



SISTERS USE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TO STOP HUNGER IN AFRICA

African women religious are using sustainable agriculture to solve problems like malnutrition and food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sustainable agriculture is key to achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) and creating a better life for Africans. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), women make up about 50% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries like sub-Saharan Africa.

If women farmers had same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30%, lifting 100-150 million people out of hunger.

Undoubtedly, women are the quiet drivers of change towards more sustainable production systems and a more varied and healthier diet for millions throughout the country. Catholic sisters are also stepping in with their own creative farming and agro-business solutions.



Sr. Catherine Wanza, LSOSF has made strides in eliminating hunger through sustainable farming. As Director of the Ukweli Home of Hope, she helps provide basic necessities, utilities and tuition to nearly 100 boys. To save on utility costs, a biogas digester on the farm uses livestock waste to create gas that is piped to the home for cooking. Biogas production uses oxygen free digestion, which reduces odor, produces energy and improves the storage of manure. It also helps in reducing pollution. Much of her knowledge she gained through the mentorship of an alumna of ASEC's Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) program.



Similarly, **Sr. Leul Teklay, SCMR** initiated a biogas project for her congregation's farm after visiting a biofarm at Shumas Centre in Bamenda Cameroon. Shumas Centre trains peasant farmers and out of school unemployed youths in sustainable agriculture practices. Sr. Leul was inspired after seeing renewable energy sources like electricity generated

from a dam, solar power and wind turbines. As an SLDI alumna, Sr. Leul was able to use the skills she learned to gain support for this project. She says,

“By carrying out this project, though we do not have any income, it reduces our cost since we do not buy cooking gas, milk and manure. Through this means, we also protect the environment as a result of using natural things instead of artificial products.”



Sisters in sub-Saharan Africa have also learned to farm other plants that help their communities. ASEC alumna **Sr. Eulalia Capdevila Enriquez, CMS** works for the Mother Earth Centre in rural Zambia. The Mother Earth Centre sustains their farming through renewable energy projects such as windmills, solar power, biogas and earth bags. There, they are improving the conditions of millions within their communities, especially through their cultivation of Moringa, a medicinal and nutritional plant.

In the abundant wildlife and raw wilderness of Zambia, SLDI participant **Sr. Veronica Nyambe, HBVM** has created her own sustainable, organic farm and garden. Currently the Hospital Administrator at Nangoma Mission Hospital, she



gained interest in farming after an SLDI field trip to Kasisi Farm Training Centre. Returning home, Sr. Veronica was inspired. She started a garden and grew different types of vegetables. Sr. Veronica's congregation community eventually gained 100 chickens, 120 quails, 10 pecking ducks and 15 guinea fowls – complete with a hatching machine for 88 eggs.



In Uganda, **Sr. Rose Namwombwe**, IHMR leverages sustainable agriculture via a mushroom growing project in the basement of her congregation's convent. Sisters have shown that you do not need to have a large farm to increase food security. Easy to maintain, mushroom farming produces several products in the short span of three months. What Sr. Rose thought would be a test project has turned out to be a very productive enterprise. She is now training communities around the area to engage in mushroom farming as a means to supplement their nutrition and generate income.



Sr. Anne Kamene, ASN serves at Cheshire Home for girls with physical and mental disabilities in Lumuru, Kenya. She began her tenure as Director after receiving her Bachelor's degree in Development Studies through ASEC's HESA program. After only a few months of employment, she has expanded the home's income (and improved the girls' nutrition) through vegetable and tea farming on two previously unused acres of land. She is now pursuing funding for a biogas plant to convert animal droppings into fuel. She's also engaged her local community in fundraising efforts, while sensitizing people about individuals with disabilities.

Sr. Ann shared that without further education, she may not have been able to access a leadership role.

“I would be in a very bad situation if I was given a home like this to run and then I don't have the knowledge and skills--that would be terrible. ...I have been able to use the skills I got in school to maximize on the resources we have.”

*Read more online at
asec-sldi.org/agriculture*



YOU CAN SUPPORT SR. LILIAN'S DREAM TO STUDY AGRICULTURE

While communities across Africa are making strides in sustainable agriculture, there are still many people suffering from food insecurity and undernourishment.

Sr. M. Lilian Novatus, SHT is one of the future leaders in sustainable agriculture for Tanzania. She wants to study farming but doesn't have the resources to attend school. With your support, she will be able to learn advanced farming techniques to help her congregation provide enough food for her community. She also wants to learn grant-writing so she can care for the many orphans and elderly in Tanzania who desperately need her support.

Your donation to ASEC's educational programs will provide the skills Sr. Lilian needs to serve her community and achieve her dream of attaining her Ph.D.

Enjoy Sr. Lilian's essay below— you'll quickly see how much hope she holds for the future of Africa. You can help her make greater strides towards sustainable agriculture in Africa by donating to support her education today.

***Make your donation today at
asec-sldi.org/donate***

After my form six level of education, I would like to be a farmer with PHD. My education from Bigwa Secondary School will help me to join high education (university) and specialized in agricultural activities.

I will obtain potential knowledge and skills of farming methods with advanced techniques to be used in order to have high production, knowledge on animals keeping and the medicine to provide when they get sick. I will be a very good advisor and use my talents with a spirit of helping people in need.

I want to pursue farming because, I want to contribute in my congregation with enough food and more sustainable development. I also wish to assist the orphans and elders because I will have a knowledge of writing grant proposal to earn fund.

I will achieve my goals by learning more geography so that I can know how to conserve environment and make it good for peoples' living. I am sure this will be possible through studying hard, obtaining good performance and keeping myself always on the hands of God.

Much appreciate goes to ASEC founders and all those who are continuing to assist we; African sisters to acquire knowledge and skills. God bless you abundantly.

Sr. M. Lilian Novatus, SHT