

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya

What is inside this Issue:

- > Pope's Prayer intention for May 2024.
- > Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC)
- > Catholic Care for Children in Kenya (CCCK)
- > Talithakum International Kenya (TIK)
- > Health Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (HASK)
- > Sisters-Led Youth Empowerment Initiative (AOSK-SLYI)
- > AOSK Insurance Agency.
- > Chemchemi ya Uzima Institute
 - > Formation
 - > ISC

POPE'S PRAYER FOR THOSE FLEEING THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

Pope Francis released his prayer intention for June 2024 and invited everyone to pray for people who are fleeing their home countries. The prayer intention has been entrusted to the entire Catholic Church through the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network during the month in which the United Nations commemorates World Refugee Day on 20th June. Produced in collaboration with Tele VID and with the support of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Pope Video for June is a story about the borders in various parts of the world. In his video, the Pope reminds Christians that "whoever wel-

comes a migrant welcomes Christ," and expresses how often this context is forgotten.

In recent years, the number of people who have been displaced has exceeded that during the Second World War. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), in 2023, there were 110 million people forcefully displaced throughout the world. In this context, Pope Francis has repeatedly asked throughout his pontificate that migrants be accompanied, promoted, and integrated. At the beginning of the video, the Pope says, "The feeling of uprootedness or not knowing where they belong often accompanies the trauma experienced by people who are forced to flee their homeland because of war or poverty."



Pope Francis Image Courtesy of the Vatican

National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) report Discussion at Ufungamo

AOSK JPIC was invited through KCCB by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) for a discussion of the NADCO Report which was adopted by Parliament to be made public to Kenyans before it is implemented.

The religious groups from different sects at Ufungamo agreed that sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya and is exercised either directly or through democratically elected representatives as per Article 1 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 for that reason, it is of absolute necessity that the Report of the National Dialogue Committee be taken to the people of Kenya for validation before it is implemented for the citizen of Kenya to be helped to understand it and make an informed decision.

The report and recommendations of the 10-member Committee which was established to facilitate a dialogue and consensus building, recommend appropriate constitutional, legal, and policy reforms on issues of concern to the people of Kenya focused on five key areas.

The first key area was under electoral justice and related matters, the Committee looked into the restructuring and reconstitution of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), boundaries delamination, and audit of the 2022 presidential elections. For this, it recommended the reconstitution of the IEBC selection panel comprising nine members.

On the same, it also recommended the intervals within which the review of boundaries may be done with the resolution of Parliament, that there be an investigation of the claims of marginalization by the rele-

vant bodies and made provision for fast-tracking enactment of a legislative framework for review of the county boundaries as provided for under Article 188 of the Constitution.

On the issue of audit of the 2022 Presidential Elections, the Committee recommended the appointment of a panel of experts who would evaluate the 2022 electoral process and a mechanism for evaluating future elections.

The second issue dealt with by the Committee was the outstanding Constitutional matters where they tackled the cost of living and related issues, implementation of the two-thirds gender rule, and governance issues including promoting national unity and inclusivity in public appointments and adequate balances.

On the fidelity to political parties or coalitions and the law on multiparty democracy, NADCO delved into possible ways of preventing interference with political parties or coalitions.

On the fourth issue of entrenching funds into the Constitution, the Committee looked into the National Government Constituency Fund, the National Government Affirmative Action Fund, and the Senate Oversight Fund.

Finally, on the Establishment and Entrenchment of State Offices, the issue of the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Office of the Prime Minister. The Committee recommended the establishment and entrenchment of the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition in the Constitution in recognition of the value and legitimacy of opposition parties as part of the country's political system.

In addition, it also recommended the establishment and entrenchment of an Office of the Prime Minister in the Constitution as a means of coordination of functions of the Executive arm of Government.

Amendment of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Act 2011 and the Selection Panel to be expanded from the current 7-members to 9-members. Gender balance be ensured in the Selection Panel's composition and mandate a transparent and competitive process for selecting nominees. Expansion of the professional qualifications for IEBC membership to include experience in information technology and accounting. The IEBC is to be mandated to conduct post-election reviews to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Further, the definition of clear terms for the secretary of the IEBC and set a term limit with the possibility of reappointment. Internal guidelines are to be developed within three months of reconstitution, delineating administrative and policy.

Proposed amendment of Article 138 of the Constitution to involve all commissioners in verifying presi-

dential election results before declaration and amendment of the Elections Act for improved processing and declaration of results. Electoral laws should be enacted at least eighteen months before a general election. Fidelity to the Law on Multiparty Democracy: The Constitution be amended to promote multi-partyism and fidelity to Political Parties by entrenching procedures for the resignation and deregistration of members of political parties in seeking to ensure party discipline. Independent Political Parties Regulatory Commission to be established to regulate political parties and their officeholders- 5 Commissioners nominated by political parties- Majority 2, minority 2 (male and female), 1 non-parliamentary.

However, a High Court in Kiambu suspended the implementation of the National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) report, following a petition filed by lawyer Michael Muchemi asserting that implementing the NADCO report could plunge the country into an unprecedented constitutional crisis.



Discussions at Ufungamo urging for people driven reforms picture courtesy of Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

By Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

AOSK JPIC CHARITY SUPPORT TO FLOOD AFFECTED VICTIMS IN MATHARE

The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya demonstrated its unwavering commitment to humanitarian support by donating essential items to victims of the recent heavy rains and floods in Mathare, Nairobi County. This was made possible through the generous support of the Members of the Association comprising of Religious Congregation that form the membership of the Association



In collaboration with other programs, the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) spearheaded this activity. The Team from AOSK Collaborated with Mathare Social Justice Centre, a community-based organization that works directly with residents of Mathare, and was able to identify the flood victims who were located in various camps in the suburb. The process was seamless and the distribution of mattresses, foodstuff, blankets, and sanitary towels to affected families provided much-needed relief to a community struggling to recover from the devastation.



The heavy rains that pounded most parts of the country in the past few weeks resulted in severe flooding, particularly in low-lying areas like Mathare. The Mathare Social Justice Centre, known for its advocacy and community support activities, served as the perfect venue for this charitable event. Volunteers from the center assisted in the distribution process, ensuring that the donated items reached the most vulnerable members of the community. Residents expressed their gratitude for the timely intervention

"I lost almost everything in the floods and I have 8 children. These mattresses and blankets will help me a lot as I start a new life," said Wangeci, a Mathare resident.

"We are here to offer our support to you the residents of Mathare who have been severely impacted by the floods. We as the representatives of members of the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya care about your situation and that is the reason we are here to support you and be assured of our prayers," said Sr. Bernadetta Nzioka, DSH AOSK – JPIC Coordinator.

The residents were happy though they expressed further urgent needs and requested for the indulgence of the Association. Since the needs were genuine, the AOSK Team reorganized and had the purchases done and delivered after a week. These included dignity packages, household utensils, and scholastic materials for the learners in the informal settlement of Mathare.

By Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA

Re-Integration Initiative in Homabay Diocese, the transforming Childcare mission in Migori County

The AOSK/AMECEA re-integration pilot project in Kenya has recently made significant strides in child welfare through its efforts at the Macalder Baby Home, managed by the IVREA Sisters. This Catholic women's congregation is dedicated to caring for children, particularly those who have lost their mothers at birth, are total orphans, or have mothers with mental health challenges. This initiative underscores the belief that the best environment for a child to grow, be loved, and cared for is within a family or family-like setting. This principle was brought to life when the AOSK/AMECEA team, in collaboration with Macalder Baby Home, engaged the Homabay Diocese, led by Rt. Rev. Bishop Michael Odiwa. Key stakeholders, including the parish priest of Macalder, the parish council, the women's association leadership, the Nyatike Sub-county children's office, and the county police commissioner, were mobilized to support the re-integration of a child, referred to as Child X, back into his biological family.



Dorcas the Macalder CCI administrator, CCKK staff and family of Child X after reintegration.

Child X was admitted to Macalder Baby Home immediately after birth, following his mother's struggle with mental illness post-delivery. He spent six years in the institution while the Macalder team prepared for his eventual reunification with his family, as his mother made a recovery. The journey home was a profound experience for all involved, highlighting the importance of rethinking long-term institutional care for children and emphasizing the community's role in supporting and protecting their young members.

The collective efforts of the various stakeholders were celebrated, as they witnessed firsthand the impact of their collaboration. This experience challenged their previous perceptions about the ease of the Sisters' work and reinforced the complexity and necessity of a multi-stakeholder approach in successful re-integration efforts. The initiative also prompted a broader understanding among the community about the critical role of families and community support systems in preventing primary separation.

Bishop Michael Odiwa expressed his gratitude to the AOSK-CCCK for their exemplary work in promoting care reforms within his diocese. He encouraged continued support for childcare institutions to ensure more children are re-integrated into their families and communities are empowered to uphold the care and protection of their children.

This project not only highlights the dedication and hard work of the IVREA Sisters and the AOSK/AMECEA team but also sets a precedent for future re-integration efforts across the region, advocating for a compassionate and supportive approach to child welfare.



Rev. Bishop Michael Odiwa and Macalder parish council chair during a visit to the bishop of Homabay Diocese as part of sensitization of church leadership

By Sr. Delvine Mukhwana, DHM

TALITHAKUM INTERNATIONAL KENYA

Advocating for anti-human trafficking measures is crucial to combat this global crime, which violates fundamental rights and perpetuates exploitation. Advocacy raises awareness, mobilizes resources for prevention and intervention, and strengthens legal frameworks. A victim-centered approach ensures survivors receive the necessary support. By amplifying survivors' voices and fostering collaboration across sectors, we can work towards eradicating human trafficking.

Daughters of the Sacred Heart

On April 19-20, 2024, the Daughters of the Sacred Heart held a human trafficking seminar in Mpeketoni-Lamu, attended by 165 youths. The seminar covered definitions, challenges, impacts, and countermeasures. Participants acknowledged the local reality of human trafficking and highlighted the need for vigilance. Challenges included fear of reporting and ignorance. Despite difficulties, attendance increased from the previous year. Facilitators emphasized the need for continued sensitization and increased funding.

Brothers of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

On April 26, 2024, the Brothers of Our Lady of Perpetual Help organized an awareness event in Kisumu, focusing on human trafficking in the fishing industry on Lake Victoria. Attended by 60 youths, the event highlighted exploitation driven by poverty and familial pressure, resulting in forced labor and teen pregnancies. The program aimed to empower youths with knowledge and resources to resist exploitation and advocated for systemic reforms to protect vulnerable individuals.

Passionist Missionaries

The Passionist Missionaries' awareness program in Sotik, Kericho County, attracted 300 participants, highlighting forced labor in tea farms and related teenage pregnancies. The event emphasized law enforcement's role in prosecuting exploiters and safeguarding human rights. Participants stressed the need for systemic interventions to alleviate economic pressures.

Training of Trainers at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa

On May 2-3, 2024, Talithakum International Kenya and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa conducted a Training of Trainers session. Thirty-two participants, including lecturers and final-year students, focused on combating human trafficking. The training provided practical tools for advocating for vulnerable populations, enriching participants' understanding and commitment to social justice.

Coastal Region Awareness Program

Between May 18-20, 2024, Talithakum International Kenya evaluated human trafficking in the coastal region, focusing on Kwale. Meetings in Mombasa and Ramisi highlighted issues such as drug trafficking, prostitution, and child-to-child marriages driven by poverty. A gathering of 400 St. Joseph Catholic parishioners in Hamisi emphasized the need for community sensitization and education on prevention methods.

Celebrating 15 Years of Talitha Kum International

Talithakum International Kenya participated in the 15-year celebrations of Talitha Kum International in Rome. The program manager, coordinator, and board members represented the organization, showcasing their efforts in countering human trafficking in Kenya, and highlighting the global commitment to fighting human trafficking and supporting survivors.



Conclusion

These initiatives underscore the importance of advocacy and education in combating human trafficking. By engaging communities and empowering individuals with knowledge and resources, we can work towards eradicating this crime and protecting vulnerable populations.

By Mr. Wilson Kyalo.

HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA

Loss and Grief: Understanding, Coping, and Supporting

Loss is a necessary part of the human experience. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, a job, a relationship, or even a sense of security, each instance of loss brings with it a unique set of challenges and emotions. Grief, the natural response to loss, is surrounded by a wide range of feelings, from sadness and anger to confusion and numbness. Understanding the nature of loss and grief, as well as its impact and ways to cope, is essential for navigating through the often tempestuous journey of loss. Loss comes in many forms, each with its own set of circumstances and consequences; Loss of a loved one, loss of identity, loss of health, loss of job or financial security, and loss of relationship among many other losses we may experience in different times and seasons.

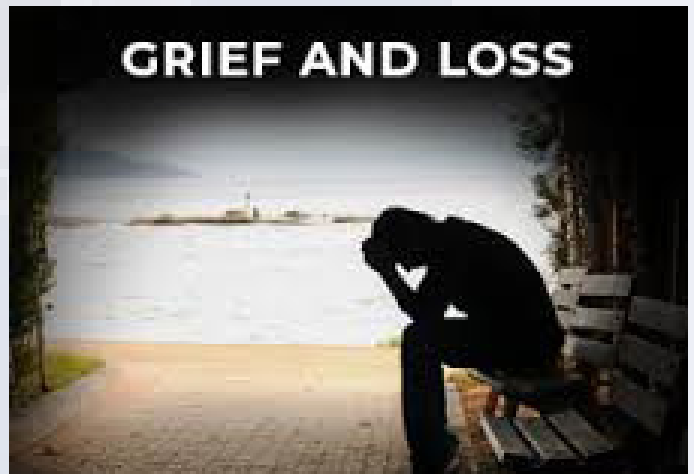
The Process of Grief

The process of grief is a complex and multifaceted process that unfolds differently for each individual. While commonly associated with stages such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (as outlined by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross), grief doesn't follow a linear path and may involve a cyclical or nonlinear progression. Some key aspects of the grieving process include:

1. ***Shock and Denial:*** Initially, individuals may feel numb or in disbelief, struggling to accept the reality of the loss.
2. ***Anger and Guilt:*** As the shock wears off, feelings of anger, resentment, and guilt may surface, directed towards oneself, others, or even the deceased.
3. ***Sadness and Depression:*** A profound sense of sadness and despair often accompanies grief, as individuals grapple with the full extent of their loss and its impact on their lives.
4. ***Acceptance and Adjustment:*** Over time, individuals may gradually come to terms with their loss, finding ways to integrate it into their lives and adjust to a new reality.

Impact of prolonged grief

While grief is a natural and necessary part of the healing process, prolonged or complicated grief can have significant consequences for one's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Prolonged grief, also known as complicated grief or persistent complex bereavement disorder, is characterized by an inability to adapt to the loss, intense and prolonged symptoms of grief, and difficulty engaging in daily activities.



How do we support those in Prolonged Grief?

Supporting someone experiencing prolonged grief requires patience, empathy, and understanding. Listening to what they are saying and not saying is important, validate their feelings without judgment. Accompany them and encourage self-care activities, good nutrition, adequate sleep, exercises, and outings. If their grief is interfering with their daily functioning or persists for an extended period, encourage them to seek professional help from therapists, counselors, or support groups specializing in grief and loss. Encourage them to start a gratitude journal to help them appreciate the many blessings they have so that the loss does not take away their joy and peace.

Conclusion

Loss and grief are universal experiences that touch the lives of every individual at some point. By understanding the nature of loss and grief, acknowledging its impact, and offering compassionate support to those in need, we can help individuals navigate through their grief journey and find solace, healing, and ultimately, a sense of peace amidst the pain.

By Sr. Regina Nthenya, SSJ

SISTERS-LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

AOSK-SLYI Youth champions training implementation

Drugs and Substance abuse is a global problem that poses a great danger to the lives of Individuals and society at large. In Kenya, young people's lives ruined by alcohol and drugs are rampant. The youth, especially, are vulnerable to the vice owing to peer pressure, media influence, or poor guidance. According to the National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) one in every 11 youths aged 15 – 24 years (632,846) is currently using at least one drug or substance of abuse. Substance use among youth is harm-

ful and has been associated with an increased risk of impaired peer relationships, mental illness, high-risk sexual behavior, school drop-out, and early pregnancies among others. Peer education is an effective method for preventing risky behaviors and educating young people about drug and substance abuse. Through May the AOSK SLYI Youth champions had peer-to-peer learning on drugs and substance abuse in their respective parishes and helped the young people to bring about positive change.



Youth Champions from Kamuri Parish, Meru during their implementation on Drugs and substance abuse

Elsewhere the AOSK-SLYI supported 13 technical training institutions that joined the program this year to procure essential equipment that will help them improve their learning. Among the Institutions supported are Maria Zanelli Technical, Teresa Van Miert, Ruben Centre, St. Teresa Ruai, Marianists Ukunda, Mary Mother

of God, Don Aldo, St. Francis Kasarani, Don Bosco Marsabit, Our Lady of Mercy Nuu, Comboni polytechnic and Pallazollo technical.

By Mrs. Caroline Wamiti

AOSK INSURANCE AGENCY

Kenyan insurers desire that the 2024 Finance Bill's proposed motor vehicle circulation tax be removed by the National Assembly. The goal of the proposed legislation is to impose an annual levy that must be paid at the time of obtaining auto insurance. The tax will be 2.5% of the vehicle's worth, with a minimum of Kshs. 5,000. The tax, according to the Association of Kenya Insurers (AKI), will dramatically raise the price of auto insurance, whose premium rate currently stands at 5% for comprehensive coverage. The rate will increase to 7.5% with the additional 2.5 percent, according to insurance providers, which may cause drivers to get third-party insurance

to help them cope with the rising cost of living. With motor vehicle insurance being compulsory in Kenya, we anticipate a major shift towards third-party motor insurance if this tax is implemented. As a result, drivers will be exposed to greater risks because their vehicles will not be covered in the event of an accident and will only be covered for third-party liabilities. As stated in the Privileges and Immunities Act, ambulances and government-owned vehicles are free from the motor vehicle circulation tax under the 2024 Finance Bill.

Motor insurance



By Mr. Francis Mutuku Mbwele

AOSK SCORE-ECD

Brain development in the early years of children

The collaboration between Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and the Association of Sisterhood Kenya (AOSK) through the SCORE-ECD has for years focused and significantly worked together to address the complex needs of children and families on nurturing and supporting children's development, especially during their early years. During the early years, the brain undergoes rapid growth and development, with billions of neurons forming connections and pathways that shape cognitive, emotional, and social abilities. This period of intense brain development lays the foundation for a child's lifelong learning, behavior, and overall health.

Highlights On Brain Development of Children in The Early Years

- Enhancing brain development in children involves creating an enriching environment that provides ample opportunities for learning, exploration, and positive social interactions. Here are some ways to support and enhance brain development:
- **Encouraging Stimulating Activities:** Engaging children in activities that stimulate their senses, such as reading, storytelling, puzzles, and creative play. These activities help build neural connections and support cognitive development.
- **Providing Nutritious Meals:** A balanced diet rich in essential nutrients is crucial for brain development. Nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, iron, zinc, and vitamins support the formation of neural connections and cognitive functions.
- **Promoting Physical Activity:** Physical activity not only supports physical development but also enhances brain function. Encouraging children to engage in regular physical activity can improve cognitive abilities and support overall brain health.
- **Fostering Positive Relationships:** Healthy, nurturing relationships with caregivers and peers provide children with a sense of security and support emotional development. Positive interactions contribute to the development of social and emotional skills.
- **Limiting Stress and Providing Emotional Support:** Minimizing stress and providing emotional support creates a safe environment for children to explore, learn, and develop. Emotional security is essential for healthy brain development.
- **Encouraging Exploration and Curiosity:** Providing opportunities for children to explore their environment, ask questions, and seek answers fosters curiosity and critical thinking skills, supporting brain development.



Good brain development in children has far-reaching effects on their future development. A well-developed brain sets the stage for academic success, emotional regulation, social competence, and overall well-being. Children with strong brain development are better equipped to learn, adapt to new experiences, and navigate the challenges they encounter as they grow.

Religious women (Sisters) play a significant role in supporting childhood development through engaging in ECD initiatives, to provide essential services such as education, healthcare, nutrition, and psychosocial support, all of which are crucial for the holistic development of children.

By Sr. Teresa Yator, ASE

AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA COLLEGE

Formation Department

They came from near and from far. The graduating Formators arrived in August 2023 ready to be trained in the formation ministry, docile to the spirit of God to shape them. Nine months later, it is evident that God had moulded them to go and mould others. Consecrated life is beautiful, it is one of the Church's most precious treasures, rooted in baptismal vocation. Thus, it is lovely to be its formators, because it is a privilege to participate in the work of the Father who forms the heart of the Son in those whom the Spirit has called. At times one may feel this service to be a challenge, as if it detracted something more important from us. But this might not be the case. It was beautiful to behold as we witnessed the graduation of thirty Formators.



The January intake group of formators went out for their one-week formation experience to formation houses of different congregations. As they set out, they felt uncertain as they ventured into the unknown, though hopeful they went. However, they came back full of joy and loaded with rich and transforming experiences. Their expanded hearts could tell it all, ready to generate and give life through formation ministry.

“Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them”.

Psalm 126:6

By Sr. Florence Nyamai, OSU

Institute of spiritual counselling.

Integrative Spiritual Counseling (ISC) like any other program in the College wound up the semester in May with major activities. These activities pointed to the end of the January-May semester which was characterized by end-of-semester examinations, and graduations for those who were finalists. After the hectic semester with all the activities undertaken, everything was coming to a halt. All was well and we are indebted to God whose control, care, and providence saw us through the semester without any course of alarm. May the

name of the Lord be praised.

The second-year students have completed their course for two years and they are now ready to go out and serve God's people in their different institutes and the church at large. They are also preparing for their graduation which will be sometime in October or November. This is a move that puts Chemchemi College on the map of excellence as they form and produce skilled Sisters and Brothers to give service to the people of God whenever they are commissioned to go.

The graduation they took part in, was for the Chemchemi College to recognize them as their students who had come to the completion of their training, and to appreciate their struggle to acquire the necessary skills for service. Given the fact that our world is undergoing serious challenges, it is necessary to prepare personnel to deal with those Challenges. In the same vein, we thank our major superiors who invested in their members to make sure there is no gap in the Lord's vineyard as service is concerned. We still encourage them to send more sisters to train in this noble course of Integrative Spiritual Counselling.



Recognition for the Twelve Diploma Finalists, the Guest of Honor, the Chairperson, and the Executive Secretary of AOSK.

We also uphold and congratulate the first-year students who have made it to the second year come August-December semester. We thank God for our Sisters and Brothers who are taking this noble course of Integrative Spiritual Counseling because it does not only make them servants in the Lord's vineyard but also self-actualizes them to be disposed to handle all situations that touch the physical, spiritual, psychological, and emotional aspects of human life; - meaning holistic approach to counseling. We encourage our Institutional Leaders to consider this training for all their members. Come all and acquire skills for self-healing and the healing of others in their psychological, spiritual, emotional, and physical challenges.

By Sr. Sophia Wanyama, LSMIG

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

CONRAD N.



FOUNDATION

MISEREOR
IHR HILFSWERK

PAX
CHRISTI
INTERNATIONAL



CRS
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

faith.
action.
results.



AGIAMONDO

Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya.
P.o.Box 21068-00505, Nairobi Kenya
Telephone: 0708663399

Email: aosksec@aoskenya.org

Compiled and Edited by Victor Emoja, AOSK Communication
Officer.