

POST WORKSHOP REPORT

**WORKSHOP ON HOW SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA
RECEIVE AND IMPLEMENT MAGISTERIAL DOCUMENTS**



**Organized by
SECAM in Collaboration with AMECEA
At St. Joseph's Spiritual Centre, Nairobi – Kenya
24-30 September, 2012**

Supported by:



AMECEA
Association of Member Episcopal
Conferences in Eastern Africa

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Introduction

SECAM is an acronym for the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar founded in 1969 by Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar and officially launched by His Holiness Pope Paul VI in Kampala, Uganda.

The Mission of SECAM is to preserve, foster communion, collaboration and joint action among the African continental Episcopal Conferences and Madagascar by promoting among others:

- a. Primary evangelization
- b. Good governance, justice and peace
- c. Consultation on major issues facing the Church in Africa (cf. SECAM, What is SECAM? Accra, June 2010, p. 2).

The Department of Evangelisation has a specific mission within this general framework, that is, to be the conduit for:

- i. The propagation of Faith: primary evangelization of those who have not yet received the message of Christ, as well as in-depth and on-going evangelization of the peoples of Africa and the Islands,
- ii. Ecumenism: the pursuit of fraternal relations and inter-religious dialogue with peoples of other faiths,
- iii. Formation: on-going formation for all pastoral agents and the coordination of theological/pastoral institutions and research centres,
- iv. Collaboration: through consultation and joint action on the major problems facing the Family of God in Africa and in the world.

SECAM in collaboration with AMECEA conducted a workshop on “How Small Christian Communities (SCCs) receive, own and implement magisterial documents with a special emphasis on *Africae Munus* and its theme of reconciliation, justice and peace.” The workshop was from 24th - 30th September, 2012 at St. Joseph’s Spiritual Centre, Nairobi – Kenya.

The workshop which was sponsored by Missio Aachen was aimed at harnessing on the new way of being Church in Africa – Small Christian Communities (SCCs).

The workshop invited delegates from all the regions of Africa that form the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM):

- Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA)
- Association des Conferences Episcopales de L’Afrique Centrale (ACEAC)
- Association des Conferences Episcopales de la Region de L’Afrique Centrale (ACERAC)
- Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA)
- Regional Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (RECOWA/CERAO)
- Madagascar

Rationale

Documents of the 1994 First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops African Synod (see No. 89 of *Ecclesia in Africa*) and the 2009 Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops (see Proposition No. 35) challenge SCC members to be agents of reconciliation, justice and peace and the SCCs themselves to be both paths to reconciliation and places of reconciliation. The workshop heard grassroots reports from SCCs throughout Africa and key theological reflections and then made recommendations for future action including strategies on new pastoral approaches of collaboration and solidarity.

Aim of the Workshop

In the context of the larger concept of how Small Christian Communities receive, own and implement Magisterial Documents, the workshop studied and strategized the reception and effective implementation of Pope Benedict XVI's *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation **Africae Munus*** which was promulgated in Benin, on 21 November 2011.

Magisterial documents: *Ecclesia in Africa*, *The Second Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa*, *The Final Message of Synod Fathers*, *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 89; challenge Small Christian Community (SCC) members to be active and dynamic agents of reconciliation, justice and peace. Members of Living Ecclesial Communities are expected and deemed to be paths, channels and places of reconciliation, justice and peace. The workshop heard and documented reports from SCCs throughout the African continent including listening to experts on the theology of SCCs from African theologians and beyond. Participants were requested to make clear, practical recommendations and strategies on how to implement the *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation **Africae Munus*** and the emerging sissies affective the effectiveness of SCCs collaboratively and in solidarity in the Regions in Africa.

Specific Goals

The specific goals of the workshop as outlined by Fr. Joseph Komakoma were:

- a. Bring together key SCC practitioners from the entire African continent to share experiences, successes, challenges, best practices and opportunities available to the Church in Africa through the use of SCCs as a tool of primary and deep evangelization in solidarity and mutual consultation.
- b. Train a wide range of representatives coming from regions and conferences of SECAM and SCEAM by theologians in theology of: the Church-Family of God, Small Christian Communities and Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.
- c. Fostering unity, communion, solidarity and bonding of Episcopal Conferences leading to promoting, revitalizing and implementing the

Church's pastoral policy on SCCs and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation ***Africae Munus*** on Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.

- d. Create the basis for a permanent consultative structure for Regional Pastoral Coordinators at Continental level.

4. Statement of Needs

Several national Episcopal Conferences and SECAM in particular are committed to the policy of establishing SCCs and implementing papal magisterial documents in a collaborative and coordinated manner. Consequently:

- a. An urgent SECAM workshop to achieve the above indicated objectives and goals was necessary, most specifically to implement ***Africae Munus***.
- b. The expected delegates were 50 representing the following categories:
 - 3 representatives from SECAM/SCEAM
 - 8 active SCC members from diocesan grassroots level who will share with participants the concrete and lived SCC, experiences, information, successes, challenges, expectations, resources, etc.
 - 10 women and youth representatives
 - 8 regional pastoral coordinators
 - 8 Bishops from Regional Episcopal Conferences
 - 3 theologians, coming from English, French and Portuguese speaking countries of Africa, that is, experts on SCCs and the Reconciliation, Justice and Peace Theologies.
 - 3 major seminary representatives: English, French and Portuguese regions
 - 6 Workshop facilitators
 - 1 Missio Representative

Priorities

- a. Consultation on how SCCs/ Living Ecclesial Communities promote Reconciliation, Justice and Peace after the publication of the Papal Exhortation on Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.
- b. Sharing experiences on the effectiveness of SCCs in Africa

The Workshop included:

Apart from the daily discussions, presentations the workshop also included:

1. Delegates formed seven SCCs (Small groups) during the workshop (four English-speaking SCCs, two French-speaking SCCs) for prayer, reflection and discussion.
2. Bible Sharing/Bible Reflection in the SCCs (Small groups) using the Gospel of the following Sunday.
3. A visit to a meeting of a SCC in the local area.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the proceedings of the workshop “How Small Christian Communities (SCCs) receive, own and implement magisterial documents with a special emphasis on *Africae Munus and its theme of reconciliation, justice and peace.*”

The report highlights the key points and strategies of SCCs in Africa and Madagascar. The final report is to be used by legal bodies in the Church to formulate strategies that help in making policies that will employ SCCs as tools of implementing Church documents and especially *Africae Munus*, which focuses on justice, peace and reconciliation.

Delegates Expectations

All the delegates were requested to state their expectations, which were categorized as three fold: *share experiences*, *learn* and come up with a *way forward* that will be informed to legal bodies.

- To know how to solve challenges faced by SCCs: individualism, urbanization, rural setup, those who work late hours.
- To know how best SCCs can be used to contribute to the dynamics of our Church in Africa to be more responsible, developmental, transformative and self-reliant.
- To deepen knowledge of SCCs in regard to the implementation of post synodal documents i.e. *Africae Munus* (to enhance JPR).
- To learn how to integrate SCCs in Church movements like International Young Catholic Students (IYCS).
- To know the role of SCCs in evangelization and Christian formation.
- To know how SCCs can be used to strengthen our faith especially during the celebration of the Year of Faith.
- To know the link between SCCs and the Bible.
- To learn how to integrate theory and praxis in SCCs.
- To learn how SCCs can be used to promote the family which is a basic unit of society and Church.
- To study how we can apply the theology of SCCs in our local churches so that all people may enjoy the spirit of Jesus Christ within the families.
- To see how our reflections on SCCs can play a formative role in priestly formation.
- To discover how SCCs can be used as a network tool from family, neighbourhood and nationally.
- To see how best we can continue to build the value of the Word of God in SCCs.
- To ensure that SCCs do not lose their original goals.
- To inform decision making bodies in the Church towards a development of a pastoral strategy from the sharings on SCCs.
- To contribute towards a pastoral strategy for effective participation of men and youth in SCCs.
- To leave this workshop with shared experiences from various regions on SCCs which will be used to enrich the local SCCs at home, and to disseminate those experiences through the media to reach out to many people.

Historical Backgrounds of SCCs

In groups based on their home regions, the delegates discussed and presented historical backgrounds, structures, challenges, success and level of participation of their SCCs. They all appreciated and acknowledged the uniqueness and particularity of the origins and historical backgrounds of SCCS in all the regions.

Similarly, various regions have variant SCCs structures, which are determined by locations, issues and the particular people.

From the presentations, it clearly came out that SCCs structures are also different and they should be determined by the Episcopal Conferences of particular countries.

Sharings and Success Challenges of SCCs from Various Regions

AMECEA



Delegates from AMECEA

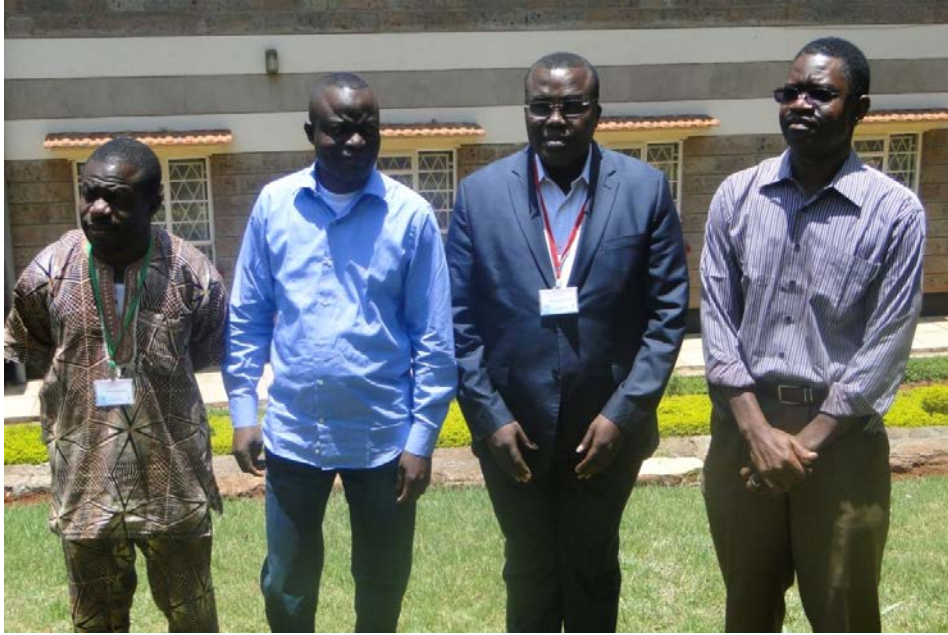
Successes

- Members are more sensitive to the needs and challenges of the community
- Fundraising for Church and community
- Church is strongly felt in the neighborhood
- Used as avenues to prevent HIV/AIDS and to promote good Samaritan causes
- Church is more self-sustaining, self-reliant, physically developed, more personnel
- Implementation of Lenten campaigns (Kenya) and other church documents

Challenges

- Clerical monopoly
- High population mobility to urban areas
- Looked at as fundraising agencies
- Gap between the rich and the poor
- Negative influence from the Pentecostal churches
- Impact of traditional superstitious beliefs and cultural practices
- Unavailability of Bibles

ACERAC



Delegates from ACERAC

Successes

- Used as means of reconciliation after civil war (Congo Brazzaville)
- Sensitization forums for Christians on various challenges affecting society e.g. corruption, poverty
- Successful ministry of youth and children
- Easy accessibility to the Word of God - one family, one Bible operation campaign ensures that every family has a Bible which they read (Cameroon)

Challenges

- Need for ongoing formation for all members is paramount
- Threat from – sects, Islam, terrorism,
- Poverty
- Patriotism – youth are tuned to be more patriotic rather than to be Christians
- Need for catechesis for youth, children and families

IMBISA



Delegates from IMBISA

Successes

- SCCs meetings are always held regardless of few members
- Everyone has something to do, no one feels left out

Challenges

- Racism
- Priests think they have less influence or are powerless over the laity who are very much involved
- Poor leadership due to lack of biblical formation
- People substitute Mass for SCCs meetings

ACEAC



Delegates from ACEAC

Successes

- Enhance mutual trust between hierarchy and laity
- Promote solidarity – unity is strength
- Promote self-reliance of the parishes
- Personalization of faith
- Used as instruments of reconciliation
- Awareness of SCCs commitment to do what is right in the name of faith
- Promotion of the laity by the laity
- Deepening of the faith professionals/ elite

Challenges

- Members are not willing to be fully converted
- Superiority complex by men which makes them not to attend meetings
- Migration to urban areas
- Laziness to attend meetings by men
- Inadequate handling of ecumenism by hierarchy

MADAGASCAR/ CEDOI



Delegate from Madagascar/ CEDOI

Success

- Promote a spirit of collaboration, communion with God, neighbor and nature
-

Challenges

- Misunderstandings among members
- Poor attendance of meeting
- Selfishness and mismanagement of financial resources

RECOWA/ CERAO



Delegates from RECOWA/ CERAO

Successes

- Instruments of Christian formation
- Promote reading, sharing of God's word and Christian witness of life - *Lectio Divina*
- Give life to the parish
- Contributes to meeting the needs of the parish
- Celebration of festivals – marriages, funerals
- Instruments of charity work: sick, needy

Challenges

- Inadequate formation
- Poor organizational structure
- Overload of responsibilities to few people
- Fundraising is discouraging members
- Lack of transparency in management of funds
- Misunderstanding between clergy and laity
- Poor collaboration between laity and laity

Summary of Inputs from Paper Presentations

1. Fr. Febian Pikiti – In his welcome remarks on behalf of Fr. Ferdinand Lugonzo, Secretary General of AMECEA, Fr. Pikiti emphasized that SCCs are the most effective avenues to bring our faith into the daily life of the African people especially as we start to celebrate the Year of Faith and secondly, as we prepare for the synod on new evangelization.

2. Bishop Emmanuel Obbo – on behalf of SECAM welcomed all the delegates and articulated the THEME of the workshop: “How Small Christian Communities (SCCs) receive, own and implement magisterial documents with a special emphasis on *Africae Munus* and its theme of reconciliation, justice and peace.”

Bishop Obbo also reiterated that SCCs, have been hailed as a new way of being Church in Africa. The two Special Assemblies for Africa of the Synod of Bishops and their Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations, *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) and *Africae Munus* (2011) challenged SCCs’ members to be at the forefront as agents of reconciliation, justice and peace and the SCCs themselves to be both paths to reconciliation and places of reconciliation.

3. Fr. Yves-Lucien Evaga-Ndjana – *The Place of the Word of God in Small Christian Communities*. In absentia, his paper was presented by +++. Fr. Evaga-Ndjana emphasized the centrality of the WORD OF GOD in SCCs. The Word of God is the basis of SCCs. Priests as pastors have a role to help SCCs members interpret God’s word rightly and therefore they should be fully involved in the activities of SCCs.

4. Fr. Mesmin Prosper Massengo – *The Role of SCCs in the Reception and Implementation of Magisterial Documents with Specific Reference to Africae Munus*. Fr. Massengo discussed the link between *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus* in relation to the importance of SCCs in the Church in Africa. He also talked about the importance of SCCs as tools of implementing Magisterial documents.

SCCs should be used to transform magisterial documents into action by all the members of the Church in Africa. However, the task is not easy; it requires will, accessibility of the document. High levels of illiteracy in Africa affect accessibility of Magisterial documents because many people cannot read and understand the documents which have technical and theological expressions.

5. Mr. Firmin Adjahossou – *Importance and Role of SCCs in the Promotion of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation*. He discussed the specificity of SCCs from biblical and Church documents perspectives, touching on their composition, mission, structures and means of actions.

He also outlined how *Africae Munus* calls on SCCs to promote JPR in the following areas: good governance, education and development, evangelization, ecumenical dialogue, biblical apostolate and Eucharist, youth ministry, migration, prison apostolate and communication, etc.

7. Fr. Godfrey Manunga - *The Role of SCCs in Evangelization, Christian Formation and Catechesis*. Fr. Manunga helped us understand missiology in relation to SCCs especially regarding his experience on the SCCs in relation with Lumko (South Africa - IMBISA) and in the Archdiocese of Kinshasa in DRC his country of origin. On the basis of a missiological approach, he proposed a picture of SCCs open to the universal mission of the Church. The SCCs ought to be places of auto-evangelisation, places of ecumenical formation and dialogue. It is necessary to gather experts in pastoral work and pastoral theology from different geographical places of the continent so that they can work out an inculturated missionary catechism which can challenge Africans in their life of catholic faith

8. Fr. Pius Rutechura - *The Role of SCCs in Evangelization, Christian Formation and Catechesis*. Emphasized the role of SCCs in evangelization, Christian formation and catechesis.

In Fr. Rutechura's view - Where SCCs have been embraced they have led to a new way of being Church. He shared contextual pastoral approaches within the AMECEA region, based on personal SCCs experiences, and the Catholic Catechism. He said understanding SCCs requires experiential and conviction of what is lived

Emerging Issues

- How do we easily access and use magisterial documents in our SCCs?
- How can SCCs promote inculturation?
- How can SCCs be used to manage ethnic, religious conflicts?
- How can SCCs be used to promote ecumenism?
- How can we ensure the inclusion and enhance the participation of elite and professionals, rich and poor, youth and men in SCCs?
- How do we handle formation and training resources in SCCs?

General Observations from SCCs Visitations

- Reading and sharing of the Word of God is taken seriously
- Moment of witness, sharing and thanksgiving
- Members focus on prayer and intercession for each other in the SCCs on various challenges
- Members know each other by name, residences, work places
- SCCs celebrate celebrations of the patron saints
- Children do not attend SCCs meetings

- Praying of the Rosary before meeting
- The SCCs meetings do not have a common structure of meetings
- Sharing of food after the meetings
- Simple people of different background meeting together
- Youth were absent because they were in school and children were too small to attend
- Know each other's social problem, come up with an action plan on how to solve each other problems
- Sharing of responsibility
- Each member had a Bible
- Vibrancy and commitment in the sharing of God's word
- Ad action plan – choosing prayer partners to pray for each other weekly

Ways to Implement Reconciliation Justice and Peace

ACEAC

- Teaching how to read and write (curb illiteracy)
- Avail the word of God to all people in local languages
- Structure SCCs activities in reference to JRP (in that order)
- Use Diocesan Reconciliation teams to handle matters of RJP
- Translate magisterial documents (*Africae Munus*) in local languages
- Establish institutes of Justice, Reconciliation and Peace (for capacity building)

RECOWA AND MADAGASCAR

- Establish centres of justice where cases of injustice will be evaluated
- Build capacity for people who can help in Justice and Peace issues
- Form a network of experts of JPR at the parish level who work with SCCs
- Promote dialogue and fraternal communion
- Set up counseling centres for victims of injustice
- Appoint various leaders to handle marital issues
- Sensitize members of the Church on various problems in SCCs
- Resize SCCs to manage them better
- Restore a life of fraternity and solidarity among Christians – belonging to one family Church
- Convert members
- Proper management of SCCs resources
- Sensitize SCCs on self-reliance
- Involve pastoral agents in the life and running of SCCs

AMECEA

- Authentic formation of SCCs members on issues of JPR

- Building capacities - empowering service oriented leaders, community mobilization and networking within the existing structures of SCCs and the parish
- All structures of use in SCCs should focus on PRAYER AND GOD'S WORD, WITNESS OF LIFE and SERVICE
- Regularly publish manuals on RJP and making them accessible to SCCs members.
- Regularly inform parishes on threats to peace before conflicts erupt for the parish to intervene before hand
- Emphasize on the use of the word of God, while looking at the concrete situations of life in the light of the Gospel (e.g. good governance, democratic space, child abuse and child protection
- Use paralegals and experts to deal with issues at hand before they become criminal issues.

IMBISA

ACEAC

Annexes

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME How Small Christians Communities in Africa Receive And Implement Magisterial Documents

• ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION: 24TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Meeting of the Steering Committee to look at the program
Registration of Participants

19.00hrs Supper

20:00hrs Self introduction and expectations from the delegates,
formation of language based Small Christian Communities (SCCs),
and looking at the program of the week together.

• DAY ONE: 25TH SEPTEMBER 2012

07:30hrs Break fast

09:00hrs Opening Prayer

09.05hrs Welcome remarks **Fr. Febian Pikiti**

09.15hrs Opening Speech by **Bishop Emmanuel Obbo** of Uganda
to represent SECAM

09.30hrs *Orientation, Concept, Goals and Expectations of the
Workshop (Fr. Joseph Komakoma - SECAM)*

10:30hrs Tea Break

11:00hrs Opening Mass - Main Celebrant **Bishop Emmanuel
Obbo**

12:30hrs Lunch

14:30hrs *Origins, Vision, and Pastoral Place of the SCCs for the
Church in Africa (Fr. Fabian Pikiti, AMECEA Pastoral
Coordinator)* followed by Plenary Discussions

16:00hrs Tea Break

16:15hrs *Introduction to and discussions on the experiences of
SCCs in the various Regional Conferences.*

18.30hrs Evening prayers in SCCs.

19:00hrs Supper

• DAY TWO: 26TH SEPTEMBER 2012

07:00hrs Morning Prayers in SCCs

07:30hrs Breakfast

08:30hrs *Reports on the Experiences of SCCs in the Various
Regional Conferences*

10:00hrs Tea Break

10:30hrs Reports on Experiences continue

11:45hrs Mass in French. Main Celebrant - **Mgr. Simon**

Ntamwana

12:30hrs Lunch

14:30hrs Discussions on the Reports

16:00hrs Tea Break

16:30hrs *The Place of the Word of God in SCCs* (**Fr. Yves-Lucien Evaga-Ndjana - BICAM Director**)

18:30hrs Evening Prayer in SCCs

19:00hrs Supper

• **DAY THREE: 27TH SEPTEMBER 2012**

07:00hrs Morning Prayers in SCCs

07:30hrs Breakfast

08:30hrs *The Role of SCCs in the Reception and Implementation of Magisterial Documents with Specific Reference to Africae Munus* (**Fr. Mesmin Prosper Massengo, Congo Brazaville**) followed by discussions

10:00hrs Tea Break

10:30hrs *Preparation of Delegates for Group Discussions on the Importance and Role of SCCs in the Promotion of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation* (**Representative from the Justice, Peace and Development Department – SECAM**)

11:45hrs Mass

12:30hrs Lunch

14:30hrs *Group Work based on Justice and Peace*

16:00hrs Tea Break

16:30hrs *Visiting some of the SCCs of Regina Caeli Catholic Church Parish - Karen*

19:00hrs Supper

• **DAY FOUR: 28TH SEPTEMBER 2012**

07:00hrs Morning Prayers in SCCs

07:30hrs Breakfast

08:30hrs *Feed-back on the Visitation of SCCs*

10:00hrs Tea Break

10:30hrs *The Role of SCC in Evangelization, Christian Formation, and Catechesis* (**Very Rev. Pius Rutechura - CUEA / Kenya**) followed by discussions.

11:45hrs Mass

12:30hrs Lunch

14:30hrs *Preliminary Presentation by Rapporteurs to guide delegates discussions on the Theme of the Workshop*

16:00hrs Tea Break

16:30hrs *Feed-back from group Discussions*

18:30hrs Evening Prayers in SCCs
19:00hrs Supper

• **DAY FIVE: 29TH SEPTEMBER 2012**

07:00hrs Morning Prayers in SCCs
07:30hrs Breakfast
08:30hrs *Discussions on the Workshop Report including
Recommendations for Action. (Rapporteurs)*
10:00hrs Tea Break
10:30hrs *Finalization of the Report (Final Document)*
11:45hrs Mass
14:30hrs Free Afternoon (Sightseeing)
16:00hrs Tea Break
16:30hrs *Consultative meeting with Regional Pastoral Coordinators
and Secretaries General - Facilitated by Fr. J. Komakoma*

• **DAY SIX: DEPARTURES**

DISCUSSIONS ON THE EXPERIENCES OF SCCS IN THE VARIOUS REGIONAL CONFERENCES

ACERAC

Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Guinea Equatorial, Tchad, RCA

Historical Background	Existing Structures	Success stories	Challenges	Levels of Participation Men, women Youth, etc.
<p>* The SCCs are the fruits of the first missionaries. * It is an old reality insofar as they can be compared with the well known Catholic action movements such as: The Legion Mariae, and Our Lady of Sorrows, whose headquarters are located in Nimes in France.</p> <p>*1971-1972: Existence of the SCCs in most countries of the region; *1973: Presence of the SCCs in Congo-Brazzaville;</p> <p>* Since 1957: birth of the Apostolic Movements of African origins (e.g.Congo). The case of "Scholas Populaires", a movement linked to the liturgical animation and accompaniment of families during funerals, marriage or other celebrations.</p> <p>* Since 1960: many fraternities, female and male, appeared; It is a highly developed form of pastoral care at country level in the region.</p>	<p>* In Congo-Brazzaville: the Mabundu or Mbongui. * In Cameroon: Associations; * In the rest of the countries in the region, the reality is almost the same; still, the SCCs are purely symbolic and authentic names. Whatever their form, these structures are before anything the place of prayer, discussion, Exchange, sharing, as well as the opportunities for formation, expression of solidarity and charity and the common good. The way they function reflects the daily life of the people * The operation, the organization or structuring of these movements operate under the aegis of the Parish Priest and the Parish Vicars. *At the diocesan level and at the national level, there is also an organization. The diocesan and national co-ordinators, as well as chaplains or spiritual guides are appointed respectively by the diocesan bishop and the Episcopal Conference.</p>	<p>* In the Acerac region, the SCCs have helped to: -the establishment of listeners' clubs or reflection groups -in the Pool Department (Congo B), active and beneficial experience in the restoration of peace, during post-conflict situations; -in his time, the current Archbishop of Brazzaville then Bishop of Kinkala (in the departement cited above) was made available from these cells, its teachings and pastoral messages using the audio recording media (cassettes); -In Cameroon: creation of community radio by the bishops to facilitate the dissemination of the message of the Gospel, facing corruption and other currents affairs. -inspired the bishops to promote pastoral plans which allowed the creation a dynamic and effective Youth Ministry. In Congo B, especially, childhood and youth ministry is coordinated by an Episcopal Commission (headed by a bishop).</p>	<p>* Permanent formation; * Social integration of young people; * Catecheses, evangelization, proximity to the word of God. A good initiative should be noted in the diocese of Batouri in Eastern Cameroon (30% of Catholics) with the operation "A family bible" * Conduct a deep reflection against the advance of the sects, of Islam, esotericism, the fight against poverty. * Maintain recurrent reflections on peace, justice and reconciliation.</p>	<p>* In the six countries of the region (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, RCA, Equatorial Guinea, Chad) women constitute the most active level and represent the largest portion of the SCCs. Participation estimated to be 70 or even 80%.</p> <p>* The lived experience so far is very encouraging, and the Pope has pointed out in his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Africae Munus" (131 and 133: "The Church as Christ's presence").</p> <p>* At the end of this workshop, the region ACERAC hopes that the SCCs become more a more lively, more current and more adapted reality within the Region.</p>

AMECEA

Historical Background	Existing Structures	Success Stories	Challenges	Levels of Participation Men, Women Youth, etc.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well explained in Joseph Healey's book, <i>Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of SCCs in Eastern Africa</i> (Chapter 1) - Inspired by the 6th Plenary Assembly of the Zaire Episcopal Conference in 1961 – pastoral plan to promote Living Ecclesial Communities as only way to make Church more African - 1961 – AMECEA was established - 1965 Vatican II – Ecclesiology Communion – influenced the SCCs idea and reflection of the position of the laity in the Church - Vatican II recognized idea of SCCs for the African Church as developed by African Bishops and theologians - 1969 Pope Paul VI visited Africa (Uganda) encouraged formations of SCCs through his message – “African you can and must have an African Christianity. Be missionaries to yourselves” - 1973 – AMECEA Bishops specifically talked of SCCs as the way to build the Church - 1976 – SCCs were given a priority in the Bishops pastoral plan - 1979 – SCCs were established in different AMECEA countries - Development of SCCS in the region continues through post synodal documents like <i>Ecclesia in Africa</i>, publications from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and AMECEA Pastoral Institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different AMECEA countries have adopted the seven LUMKO steps during meeting - Structures different due to continuous evolvement, different ministries, localities - Meetings are once a week as agreed upon by members - Leadership is as agreed upon in a particular diocese - E.g SCCs leadership in Uganda – situation – president, leader of liturgy, treasurer and caritas department, good Samaritan (hiv/aids people), leaders in groups in schools, prisons and hospitals <p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SCCs leadership in Malawi – Chair and vice, secretary and vice secretary, treasurer and vice treasure - Malawi, Zambia and Kenya share same leadership structure – SCCs leaders are elected to lead at parish level - Zambia and Kenya – more leaders are suggested by SCCS according to ministries - Parish trains SCCS leaders - SCCs leaders are also called coordinators of SCCS (Kenya) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ownership of the local church by the people - Youth are more strengthened in their faith especially in schools - Improved participation in liturgy e.g. readings, liturgical dances - Members are more sensitive to the needs and challenges of the community - Fundraising for Church and community - More lay leaders have been trained - Bible sharing - Church is strongly felt in the neighbourhood - Development of devotions among the laity - Used as avenues to prevent of HIV/AIDS and the good Samaritan causes - Faith has been taught and explained - Conversions to the Church - Church is more self-sustaining, self-reliant, physically developed, more personnel - Implementation of Lenten campaigns (Kenya) and other church documents - More people partaking sacraments e.g. marriage, baptism - Used to promote Peace, reconciliation and solidarity in the neighbourhood - Used to tackle negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clerical monopoly - High population mobility to urban areas - Looked at as fundraising agencies - Gap between the rich and the poor - Poor attendance of men and youth - Ongoing training for SCCs leaders has not been easy - Negative influence from the Pentecostal churches - Impact of traditional superstitious beliefs and cultural practices - Unavailability of Bibles - Poor leadership and coordination at parish, deanery and diocesan levels - Time factor in attendance of SCCs meetings - Poverty - HIV/AIDS impact - Divisive politics and negative ethnicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor participation of men and youth - Men are not interested or are at work - Youth are especially at school, move towns to seek for jobs - Youth have movements in schools - Women are majority - Clergy control SCCs, but do not attend SCCS except when called celebrate Mass
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	<p>Activities -Praying common prayers, Bible reading, charity work, rosary prayers, catechical instructions, monthly provision of food for the parish priests, preparation for animation of Sunday Masses, Bible study, monthly seminars on particular topics, Lenten campaigns (Kenya)</p> <p>Participation - 10-30 families -All persons are supposed to attend and participate men, women, clergy</p>	<p>ethnicity, violence (Kenya) -Encouraged family prayers -Promote ecumenical dialogue i.e. dialogue with Muslims, Christian unity</p>		
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Historical Background	Existing Structures	Success stories	Challenges	Levels of Participation Men, women Youth, etc.
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<p>To implement the guidelines drawn by the Second Vatican Council in LUMEN GENTIUM, GAUDIUM and SPES, APOSTALICAM ACTUOSITATEM and above all the mentality of many Christians who tend to separate their faith and their life, a priest had the audacity in 1978:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to set up of Small Christian Communities in the village of his ecclesiastical district; • to animate them; • to make them hold regular meetings: weekly for some and monthly for others where all the Christians of the village pray together and share the word of God and finally discuss the smooth running of their village on the religious social, economic, cultural and even political level and provide clear, sharp programs where all members contribute according to their possibilities and talents to meet the purpose of laity in sanctifying and in managing the temporal affairs according to the will of God and the Christian spirit. <p>Seeing the success of this district, the initiative of setting up SCCs spread to the rest of the Diocese and finally in 1987, the Bishop stated officially that the SCCs were part of the pastoral priorities of the diocese. These have therefore worked for 25 years and this year, it opened the celebration of its 25th anniversary to be celebrated next year solemnly.</p>	<p>So far, SCCs depend on the Diocesan Caritas, which is managed by a Staff composed of a chaplain, a Secretary general and technicians especially for technical questions related to the development project. All activities are expanded and fixed by an annual general meeting where the Caritas officials and of SCCs of the Diocese are represented. The implementation of the decisions is led, followed and controlled by animators at each level under the aegis of the priests, catechists and the Office of the Pastoral Council; but all the Christians of the village are not required to be part of the SCCs meanwhile the Christians of other denominations are allowed to attend meeting. The meetings of the SCCs are programmed precise Diocesan guidelines.</p>	<p>Small Christian Communities have won great success on the religious, economic, social, cultural and even political map, because the spirit of collaboration and communion that lead the members to love, support and help each other. This can be summed up through these three objectives: communion with God, with others and with nature.</p>	<p>However, there is, still some challenges that they face:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disagreements between members, • meetings and activities decided upon are abandonment, • the search for personal interests that lead members to financial misappropriation, and • counter witnessing. 	<p>Everyone, without exception, ought to participate in the activities of SCCs, but it happens, often the family sends only a delegation consisting mainly of women and children.</p> <p>The current situation of the SCCs: Since last year the bishop told us to situate the SCCs in the Church's pastoral ministry before the pastoral structure. We call them "Church", they ought therefore to have the desire to be a genuine Church, taking the Church's role in meeting all requirements requested by Christ to his Church. Therefore, the SCCs must become the Small Ecclesial Communities taking its share of responsibility by faith education, preparation for the sacraments and pastoral ministry demonstrating in all this by action, leaven for the society, under the direction of the pastors. All the activities ought to pass through the SCCs with the support of all diocesan commissions. It is a new challenge for the diocese which has now started this after the exhortation by Pope Benedict VI.</p> <p>I thank you all.</p>
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