



**NEWSLETTER VOL. 5, No. 1
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**2016 GHR-FUNDED ACTIVITIES
A TIME OF INTEGRATION**

FINAL REPORT TO GHR



One year ago we reflected on 2015 as a Year of Intensification prompted by the GHR grant activities that were intended to stabilize new understandings and skills gained through "Leading with Prophetic Hope: Leadership Development and Strategic Planning for Women Religious in Cameroon".

In 2016 we embraced the third year's GHR activities realizing that developing a stable functioning of new skills would be part of changing the culture of the way we do things. Indeed, that has been the case. By year end, we were able to present a final report to GHR that reviewed the entire three-year project.

meetings of commissions and superiors on different continents have created a deeper sense of our common mission and identity as well as providing the opportunity to experience other cultural realities.

Personally for me it has been a journey in self-knowledge because giving accounts, tracking receipts, trying to look for the missing "centesimo" have increased the values of stewardship, accountability and transparency as well as trust.

Our thanks go to the GHR Foundation for opening such a new page in our history. You have made us believe we can make a great difference in the church and society. Special thanks to the FSPA community for allowing Sr. Marlene to dedicate so much time and energy in this service. A big "thank you" to all the FCV communities, friends like Sr. Joyce Meyer PBVM, Dave Sauer and many other people who shared their wisdom in the various programs organized.

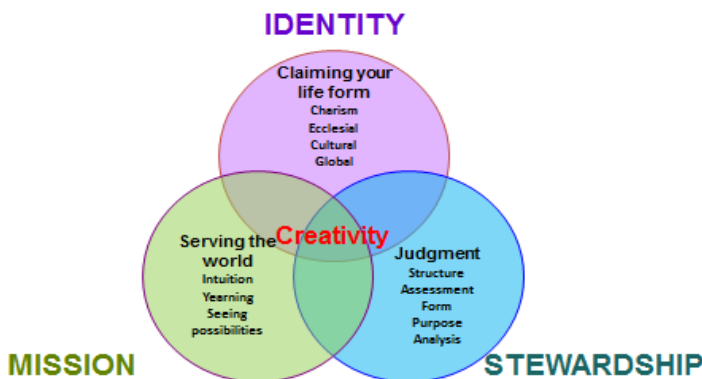
We cannot hide a sense of pride in having reached the expected "Outcomes" of this Project. However there is also a deeper sense of responsibility for its sustainability.

**From Sr. Roberta Feh TSSF
Provincial in Cameroon**

The entire Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis Congregation has shared in the GHR blessing. . . . Yes, The TSSF Cameroon Province will never be the same. The door of awakening and growth has been opened and will never be closed. It is my prayer that we become a contagious presence to the people we are called to serve as well as other Religious sisters we come in contact with as we carry out our ministry with prophetic hope. May God bless the GHR Foundation, FCV and the TSSF.

**From Kathleen Mahoney
GHR Senior Program Officer and Advisor**

Many thanks for preparing and sending us these reports. I look forward to reading and learning from them. (2-1-17)



Leading With Prophetic Hope

Here are some comments from various individuals upon receiving the report.

Sr. Alphonsa Kiven TSSF, Vicar General in Rome
These three years have been years of transformation and conversion as a congregation. The international



TSSF International Audit Meeting

Absam, Austria
November 21-24, 2016

Gifted for Mission: Stewardship, Accountability and Solidarity

In its 2013 General Chapter, a mandate was given to conduct a congregational-wide audit of its finances and properties. This would be an unprecedented event which the GHR grant funded. An international meeting took place in Absam, Austria, near Innsbruck and Hall, the location of the Austrian province. Attended by members of the General Council, the congregation treasurer, and bursars and representatives of each province, the purpose was to determine the consolidated assets and liabilities of the congregation and to develop a financial plan.



Back row L/R: Alphonsa Kiven, Maria Luise Eberharter, Herta Klammer, Odette Ngong, Marceline Yenmuleh, Maria Theresia Oberwalder, Elizabeth Tschurtschenthaler.
Front row L/R: Maria Michaela Mayr, Isabelle Mahla, Marcia Lunz OSF, Marlene Weisenbeck FSPA, Luitgard Kainer.

Sisters Marcia Lunz OSF and Marlene Weisenbeck FSPA facilitated the meeting which focused on the following aims and objectives.

AIMS

- To study the reports of the finances and assets from all the Provinces/Region
- To root the work in biblical and Franciscan contexts
- To deepen the sense of a common mission

OBJECTIVES

- To create the awareness that all resources are at the service of the common mission of TSSF
- To let the values of stewardship, accountability and solidarity be reflected in the work

- To deepen the ability to look at reality from different cultural, social and economic contexts

Guest presenter Fr. John Puodziunas OFM, Eonomo General in Rome, provided an opening day of reflection with content that included:

- Reflection on values that bridge the language of economy and the language of the sacred
- Naming these values in Scripture, the Life and example of St. Francis, the TSSF Constitutions, *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato si*
- Articulating the values that shape a spirituality of economy from our life as consecrated persons
- WHAT is financial administration and HOW to implement values in the religious world economy and its financial administration
- Living our mission with unique and greater integrity

Each province/region as well as the generalate was asked to supply the basic data that would serve to create a consolidated picture of the congregation's economic position as a whole.

The closing prayer provided contemplative time for reflecting on St. Francis' Admonitions 19 and 27. Participants were invited to write their own admonition to their congregation about promoting everyone's part in serving the common good.

Bursars were given purses made in various parts of the world, symbolizing the sisters' international character and their role of assisting their congregation's mission of building an international community of compassion.



Each participant received a small purse (above) handcrafted by Sr. Marcia Lunz OSF. When completely unzipped, the purse became a flat piece of material symbolizing the qualities of openness and transparency that must be at the core of managing financial matters.

Before today, we never had a forum where we could discuss financial matters with openness. We can build more trust now because we understand more, remarked one participant.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES (FUNDED BY GHR)

After two and half years, Sister Hilda Bayela TSSF received her CNA Certificate (certified nursing assistant) as well as a Certificate in Gerontology from Western Technical College in La Crosse. In the photo to the left, President Lee Rasch makes the presentation. Sister Hilda gave remarks of gratitude to everyone who

assisted her in her studies at the college. Her program was funded by the GHR grant.

From September 2014 to end of December 2016, Sister Delphine Shiri Kohyen TSSF also studied in the U.S. in the field of nursing. She earned a B.S.N. (Bachelor of Science) degree with a minor in gerontology from Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI which provided a full tuition scholarship for her R.N. completion program. Fees and books were funded GHR.



Another graduate funded by GHR is Sister Paschaline Dubam TSSF who graduated from the Antonianum in Rome with degrees in Franciscan spirituality and Formation theology. She returned to Shisong, Cameroon in August 2016 to take up the role of Novice Director for the TSSF. Sister Corrina Thomas FSPA, novice director for FSPA, visited the novitiate in Cameroon in November 2016 while she was there for the primary purpose of contributing a segment in Franciscan spirituality for the Renewal Sabbatical Program.



Sister Paschaline Dubam TSSF, Sister Margaret Dzelambong TSSF (Director, Temporary Professed) and Sister Corrina Thomas FSPA at the novitiate in Shisong

Presently 25 other TSSFs are pursuing advanced degrees in various African and European universities. These programs likewise are funded by the GHR grant.

RENEWAL TIME

Sister Gloria Wirba Kenyuyfon TSSF resided at St. Rose Convent in La Crosse from November 28 - February 18, 2017 for a period of personal renewal. Sister Gloria stated her objectives for this time of renewal, as follows:



- To have a quiet period which facilitates an inner journey necessary for spiritual and human growth,
- To have someone accompany me on this journey, and
- To broaden my experience of religious life through sharing life together with other sisters outside of my congregation.

While in the United States, Sister Gloria visited the FSPA Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center in northern Wisconsin, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in Milwaukee, and the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist in Meriden, CT.

Since 2009 Sr. Gloria has been a lecturer of various courses on Theology of Consecrated Life at the Institute of Catechesis and Missionary Spirituality - Pontifical Urban University of Rome and will return to begin another term of teaching in February 2017.

THE COMMON VENTURE AS INTERFACE BETWEEN AMERICAN BOB AND CAMEROONIAN TATIANA

by Appo Budzee, TSSF

The American Sisters of the Franciscan Common Venture visited Cameroon since 1999 with an attitude of see-judge-act. By 2006, they probably felt that their sharing of the Cameroon experience was not going far enough, and they decided to invite Marion Amberg, a freelance journalist from Minnesota, to visit Cameroon and write the story.

Eventually, Marion's story, "Franciscan Sisters Make Peace, then Miracles" got published in St. Anthony Messenger (June 2006). Her description of the plight of the Cameroonian youth, no doubt, moved persons like the Cameroon-born American, Laurend Doumba and Bob McSweeney to embark on the sponsorship of Cameroonian children, a tool that would break the cycle of family poverty. "There is no free public education in Cameroon and with a per capita income of \$600, tuition is a great hardship for many families. . ." explained Marion.

Tatiana hails from Mindjil, Far North Region of Cameroon, considered uncivilized by the Southern Regions. The Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis have ministered in the Northern Region for over 40 years. "Our children in the North had been benefiting from the Tertiary Sisters' Global Education program", confirm Sisters Leon Marie Ngaberi and Suzanne Muring, who worked in Mindjil and recommended Tatiana for assistance.

"Bob Mc Sweeney and Diana, a Catholic family from New York, responded to Marion's story. They offered to help a needy girl when Tatiana's picture and information sheet had reached us", recalls Sr. Alphonsa Kiven, then Provincial Superior in Cameroon. "Bob embraced Tatiana! He didn't only provide 100% of her tuition and school needs; he offered moral support for ten years. When Tatiana had to repeat the first year in College, Bob kept encouraging her. Thanks to the close mentorship of TSSFs Geneviva Bih and Perpetua Tume, Bob was visibly impressed and congratulated her for clear handwriting and mastery of the English language, which will enable her to achieve her goals".

With the fast-evolving Cameroonian society, a High School certificate would not make Tatiana competitive on the job market. So despite the high tuition (\$1,600), Bob accepted to continue sponsoring Tatiana at Bambui Polytechnic. "Yes, I would like to support Tatiana's higher education" was a response from Bob.

He kept his word! After two years of consistent support, Bob sent to the Tertiary Sisters a consignment

for Tatiana's last year of academic and personal needs in October 2015. He died shortly after on November 5, 2015. What a successful closure of mission in God's presence! Bob's daughter Diana who informed us of Bob's departure completed some unforeseen needs for Tatiana's last year.

Sisters Leon Maria and Suzanne had helped other children from their homes, but "the case of Tatiana was special". Tatiana was orphaned when the father sent away her mother and kids, and rendered them homeless. On the spot they "saw the necessity to bring the 11 year-old Tatiana down south to rescue her from teenage pregnancy and forced marriage". Tatiana says her "mother gave her to the Sisters readily, blessing her to evolve".

Shisong, which has become "home" for Tatiana since 2007, was a very different environment for her back then. "First of all, I never understood any English", plus her physiognomy was outstandingly "different" from that of persons down south. Notwithstanding, she kept going without losing heart. "Patient endurance and love for education kept me focused", she confessed.

Graduating from Bambui Polytechnic in August 2016 with an Associate Degree in Banking and Finance, Tatiana's future is bright! While her mother is so grateful to Bob and family for their sponsorship, more expectant eyes in the family are on Tatiana for support, an expectation which Tatiana considers normal and looks forward to earning a salary and "helping especially the underprivileged." She vows that she "will never forget the generosity of Bob" whom, she regrets couldn't wait any longer to see her academic achievements, and wishes him angels' smiles in heaven.

The Franciscan Common Venture, the mutual relationship among the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration-La Crosse, the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist-Meriden, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi-Milwaukee and the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis sparked the beginning of a miracle in Cameroon, a beginning that seems to have no end." Many unexpected, life-changing experiences are recorded in the lives of the Sisters and people in Cameroon through the Franciscan Common Venture.

Author Sr. Appolonia Budzee TSSF, mentored Tatiana and reported regularly to Bob and Diana. She wrote this story for her program in Mass Communications in Yaounde, also funded by the GHR grant.

