

2014 Site Visit to Kenya

January 2 – 22, 2014

In January 2014, Sister Marcia Sichol, SHCJ, Executive Director of the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters, and Sister Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, ASEC Executive Director and SLDI/HESA Director, participated in a site visit to Kenya. The purpose of this visit was threefold: a) to facilitate a two-week training course for the ASEC Staff in Africa; b) to explore the possibility of working with the Fund for Sisters to design a program whereby both ASEC and the Fund for Sisters could collaborate more closely with the Catholic Sisters Initiative (CSI), and c) to visit several SLDI alumnae ministries that have been funded by the Fund for Sisters. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation funds both the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) and the Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA). To date, over 1,100 sisters have attended the SLDI courses since its beginning seven years ago. In 2014, a total of 758 sisters from Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Zambia, Malawi and Lesotho will be participating in SLDI program and 112 will be enrolled in the HESA program.



Above: Group photograph of the coordinators and facilitator Mr. Peter Musee, CORAT Africa at the Donum Dei Family Centre. Featured from right to left are: Sr. Mary Germina Keneema, MSMMC, Sr. Clarisse Remjika Jaiwo, Sr. M. Tryphina Buchard, STH, Maureen, Sr. Lina Wanjiku Ndung'u, SE, Sr. Clementina Obembe, OSF, Sr. Hilaria Chombo, SBVM, Sr. Francisca Damoah, SIJ, and Sr. Jane Wakahiu LSOSF, ASEC Executive Director & SLDI/HESA Director.

Presenters of the two-week professional development workshop for ASEC staff were; Sister Marcia Sichol, SHCJ, Sister Anne Munley, IHM; Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF and CORAT Africa. Sr. Marcia presented on Monitoring Funded Grants; Sr. Anne who is Chair, of the ASEC Board of Directors, presented on Spiritual Leadership; and, Sr. Jane presented on Program Design, Management and Evaluation. CORAT presented on Quick Books, Accountability and Leadership topics. Program staff represented Kenya, Tanzania and

Uganda from East Africa; Zambia and Malawi from Central Africa; and Cameroon, Nigeria and Ghana from West Africa.

We explored the possibilities of working with the Fund for Sisters to design a program whereby both ASEC and the Fund for Sisters could collaborate more closely with the Catholic Sisters Initiative (CSI), a program of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. CIS and the Fund for Sisters envisioned possibilities of giving a type of "signature grant" to sister-graduates (SLDI alumnae) for their ministries. Since these sisters have gone through an extensive program with SLDI, they are likely to be effective leaders of their ministries.

The result of our meeting in Nairobi with the coordinators was a draft criteria and a procedure for initiating an SLDI Ministry Grant Program. The coordinators, working with SLDI alumnae superiors, would identify sisters who, would best benefit from grants of perhaps \$25,000. They would receive data from the sisters that would give evidence of success and planning in their respective ministries, and would eventually recommend these sisters to submit their applications to the FFS. A pilot program would be implemented in 2014.

Also, we visited a variety of projects where SLDI alumnae are working and have been funded by the FFS. The number of people being served in these ministries is significant. We visited the Assumption Sisters Sustainable Initiative Farming Project. Sr. Susan Wanjiru an SLDI alumnae in the Project Management Track is using her skills in this ministry that benefits so many people in the area. Susan manages several projects in the farm including fish farming, coffee processing and subsistence farming. Staff and retired sisters here also make uniforms for children attending schools in the area. This is income producing for the ministry.



(Photograph: Sr. Susan in the organic farming cabbage farm, Sr. Christine Kagunya, Superior General ASN and Marcia Sichol, SHCJ, Executive Director Hilton Fund for Sisters)

We visited the Maria Immaculate Centre where Sr. Martha Wanjiku showed us how she has been able to use her resource mobilization skills learned in SLDI to administer the programs that include: construction of an elementary and high school, a computer laboratory, a science laboratory, a borehole project and the procurement and operation of a grinding mill, animal husbandry with pigs and cows providing a supplement diet for the children in the school. More than 700 children from poor families attend the nursery, primary and high school on site. This large project is a tribute to the success of the SLDI education that Sr. Martha was able to put into practice to assist many in becoming self-sufficient.



(Photograph: Sr. Marcia with the children at the Maria Immaculate Centre)

In addition, we visited St. Francis Hospital. This site not only serves many patients for medical conditions, but is also a Community Based centre that is serving over 3,500 children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and children with disabilities. Sr. Esther (HESA student) talked about how the program provides medication, nutrition and counselling to children as well as home based care to the HIV/AIDS patients. The Ukweli Home of Hope Project for Street Boys serves the boys as the sisters are able to rescue them from homelessness. They rehabilitate the boys to help them live lives worthy of human beings and to become responsible citizens. The boys are able to attend public schools during the day and then return to their home here with the sisters. Forty boys are currently in secondary schools, ten in different colleges and universities within the country pursuing professional courses. The sisters have actually been able to re-unite 78 boys with their families and relatives after primary school. Also, sisters have a dairy farm and gardens that supply milk and food for the boys. The dairy cows produce waste that is re-cycled and the sisters and workers have developed a new biogas fuel source. The gas fuel will make the operation far less expensive than current costs of purchased fuel.

We then visited with the Association of Sisterhood of Kenya (AOSK) executive committee led by Sr. Agnes Wamuyu, the Executive Secretary. Sr. Marcia presented about the FFS. We also discussed the role the association plays in ministering in this region. The organization

includes 157 congregations representing more than 5,200 sisters. The congregations receive about 250 novices each year. Between 2002 and 2011, the number of sisters has risen from 3,732 to 4,935. Formation and education needs are great. AOSK provides classroom and ASEC equips the class with computer facilities for SLDI classes and facilitates in the selection of participants to ensure equal representation of congregations. The SLDI Program Coordinator's office is located on AOSK premises. Sister Agnes showcased the AOSK website she had created after participating in the SLDI, Web Design workshop. Indeed, an impressive website: <http://www.aoskenya.co.ke>



Sr. Marcia and Sr. Jane together with the AOSK Executive Team (Association of Sisterhood of Kenya)

We also visited the Teresa Nuzzo Children's Home for Orphaned Children managed by the Daughters of the Sacred Heart. Sr. Bernadetta Nzioka, the manager of this site, went through the SLDI Project Management program. Sister Bernadetta said the team building skills she learned at SLDI has helped her to mentor other congregations in preparing grant applications. The ministry provides a home for abandoned children, and the majority of parents have died of AIDS and some from cancer. The sisters go out to find these children, bring them to their home and care for them until they are 17 years old. The sisters are able to offer nursery school for the children in their care and then send the children to public school during the day. The sisters care for 58 girls and provide much needed protein rich foods.

A visitation was scheduled with the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary Immaculate where they run a project that serves four major slums in the area. Again, the sisters here participated in the SLDI program. Sr. Christine started a micro-finance program for unwed mothers and Sr. Anne is congregational project manager. Ministries on this site include a school, an unwed mothers program, animal husbandry (piggery and dairy) and a dispensary that serves a mostly HIV/AIDS population. Through SLDI mentoring component Sr. Wilfrida, congregational counsellor, mentored Sr. Mary who runs the HIV/AIDS program.



(Photograph: Sr. Marcia and Sr. Jane at the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary - Ongata Ronga)

The staff members here work tirelessly to rescue children from their drug and alcohol infested environments. They are helping 3,002 children currently (the nursery serves 500-600 children), 1,360 families, more than 5,000 people in all. They provide HIV medications. The focus of the ministry here is to provide food, security, to seek partners to assist in financing the care being given, to teach the children skills in such areas as finance and accounting in order to get jobs.



Also we held meetings to assess HESA program at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and signing a Framework of Reference between ASEC and CUEA.



Middle row: Left to right: Rev. Prof. Juvenalis Baitu (Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration), Sr. Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, ASEC, Msgr. Dr. Pius Rutechura (Vice Chancellor) **Back row:** Left to right: Rev. Prof. Fredrick Mvumbi (Immediate former Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; currently, Executive Director, Kisumu Campus), Dr. Simon Kangéthe (Dean Faculty of Education), Rev. Prof. Peter Gichure (Director, Academic Linkages), Rev. Dr. Charles Kyalo (University Chaplain), Prof. Justis Mbae ((Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs), Prof. Joseph Kavulya (University Librarian) **Front row:** Sr. Hilaria Chombo, Sr. Maureen Malashya, Sr. Clarisse Jaiwo, Sr. Lina Wanjiku, Sr. Francisca Damoah, Sr. Clementina Ombebe and Sr. Germina Keneema

In addition, ASEC entered into partnership with the AOSK's Chemi Chemi Ya Uzima Center, Nairobi. In this partnership, Catholic Sisters will study for a degree in Theology and Catechitics at the Institute which is affiliated to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa but run by the Association of Sisterhood of Kenya (AOSK).



Photo – taken after the signing of the Framework of Reference between ASEC and the AOSK, Chemi Chemi Ya Uzima Institute. In the photo are representatives from ASEC's eight countries coordinators, AOSK executive and Chemi Chemi Institute Administrators.

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has been instrumental in providing funding to facilitate in the education of Catholic Sisters in Africa. We are deeply indebted by this

On a personal note, I am touched by the challenges sisters have to confront each day in service to God's people. The joy they exude tells it all, they are indeed changing one life at a time. Our call to discipleship is to continually give without counting the cost! We are together in this journey... education is the greatest gift that can facilitate transformation of Africa. Join us in educating our Catholic Sisters in Africa!