



# SCORE-ECD NEWSLETTER

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Edition 3



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## Strengthening the Capacity of Religious Women in Early Childhood Development

(SCORE ECD III), funded by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is implemented through the National Associations and congregations, which bring national-level reach and visibility at the Association level and deep-rooted community ties through the congregations. These national associations include the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK), Associations of Women Religious Institutes in Malawi (AWRIM), Zambia Association of Sisterhoods (ZAS), Conference of Major Superiors of Religious in Ghana and at the regional level, the Association of Consecrated Women of Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA).

### Project Goal and Objectives

Phase III of the project runs from December 2021- Nov.2024. The overall goal is that children 0-3 years old in the target areas live in nurturing environments by 2024. The project increases technical capacity among Sister Congregations to deliver high-quality, equitable, and integrated Mother and Baby Course (IMBC), nurturing care, and family-strengthening services. Phase three also ensures that congregations have functional community-facility referral systems to enable timely access to services. SCORE ECD III offers increasing opportunities for networking and peer learning among congregations, particularly between continuing and newly added congregations. SCORE ECD III is offering opportunities for networking and peer learning among congregations, particularly between continuing and newly added congregations. Its scope is 10 districts in Ghana (CRS), 16 counties in Kenya, 7 districts in Malawi, and 8 districts in Zambia. 34 congregations through associations of sisters are implementing SCORE ECD III. The objectives of the project are:

- **Sisters deliver nurturing care and family strengthening services to caregivers of children 0-3 by 2024.**
  - To achieve this, there is technical training,

supervision and mentorship for sister master trainers, establishment of child ECD spacecenters, strengthened referral systems for preventive, curative and social support services.

- **Caregivers of children 0-3 years old are equipped with skills and capacities to provide their children nurturing care by 2024.**
  - To achieve this, there is training of volunteers in IMBC /ECD and smart couples. There are monthly home visits, group sessions, demonstrations, ECD space sessions and referrals. There is Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) formation.
- **NACCs have strengthened organizational capacity by 2024.**
  - To achieve this, there is Institutional capacity strengthening support in Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment Instrument (HOCAI) assessment, meal system set up in congregations, key policy development, increased documentation and resource mobilization, leadership, advocacy and networking, advocacy and networking strategy manual, advocacy initiative/ activities, engagement with local media platforms and key ECD actors.

The congregations implement the following components under phase III.

**Maternal mental health integration:** To support pregnant women and new mothers affected by depression and other mental health disorders, which can adversely affect breastfeeding, mother-child bonding, parenting quality, and ultimately children's overall development. The project team uses the adapted IMBC/ECD curriculum with low literacy audiences and deliver IMBC/-ECD messages through a care group platform. The messages are being delivered by community health volunteers (CHVs) and Lead Mothers under the supervision of Sister Master Trainers.

**Family and couples strengthening:** This is done to provide safe and stable home environments for a child's healthy development. It also improves communication and joint decision-making using approaches such as Strengthening Marriages and Relationships through Communication and Planning (SMART) Couples.



The project team combines group sessions with home visits. Couples who complete the program are expected to demonstrate improvements in gender relations and dynamics, male involvement in child health, birth-spacing, and joint health decision-making.

**Household economic strengthening:** SCORE ECD III capitalizes on CRS' Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) methodology to equip partners to integrate household economic strengthening into the program model. SILC is established to support community-based, user-owned, self-managed savings groups that are designed to serve those with little or no access to formal financial services. SILC groups are formed and facilitated by field agents, who are recruited from the community and trained on the SILC methodology. The project uses the private service provider (PSP) model, in which field agents are supported to become independent service providers serving SILC groups on a long-term, fee-based and market-driven basis.

**IMBC/ECD:** The project uses the Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) approach to build caregivers' knowledge and skills through the Care Groups Model where caregivers learn the ECD behaviors during a group session and a follow-up home visit is done by the Lead Mother to assess uptake and practice of the acquired skills. The project encourages caregivers to sustain the practice of nurturing care behaviors and where obstacles to practice are met, they are offered the required guidance and counseling, and where necessary, referrals for further management.

### **ACWECA SCORE ECD Participates in SMILER workshop**

In preparation to roll out the Strengthening Capacity of Women Religious in Early Childhood Development (SCORE ECD) phase III, funded by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, CRS Global, regional and country project managers and coordinators in collaboration with Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA), Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK), Association of Women in Religious Institutes of Malawi (AWRIM), Zambia Association of

Sisterhood (ZAS) and Ghana Country Program Managers and coordinators gathered virtually for five days between 1st-5th November 2021 for a workshop on SMILER (Simple Measurement of Indicators of Learning and Evidence-based Reporting). ACWECA SCORE ECD Coordinator, Sr. Wilhelmina Uhai Tunu, (LSOSF) said the workshop was an opportunity for participatory development of key Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system components as conceptualized in key project design documents and shaped by donor requirements and field realities.

"In the workshop, the participants produced drafts of key MEAL components that were reviewed and tested before finalization. Drafts included; a stakeholder communication plan, support supervision checklist, ECD space quality environment checklist, beneficiary registration, and attendance list, fidelity rating form during group sessions, neighbor group tracking form, Integrated Mother and Baby Course (IMBC) supervision form, Community Health Volunteers monthly summary report form, Sister congregation monthly report form, data flow maps, feedback mechanism, reporting due dates table, data collection forms. The team also developed Deep Implementation Plan for the three years and instructions among others," she said.

Sr. Tunu mentioned that Phase three of the SCORE ECD project is being implemented in Ghana with 10 sister congregations covering ten districts of Yendi, Nanumba North, Saboba, Zabzugu, Chereponi, Mion, West Gonja, Central Gonja, Bole and Sawla-Tuna Kalba. In Kenya, it is being implemented by 10 sister congregations and within sixteen counties including Meru, Siaya, Kisumu, Nairobi, Isiolo, Kajiado, Uasin Gishu, Narok, Kitui, Murang'a, Kiambu, Kisii, Migori, West Pokot, Mombasa, and Nakuru. Malawi implements three districts of Charadzulu, Nkhosakota, and Mzimba districts and implemented by six congregations. In Zambia eight districts including Keebe, Chipata, Chadiza, Kavuu, Mpongwe, Kasanka, Chifunabuli, and Kasaba. Implemented by five congregations.

Sr. Tunu further said SCORE ECD Phase III aims to ensure that children 0-3 years old in the target areas live in nurturing environment by 2024.

She also highlighted the project's objectives. "The project's first objective is that sisters deliver nurturing care and family-strengthening services to caregivers of children 0-3 by 2024. The second ensures that caregivers of children 0-3 years old provide their children nurturing care by 2024 and the third is that National Associations and Congregations of Catholic Sisters (NACCS) have strengthened organizational capacity by 2024".

### SCORE ECD Phase III

SCORE ECD project is in line with ACWECA strategic priority areas such as the Leadership program, family program, and Organizational Development and Growth. Hence can leverage ACWECA priority areas and lessons learned and best practices from SCORE ECD II to expand ECD to other African countries. ACWECA contributes to the achievement of the phase III goal by documenting, advocating, and influencing ECD using different platforms at regional and International levels, supporting congregations and associations to incorporate ECD into the formation syllabus or formation Programme, training formators who will in turn train Formees with basic knowledge of ECD, Provide Leadership training for the newly elected superiors within ACWECA region on Sustainability, administration, canon law, finance management, and others. Fundraise to increase and expand ECD to other National Associations in ACWECA Region among others.

Sr. Tunu explained that the SCORE-ECD Phase II project which was phasing out was implemented through the Associations of Sisters and Catholic Sister religious congregations in Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia and ACWECA at the regional level towards achieving the goal of children under 2 years (CU2) in Kenya, Malawi and Zambia thrive in a sustainable culture of care and support. Phase II of the project leveraged learning from the first phase of SCORE-ECD and focus intervention approach in integrated ECD by using the Care Group's model.

## AOSK- Strengthening Capacity of Women Religious in Early Child Development (SCORE-ECD) Project

By Christine Nguna

CRS has partnered with NACCS in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Ghana to implement SCORE ECD Project. SCORE ECD III aims to continue strengthening National Associations and Congregations of Catholic Sisters (NACCS) in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Ghana to address organizational capacity and sustainability challenges that affect the achievement of their respective ministry goals in nurturing care and maternal mental health, by scaling up the successful SCORE-ECD II model of support so that NACCS lead and sustain effective community-based integrated early childhood development and maternal mental health (IMBC/ECD) interventions.

In Kenya, CRS implements the project through AOSK and 10 congregations in different Counties across the country. The project began by training 20 sisters, as sisters master trainers who work directly with the beneficiaries or guide the community health volunteers to also reach out to the beneficiaries. The sisters were trained in areas of need, to increase their technical capacity to deliver high-quality services to the beneficiaries. The areas the sisters were trained in were; integrated maternal mental health (iMBC), nurturing care, and Family strengthening services (SILC and SMART Couples). Sisters' master trainers after the training have taken early childhood development services at a high level in the congregations' apostolates and the Country at large. The sisters have embarked on the project with much zeal by training 12 community health volunteers (CHVs) on the ECD curriculum and reaching out to the project participants (beneficiaries) with the ECD messages, the CHVs are also reaching out to the beneficiaries. Sisters have for the past months reached beneficiaries with the nurturing care information in areas of; nutrition, health, early stimulation/positive parenting practice, and Security and Safety.

This is evident with sisters engaged in carrying out sessions with beneficiaries at the health facility level, household, one-on-one, and many other forums such as the small Christian communities, local government administration forums (chief barazas) catholic women association meetings, parents' days in schools, etc.



## Catholic Sisters trained in Communication

After developing the communication strategy for better advocacy and implementation of strengthening the Capacity of Religious women in Early Childhood Development, (SCORE ECD), ACWECA planned for training on the use of the communication strategy which is being rolled out in the congregations within the Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa and particularly national associations of sisterhoods of Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia.

Regional Program Coordinator for SCORE-ECD, Sr. Wilhelmina Uhai Tunu says the workshop which was aimed at equipping Sisters with knowledge and skills on the use of communication tools which is crucial in their day-to-day activities.

She said, "Knowledge and skills on the use of communication tools will help sisters to integrate communication in the project design and

implementation, hence achieve the overall ACWECA and SCORE ECD objectives,"

She added that investing in project implementation, and communication builds trust with the target audience and encourages community ownership, thus improving sustainability and program quality. She said communication also promotes and enhances leadership buy-in and support, which is critical for advocacy and resource mobilization".

The facilitator of the course, Florence Ogola from Oxfam International, Global Media Officer said the participating sisters were equipped with skills and knowledge in communication channels/tools, crisis communication and, monitoring, the importance of communication, communications purpose and objectives, the role of communication in ATC/AAP, Audience Segmentation, monitoring and evaluation among others.

Florence said she was also impressed with the enthusiasm of the participants.

For her part, Sister Jane Kaputa of the Little Servants of Mary Immaculate (LSMI) from Zambia said she was very happy with the training and that the knowledge gained will help her improve a lot in her services.

"Not many including myself had knowledge in the use of communication channels/tools and many others as regard to disseminating information on our daily activities in our associations but I can assure you that we have gained a lot having undergone this course," she said.

The coordinator for the program, Sr. Wilhelmina Uhai Tunu commended the Hilton Foundation for supporting sisters in the region. She also commended CRS for taking an initiative to introduce the course for sisters to gain more knowledge and skills.

Christine Nguna, a participant from Kenya said that she has gained skills to enable her communicate better with SCORE ECD stakeholders. "Now I can communicate effectively with stakeholders on the SCORE ECD project. I have also gained skills on developing an effective communication plan.



With these skills, I intend to mentor the ten congregations implementing SCORE ECD to enable them develop communication plans for their congregations and apostolates/projects."

## **AWRIM drill families on Early Childhood Development ECD project**

**By: Sr. Teresa Mulenga, AWRIM communications**

The Association of Women in Religious Institutes of Malawi AWRIM through its Early Childhood Development ECD project Manager says lack of communication in marriages affects the good upbringing of children in most families.

This was disclosed during a training workshop that targeted couples in seven congregations that are implementing the School Early Childhood Development ECD project at Msamba Pastoral Centre, Lilongwe Archdiocese.

The project is being implemented by AWRIM through the seven congregations namely, Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Teresian Sisters, Carmelites, Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of Our Lady, Mary Consoler of the Afflicted, and the Presentation Sisters. Project Manager, Sister Rebecca Mathole said the project which is focusing on 0-3 years children has also a component of smart couples to be trained on the importance of working together as families.

"We understand that for the successful implementation of the project, we need not leave behind couples as they are the major partners and also make rightful decisions as couples like working together as we know that if they do not do that it affects children," she said. Sister Mathole added that in as much as some of these couples had already undergone several family workshops, like those from the Catholic Family Movement, CFM, and Marriage Encounter among others, this was specifically targeting the ECD.

"It is sad to note that some couples use children to communicate with their spouses within the family, which if not properly handled affects the psychological part of the children, and as couples, they, need to respect their marriages considering that it was created by God who is also the author," sister Mathole explained.

She emphasized that communication is an integral part of any successful marriage.

According to the lead facilitator couple of the Lubega Gonzanga and Paskazi Lubega from Uganda, their emphasis was to encourage couples to live a Christian and happy life by putting God first in their marriages.

"We use an example of a physical house which is a marriage where all aspects are being looked into from the foundation stage, where if the foundation is strong, will also help to take good care of the children in our homes," Gonzanga said.

The couple which is working under the banner of Faithful house preaches the four pillars of marriage namely Love, Faithfulness, Respect for human life, and Dignity.

"We have also reminded couples of the need to express themselves freely on issues of family development, spoiling one another, having time for one another, being faithful, working together, and most importantly a plea to women who always suffer in silence, that they need to speak out and express their feelings to their husbands," he said.

He stated that one of the areas the faithful group looks into is how couples can deal with issues of unfaithfulness, and how couples can lead a faithful life, by being transparent.

Gonzanga family added that families need also to preserve and promote life, right away from conception to human death and also involve children and the community in various programs.

"It is also good to be reminded that the faithful house promotes the four walls follow which are, God, Spouse, Children, Job, and other things, saying this order has to remain like that, as most of the challenges in marriages come when we distort the order," they added.

The couple also tackled issues affecting human being like alcohol, drug abuse, and also different cultural practices that in one way or another has an impact on successful marriages.

One of the participants Mercy Amon from Kasombo, Traditional Authority Kasombo in Dedza diocese, said the training was helpful as they have learned a lot of topics that will help to build their families.

Another participant Stefano Khavala, from Nsanje who works for Kalembe community hospital, said the most important thing was about putting God first and faithfulness, which if exercised will help in ending gender-based violence in families.

“We have to promote dialogue whenever there are differences instead of involving third parties, as this only exposes our marriage flaws and a disrespect to our partner,” he said. He added, “We have been encouraged to also help our wives with household chores if we are to stop complaining about excuses from our spouses whenever we need their services”.

The faithful house programme started in Uganda in 2004 and with a pilot phase in other two countries of Rwanda and Ethiopia then after a positive evaluation, it was scaled to other 20 African countries where Catholic Relief Services, CRS is working including Malawi.

The School ECD programme is being implemented with support from the Conrad Hilton Foundation with technical support from Catholic Relief Services.

## **National Policy Conference on Early Childhood Care, Education and Development (ECCED) Policy in Nairobi, Kenya.**

A two-day Conference on Early Childhood Care Education Development (ECCED), with the theme “Advancing Kenya's ECCED Legal Reforms in the Era of Devolution”, was held during 9-10 March 2022, at the Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.



The Conference brought together 233 delegates, comprising 218 physically present and 15 virtually via Zoom representing National and County Governments, the Council of Governors Secretariat, County First Ladies, implementing and research organizations, the private sector, international development partners, and supporters deliberated and shared their ideas on the theme and sub-themes of the Conference to foster comprehensive discourse and commitments for improving ECCED policy and legal environment and to stand together to accelerate the growth of the early childhood care, education, and development ecosystem, creating a world where children and their carers can thrive.



In attendance were also key players in implementing the Strengthening the Capacity of Women Religious in Early Childhood Development (SCORE-ECD), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA), and Association of Sisters of Kenya (AOSK).

Participants discussed a roadmap for further collaborative action that not only puts the government in the in but ensures other actors work together to accelerate quality, affordable early childhood care and education in Kenya.

The purpose of the National Conference on ECCED was to give an opportunity for stakeholders to specifically share ideas, knowledge, and understanding of the status of policy and regulatory reform at the county and national levels.



The following were the selected sub-themes; nurturing care framework, partnerships and coordination, inclusion, workforce development, financing investing, and budget.

At the close of the conference, delegates and the ECCED Policy and Regulatory Reforms Technical Working Group of the inaugural National ECCED Policy Conference released a communique that called for action on the following:

- Integrate the Nurturing Care Framework into policy, legislation, and national and county programming: prioritize at the highest political authority, the implementation of the Nurturing Care Framework;
- Enact National Kenya's ECD policy to strengthen multi-sectoral partnerships, coordination, and collaboration;
- Harmonise and strengthen systems for developmental monitoring, to ensure assessment, screening, early detection, management, and referral of developmental delays in County and National level programmes;
- The National Government to support the 47 Counties to set up minimum standards for all categories of childcare facilities as per relevant policies;
- National Government to scale up the capacity building of frontline workers, all caregivers, and teachers to integrate Nurturing Care for ECD into maternal and child health services to enable all children to reach their full development potential;
- The National Government to dedicate funds with guiding financing frameworks that can be adapted by counties, indicating how funding for early childhood should be prioritized and utilized;
- The 47 County Governments prioritize investments in early learning, beyond infrastructural development, for the holistic development of children.
- All ECCED actors to collaborate and support government efforts in the aforementioned call to action.

The Collaborative Action for Childcare in Kenya is designed to respond to the biggest challenges facing the early childhood care, education, and development ecosystem.

## **SCORE ECD Celebrates the World Breastfeeding Week**

**By Victor Emoja**  
**AOSK-Communication Officer**

The Vital Importance of breastfeeding as the best possible start in life is more critical than ever. During this world breastfeeding week, under its theme "STEP UP FOR BREASTFEEDING: EDUCATE AND SUPPORT", UNICEF and WHO called upon governments, and partners to allocate increased resources to protect, promote and support breastfeeding policies and programmes, especially for the most vulnerable families living in emergency settings. WHO recommends that standard infant feeding guidelines should be adhered to during the COVID-19 pandemic. These standard infant guidelines are Initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth, Exclusive breastfeeding until the babies are six months old, and continued breastfeeding along with nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods until the age of two years or beyond.

On 7th July 2022 in Kisumu County the Franciscan Missionaries Sisters of St. Joseph who are implementing the SCORE ECD project in collaboration with relevant partners (KUAP, KIDOGO, SAVE THE CHILDREN, USAID Nutrition Advocacy, Biodiversity, JIW PACHI, RED CROSS, MAKES ME SMILE, ADZ Nyanza), took part in Launching the World breastfeeding week. The event is always conducted in August every year but due to the election calendar in Kenya, it was pushed back to the first week of July 2022.

Kisumu County department of Nutrition and other health sectors, education, and Agriculture marked the breastfeeding week, with the opening of a modern breastfeeding space at the Kibuye open market where breastfeeding

mothers will be able to go in and comfortably breastfeed their babies while going to market services (their work) the occasion was presided over by the First Lady of Kisumu County, Madam Dorothy Nyong’o. During the event SCORE, ECD III showcased their best practices through dramas, songs, and skits in relation to the theme of the event and also was able to share information with the crowd about their services and achievements.



Franciscan Missionaries of St. Joseph SCORE ECD III caregivers in procession displaying a banner during the launching of the World Breast-Feeding week in Kibuye Kisumu County.



Kisumu County First Lady, Dorothy Nyong'o on the far right, SCORE ECD team, and other partners (TWGs) during the World Breast Feeding Week launch in Kisumu county.

## World Breastfeeding Event July 2022 Kisumu Report

By Masters Trainer KUAP SCORE ECD III  
Sr Linet Kemuma and Dancun Onyango

### Impact of world breastfeeding event:

Communities benefit overall when mothers breastfeed. Breastfeeding saves lives. Research shows that if 90% of families breastfed exclusively for six months, nearly 1,000 deaths among infants could be prevented each year. Breastfeeding saves money.

### The benefit of Launch to the mothers

“I had a home birth for my first child and what a traditional midwife taught me is not what I know now”, said the beneficiary mother from KUAP. I have realized some of our practices are wrong. We need to change. They were just old traditions.

To strengthen mother-to-mother support, talking with other women who are breastfeeding can help mothers decide to start and keep breastfeeding. The community can support mother-to-mother groups and develop peer counseling programs in health and community setting which are good ways to connect breastfeeding mothers with each other. KUAP in partnership with others including Kisumu county established a breastfeeding room well furnished with the requirements at the second largest market in east Africa kibuye where mothers would comfortably break and had their children breastfeed comfortably.

Kisumu County First Lady, who was the guest of honour said on the launch day, “Breastfeeding is a shared responsibility between parents; children’s health and wellbeing could be improved by addressing gender inequities. Our leaders need to support both parents to play an active role in children’s lives.”





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KUAP MASTER TRAINER VISITED A BREASTFEEDING BOOTH IN KIBUYE MARKET KISUMU



KUAP SCORE ECD III TEAM WITH THEIR BANNER OF ADVOCACY ON THE WORLD BREASTFEEDING DAY IN KIBUYE MARKET



DEMONSTRATION OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT STAFF ON HOW BREAST WORKS.

## Development of the Nairobi County Chapter Framework Workshop in Nakuru.



The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK) is in the process of forming ECD chapters in the 47 counties. Currently ECD Network for Kenya has formed chapters in 4 counties and is in the stages of strengthening the chapters. In Nairobi County, technical committee was formed consisting of different ECD actors. The Nakuru workshop aim was to develop a Nairobi County chapter framework. This was supported by world vision Kenya. This framework will enable the network to operationalize the ECD county chapters.

The workshop took place from 22nd to 25th March at Midlands Hotel in Nakuru.



The objectives of the workshop were:

- To bring together a multisectoral representation of ECD stakeholders in Nairobi County;



- To provide an opportunity for sharing knowledge among stakeholders in the sector by identifying pathways for sectoral coordination and collaboration;
- To influence budgeting and financing of ECD in Nairobi County through advocacy strategies such as political influence, media campaigns, and legal frameworks.

Below are some of the issues that were discussed during the workshop:

1. How do we develop a situation analysis on the state of ECD in Nairobi?
2. Creation of a flow chart on how to address the ECD gaps in Nairobi County.

World Vision, representative welcomed participants to the workshop. He alighted of how delighted he was to see the turnout of members to help develop the framework. He emphasized on the 3 W's 'Watoto wacheze wasome na wajifunze'

The Nairobi County Government representative, Ruth Akinyi opened the workshop with a delightful remark. She explained how the framework would help the county in bringing all the ECD actors together. She highlighted that all the Nairobi sub-counties were represented and she was excited to engage with all of them.



During the gathering, it was pointed out that so far ECD Network for Kenya implemented the following: Convening of Nairobi ECD stakeholders and County Department Education, selection of the chapter committee members (10members and 1 co-opted (Uthabiti), convened first

technical working group (TWG), development of roles of TWG, and the last one was the ECD Framework Development.

During the workshop, there was also an input on Nurturing Care Framework: Moving ECD from Science to Scale by Oscar Kadenge, a consulting Specialist, ECD.

At the close of the workshop, delegates formed technical groups to finalize the framework that will later be circulated to all the members of Nairobi County.

The meeting comprised participants from different sectors and stakeholder groups thus deepening or catalyzing multisectoral collaborations for early childhood development. Representatives from all ECD organizations from Nairobi County including the government.

Participants had an opportunity to share work underway, reflect on opportunities and challenges, and agree on a way forward together. Each workshop concluded with the identification of priority actions to be completed in 2022 and beyond.

The Action brought together an ever-expanding number of partners engaged in advancing quality affordable Early Childhood Care Education and Development (ECCED) in Kenya from the Government, Council of Governors, researchers, academia, civil society organizations, parliamentarians, National and County Assembly committees on Education and Delegated Legislation, Child-care Entrepreneurs and private sector players.





## Training of Formators on Basic SCORE ECD

Sr. Pauline Acayo, CRS SCORE ECD Coordinator & Sr. Wilhelmina Tunu, ACWECA SCORE ECD Coordinator

Sisters work with mothers in hospitals (under 5 clinics), schools, and communities and in the church women groups. In this sense, they interact with mothers and children in many forums. The Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA) has the responsibility to promote family and youth ministry by ensuring that children are safeguarded at all times. SCORE ECD project has strengthened the Institutional capacity of the congregations and built the technical capacity of sisters to ensure that there is an increased impact on the lives of children aged 0-3 and their families. To expand the SCORE ECD project, ACWECA; use continuous tense;

- Integrates ECD Curriculum into the Formation Program. This integration will help formees to learn the importance of interacting with women for the holistic formation of children.
- Provides basic ECD orientation to Formators in the Formation Centers about the CRS SCORE ECD Curriculum, SCORE ECD Flip Chart, and Care group model and implementation approaches and processes.

## Congregations Success Stories

Meeting with the CEO at the Little Sisters of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus

In tracing the SCORE ECD project journey through HOCAI the CEO Sr. Mary Agnes said that they began to partner with CRS in 2014 after being invited by AOSK to participate in implementing the project. As Congregation they seek to discern the needs of the time in the spirit of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. They were introduced to HOCAI a magical tool that accompanied them in their sustainability journey.

Sr. Naomi was sent for training and she later proposed that 7 other sisters be trained on the science of ECD, MTs, strategic planning, Human resource management, fund development, M&E networking, and partnership.

This increased 40% of their income funded by donors. Using HOCAI they scored themselves and identified some gaps.

### Way forward

- Service delivery – the creation of beneficiary groups
- Fund development – they constituted a resource mobilization team and capacity building.
- HRM - they realized that they had mixed charity, employment, and professionalism so they developed JDs – contracts – policies.
- One of their challenges was to involve the beneficiaries who were not part of the group.
- They formed groups e.g., feeding projects for 5 years and below children, HIV patients, diabetics.
- They brought parents and family members together.
- They centralized their resources and redefined their vision and mission statements and made them known to all.

### LWAK Visit

(Franciscan Sisters of St Anne & St Elizabeth hospital)

Throughout the project, they have experienced a lot of change and growth in the Community. They visited the ECD space and care group session in Rambugu. They managed to review module 1 Card 4 for danger signs during pregnancy. Lawrence is the only man among women in the care group session representing all other men in taking care of all women. The project is transforming the lives of many women and helping people understand what's happening in families and communities. The Project is important because it prepares the community for the future.

Jacqueline explains how she learned a lot from the program and how it has benefited her socially and psychologically, she is happy and acknowledges practicing everything. She committed herself to be attending sessions. "This program is holding my life as a woman and my child at 0-3 years."

#### Lesson learnt from visit to LWAK

- Talking to the child while in the womb
- Husband to support his wife when pregnant and after.
- Representative of County Government to take care of the health activities and coordinating Community Health Volunteers (CHVs).
- A lot of change is being realized in the community.
- At the ECD center, people are allocated to coordinate activities and observe what children do.
- Locally made materials are brought by care givers for children to play.

### Women Religious in Ghana Trained in Early Childhood Development Skills

By Newswatchgh.com



Some women Religious selected from seven Congregations and Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) from ten beneficiary towns (Municipalities/Districts) recently attended a 3-day training workshop on Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Tamale. Organised by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) – Ghana, it is expected to be implemented under a project dubbed, "Strengthening the Capacity of Women Religious (SCORE ECD III)".

The beneficiary towns (Municipalities/Districts) are Damongo, Walewale, Saboba, Tatale, Chereponi, Tuna (Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District), Chamba

(Nanumba North Municipality), Tinga (Bole District), Kongo (Nabdan District) and Fumbisi (Builsa South District).

The implementing Congregations comprise of Sisters of Mary Immaculate, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy,



Sisters of Charity of St. Anne, Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary Mother of Christ and Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters.

The 3-year project spanning from December 2021 to November 2024, has an overall goal of ensuring that children between the ages of 0-3 years in the targeted areas live in a nurturing environment by the end of 2024. The project is funded by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, a Philanthropic Trust based in the United States of America in partnership with CRS Ghana and implemented by the afore-named Congregations under the supervision of the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious in Ghana (CMSR-G).

Mr. Daniel Mumuni, Country Representative of CRS-Ghana, Dr. Selamawit Tadesse, Senior ECD Technical Advisor at CRS Headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, Sr. Pauline Silver Acayo, Coordinator of SCORE ECD Projects in charge of Kenya, Malawi, Zambia and Ghana, and Sr. Wilhelmina Uhai Tunu, Coordinator of SCORE ECD Projects, ACWECA, who were the Resource Persons, and Sr. Theodora Adzayawo, SMMC, Executive Secretary of CMSR-G, among other dignitaries, were present at the opening ceremony.

In a brief welcome address, Sr. Juliana Lamisi Akayeti, SMI, the SCORE-ECD III Manager, expressed delight that the project has now been extended to Ghana from Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia.



She called on participants to actively participate in the training in order to acquire the needed skills to bring up intelligent youth for the development of Ghana's economy. Under the project, participants' technical capacity to deliver high-quality and holistic ECD services to the most vulnerable families would be enhanced through nurturing care and family-strengthening services while ensuring that the implementing Congregations have functional community-facility referral systems to facilitate timely access to services and also offer opportunities for networking and peer learning among the Congregations. Participants were taken through the overview of the project and other relevant topics such as why SCORE ECD focuses on the 0-3 age group, the importance of play and communication in ECD,

the importance of play and communication in ECD, components of responsive caregiving, SCORE ECD Intervention Framework for holistic ECD, care group model used in SCORE ECD III, Nurturing Care Framework, quality assurance, and monitoring, among others.

Through the training, participants gained new knowledge, skills, and attitude on how children develop, learn and thrive and what caregivers need to practice for their children to thrive in a playful nurturing environment especially focusing on maternal mental health, children's development in health, nutrition, safety and security, responsive care and early learning, and it is envisioned that the SCORE ECD III will become a model for quality community-based ECD services in Ghana.

In a brief closing remark, Sr. Adzayawo urged participants to apply the knowledge they have acquired for the benefit of the people in their respective communities, especially children within the scope of the project. She thanked the Resource Persons for their passion to ensure that the SCORE ECD III is successfully implemented in Ghana, expressing optimism that this would open avenues for future projects.

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Speaking in an interview about how they would use the knowledge acquired to benefit the people in their localities, Sr. Stephany Ayomah, SMI, from Chamba, said she is now in a better place to educate mothers on how to take care of their babies, improve on their hygiene, live and take good care of their families as regards their physical, social, spiritual and emotional development. She hoped mothers as stakeholders will cooperate with her team to ensure the success of the project.

Sr. Paschalina Gyereh, SSpS, from Saboba, said she is also better placed to educate expectant and lactation mothers to take good care of their children, most especially the babies in their wombs. She was hopeful that any teething challenges that may arise will not adversely impact the project.

## Zambia Association of Sisterhoods

The Zambia association of sisterhood through partnership with Catholic Relief service is implementing the project SCORE ECD through the help of five congregations namely the little servant of Little Servant of Mary Immaculate, Dominican sisters of the Sacred heart of Jesus, Franciscan Missionary sisters of the Divine Motherhood, Good shepherd sisters and Charity of Ottawa sisters.

SCORE ECD III is a three-year project expected to run from 1st December 2021 to 30th November 2024. The Project will be building up from SCORE II and will adapt the iMBC/ECD model based on learning from SCORE II.

The Goal of SCORE ECD III is that children 0-3 years old in the target area live in nurturing environment. The project has three objectives that will help the project team to reach out to the intended beneficiaries which are caregivers of children 0-3 years old and their spouses and adolescent mothers of children 0-3 years and their partners.

**Objective 1:** Sisters deliver nurturing care and family strengthening services to caregivers of children 0-3 by 2024

**Objective 2:** Caregivers of children 0-3 years old are equipped with skills and capacities to provide their children nurturing care by 2024

**Objective 3:** NACCS have strengthened organizational capacity by 2024

## Strengthening the Capacity of Women Religious in Early Childhood Development Phase III

By Sr. Christabel Kazembe  
SCORE ECD project Manager, Zambia

Advancing the strides made in phase II, the team continues to deliver messages that promote early childhood development in the communities of Ndola, Kaparu, Kasanka with an addition of another site in Chipangali. The scaling up of ECD services in Kasanka has led to the site adding another site. This entails that the ECD activities will be carried out in Kaishe and Mondo sites of Kasanka.

The Conrad Hilton Foundation-funded project will also see the inclusion of activities around integrated Mother Baby Course which will focus on maternal mental health and SMART Couples looking at improving communication in the home between couples caring for children between 0 and 3 years. Previously, the focus was on children aged between 0 and 2 but this time around the age range has been extended to 3.

The CRAS/ZAS implemented projects has kicked off the implementation of activities including training targeting the 18 Community Health Volunteers, 300 Lead Mothers, and 30 Male Champions who will spearhead the delivery of activities in the communities. The association has trained nine sister master trainers in different courses to build and strengthen their capacity to implement the project well and reach out to the intended beneficiaries.



The training the sisters attend to focused on the following activities:

- Good health
- Adequate nutrition
- Responsive caregiving
- Safety and security
- Opportunities for early learning
- Smart couples
- Integrated mother-baby course



*Community-based training in Kalichero*

More than 1000 beneficiaries have reached with Nutrition and WASH messages, Early stimulation, integrated mother-baby course, smart couples, health-seeking behaviors massages Play and Communication

Playing and communicating with children helps the child to develop his/her milestone at an appropriate time. male champions were encouraged to take lead in playing and communicating to children as early as 3 months when the baby is just in the womb. This work is all both parents. Therefore more than 1000 men have starting playing with their children





Toys refine a child's motor development; they promote children's cognitive development by stimulating their concentration and memory skills.



Toys also boost children's emotional development, and social development which will help them attain their milestones, therefore, sister master trainers have shared these messages to the lead mothers/fathers and male champions. Over 1000 mothers have made toys for their children to help them develop the four domains (physical, intellectual, social, and cognitive)

## Cooking Demonstration



Cooking demonstrations were conducted to enhance mothers' skills in cooking different food containing macro and micronutrients to better their children's health. Therefore more than 1000 mothers of children 0-3 years old have started feeding their children with three or four groups of foods per day.

In addition to that mothers have continued cooking /preparing different locally available food using different methods, this has helped to reduce malnutrition in the areas we are implementing the project.

## SILC (Saving Internal Lending Community )

Saving and internal lending communities (SILC) are a type of community-based accumulating savings and credit association. It is a self-selected group of people who pool their money into a fund from which members can borrow. The money is paid back with interest causing the fund to grow. Therefore, a good number of our beneficiaries, lead mothers/fathers, and community health volunteers have welcomed this tradition and they have started saving and borrowing. SILC is helping our beneficiaries to start small businesses (IGA) to sustain their families.

In Kasanka Kaishe site, there are three groups of SILC and of these, 22 members are SCORE beneficiaries 15 are lead mothers/fathers, and three CHVs. therefore, the current total saving in all their groups is K10,900.00.

Kalichero site has formed five groups so far which includes 65 beneficiaries, eight lead mothers and one CHV.

In Mondo site there are four SILC groups so far which consist of 30 beneficiaries, 15 lead mothers, and two CHVs.





On the Kapata side, three SILC groups have been formed which are composed of 30 beneficiaries, 15 lead mothers three CHVs, and one ECD space.

### WASH

All six sites have continues encouraging mothers to practice Hand washing to prevent certain diseases like diarrhea.

More than 1000 beneficiaries are able to demonstrate hand washing, are able to boil drinking water/home treatment using chlorine, and safe storage of water ( covered containers). In addition to that more than 1000 households have proper toilets, dish rack rubbish pits, and tip taps furthermore mothers are able to cook food for their children using the locally available foods stuff such as pumpkins,cassava leaves.

### Backyard Garden

With the messages on a healthy diet for pregnant and lactating mothers, our beneficiaries have planted different vegetables for their families, which will help them to feed their families with a balanced diet.



