

REPORT

FIRST NATIONAL CATHOLIC CONFERENCE ON HIV/AIDS

Conference Theme: *"This We Teach and Do"*

Date: *June 25th - 29th, 2007*

Venue: **Kenya Institute of Education, Nairobi**

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The conference was convened by the Kenya Episcopal Conference under the stewardship of the Catholic Secretariat. The prime objective of the conference was to review and celebrate twenty years of Catholic AIDS Ministry in Kenya. The official policy of the Catholic Church; "This We Teach and Do" was launched at the conference. The policy was approved by Catholic Bishops of Kenya at the Plenary Assembly of November 2006.

The key conference organizers were the Kenya Catholic HIV/AIDS Taskforce (K-CHAT), the Catholic Health Commission and Catholic Groups and NGOs that are involved in the AIDS Ministry such as Education for Life Program.



REPRESENTATION OF ST. CAMILLUS MISSION KARUNGU

St. Camillus Mission Karungu was invited by the conference organizing committee to participate in the conference presentations and deliberations on two specific areas:-

1. Management of opportunistic infections
2. Challenges of OVC care and support in a rural set up.

In a team of five people the Program Director, Fr. Emilio Balliana represented the Mission. The presentations were made on Monday June 25, 2007 and Wednesday June 27, 2007 by Emily Nyagilo (Clinical Officer- ART Project) and George Ariya (Program Coordinator - Dala Kiye Program). The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Homa bay was also invited to lead in a pastoral vision on OVC interventions on Wednesday June 27, 2007. He made a visionary well researched presentation on the OVC interventions under the Diocese. The Bishop highlighted and made congratulatory remarks on the integrated HIV/AIDS and OVC interventions in St. Camillus Mission.



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The conference programme was well designed to address the key issues on HIV/AIDS and OVC situation in Kenya. The first day presentations focused on care and support for those living with HIV and affected by AIDS. The second day was set apart for prevention of HIV spread whereas the third day focused mainly on OVC situation. Each day started at 8:30 am with morning devotion, pastoral visions and technical information on the day's themes. There were 12 presentations on average on each day in various rooms within the conference venue. The attendance and participation in the colorful conference was drawn from Catholic Clergy (Bishops, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters), Catholic Missions, Government representatives and donor communities. The community of people

living with HIV/AIDS was also represented and granted the opportunity to facilitate various sessions in the conference. The key topics were presented and deliberated upon were:

- ❑ The relationship between health status, viral load and CD4 cell count
- ❑ Management of Opportunistic Infections
- ❑ AIDS and nutrition
- ❑ Pastoral concerns of AIDS
- ❑ AIDS Program in Kenya
- ❑ ART alternatives
- ❑ Home Based Care for PLWHA
- ❑ Self support for PLWHA
- ❑ Discordant couples
- ❑ AIDS policies in religious communities
- ❑ Government policies and practices
- ❑ Alcohol, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS
- ❑ Behavior Change Process in HIV/AIDS prevention
- ❑ PMTCT
- ❑ VCT as a tool for prevention
- ❑ Understanding vulnerability of HIV infection
- ❑ Abstinence for the unmarried
- ❑ Gender stereotyping culture in relation to HIV & AIDS
- ❑ Sexual offences Act
- ❑ AIDS vaccine initiative
- ❑ Pastoral manual on HIV/AIDS
- ❑ AIDS for families
- ❑ Communities awareness
- ❑ Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA)
- ❑ Behavior change amongst the youth through peer counseling
- ❑ HIV response through the CBHC program in pastoral communities
- ❑ ABY in Catholic Primary schools, Experiences, challenges and opportunities
- ❑ Magnitude of the OVC situation
- ❑ Community involvement in OVC care
- ❑ Trauma of OVC
- ❑ The child trafficking phenomena
- ❑ Children ACT in Kenya
- ❑ Child and teenage counseling
- ❑ Caring for caregivers
- ❑ Integrating cultural values and challenges regarding AIDS
- ❑ Books on children speaking on AIDS
- ❑ Child abuse and national guidelines
- ❑ Family set up in OVC care
- ❑ Behavior formation for OVC
- ❑ Videos on AIDS
- ❑ Challenges to OVC care and support in Rural set up

CONFERENCE RESULTS

- ❑ The Catholic Church in Kenya reviewed and celebrated the twenty years of Catholic AIDS ministry since the challenges of AIDS in 1987.
- ❑ The over 1000 participants in the conference learnt about the Foundations of Catholic AIDS Ministry: Building on “The Church Speaks and Teaches” (This We Teach and Do).
- ❑ The conference created an opportunity for enhanced collaborations and networking everyone involved in the church’s AIDS ministry to develop

- planning and collaboration, building on The Church Presents Her Strategy “This We teach and Do”.
- ❑ The conference participants shared on what the Catholic Church is doing on HIV/AIDS in Kenya. It came to light what others in Kenya are doing to stem the AIDS pandemic, especially government policy and practice
 - ❑ The Catholic Church image on love and Compassionate response to those infected was demonstrated.
 - ❑ The Catholic HIV/AIDS policy “This We Teach and Do” was officially launched to carry forward the church’s AIDS Ministry in Kenya. This was officiated by the Pope’s Representative in Kenya, His Excellency Allain Lebeaupin – Apostolic Nuncio

