

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya

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Pope's September prayer intention: For the cry of the earth

In his message for September's prayer intention, Pope Francis prays that "each of us might listen with our hearts to the cry of the earth and the victims of environmental disasters and climate change, making a personal commitment to care for the world we inhabit." Considering rising global temperatures, we can say the earth has a "fever", Pope Francis denoted in his message. The earth "is sick", he continued, "Just like anyone who's sick".

"But are we listening to this pain?" he asked. "Do we hear the pain of the millions of victims of environmental catastrophes?"

In his message the Holy Father noted that it is the poor who suffer most from these disasters, pointing especially to those forced to leave their homes due to floods, heat waves, or drought.

Our response must be comprehensive, involving not only ecological but also "social, economic, and political" action. "We must commit ourselves to the fight against poverty and the protection of nature, changing our personal and community habits."



THE CATHOLIC CARE FOR CHILDREN IN KENYA

Building a Culture of Safety: AOSK Sisters Trained

In a significant stride towards ensuring the safety and well-being of minors and vulnerable adults, the Catholic Care for Children in Kenya (AOSK-CCCK) organized an intensive eight-day training program from 19th August to 28th August 2024. Held at the serene Subiaco Retreat Centre in Karen, the training brought together a dedicated group of 46 sisters from various AOSK Units, united by a common purpose: to safeguard the lives of those entrusted to their care.

The training curriculum was meticulously designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of safeguarding principles and practices. Participants embarked on a journey of learning, delving into the foundational concepts of safeguarding, exploring the intricate relationship between safeguarding and religious law, acquiring essential skills to support survivors of abuse, and ensuring strict adherence to organizational policies and procedures for reporting abuse. Through a combination of interactive workshops, case studies, and expert lectures, the sisters gained a deep understanding of the multifaceted nature of safeguarding

and the critical role they play in protecting vulnerable individuals.

The successful completion of this training marks a significant milestone in AOSK's efforts to create a safe and nurturing environment for all. By equipping its sisters with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent and respond to abuse, AOSK is taking a proactive approach to safeguarding the well-being of those under its care.

The sisters who participated in the training are now poised to become champions of safeguarding within their respective communities. Armed with a deep understanding of safeguarding principles and practices, they are equipped to identify potential risks, implement preventive measures, and provide support to vulnerable individuals.

As the sisters return to their ministries, they will carry with them a renewed commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of society. Their dedication to safeguarding will serve as an inspiration to others and contribute to the creation of a safer and more compassionate world.



Sisters from the AOSK Units being commissioned after successfully finishing a training on Safeguarding.

Written by Victor Emoja

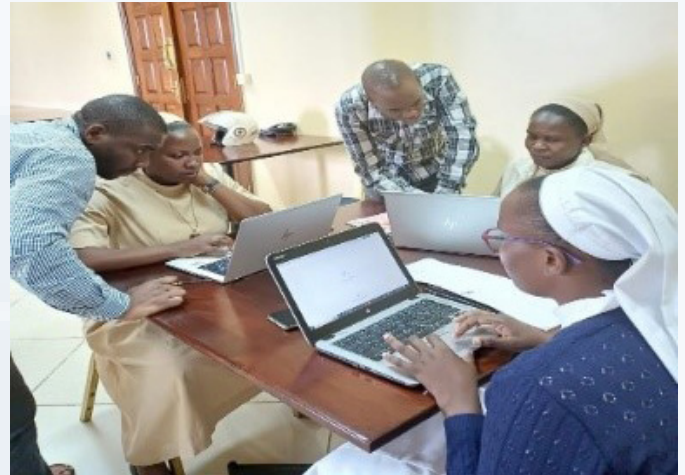
AOSK SCORE ECD

Enhancing Sisters Capacity in Monitoring and Evaluation.

The CRS SCORE ECD team organized a workshop on integrated Data Quality Assessment and project Data review in Kisumu at Vic Hotel from the 13th to the 15th of August 2024. The workshop was attended by four Master Trainers, two MEAL Sisters from the Franciscan Missionaries of St. Joseph and Franciscan Sisters of St. Anna, and AOSK project staff. The main objective of the meeting for the project teams (CRS, AOSK, and Congregations) was to review and reflect on the DQA findings and actions, review and refine the data management and reporting processes on caregiver registration, tracking, and monitoring, and reflect on the findings of the midterm review and develop an action plan.

The team received training on the five data quality standards and gained a better understanding of data

quality as one element of a larger, interrelated performance management system. Data quality was emphasized to flow from a well-designed and logical strategic plan that identifies the goals, purposes, sub-purposes, and outputs of any project/program.



CRS staff supporting Sisters during the workshop

The five key data quality standards covered during the workshop are:

1. **Validity:** This refers to the extent to which a measure represents what is intended to be measured, focusing on face validity, attribution, and measurement error.
2. **Reliability:** Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods over time to recognize true changes.
3. **Precision:** Precise data should present a fair picture of performance and enable management decision-making with sufficient detail smaller than the margin of error.
4. **Integrity:** Integrity focuses on preventing improper manipulation of data by establishing mechanisms to reduce manipulation.
5. **Timeliness:** Data should be available and up to date enough to meet management needs, with the frequency of availability influencing decision-making.

Additionally, the team was informed about the recruitment process for caregivers, which involves several steps such as conducting a needs assessment and planning, identifying needs, outreach, and recruitment, advertising, building partnerships, conducting background checks, and providing pre-service training. Although the process may have slight variations depending on the specific program, these are the general steps that are followed.

Written by Sr. Teresa Yator, ASE

AOSK SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Monitoring Support Visits

The AOSK-SLYI conducted monitoring visits in August 2024 to assess the effectiveness of its programs in 18 technical training institutions. Key areas of focus included student retention, skills acquisition, daycare provision, and support for differently-abled youth. The monitoring teams found generally strong retention rates, particularly in institutions with mentorship programs, peer support, and financial assistance. Daycare facilities were crucial for young mothers, and support for differently-abled youth included physical accessibility and specialized equipment. The findings will guide future improvements to enhance the program's impact.



A focused group discussion with the sponsored youth at St Jude technical training institute by the AOSK-SLYI STAFF during the monitoring visit

Counselling support in partnership with ChemChemi

AOSK-SLYI, in partnership with Chemchemi, visited 18 youth struggling with alcohol addiction in Gachie, Kiambu County on August 23, 2024. The initiative aims to provide targeted counseling support to help these youth overcome their challenges. Trained counselors will offer one-on-one sessions focusing on understanding the root causes, developing recovery plans, and building healthier habits. The partnership also includes group counseling sessions to foster support and reduce isolation.



Sisters during a counselling session with the youth at Gachie, Kiambu.

Monitoring Support Visits

In August, the TTI Admins and Youth Champions organized Psychosocial Forums to address pressing issues affecting youth, including drugs, substance abuse, sexuality, mental health, and cyberbullying. Experts discussed the dangers of substance abuse, the importance of early intervention, and strategies for support. Participants engaged in open dialogue about sexual health, consent, and relationships, while mental health professionals emphasized the importance of recognizing signs of distress and seeking help. The forum also highlighted the dangers of cyberbullying and offered practical advice for online safety. Youth Champions played a key role in leading these discussions and empowering their peers.



Sr. Mercy Mwayi addressing youth during a psycho-social forum at St. Charles Lwanga vocational training institute on 30/08/2024.

Written by Sr. Mercy Mwayi, FSJ

AOSK INSURANCE AGENCY

Endowment Policy

An endowment policy is a financial product, which includes life insurance and an investment and combines both life assurance and saving. In Kenya, these policies accord policyholders and their families a form of monetary security and also pay a certain sum of money at the time that the policy expires, be it through the policyholder's demise or not. If the insured person dies while alive within a given period of the policy, the pay out is made to the nominees. But if the assured dies before the given policy period, the nominee will get the reimbursement which combined the sum assured and the interest.

Kenyan endowment policies are especially preferred

because the products are flexible. They can be used in the following requirements including, saving for retirement, education or down payment on a home. The policyholder has the flexibility of choosing the right term and sum assured depending on his or her requirements.



Written by Mr. Francis Mbwele

THE HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SISTERHOODS OF KENYA.

Understanding emotional abuse and its impact on individuals life

Emotional abuse (EA) is a pervasive issue that can have devastating consequences for individuals' mental and emotional well-being. It involves the use of words and actions to control, manipulate, or intimidate another person. While often overlooked, EA can be just as harmful as physical abuse.

Common Contexts of Emotional Abuse

- **Family:** Parental abuse, neglect, manipulation, and criticism can significantly impact children and adults alike.
- **Societal:** Bullying in schools and workplaces, particularly when there is a power imbalance, can create a toxic environment.
- **Religious:** Some religious leaders may use manipulation and coercion to control their followers, causing emotional distress.

Risk Factors for Emotional Abuse

- **Personal History:** Individuals who have experienced abuse, substance abuse, or mental health issues may be more likely to perpetrate or experience EA.
- **Environmental Factors:** High-stress environments, lack of support, and power imbalances can contribute to EA.
- **Societal Norms:** In cultures where women and children are not valued, EA is often seen as acceptable.

Signs of Emotional Abuse

- **Emotional Dysregulation:** Difficulty controlling emotions, extreme behaviors, and outbursts.
- **Relationship Difficulties:** Struggles with forming and maintaining healthy relationships.
- **Long-Term Consequences:** Anxiety, insomnia, social withdrawal, and difficulty concentrating.

Interventions for Emotional Abuse

- **Religious Institutions:** Promote transparency, accountability, and training for faith leaders to address EA.
- **Societal Settings:** Implement anti-bullying policies, promote mental health awareness, and create support systems.
- **Families:** Provide family therapy, counseling, and parenting skills training to address emotional dysregulation and promote healthy dynamics.

By recognizing the signs of emotional abuse and implementing appropriate interventions, individuals and communities can work towards fostering healthier environments and supporting those affected by this pervasive issue.

Written by Sr. Regina Nthenya, SSJ

AOSK JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION.

Africa Peace and Environment Summit: People, Planet, Peace

The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya took part in Peace and Environmental Summit organized by one of their partners Amani Communities Africa (ACA). These brought together other peace and environmental actors from across Africa, who together discussed the interconnectedness of Peace, Planet, and People. The discussion took place at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The different groups had time to reflect on their role and interconnectedness brought about by the planet, People, and peace. AOSK took part from the second day of the summit, with the topic of Women front-runners in building peace. The reflection was around the impact of women in the society as they contribute positively in caring for mother Earth. The presenters of the day challenged the participants on the positive impact as well as negative which women have to bear in the face of climate change.

Though the earth is viewed in a feminine way as it nurtures, cares, gives life as she faces the challenges of climate change and all the harm done to her, women resonate very well with this. The impact of climate change such as drought, floods and high temperatures have greatly affected women and especially women in the rural areas. Due to scarce resources conflicts erupt in communities and those who bear the burden of it mostly are women and children. It was noted that lack of adherence to the Kyoto protocol, which called on “established a rigorous monitoring, review and verification system, as well as a compliance system to ensure transparency and hold Parties to account. Under the Protocol, countries’ actual emissions have to be monitored and precise records have to be kept of the trades carried out



Sr. Juliana Ndunge and Madam Patricia Loko represented AOSK well in championing for women voices.

Faith practice in Breaking the Chains of Corruption

In 2019 the Catholic Bishops in Kenya began a campaign of breaking the Chains of Corruption, where they called all Christians to be part and parcel of the campaign and take the lead. Five years later the CJPD commissioners from every Diocese and Institution including AOSK gathered in Nairobi to reflect on the same issue of breaking the chains of Corruption but this time round asking how faith influences in breaking these chains.

In August AOSK joined other CJPD commissioners in reflecting on the question of corruption in the country and the harm it has done and costed the taxpayers. In collaboration with Loyola Communication media, the issues of corruption were reflected as having both Micro and macro impact on the society. In micro level there has been a propensity towards greed, low pay scales/wages, low job opportunities, transparency and accountability, political party transformative agenda and Judiciary system. In the macro level impacts of corruption were viewed as, weakening the education system and health system, hindering social and economic development, Undermining democracy, exacerbating inequality and injustice. All these have affected the Economic, social, political, and environmental through the exploitation of natural resources. In an example by the facilitator to calculate how much one billion Kenya Shillings could do where the participants agreed it could employ 1667 people paying them 50,000 Kenya shillings per year. This was a clear sign of how much taxpayer's money is lost through corruption when citizens hear of public funds lost and how much they would develop the country.

In 2015 when Pope Francis visited Kenya he asked this question to Kenyans and it is very relevant to us today "can we justify corruption? Just for the mere fact that everyone is corrupt? How can we be Christians and overcome this evil of corruption?" He continued to say "Corruption is something that eats inside, like sugar. Sweet, we like it, it's easy. And then we end up in a bad way. So much sugar that we end up being diabetic or our country, community, family ends up being diabetic."

Written by Sr. Bernadette Nzioka, DSH

PAX-CHRISTI

Centrality of the Gospel of Non Violence in Catholic Social Teachings.

As Christians we are committed to a more just and peaceful world we are called to take a clear stand for creative and active nonviolence and against all forms of violence.

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the

sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. We are driven by excessive individualism and yet traditionally humans are social beings. How we organize our society, economically and politically directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Our Church teaches that the role of the government and other institutions is to protect human life and human

dignity and promote the common good.

Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Citizens have a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Catholic teaching proclaims that a basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt. 25) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

We have a responsibility to participate in politics out of a concern and commitment to the good of the community. We cannot be bystanders to political processes but we are called to vote, to inform ourselves about the issues of the day and engage in serious conversation about our nations' future. We need to learn to listen to different perspectives with empathy.

Catholic Social Justice teaches us that work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. Work should enhance the dignity of the person by allowing all workers to

express their uniqueness in a way that contributes to the common good. Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Solidarity means that "loving our neighbor" has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

Because we are social beings, the state is natural to the person. Therefore, the state has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. Its purpose is to assist citizens in fulfilling their responsibility to others in society.

According to the principle of subsidiarity, the functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible, as long as they can be performed adequately. If they cannot, then a higher level of government should intervene to provide help. Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, "Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements." There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.

Written by Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

LEGAL OFFICE

AN ASYLUM SEEKER AND A REFUGEE

An asylum-seeker is an individual who has fled their country of origin and applied for asylum in another country, but their claim to refugee status has not yet been processed. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee was initially an asylum-seeker. An asylum seeker is someone who is also seeking international protection from dangers in his or her home country, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined legally. Asylum seekers must apply for protection in the country

of destination meaning they must arrive at or cross a border in order to apply.

A refugee is a person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there. The risks to their safety and life were so great that they felt they had no choice but to leave and seek safety outside their country because their own government cannot or will not protect them from those dangers. Refugees have a right to international protection. They undergo refugee status determination process to ascertain their claim for refugee status in order to get the identity as a refugee. If they meet the threshold under section 3 of the refugees Act 2021 laws of Kenya, they get the refugee status that entitles them to some rights and privileges like jobs, they can open accounts, get insurance among others. An asylum seeker does not merit such rights.

On the other hand, an immigrant is someone who makes a conscious decision to leave his or her home and move to a foreign country with the intention of settling there. Immigrants often go through a lengthy vetting process to immigrate to a new country. Many become lawful permanent residents and eventually citizens. Immigrants research their destinations, explore employment opportunities, and study the language of the country where they plan to live. Most importantly, they are free to return home whenever they choose.

Written by Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

AOSK UNITS

Notable Work done by sisters in the Units

United we stand as a sign of God's Presence; we are called to be witnesses of the gospel. This is a calling to every baptized. In all the Units all over Kenya, the sisters do acts of mercy to the communities and all in dire need. They visit and offer moral support to the vulnerable, the destitute, and especially those in the prisons, the old and neglected, the children in the small homes as well as those affected by natural calamities. Besides the charitable work, sisters nourish their souls through spiritual activities such as recollections, pilgrimages, retreats and spiritual activities.



Written by Sr. Juliana Ndunge, LSOSF

AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA COLLEGE

Formation Department: The Journey begins.

August 7th was the general orientation for the new Formation and Sabbatical groups after their arrival on the 6th. On the 8th, the two groups went separate ways for their orientations. The formation department head and her assistant had integration activities designed to help the new group of formators work together effectively by fostering a sense of unity, understanding, and collaboration.



These activities served several important purposes:

Building Trust: Trust is the foundation of any successful team. Integration activities helped members get to know each other better, breaking down barriers and building relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.

Encouraging Communication: Effective communication is crucial for teamwork. These activities promote open dialogue, help participants express their ideas and feelings, and develop listening skills.

Fostering Collaboration: By working together on the integration tasks and activities, participants learned to collaborate, share responsibilities, and support one another, which enhances their ability to work as a cohesive unit.

Enhancing Understanding of Diversity: These integration activities involved sharing personal backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, which helps participants appreciate and respect each other's diversity hence creating a deeper connection and valuing diverse perspectives and experiences.

Strengthening Team Identity: These activities helped participants see themselves as part of a team with a shared mission and goals, reinforcing a sense of belonging and commitment to the group.

The formators began to see themselves not as individuals with separate missions but as a collective, each contributing a unique thread to the rich tapestry of their shared vocation. They completed their orientation with renewed energy and a deep sense of connection. They were ready to face the challenges ahead, knowing that their shared mission and mutual respect would guide them through every step of the way. Orientation set the stage for the new group to begin their training well-integrated and with a spirit of collaboration and openness. “May our unity and commitment in this formation be a beacon of hope and a source of inspiration for all we encounter.”

Written by Sr. Catherine Mutuku, OSB

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS FOR BELIEVING IN US !!!!!



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