

NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya

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Pope's October prayer intention: 'For a shared mission'

Pope Francis' monthly prayer intention for October is for "a shared mission."

The Pope invited the Church to pray for this intention in the month of October.

Pope Francis' video message emphasizes his invitation to every Christian "to walk together, taking the path of synodality," explaining that "we are co-responsible in mission, we participate and we live in the communion of the Church."

Regardless of one's career or work in life, Pope Francis underlines that the mission is the same, namely that of "witnessing with one's own life," "everyone contribut-

ing what they know how to do best."

The Holy Father suggests that, in this way, "We work together in this co-responsibility."

Co-responsibility to care for the Church, our 'home'

In his message, Pope Francis clarifies that priests "are not the bosses of the laity, but their pastors," and stresses how Jesus calls upon us all to complement one another.

With this spirit, the Holy Father calls on all baptized people in the Church at all levels to remember how the Church is their home, and therefore, reminding them of their responsibility to take care of it.

Pope Francis concludes by praying, "Let us pray that the Church continues to sustain a synodal lifestyle in every way, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting the participation, communion, and mission shared by priests, religious and laity."



Pope Francis (Image Courtesy)

ACWECA MARKS A MILESTONE

The Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA) recently celebrated its 19th plenary assembly and 50th anniversary in partnership with the Association of Women Religious Institutes of Malawi (AWRIM). The theme, “**Transformative holistic formation for authentic living towards deeper evangelization in the ACWECA region and beyond,**” guided the weeklong event.

For half a century, ACWECA has been a unifying force for consecrated women in the region. Its dedication has significantly impacted countless lives. During the opening mass, Pope Francis, through Archbishop Gianluca Perici of Zambia, conveyed a message of encouragement, urging the Sisters to strengthen their commitment to spreading the joy of the gospel.

Throughout the assembly, members shared experiences and discussed their collaborative efforts with ACWECA. Sr. Pasilisa Namikoye, LSOSF Executive Secretary of the Association of Sisters of Kenya (AOSK), highlighted AOSK’s partnership with ACWECA in implementing the formation of Formators Program so as to enhance the sisters skills and techniques in formation. She praised ACWECA’s work and pledged continued collaboration.

Elections were also held during the celebrations. Sr. Grace Kyomugisha, a member of the Congregation of Our Lady of Good Counsel, was elected as the new ACWECA president. In her acceptance speech, she emphasized the importance of deepening the charisms of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (ICLSAL) within the association. **“I urge you, let us grow, walk, and work together by deepening the charisms of our congregations. Let us keep the candle burning,”** she noted.

Closing the assembly, ACWECA Secretary General Sr. Bridgita Samba thanked all participants and reaffirmed the association’s commitment to transforming lives in the region it serves.



ACWECA Partners posing for a group photo during the plenary assembly in Malawi in August 2024.

By Mr. Victor Emoja

THE LEGAL OFFICE

Endowment Funds

An endowment fund is an investment with the initial capital deriving from donations. Endowment funds are established to fund charitable and nonprofit institutions such as churches, hospitals, etc. An endowment fund typically refers to a fund that is not wholly expendable on a current basis. An endowment fund is intended to provide long-term support, and generally, this is accomplished by permitting the expenditure only of income rather than the principal amount. This is typically accomplished by defining income in a manner that permits expenditures up to 5% annually or otherwise permitting the expenditure up to this amount and some endowment funds may contain provisions allowing the greater expenditure of principal in certain defined circumstances. Endowment funds may be established to support a congregation generally or may be established for specific purposes such as supporting specific ministries, building or capital improvements, or school support.

Creating a congregation's endowment fund can provide an opportunity to plan for and support the future needs of the congregation or designated ministry. A congregation endowment also gives the congregation a means by which it can encourage legacy gifts from donors, alumni of an Institution, or people of good will. Congregation endowments have both civil law and canon law dimensions. The establishment of endowments at congregation's level is through the creation of a document known as a "Burse Agreement." A Burse refers to a restricted fund of the congregation that is owned by the congregation and managed or controlled by the congregation, subject to certain canonical rights of the superior. The funds are congregation funds, although restricted in purpose and/or expendable amounts under the terms of the Burse Agreement. The establishment of any endowment requires the approval of the superior, and this is ordinarily accomplished through the superior's signature on the Burser Agreement. Establishment of for an endowment fund for a religious congregation typically requires authorization from the appropriate ecclesiastical authority, which could be the bishop or the congregation's superior.



By Sr. Hedwig Muse, Esq LSMIG

JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Child rights in schools

The Government has developed a strong legal and policy framework to protect children. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya (Article 53) recognizes the right of all children to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhumane treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour. Further the Constitution provide for the best interest of the child. The principle, aims to safeguard children's well-being, has become more crucial than ever in the wake of tragic incidents affecting learners in Kenyan schools.

Government of Kenya in collaboration with non-state actors has made effort to increase protection for children and adolescents from violence, exploitation and abuse, as well as harmful cultural practices. To ensure children have improved access to prevention, care, support and justice services required for their physical, mental and social well-being.

Children are suffering and facing negligence and recklessness from those responsible for their well-being and security. The safety of learners on school grounds, where they should feel most protected, is now in doubt. The recurring tragedies in schools with the most recent where 17 pupils lost their lives in a tragic fire at Hillside Enderasha Academy Primary School in Nyeri County and 14 pupils sustained serious injuries. This highlights the negligence and carelessness on the part of those entrusted with the welfare and security of the children. It is essential to acknowledge that the “best interest of the child” principle, firmly rooted in international human rights law, mandates that deci-

sions and actions concerning children prioritize their well-being, safety, and overall development. Crucial aspects of this principle include prioritizing the child's well-being as the foremost consideration, adopting a comprehensive approach, conducting personalized assessments, involving the child in decision-making, and safeguarding them from discrimination and harm.

For schools to truly uphold the child's best interest, they must be diligent duty holders, ensuring the implementation and effectiveness of child protection policies and procedures. This necessitates the establishment of robust structures, imparting necessary skills and attitudes among staff, and fostering a culture of human rights and accountability. Such measures are essential for creating an environment where the safety and well-being of every child are paramount. As we grapple with the unsettling reality of children losing their lives within the supposedly safe confines of schools, it is imperative to reassess and reinforce our commitment to the “best interest of the child” principle.



Pupils in Nzaikoni Primary school reciting a poem of Child protection and safe environment in schools

A call for accountability is not only justified but crucial to preventing further tragedies. Schools, as custodians of learner's well-being, must proactively enforce the implementation of comprehensive child protection measures to create an environment where every learner can thrive, learn, and grow without fear for their safety. This is the reason Human rights teachers through JPIC work with children in schools, to ensure that they can reject harmful practices, respond to violence against children, and reinforce their safety. Through human rights teachers, AOSK JPIC has enhanced child rights and responsibilities at school that are learner-centered. The children express the need for child rights alongside responsibilities through poems, songs, and drama.

By Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

Environment care for our common home

From September 1st to October 4th, on the feast of St. Francis, the patron saint of the environment, the Catholic Church calls upon all citizens of the Earth, especially Christians, to stop, pray, and respond together to the Cry of Creation. Throughout the month, the Church, through the Laudato Si movement, dedicates itself to the Season of Creation, inviting people of faith to feel more responsible for acting with integrity towards all creation. AOSK, in partnership with the Global Green Grants Fund, held forums in Ng'ando informal settlement in Nairobi to promote care for Mother Earth, with a special focus on waste management and the culture of disposability. Over 450 participants were reached. Our environment is a shared home, yet many of us live as if someone else is solely responsible for our actions. How do we dispose of even the smallest items, such as sweet wrappers, water bottles, and sugarcane waste? We often throw them away, expecting others to collect and dispose of them for us. Article 42 of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution states that every person in Kenya is entitled to a clean and healthy environment and has a duty to safeguard and enhance it. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every Kenyan citizen to protect and improve the environment.

Laudato Si no 22 the Pope challenges us on our throw away culture He says *"To cite one example, most of the paper we produce is thrown away and not recycled. It is hard for us to accept that the way natural ecosystems work is exemplary: plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants. But our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them. A serious consideration of this issue would be one way of counteracting the throwaway culture which affects the entire planet, but it must be said that only limited progress has been made in this regard."*

Next time you want to throw away something, Re- Think how you can Re Use it or Re- Cycle. together let us make our Common home better. Pope Francis reminds us *"From God we have received a garden, we must not leave a desert to our children"* Gen:1;28-30



Ng'ando participants actively participating during the forums

By Sr. Bernadette Nzioka, DSH

The summit of the future.

Summit for the future is an opportunity to enhance cooperation on critical challenges and address gaps in global governance. It will reaffirm existing commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Charter, and move towards a reinforced multilateral system better positioned to impact people's lives positively. The Summit underscored the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders from across the full spectrum of society. Their voices are essential and tapping into their wealth of expertise and leveraging their platforms, there will be more informed policy decisions, amplify the impact of the Summit, and better tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow. The Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK) was represented at the UN General Assembly events especially on health, education and gender under inter-generational leadership. The aim was to amplify the work of Sisters in Health, education and gender initiatives among others. The Catholic sisters are key in service provision and the sisters have been able to navigate various diverse challenges through initiatives and innovations right from grassroots as they engage with various categories of people they serve. These include; Children, women, girls, the sick, elderly, among others. Therefore, it is important to bring up the visibility of the sisters as they do a lot through the support of the Umbrella body AOSK.



On the left Sr. Hedwig making a presentation on the initiatives and innovations of the sisters in enhancing education outcomes in Kenya. On the right Meeting with Sr. Jane sharing on the experiences and action points after the UN events.

By Sr. Hedwig Muse, LSMIG

Being voice to the invisible women

Vulnerable individuals in society must be valued, given their fair share, and provided with access to basic necessities. We must become their advocates, sharing their stories to ensure they are heard. Women are often seen as the primary drivers of social transformation, tasked with educating minds, touching hearts, and transforming lives. Discrimination based on gender, tribe, political affiliation, color, religion, or race must be condemned. The dignity of every human being should be upheld. Issues affecting women, such as FGM, lack of access to education, early marriages, domestic violence, gender-based violence, and other forms of discrimination, must be addressed. Instead, we should promote education, respect for their rights, opportunities for personal and professional development, improved employment prospects, and greater participation in decision-making. This will empower women, particularly those in vulnerable positions, to realize their full potential and be recognized for their contributions. By upholding these values, we can achieve development and equity in our society and workplaces. It is our collective responsibility to stand up for the voiceless, especially those invisible women who work tirelessly without recognition or appreciation. From September 15th to 20th, 2024, the Catholic Women's Organization of Uganda (UCWA) hosted the World Women Observatory (WWO) workshop, bringing together women from 25 countries and 65 nationalities worldwide. Led by the Africa WUCWO President, Madam Evelyn Malise from Tanzania, and joined by dignitaries from Rome, the WWO aims to promote the presence, participation, and responsibility of Catholic women in society and the Church. The organization focuses on empowering women to fulfill their mission of evangelization and work for human development, particularly through education, poverty reduction, and the advancement of human rights. Women play a crucial role in the development and economic growth of any society. The workshop included women religious representing various associations, institutions, and congregations. Key topics discussed included networking, collaboration, good practices, and sharing experiences, with a particular emphasis on giving a voice to the voiceless in society



Discussions of WWO in the Conference Hall at Entebbe Guest House Uganda

By Sr. Juliana Ndunge, LSOSF

AOSK SCORE ECD

SILC approach improving ECD program outcomes

Success Story by Sr. Irene Inviolata

SCORE ECD Master Trainer

I spent three years implementing the SCORE ECD project, a multi-sectoral, integrated intervention with caregivers in Rambugu-Siaya County. One of the interventions is the SILC Approach designed to provide a safe place for poor households to save and borrow to increase their income. It was here that I met Ochieng and his wife. Ochieng was a local farmer and through the years became a close friend. He was a good farmer, but couldn't grow enough food to feed his wife and three children because of lack of enough water. It was even harder to earn cash that he needed to buy things he couldn't grow or make such as school supplies or household goods.

We began to implement SILC intervention efforts in Ochieng's community. Initially, we entered the community through a relationship with a local government official who identified Ochieng's community as one in need. Through a series of public community meetings, the community members organized themselves into a development group and began to participate in the SILC activities.

Ochieng wanted water, to help him and his family utilize the big and fertile land at his disposal for farming to improve his family life. The area water table was high so he needed to dig a borehole and purchase start-up materials to begin. Both he and his wife joined SILC groups. As the SILC groups met from week to week and began to put plans for what they envisioned happening in their families, Ochieng began to see that some of his dreams, mostly smaller projects, could be

accomplished fairly quickly through getting loans. But some of his ideas would take years to accomplish- like becoming a large-scale farmer.

Ochieng realized from their discussions that there were some immediate needs to address. He needed more food and food security for his family. He needed a bit more income from his farm and labor if they were going to keep sending their children to school. And, when he and his wife began to look at the resources, they had on hand to address these problems identified and plans to be implemented, they began to see some limitations and realities.

Ochieng and his family decided to make their dreams happen one step at a time. They held on to their long-term dream vision for their family but decided to start working on the smaller, more doable problems. Since livelihood and lack of income were a problem for all the families, they decided to do a project that addressed livelihood. They talked about the resources they already had: land, labor, local knowledge, and relationships both in the community and outside. They then considered what kind of agriculture projects they could fairly easily accomplish with these resources. Several ideas were discussed and they decided to improve their farming. Ochieng and his wife took small loans from the SILC groups and began to improve their farming.

Farming has turned out to be a great project. For three years, the family stands out in the community and can get enough food for themselves and to sell to the villagers, especially vegetables. Nutrition and income

improved in the family and, within a short time, an impact on health and education could be observed. In addition, the family gained a new-found confidence returned to their original dream for their family, and began attempting other projects e.g., Poultry and rabbits farming. Some failed but many succeeded. They bought solar systems for their family. They have become so well recognized as a model of ECD champion to their village. Ochieng, 's family has turned out not only to be a well-respected catalyst of ECD intervention in his home community but also the leader of the Village.



A number of projects that Ochieng has invested in after obtaining a loan from the SILC group.

SISTERS LED YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Joint youth sports activities

To promote unity and personal growth among youth, the AOSK-SLYI organized a joint sports event for 45 technical institutions. Sports activities play a vital role in developing essential soft skills like teamwork, leadership, and communication, which are crucial for building peaceful and cohesive societies. Beyond physical fitness, these events offer valuable opportunities for youth to build resilience, discover their talents, and socialize positively. By participating in sports like

football, netball, volleyball, and handball, students from different institutions had the chance to showcase their abilities and learn from one another. To ensure a successful event and motivate participants, the AOSK-SLYI provided sports t-shirts to each institution and awarded certificates of participation to all participants. Additionally, winning teams received trophies as a token of recognition for their achievements.



AOSK SLYI Youth from different technical institutions participating and being awarded a trophy after successful finishing joint sport activities.

By Mrs Caroline Wamiti

AOSK INSURANCE AGENCY

Social health authority

The Social Health Authority (SHA) in Kenya is poised to replace the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), ushering in significant changes to the country's healthcare landscape. Key changes anticipated with the full implementation of the SHA include:

Universal Health Coverage: The SHA aims to provide affordable, accessible, and quality healthcare services to all Kenyans, ensuring that everyone has health insurance coverage.

Expanded Benefits: The SHA has developed a comprehensive benefit package covering a wider range of healthcare services than previously offered by the NHIF.

Increased Government Funding: While the government has allocated Ksh. 6.1 billion for the SHA, this is only a portion of the Ksh. 168 billion required for full implementation. Future funding increases are expected to support the SHA's goals.

Modern Technology Infrastructure: The SHA is investing in a new technology infrastructure, including a claims processing system and electronic health records, to enhance its operations.

Increased Competition: The introduction of the SHA is likely to stimulate competition in the Kenyan insurance market as private insurers will need to compete for customers.



SHA

**Social Health
Authority**

By Mr Francis Mutuku

AOSK CHEMCHEMI YA UZIMA COLLEGE

Library information literacy

The ability to easily and effectively locate, retrieve, and utilize information from libraries and other sources according to American Library Association is known as library information literacy. Chemchemi ya Uzima library is always committed to ensuring that all our users are equipped with the necessary skills relevant in helping them become more effective and confident library users. This promotes both their academic and personal growth. At the beginning of every semester and upon admission of a new intake, the library in collaboration with the heads of departments organizes for such sessions to all the users. This September has not been an exception and it is a continuous endeavor as the semester progresses. The process entails familiarizing the users with the layout of the library and orientation on different services offered in the library including, interlibrary loan services where users are able to access and borrow materials from partner University/College libraries including; CUEA, Tangaza, Marist, Hekima, Don Bosco among others under the already established MOUs. Furthermore, users are trained on how to maximumly utilize the resources available both print and electronic resources. In an age of information explosion, we guide users on sources of credible information, catalog systems and teach on basic research skills for effective research strategies.



Some of the users undergoing information literacy sessions.

By Mr. Dominic Kamau

Formation Graduation Ceremony

On October 4, 2024, AOSK Chemchemi ya Uzima College, held a graduation ceremony for seventeen students who had completed a one-year formation program. The formators were elated to have finished their training and were eager to contribute to their congregation by forming others. The ceremony began at 9:00 AM with an opening mass led by Rev. Fr. Professor Patrick Mwanja, Vice Chancellor of Tangaza University. In his homily, Fr. Mwanja reminded the graduates that God desires us to remain formed in Him. He also served as the guest of honor for the event. During his speech, he urged the graduates to be good examples in their congregations to be emulated by others. Considering that this day was also a me-

morial of St. Francis of Assisi who was himself a formator, the priest urged the graduates to emulate the saint by going out and forming others.

Representing the AOSK Chairperson, Sr. Catherine Mulwa, the AOSK Human Resource addressed the graduating class. She emphasized the crucial role of formators in representing the congregation's spirit, welcoming new members, and making consecrated life attractive to others. *"Formators, As you go out for the mission remember that the formators are the ones who make the Congregation known, who embody its spirit and help new members to know and love their new home and family, As trained and empowered formators, you have an opportunity to make consecrated life maintain its attraction and to reawaken its attraction and liking in those who are on the outside, make formation to be desirable not scaring"* She said. Sr. Catherine also commended the Chemchemi ya Uzima staff, particularly in the formation department, for their dedication in equipping the formators with the necessary skills, knowledge, and strategies. The graduation concluded with the presentation of certificates of accomplishment to the formators, who expressed their positive experiences at Chemchemi ya Uzima College.



Formators Cutting a cake after a successfull graduation ceremony on 4th October 2024 at Chemchemi ya Uzima college.

By Sr. Celine Makario, SMK

Integrative Spiritual Counselling.

ISC is grateful for another successful academic year, the academic year kicked off on August 19th 2024. Our students, both returning and new joined us to pursue their studies. The semester started strongly with a diverse group of students from across Africa enrolling in our Integrative Spiritual Counselling (ISC) department. ISC received students for Certificates that take one year, Diploma students who take two years, and Module students who are doing a 10-week certificate course fully online. This has posed a positive challenge that led us to have virtual classes too. The department has recorded twenty-six students in total. ISC remains indebted to our Congregation Leaders who are making this program successful. The demand for counseling services in our region is growing rapidly due to ongoing challenges. We encourage more sisters to consider ISC as a valuable tool to support our communities. With limited counselors available, ISC is prioritizing those in greatest need, including youth who are often impacted by political unrest and social issues. Chemichemi College is also

committed to training future leaders in counseling. Our recent student elections highlighted the potential of our students, with Sr. Susan Wangu Munyagia elected as Deputy President. ISC is confident that she will be a valuable asset to the department and the wider community.



The Director, Sr. Luciana Wanyahoro, VDM Introducing the President and his Deputy Sr. Susan dressed in the White Habit Centre, as the staff members congratulated them.

By Sr. Sophia Wanyama, LSMIG

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



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