenya in May of 2022, in which WUCWO along with experts sought information and designed a survey to determine the direction of the work of WWO in Africa. The survey influenced the focus on gender-based violence, the results of which were shared with participants

at the beginning of this conference.

A panel of experts ranging from women working with victims of gender-based violence to academia spoke to various elements related to the cause and solution of domestic violence. The sentiment echoed by them all shows the existence of a problem of domestic violence in many communities, even in different contexts. They spoke to the existence of power dynamics that often result in women being the main victims of domestic violence and that, often being at the hands of their spouses or partners. It was highlighted that major influences that exacerbate GBV include but are not limited to religious and cultural beliefs, little to no access to formal education, and early marriages.



Participants posing for the photo after the session in Dar Es Salam

CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA

A journey towards winning hearts and minds through close collaboration and partnership

The recently conducted and published Regional Portrait for Catholic Care for Children in Eastern Africa; a study based on information from Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and Malawi; provides a perfect opportunity to help win the hearts and minds of the different stakeholders towards advocating and embracing Family and Community based care rather than Institutionalization of children in different Child Care Institutions (CCIs)

At a meeting held in Kampala, Uganda from 3rd June to 7th June 2023; the meeting brought together representatives of Catholic Care for Children in the AMECEA region from four countries namely Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, and Uganda. Also present was the team from AMECEA secretariat. During the meeting, Fr. Andrew Kaufa gave an analysis of the study findings published in the month of May in a document titled “A Regional Portrait of Catholic Care for Children in Eastern Africa.”



Catholic Care for Children in AMECEA region from four countries namely Malawi, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda and AMECEA secretariat team

According to Fr. Kaufa who is the Coordinator of AMECEA Social Communications Department, the CCCs survey data is significant so it can be taken as “a tool and the Gospel truth for our agenda of winning the hearts and minds of stakeholders in the mission,” and at the same time, “to identify and translate the gaps within our countries and institutions into actionable points from our local perspective.”

Additionally, the regional portrait describes the growing efforts by Religious men and women in ensuring that children can grow up in safe, nurturing families or family-like environments rather than institutions. Consequently, Sr. Delvin narrated, the data from the portrait is helpful for “Raising awareness about the nature of and need for care reform, for use as evidence to influence and advocate for care reform within the stakeholders’ respective constituencies and beyond and at the same time they can be used for planning and implementation of efforts to reform care using the evidence which has documented the needs, gaps, opportunities, and effective strategies.”

Sr. Delvin added in her analysis that the portrait highlights best practices within the four CCCs and demonstrates to stakeholders that care reform is possible, It increases visibility of sisters’ role in care and care reform, encourages fuller participation in care reform within the wider Catholic community including hierarchy, clergy, dioceses, parishes, small Christian communities and Catholic organizations and at the same time it helps build an evidence base pertaining to Catholic care reform mobilizes human and financial resources toward care reform.

AOSK SCORE ECD

AOSK SCORE ECD project showcasing during the 5th National Ecd Stakeholders Conference in Turkana County

One of the objectives of the SCORE ECD Project is to strengthen the organizational capacity of National associations. This is done through advocacy and networking activities to ensure quality nurturing care policies and programs. The advocacy activities are also geared towards raising the profile of the Catholic sisters and giving them a platform to tell their stories.

In July 2023 AOSK SCORE ECD staff and four master trainers from four congregations implementing the project namely; Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Sisters of the Blessed Virgin, Assumption Sisters of Eldoret, and Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus participated in a three days 5th National ECD Stakeholders conference which took place in Turkana County. Themed “From Policy and Evidence to Action”, the three-day event brought together more than 500 ECD practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders from 31 Counties and 10 Countries. The primary objective was to emphasize the crucial role of research and data in shaping policy decisions and translating them into tangible actions.

During the conference, the AOSK SCORE ECD exhibition booth attracted many participants who visited to learn about the project. The following are some of the comments; Dr. John Ng’asike from Turkana university *“This is a very comprehensive nurturing care project. This project is welcomed in Turkana County. Connecting nurturing care to community Health volunteers is a wonderful strategy. The sisters in charge are very passionate about the project and I wish them success in their endeavor to transform the communities they serve”*.

Pauline A. Lokuruke, Director Echoni Aito noted *“The project is very appropriate for the Turkana Women”*



AOSK team showcasing the project intervention during the conference in Turkana County (Photo by: Sr. Violet Wamalwa)



AOSK SCORE ECD Project manager explaining the project to Lilian Ekamais (Turkana County First lady) and Scovia Kachapin (West Pokot County 1st Lady) at the AOSK exhibition booth during the conference. (Photo by: Sr. Esther Mutheu)

AOSK INSURANCE AGENCY

Public Liability

Public liability insurance is a term for general liability insurance. It covers costs of claims made by the public who include customers, visitors, and delivery personnel for incidents that occur in connection with your business. It refers to business insurance that covers claims by the general public for medical expenses and other costs resulting from injuries, death, and property damage involving your business.

Public liability insurance covers the cost of third-party injuries and damage claims attributed to your business. This includes incidents at your business and locations related to your work, such as a client's home. As this falls under a comprehensive general liability insurance policy should a customer or member of the public injure themselves on your property, your public liability insurance policy would cover the cost of bodily injuries, property damage and legal costs for any related lawsuits, within your policy limits, after you meet your deductible.

This insurance would also cover accidents caused by yourself or an employee while visiting a customer's property. It does not cover injuries or damages that happen to yourself, your business, or your employees. Any business that interacts with clients, customers, and other members of the public should consider public liability insurance. If a client suffers a slip-and-fall injury at your workplace, or if you or your employee damages a customer's property, it could lead to expensive medical bills or repair costs, or even a lawsuit. This cover can help reduce the financial impact on your business. Public liability coverage is especially important for businesses that regularly deal with the public, whether it's on-site at your business, a client's business, or at someone's home.

AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA INSTITUTE

St. Anselm Sabbatical Program

The Sabbatical department saw the need to assist participants go deeper into their emotional world and unlock some of the emotions that they are unconsciously locked in the body by introducing the Emotional Quotient (EQ) Bodywork. The qualified EQ Bodywork staff assisted participants and taught them how to do the same to others so that they can go back with a skill to help others in their various communities and apostolates. This exercise helped participants to realize that our hands are healing gargets to our bodies. Welcome to Chemchemi ya Uzima and learn more about listening to your body instead of suppressing emotions. Many times, we get too busy that we don't even have time to listen to whatever is happening in our lives.

Some of these emotions got locked up unconsciously in certain parts of our bodies right from our childhood. These emotions can keep us hostage for the rest of our lives until either we go through counseling or therapy which is EQ bodywork. These emotions are some of the major contributing factors to some of the psychosomatic illnesses that we go through in life. The Emotional Quotient Bodywork is one of the therapies that assist



one to unlock these emotions. Otherwise, we become victims of some psychosomatic illnesses e.g., Hypertension (High blood pressure), Diabetes, or Ulcers among others



AOSK-Chemchemi Sabbatical Students who first experienced the Emotional Quotient body-work

Elsewhere, the Sabbatical period is not just a time to rest but also a time to enhance our relationship with self, God, others, and even the environment. On that note, the 41st St. Anselm's Sabbatical chose to respond to the request of our Holy Father Pope Francis on Laudato Si and attended to mother earth by planting trees and grass.



Sisters Planting trees and grass at Chemchemi ya Uzima institute compound



Formation Department

How can we tell today's youth about the beauty and the good of consecrated life

The power of love is the beauty of the call to religious life! The truth is that, if it does not precede renunciations and sacrifices, if it does not have strong motivation and burning desire, if it results in no concrete service, then it is far from being authentic.

For us consecrated persons in love with God, it is clear that the power of his love conquered us. Otherwise, we would not have had the courage to respond promptly, with joy and courage, when we “discovered” the call in our various states of life. To answer the call at that time required courage and abandonment, a leap into the unknown, when nothing was secure, concrete, or promising, but only through trust and total self-surrender to the one who calls us unconditionally, Christ who showed who He truly is and the depth of His love through sacrifice.

The only vocation campaign that is visible, credible, and fruitful in the 21st Century will be the life of consecrated persons, their witness of a good, beautiful, and happy life that shows people fully realized in Christ and living in communities that are real homes, not hotels, bearers of a charism and not mere service agents; going out to the world's existential peripheries, always attentive to people's needs and letting themselves be guided by the Spirit.

In our 21st Century, we are faced with a challenging question; what do the young think about consecrated life?

Before all else, we must be aware that today our works do not speak with the same eloquence as in the past. The message we want to transmit is not understood or grasped by young people, and that explains its inevitable loss of social relevance. Today, the significant presences are those that raise questions about the meaning of life and the different forms of lifestyle.

Likewise, we must remember that our significance in the lives of young people depends on three factors: the credibility of the offer in relation to the situation in which they live; the authority of the witness; and the capacity to communicate.

All in all, we should be concerned less about looking for vocations as if that were “the” mission, than about gathering the vocations that are the fruit of our mission. This will be possible if we help young people, through our word and witness, to discover the meaning of life, i.e., life as a gift lived in their own self-giving.

This will be possible if they discover that God is not a threat to their happiness, but that He alone can satisfy their deepest longings, fill their lives with energy, and give them the capacity to be happy and good. This will be possible if they feel motivated to dream big, not to waste their youth, to commit themselves to their personal formation and to the transformation of society, to have life plans, and become people for others, because only through Love can a person reach his full stature and overcome the allurements of this passing world.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS FOR PARTNERING WITH US.

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