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# **Sisters' Blended Value Project**

Strathmore University Business School has partnered with the Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa to implement the Sisters Blended Value Project.

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Catholic Sisters, who run various social ministries within their congregations, are facing a decline in donor funding brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, a deficiency in leadership acumen and

the absence of adequate sustainability measures is detrimental to the success of these social initiatives, potentially undermining the efforts to empower marginalized and suffering communities. To address these challenges, Strathmore University Business School (SBS) has partnered with the Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA) to implement the Sisters' Blended Value Project (SBVP). Funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the three-year project aims to develop skills, support networking opportunities, and transform social ministries into sustainable social enterprises in Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, and Tanzania. In the past year, SBS and ACWECA have trained 292 sisters from 147 congregations through their Project Management, Social Enterprise - Start-Up, and Social Enterprise - Growth programmes.

The sisters have reported positive results from the training:

*“The one week was so wonderful! I am grateful for the experience. I got to learn a lot from the Program, I acquired a lot of skills, knowledge and insights that I’ll be able to go back and implement in the projects. The interactions with the lecturers in the class stood out for me. The lecturers created an atmosphere for us to share freely and actively involved us in the class sessions, making them very practical,” Sr. Maureen Ogunde, Kenya.*

“The Social Enterprise Programme has equipped me with the tools to effectively utilize resources and personnel to maintain the ongoing operations of the ministry, while also fostering creativity and innovation to identify new strategies that will enable our project to meet current needs and ensure its long-term

sustainability,” Sr. Achieng Dorothy, Uganda.

*“The Social Enterprise Programme - Start-Up was an amazing experience. It brought to light a lot of opportunities which I never observed and taught me skills on how-to tap into these opportunities in my community,” Sr. Valeria Kabaso, Zambia.*

*“I enjoyed the way we were taken through how to make budgets and how to implement the budgets along with the risks that may come up during the Project Management Programme,” Sr. Patricia Immaculate, Tanzania.*

The SBVP project team recently concluded a series of conferences in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia with the goal of exploring key thematic areas such as Agribusiness, Healthcare, Education, Manufacturing, and Hospitality. The

theme of The Inaugural Strathmore Social Entrepreneurship Conference was ***“Unlocking the Potential for Sustainable Social Enterprises”*** and provided a platform for peer learning and networking.

The objective of the conference was to bring together Catholic sisters and other non-religious social entrepreneurs to identify areas of collaboration and discuss the potential of social entrepreneurship as a powerful force for social transformation in Africa. Attendees were provided with opportunities for capacity building and collaboration in organized, fluid, open, and integrated teams championing social entrepreneurship across Africa. The conferences were well-attended by sisters from the host countries, as well as key stakeholders and speakers from successful and promising social enterprises who shared insights and best practices.

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