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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN RELIGIOUS LIVING IN KENYA IN 2017

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Executive Summary: *This report presents findings from a national survey of international women religious living in Kenya. The study was motivated by the need to establish the needs and experiences of international Sisters living in Kenya. For the six months I was at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in Washington, I came to realize that being away from home is a unique experience. Kenya as compared to other African countries is a home to many religious institutes. Many of these institutes are missionary by nature meaning that membership is both internal and external. Understanding the nature of needs and experiences of international women religious living in Kenya forms the basis for laying better strategies that would see them even enjoy their life in the country more as well as becoming more fruitful. A good number of those who participated in this study were students while a smaller number comprised Sisters undertaking different apostolic activities.*

To obtain the names and contact information for these women, the researcher contacted the executive secretary of the Association of Sisterhoods in Kenya (AOSK) who in turn contacted the major superiors of religious institutes that belong to the Association. Basically, the study was carried out through the collaboration of the researcher, AOSK leadership and that of the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) in Kenya. While AOSK provided information on sisters living, working or schooling in Kenya, ASEC specifically provided the contact information of international women religious schooling in Kenyan colleges and universities whom they sponsor. To begin, the secretary of AOSK invited the researcher to one of their major superiors' gatherings to inform them about the study. The superiors present, through their Chair, were each given several copies of the survey for their international women religious community members. To accelerate the process, the AOSK executive secretary sent to individual sisters the same survey online.

In addition to the meeting with major superiors, several other meetings were held with international women religious students studying in two different universities during which surveys were distributed. The same survey was sent online to those who could not be reached in person. On the whole, 500 surveys were distributed through different means. Of these, a total of 320 responded to the survey by December 31, 2017. This represents a response rate of 64 percent of the international women religious living in Kenya who are known to these two groups.

International Women Religious Living in Kenya in 2017

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1.1 Introduction

In 2016, in collaboration with the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC), the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation entered into partnership with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, to train at least three African sisters in Church oriented research for six months each. In this initiative, sister Bibiana from Kenya became the pioneer trainee from January 15th to July 15th 2017. At the end of her six months, CARA requested the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for a provision to enable her to carry out a study back in Kenya as a way of deepening her skills and knowledge acquired at CARA. By choice, she opted for a study on international women religious currently living in Kenya. While at CARA, the center did a survey on international women religious in United States. On reading the stories and experiences of international women in America, I felt moved to do a similar study in Kenya with a keen interest in finding out their experiences in Kenya and back in their home countries specifically with their religious institutes, their primary purpose of coming to Kenya, current assignments, and so on.

This study was carried out between September and December 2017. The study involved international women religious working, studying or living in Kenya for other purposes such as sabbatical or visiting with friends. For this project, the researcher adhered strictly to CARA question items and format. As such, the researcher gathered information about the characteristics and experiences of these women religious in a fashion similar to the survey of perpetually professed that CARA conducts each year for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, which is released each year at the time of the World Day of Consecrated Life in February. This report presents results of this survey on international women religious living in Kenya in 2017.

To obtain the names and contact information for these women, the researcher contacted the Secretary General of the Association of Sisterhoods in Kenya (AOSK) who in turn contacted the major superiors of all religious institutes that belong to the Association. Basically, the study was carried out through the collaboration of the researcher, AOSK leadership, and that of the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) in Kenya. While AOSK provided information on sisters living, working or schooling in Kenya, ASEC specifically provided the contacts of international women religious schooling in Kenyan colleges and universities whom they sponsor. To begin, the leadership of AOSK invited the researcher to one of their major superiors' gatherings to inform them about the study. The superiors present, through their Secretary, were each given several copies of the survey for their international women religious community members. To accelerate the process, the AOSK Secretary General sent to individual sisters the same survey online. In addition to the meeting with major superiors, several other meetings were held with international women religious students studying in two different universities during which surveys were distributed. The same survey was sent online to those who could not be reached in person.

On the whole, 500 surveys were distributed through various means. Of these 500 identified women religious, a total of 320 responded to the survey by December 31, 2017. This represents a response rate of 64 percent of the international women religious living in Kenya who are known to these two groups. In all, 320 respondents from 56 institutes participated in the study.

The questionnaire asked these international women religious about their demographic and religious background, purpose of coming to Kenya, current assignment in Kenya, education and other experiences with those they currently live, encouragement and discouragement from their superiors and religious communities either in Kenya or back in their home countries. This report presents analyses of each question from all responding women religious.

This report is arranged in three parts: Part I provides details of responding institutes and their Sisters, which includes details of birth, country or region of origin, race/ethnic background, native language, and education. Part II discusses vocational aspects of international women religious in Kenya, which comprises information about their entrance in religious life and profession. Part III describes their experiences since they first entered Kenya and reports, in their own words, what is most needed to improve the life and ministry of international women religious.

1.2 Interpreting this Report

Many of the questions on the survey use four-point response scales (for example, "not at all," "only a little," "somewhat," and "very much") In parts of the analysis in this report, these responses are combined to allow for clearer comparisons. Tables summarizing responses to questions that use these scales usually report the percentage of those who responded to the two most positive categories combined (e.g., "somewhat" and "very much"), followed by a column of the percentage of those who responded in the most positive category (e.g., "very much"), since the most positive response sometimes distinguishes important contrasts in level of support. This is especially useful for this survey since many respondents tended to give "positive" responses but not always the most positive responses.

Readers may also wish to compare the difference between the two extreme responses, say "Not at all" and "Very much," to compare the level of intensity with which opposing opinions are held. These comparisons and others

may be drawn by referring to the actual percentage responses given in Appendix I. That appendix shows the percentage responses for each item, calculated out of 100 percent, as well as the percentage of all respondents that did not respond to each question, separately calculated out of 100 percent for clarity of comparison.

In general, in making comparisons between various elements of this study, tables will show the percentage of each subgroup who provided a strong response. Whenever the difference in percentages between these groups approaches or exceeds 10 percent, this difference is considered notable or important.

1.3 Major Findings

Responding Institutes and their Sisters

- In total, respondents came from 56 different religious institutes. The greatest number of responses came from the Comboni Missionary Sisters, the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, the Carmelite Missionaries, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Sisters Servants of the Visitation.
- Less than one in 20 respondents belong to the Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul, the Medical Missionaries of Mary, the St Joseph of Tabs Sisters, and the Sisters of Mercy the Holy Cross, among others.

Personal Background

- Respondent's year of birth has been arranged into ten year categories. The most senior respondent was born in 1938 while the youngest was born in 1993 or later. Just over three in ten respondents were born between 1980 and 1989, nearly three in ten between 1970 and 1979, and almost two in ten between 1960 and 1969. One in ten respondents were born between 1950 and 1959. Nearly one in ten were born in 1949 or earlier.
- About eight in ten report their primary ethnicity or cultural background as African/ African American, Caucasian, European /American, or white, and Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian.
- Respondents to the survey report a total of 48 native languages spoken across Africa, Europe, America and Asia. One in ten report Chichewa and Igbo as their native language. Almost one in ten reports Italian as their native language while about one in 20 say their native language is Runyankore/Rukinga.

English Proficiency Levels

- Reporting about their English level-speaking, nearly six in ten respondents say they are fluent or that English is their native language. Four in ten say they have basic proficiency in spoken English. Only 3 percent report no proficiency or are limited in spoken English.
- Reporting on English proficiency level-writing, almost six in ten respondents say they are fluent or native, four in ten have basic proficiency, while 3 percent report being not proficient or are limited in written English.
- On English proficiency level-comprehension, slightly more than half report being fluent or native, slightly more than four in ten say they have basic proficiency in English comprehension, and 3 percent say they are not proficient or are limited on the same.

Vocation to Religious Life

- About their vocation to religious life, four in ten of respondents entered religious life between 2000 and 2009, and two in ten between 1990 and 1999.
- Just over one in ten entered religious life between 1980 and 1989. One in ten entered religious life 2010 or later.

- One in ten entered religious life in 1969 or earlier. Nearly one in ten entered religious life between 1970 and 1979.
- Respondents were also asked to mention the year of their perpetual profession. Four in ten had their perpetual profession between in 2010 or later and a quarter between 2000 and 2009.

Arrival in Kenya

- About their arrival in Kenya, six in ten respondents say they entered religious life in their present congregation outside Kenya then they were sent to Kenya for study. Just over two in ten say they entered religious life in their present congregation outside Kenya then they were sent to Kenya for a ministry.
- One in ten report entering religious life in their current congregation outside Kenya then they were sent to Kenya for part of their religious formation.
- When asked to state their purpose of coming to Kenya, nearly six in ten say they were sent to Kenya by their superiors for study. Three in ten say their superiors sent them to Kenya for a particular ministry.
- About provision of services on arrival to Kenya, just over four in ten report that no one provided for their accent reduction/language acquisition, three in ten (30 percent) say their congregation provided for this service, while 1 percent report that someone else did it.

Satisfaction with Different Aspects of Life

- When respondents were asked to state how satisfied they were with different aspects of life in Kenya, nearly nine in ten report they are at least “somewhat” satisfied with their life as woman religious while nearly nine in seven say they are “very” satisfied with this element.
- Slightly more than eight in ten reports being at least “somewhat” satisfied with their current housing situation, Opportunity to meet in person other members of the congregation living in Kenya, and the transportation offered to them when they first came to Kenya. Just over half and nearly three in four reports they are “very” satisfied with these elements.
- Nearly eight in ten and eight in ten report they are at least “somewhat” satisfied with the financial support received on arrival in Kenya, friends they have made in Kenya, and the fact that someone is available for help them if they need it.
- Nearly half and more than half report being “somewhat” concerned about tiredness and anxiety. About these two elements, a quarter and two in ten say they are “very” concerned. . On the same health issue, just over one in ten say depression is “very” much of a concern to them.
- Of these five health elements, majority of respondents are more likely to report being “very” concerned about their sense of belonging compared to the other elements.

Legal Status in Kenya

- Two in ten report that their status is legal permanent residents.
- One in twenty say they are immigrant students while 2 percent say they are missionaries to Kenya.

Future Plans

- When asked to mention their future plans, six in ten say their future is determined by their religious superiors. Nearly two in ten say they plan to return to their home or be sent to another country.
- Nearly one in ten plans to stay in Kenya permanently, to return to their home country when they are no longer engaged in Kenya, and to return home after their studies.

Part I: Religious Institutes and Characteristics of Responding Sisters

Institutes Responding

The study indicates that respondents come from 56 religious institutes. Those responding to this item are just over seven in ten (73 percent) of all religious institutes in Kenya. Of these, one in 20 report coming from HHCJ (6 percent), Comboni Missionary Sisters (5 percent), Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (5 percent), Carmelite Missionaries (4 percent), Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (4 percent), and Sisters Servants of the Visitation (4 percent).

Table 1: Participating Institutions

Source:
data,

Field
2018

Table 1:

<i>Name of Institute</i>	Frequency	Percentage
HHCJ	13	6
Comboni Missionary Sisters	12	5
Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul	11	5
Carmelite Missionaries	9	4
Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	9	4
Sisters Servants of the Visitation	9	4
Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul	8	3
Medical Missionaries of Mary	8	3
St Joseph of Tabs Sisters	8	3
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross	7	3
Grail Movement	6	3
Our Lady of the Good Counsel Sisters	6	3
Union of the Presentation of the Blessed Mary	6	3
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary-Loreto	6	3
Sisters of Mercy	6	3
Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph	6	3
Filles de la Saint Famille De Bafoussan	5	2
Daughters of the Redeemer	5	2
Eucharist Heart of Jesus Sisters	5	2
Franciscan Sisters Missionaries of Christ	5	2
RSHS	4	2
Congregation of the Sisters of the Child Jesus	4	2
Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus	4	2
Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary	4	2
Sisters of Charity, Ottawa	4	2
Benedictine Sisters of St. Agnes	4	2
Religious of the Assumption	4	2
Tertiary Sisters of St Francis	4	2

Continuation...Participating institutions

Source:
data,

IHMR Ggogonya	3	1%
Our Lady of the Missions	3	1
OSB of Oshikuku	3	1
Sisters of Mary, Mother of God	3	1
Little Daughters of St. Joseph	3	1
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur	3	1
Benabikira Sisters	2	1
Little Sisters of St. Francis	2	1
Sacred Heart Sisters	2	1
Dominican Sisters	2	1
Institute of the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians	2	1
Daughters of Mary	2	1
Bannabikira Sisters	2	1
Sisters of Notre Dame	2	1
SSII	2	1
Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (FIHM)	2	1
Sisters of Immaculate Conception	2	1
Sisters of Mary	2	1
Little Sisters of Jesus	2	1
Canossian Daughters of Charity	2	1
Daughters of Wisdom	2	1
Sisters of our Lady Mother of Divine Love	2	1
Ancelle della visitazione	2	1
Incarnate Word Sisters	2	1
DSJC1	1	<1
Sisters of Charity	1	<1
Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Sisters, Malawi	1	<1
Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary	1	<1

Field
2018
•Less than
one in 20

respondents belong to the Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul (3 percent), Medical Missionaries of Mary (3 percent), St Joseph of Tabs Sisters (3 percent), Sisters of Mercy the Holy Cross (3 percent), Grail Movement (3 percent), Our Lady of the Good Counsel Sisters (3 percent), Union of the Presentation of the Blessed Mary (3 percent), Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary-Loreto (3 percent), Sisters of Mercy (3 percent), and Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph (3 percent).

- Two percent each of respondents belong to these institutes: Filles de la Saint Famille De Bafoussan, Daughters of the Redeemer, Eucharist Heart of Jesus Sisters, Franciscan Sisters Missionaries of Christ, RSHS, Congregation of the Sisters of the Child Jesus, Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Sisters of Charity Ottawa, Benedictine Sisters of St. Agnes, Religious of the Assumption, and Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis.
- Respondents belonging to the following institutes are 1 percent of responses: Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Little Daughters of St Joseph, Sisters of Mary Mother of God, OSB of Oshikuku , Our Lady of the Missions , IHMR Ggogonya , Benabikira sisters , Little Sisters of St. Francis, Sacred Heart Sisters, Dominican Sisters, Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Daughters of Mary, Bannabikira Sisters, Sisters of Notre Dame, SSII, Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sisters of Immaculate Conception, Sisters of Mary, Little Sisters of Jesus, Canossian Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Our Lady Mother of Divine Love, Daughters of Wisdom, Ancelle della visitazione, Incarnate Word Sisters.

- Less than 1 percent of respondents are from DSJC, Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Sisters-Malawi, Sisters of Charity, and the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary.

Personal Background of Responding Sisters

Country or Region of Birth

Respondents were asked to provide details of their country or region of birth. The results on this item are presented according to region and not country. Consequently, one third say they come from Eastern Africa (34 percent), about a quarter (27percent) respondents are from Southern Africa and two in ten from West Africa (18 percent). The results show that a majority of respondents come from Eastern Africa, followed by Southern Africa.

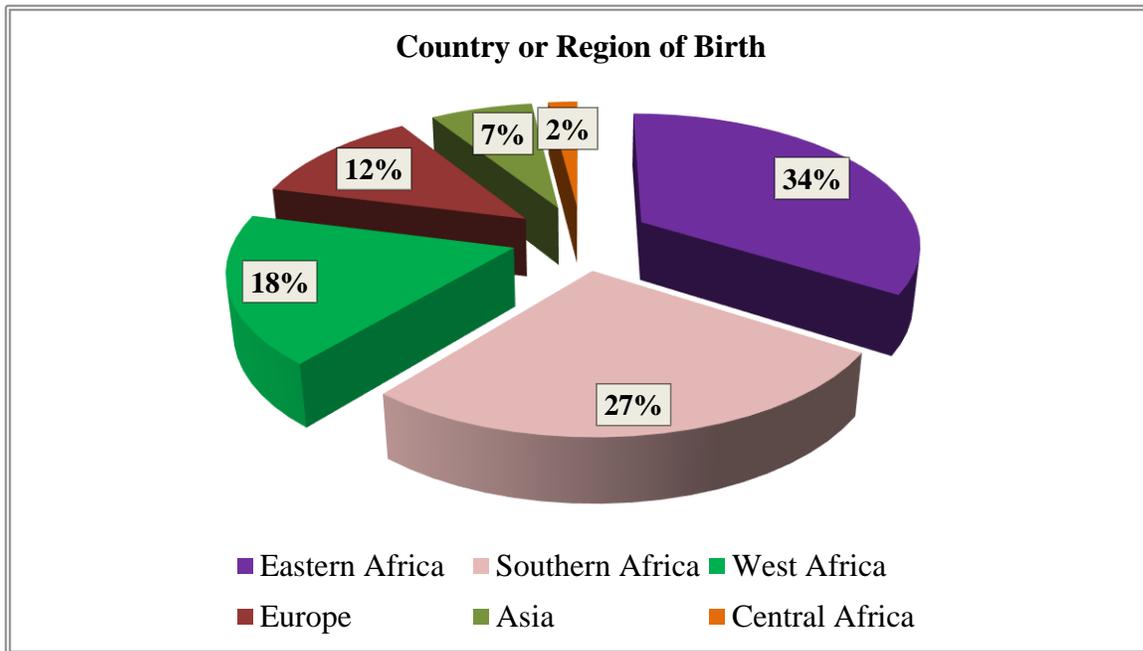


Figure 1: Region

Source: Field data, 2018

- About one in ten come from Europe (12 percent), about one in 20 (7 percent) are from Asia, and 2 percent say their region of birth is Central Africa.

Primary Ethnic or Cultural Background

About eight in ten report their primary ethnicity or cultural background as African/African American (82 percent), Caucasian, European, American, or white (12 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian (6 percent). The report indicates that there are more respondents of African origin than there are from other races.

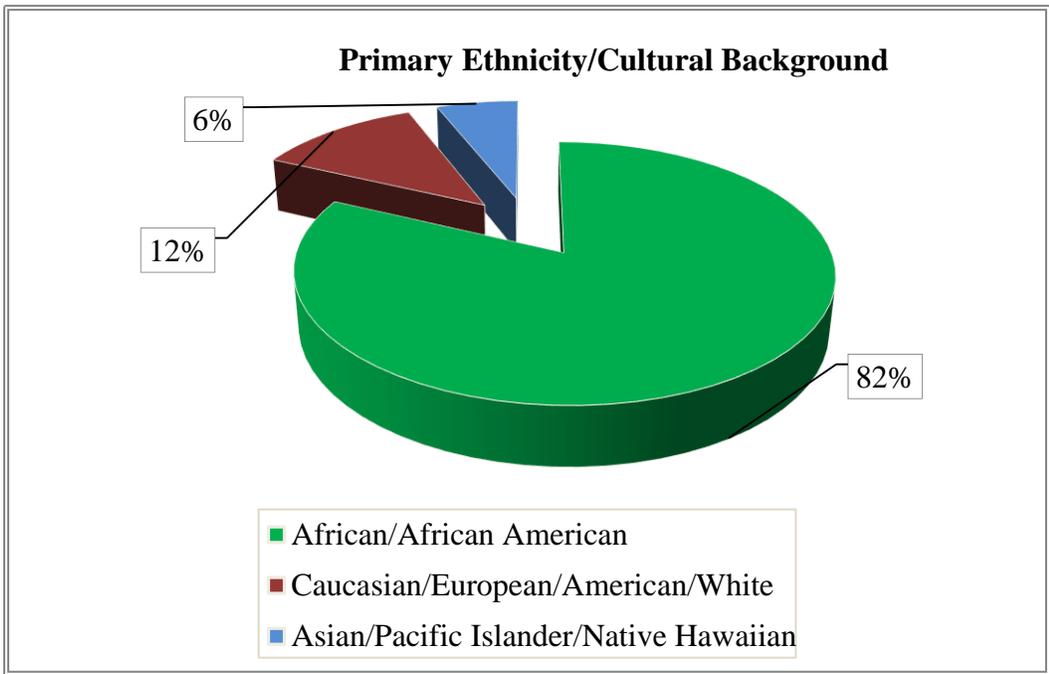


Figure 2: Cultural background
 Source: Field data, 2018

Education

Almost three in ten of those responding hold a high school/secondary school diploma or less (28 percent) and just over a quarter (27 percent) have attained a college or university undergraduate degree. A quarter (25 percent) has some college but not bachelor’s degree.

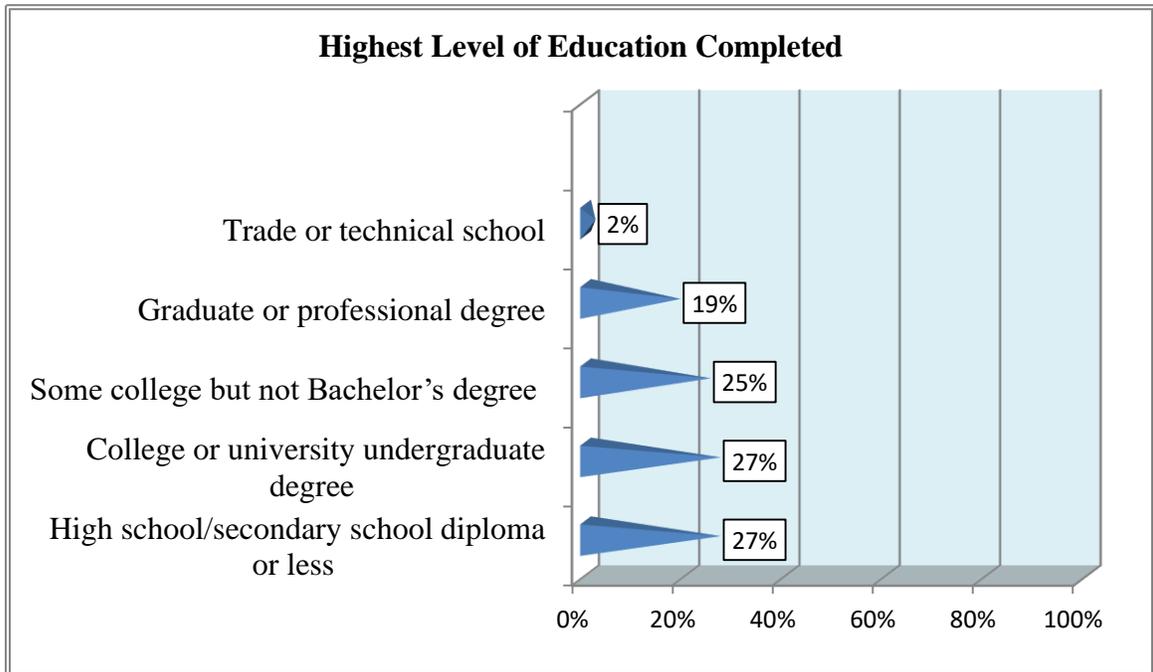


Figure 3: Highest level of Education
 Source: Field data, 2018

- Two in ten are graduates or have a professional degree (19 percent).
- Just 2 percent of respondents have completed a trade or technical school.

Comparison by Region

Comparing the level of education of respondents across regions shows that respondents from Central Africa are more likely than those from other regions to have a high school/secondary school diploma or less.

Table 2: Education level by region

Education Level by Region					
	High school/ secondary school diploma or less	Trade or technical school	Some college but not bachelor's degree	College or university undergrad-uate degree	Graduate or professional degree
Central Africa	40%	0%	0%	60%	0%
Southern Africa	35	2	23	27	13
Europe/America	26	3	41	10	21
Western Africa	24	0	17	34	25
Asia	0	0	14	43	43
Eastern Africa	29	2	29	24	16

Source: Field data, 2018

- Respondents from Europe/America (41 percent) are more likely than Eastern Africa (29 percent), Southern Africa (23 percent), Western Africa (17 percent), and Asia (14 percent) to have some college but not a bachelor's degree.
- Those responding to the study from Central Africa (60 percent) are more likely than those from Asia (43 percent), Western Africa (34 percent), Southern Africa (27 percent), Eastern Africa (24), or Europe/America (10 percent) to have a college or university undergraduate degree.
- Respondents from Asia (43 percent) are more likely than those from Western Africa (25 percent), Europe/America (21 percent), Eastern Africa (16 percent), or Southern Africa (13 percent) to have a graduate or professional degree.

Part II: Vocational Aspects of Religious Life

Year That One Entered Religious Life

In regard to the year that one entered religious life, four in ten of respondents entered between 2000 and 2009 (39 percent) and two in ten entered between 1990 and 1999 (20 percent).

Table 3: Year entered religious life

Year of Entering Religious Life		
	Frequency	Percentage
2010 or later	34	11%
2000-2009	126	39
1990-1999	64	20
1980-1989	36	12
1970-1979	27	8
1969 or earlier	31	10

Source: Field data, 2020

- Just over one in ten entered religious life between 1980 and 1989 (12 percent). One in ten (11 percent) entered religious life 2010 or later.
- One in ten (10 percent) entered religious life in 1969 or earlier (10 percent). Nearly one in ten entered religious life between 1970 and 1979 (8 percent).

Year of Perpetual Profession

Respondents were also asked to mention the year of their perpetual profession. Four in ten had their perpetual profession between in 2010 or later (41 percent) and a quarter between 2000 and 2009 (24 percent).

Table 4: Year of perpetual confession

Year of Perpetual Profession in Religious Life		
	Frequency	Percentage
2010 and later	111	41%
2000-2009	77	24
1990-1999	38	12
1980-1989	32	10
1970-1979	23	7
1969 and earlier	5	2

Source: Field data, 2018

- Just over one in ten had their perpetual profession between 1990 and 1999 (12 percent). In addition, one in ten had their profession between 1980 and 1989 (10 percent).
- Nearly one in ten had their perpetual profession between 1970 and 1979 (7 percent) and 2 percent in 1969 and later.

Part III: Experiences of International Women Religious in Kenya

Purpose of Coming to Kenya

When asked to state their purpose of coming to Kenya, nearly six in ten (56 percent) say they were sent to Kenya by their superiors for study. Three in ten (29 percent) say their superiors sent them to Kenya for a particular ministry.

Table 5: Purpose of coming to Kenya

Purpose of coming to Kenya		
	Frequency	Percentage
My superior sent me here for study	179	56%
My superior sent me here for a particular ministry	65	29
My superior sent me here for a part of my religious formation	45	14
A priest/Bishop from Kenya requested sisters from my congregation for ministry	17	5
A friend or family member invited me to come.	14	4

Source: Field data, 2018

- Just over one in ten (14 percent) report being sent to Kenya by their superiors for a part of their formation religious formation.
- Less commonly, one in twenty say that a priest or a bishop from Kenya requested sisters from their congregation for ministry (5 percent) while others say a friend or a family member invited them to Kenya (4 percent).

Comparison by Region

Respondents from Eastern Africa and from Asia are more likely than those from West Africa, Europe/America, Southern Africa, or Central Africa to say that their purpose for coming to Kenya was for a part of their religious formation.

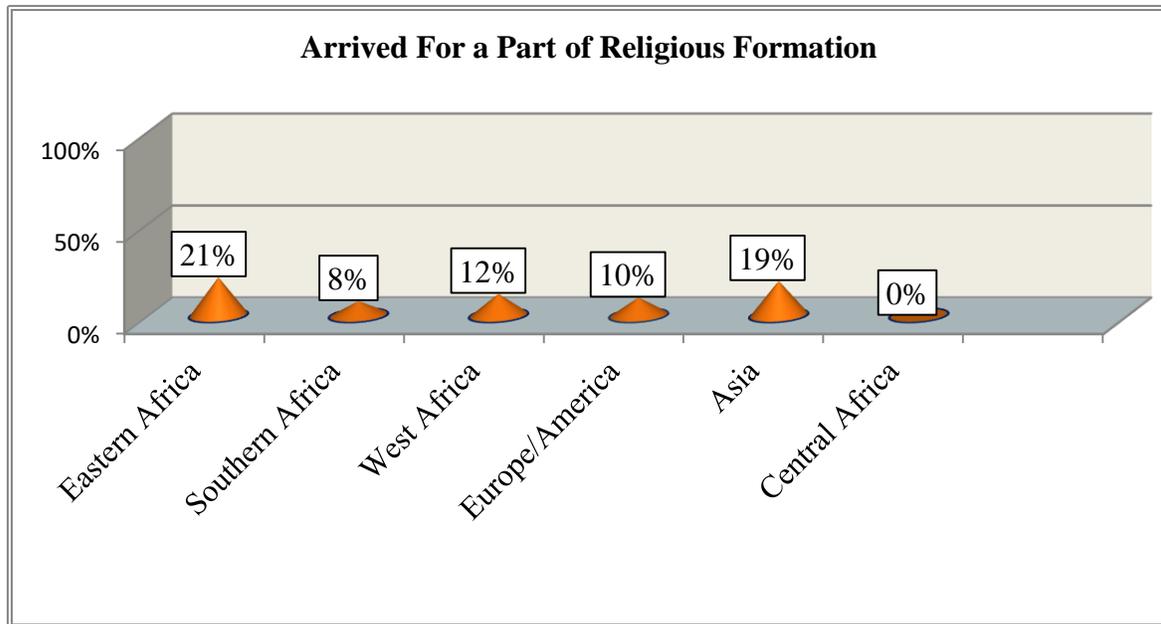


Figure 4: Region arrived

Source: Field data, 2018

Respondents from Central Africa (100 percent) are more likely than those from other African regions, Europe/America, or Asia to state that they came to Kenya to study.

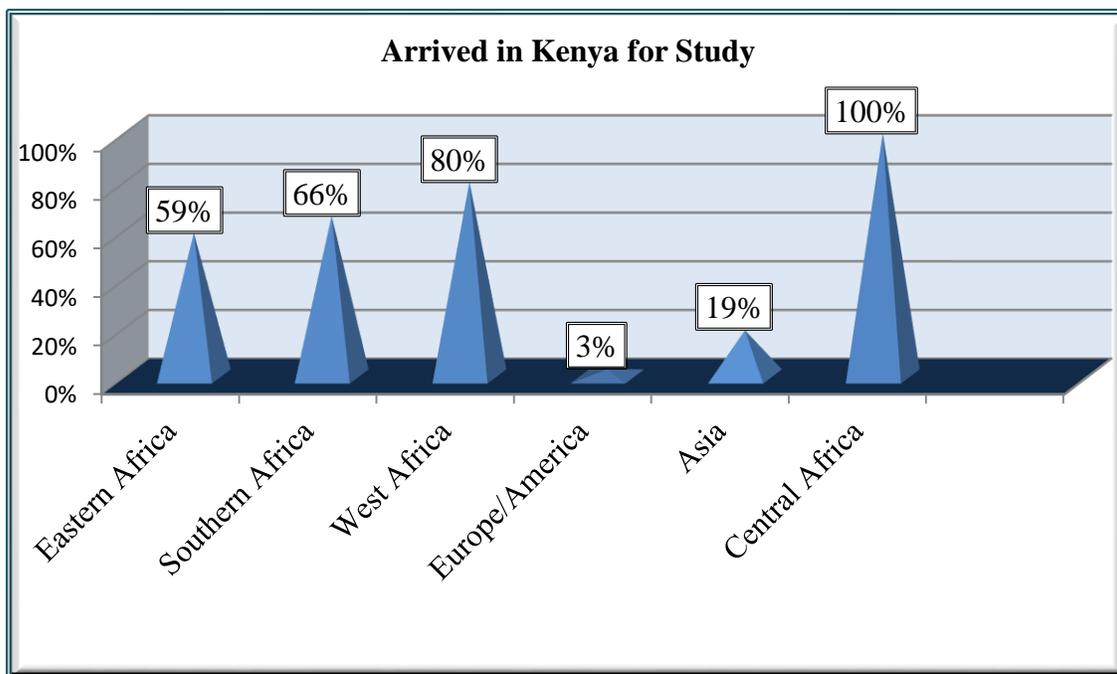


Figure 5: Arrived in Kenya for study
Source: Field data, 2018

In regard to ministry, half of those responding from Europe/America say they came to Kenya for a particular ministry (49 percent). One in five Asians and Southern Africans give that reason (20 percent and 19 percent, respectively).¹

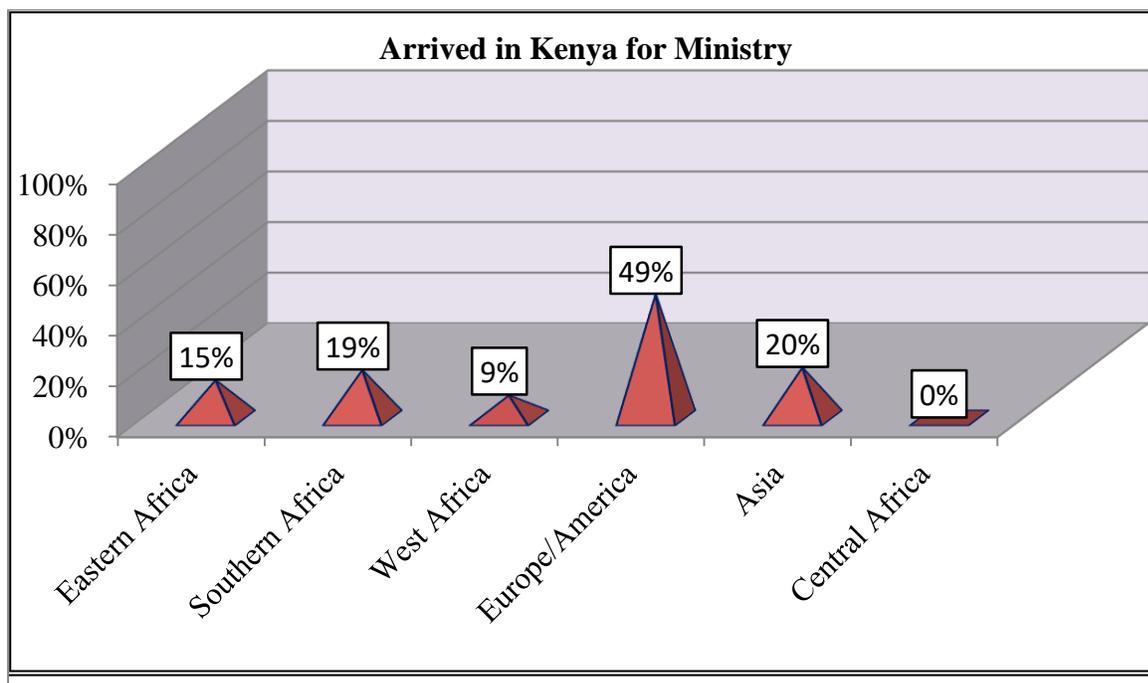


Figure 6: Arrived in Kenya for ministry
Source: Field data, 2018

¹ This report is in agreement with observations by Philip (1939) who indicates that the first missionary congregations of women religious to Kenya were from Europe and America. These are the Franciscan Sisters of Mary from St. Louise Missouri and the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul from France.

Few respondents say that a priest or a bishop invited their congregation for a ministry in Kenya. Sisters from Europe/America are slightly more likely than those from other regions to say they were requested by a priest or bishop for a ministry in Kenya (10 percent).²

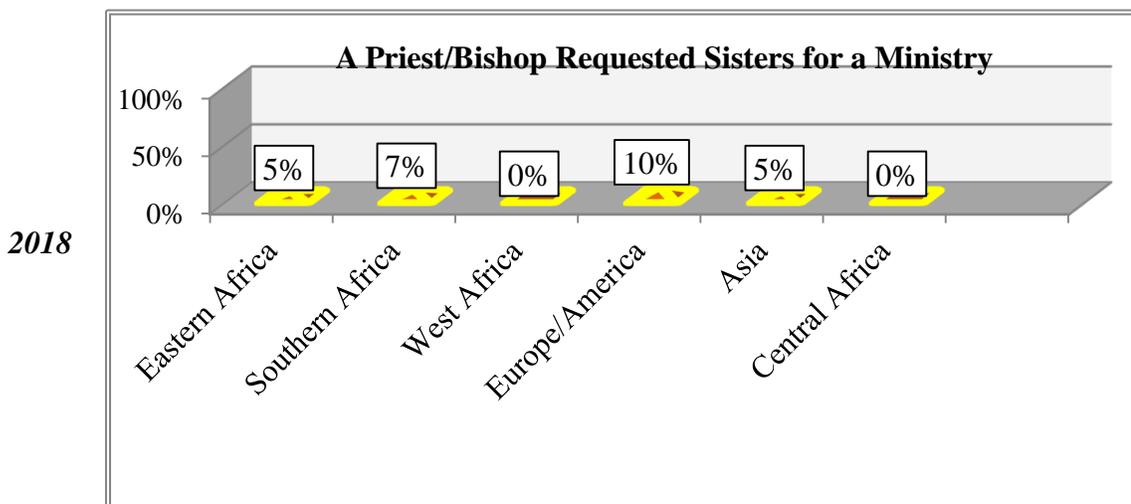


Figure 7: A Priest/Bishop requested sisters for a ministry
Source: Field data,

Respondents from Europe/America are more likely than those from other regions to say that a friend or a family member invited them to Kenya. This study did not discriminate against visiting sisters but reached out to all available respondents whether temporarily visiting or staying in for a ministry. There were no respondents from Africa invited to Kenya either by a friend or a family member.

Provision of Services on Arrival in Kenya

When asked about provision of services when one first arrived in Kenya, just over four in ten (43 percent) report that no one provided for their accent reduction/language acquisition, three in ten (30 percent) say their congregation provided for this service, 2 percent say another religious congregation provided this for them, 1 percent say parish/diocese provided, and another 1 percent report that someone else did it. Slightly above two in ten (22 percent), report that they did not need this service.

Table 6: Services provided

	Services Provided on Arrival in Kenya					N/A
	Not provided	My Congregation	Other Religious Congregation	Parish/Diocese	Someone Else	
Accent reduction language acquisition	43%	30%	2%	1%	1%	22%
Acculturation training or orientation	20	55	6	1	6	13
Education	9	55	5	4	6	21
Employment	11	38	8	3	3	36
Financial support for education	6	66	9	3	6	11
Housing	6	67	13	7	5	3

² True to this report, most missionary women religious congregations to Kenya come by invitation mostly from the Ordinary of a particular diocese. Initially, male missionary societies brought sisters along with them for the purpose of running newly opened schools and health centers. For example, the Mill Hill Fathers from Ireland brought along with them the Mill Hill Sisters while the Holy Ghost Fathers invited the Precious Blood Sisters to Kenya. To this day, these sisters run some of the best schools in the country.

Immigration legal services	5	63	7	6	13	5
Interpreter or cultural liaison	21	37	11	2	3	27
Mentoring or support group	19	40	17	3	2	16
Spiritual support	7	60	20	4	6	1
Stipend/benefits	13	60	9	1	4	13
Transportation	3	83	7	3	2	1

Source: Field data, 2018

- Regarding acculturation training or orientation when they arrived in Kenya, nearly six in ten (55 percent) say their congregation facilitated their orientation, two in ten (20 percent) respondents say this service was not provided to them, one in twenty (6 percent) report that another congregation provided this service for them, 1 percent say a parish or diocese provided for their acculturation training or orientation while one in twenty (6 percent) say someone else did it. Just over one in ten (13 percent) say they did not need acculturation training or orientation when they arrived in Kenya.
- On education, just under three in five (55 percent) respondents say their congregation provided for their education when they arrived in Kenya while two in one (21 percent) say they did not need this service when arrived in the country. One in ten (9 percent) report that no one provided for their education when they arrived in Kenya. Six percent say someone else provided for their education while 5 percent say another congregation provided this service. Four percent report that a parish or diocese provided for their education.
- On employment, almost four in ten (38 percent) respondents report that their congregation provided them with employment when they came to Kenya. About a third (36 percent) say that they did not need this service when they arrived in Kenya. One in ten (11 percent) report that this service was not provided for them when they arrived in Kenya, and to another nearly one in ten (8 percent) respondents that another congregation provided for this service to them. Tree percent respondents say that a parish/diocese and someone else respectively provided them with employment when they arrived in Kenya
- About financial support for education, two-thirds (66 percent) report that their congregation provided for them while one in ten say they did not need this service (11 percent) and that another congregation provided for their financial support when they arrived in Kenya (9 percent). One in twenty say that someone else provided (6 percent), they were not provided (6 percent) and the parish/diocese provided for their education on arrival in Kenya.
- In regard to housing, two thirds (67 percent) report that their congregation provided for their housing when they arrived in Kenya and just over one in ten (13 percent) say other religious congregation. Between 3 percent and about one in twenty say a parish/diocese (7 percent), not provided (6 percent), someone else (5 percent) and service not needed 3 percent.
- About their immigration legal services when they arrived in Kenya, just over six in ten (63), say their congregation was responsible in offering this service, just over one in ten (13 percent) say someone else provided the service and just under one in ten (7 percent) say another religious congregation provided this service. One in twenty reports that a parish/diocese provided (6 percent), no one provided the service (5 percent) and the service was not needed (5 percent).
- About an interpreter or cultural liaison, respondents report that their congregation provided the service (37 percent), service was not needed (27 percent), no one provided (21 percent), another religious congregation provided (11 percent), some else did it (3 percent) and a parish/diocese provided an interpreter or cultural liaison when they arrived in Kenya.
- Respondents were also asked to mention who provided for their mentoring or support group when they arrived in Kenya. Four in ten (40 percent) report being provided for by their congregation, not provided (19

percent), other religious congregation (17 percent), not needed (16 percent), a parish/diocese provided for them (3 percent) and someone else provided the service (2 percent).

- On stipend/benefits, six in ten (60 percent) opine that their congregation provided for them, just over one in ten (13 percent) say they were not provided while others say they did not need this service. One in ten (9 percent) say other religious congregation provided for them while 4 percent and 1 percent respectively say someone else and a parish/diocese provided them with stipend or benefits needed when they first arrived in Kenya.
- Slightly above eight in ten report that their congregation provided them with transportation when they arrived in Kenya. Between 1 percent and about one in ten say some other religious congregation provided transportation for them (7 percent), parish/diocese (3 percent), not provided (3 percent), and transportation not needed (1 percent).

Satisfaction with Different Aspects of Life in Kenya

When respondents were asked to state how satisfied they were with different aspects of life in Kenya, nearly nine in ten (87 percent) report they are at least “somewhat” satisfied with their life as woman religious while two in three say they are “very” satisfied with this element.

Table 7: Satisfaction with the aspects of life

Satisfaction With Aspects of Life in Kenya		
	“Somewhat or Very”	“Very” only
My life as a woman religious	87%	66%
My housing situation	85	53
Opportunity to meet in person other members of the congregation living in Kenya	84	63
My transportation	83	52
My health care	82	59
My financial support	81	55
The friendships I have made in Kenya	78	42
Someone available for help if I need it	77	49
The welcome I received from my local congregation at the time of my arrival in Kenya	76	48
The parish in which I am living	74	32
The food	74	45
Opportunities available to me in Kenya	73	41
The neighborhood where I live	70	33

Source: Field data, 2018

- Slightly more than eight in ten reports being at least “somewhat” satisfied with their current housing situation (85 percent), with the opportunity to meet in person other members of the congregation living in Kenya (84 percent), and with the transportation offered to them (83 percent) when they first came to Kenya. Between just over half and nearly three in four reports they are “very” satisfied with the elements outlined.
- About eight in ten report they are at least “somewhat” satisfied with the financial support (81 percent) received on arrival in Kenya, friends they have made in Kenya (78 percent), and the fact that someone is available for help them if they need it (77 percent).
- Three in four respondents report being at least “somewhat” satisfied with the welcome received from their local congregation at the time of arrival in Kenya (76 percent), the parish in which they are currently living (74 percent) and the type of food (74 percent).

- Seven in ten and more report they are “somewhat” satisfied with the opportunities available for them in Kenya (73 percent) and the neighborhood where they live (70 percent).

Satisfaction with Support Received from Others

Respondents were also asked to express their level of satisfaction with the support they receive from different people. Just over nine in ten are at least “somewhat” satisfied with the support they are receiving from their parents (92 percent). More than seven in ten are “very” satisfied with this element. Nearly nine in ten report they are “somewhat” satisfied with the support from their religious superior in their home country (87 percent). Nearly seven in ten are “very” satisfied with support from superiors.

Table 8: Satisfaction with support from other people

	“Somewhat” or “very”	“Very only”
Your family	92%	72%
Your religious superior in your home country	87	66
The sisters in your local house	83	61
Your congregation in your home country	81	65
The person/group who invited you to Kenya	80	48
Others from your home country who live here	76	41
Your religious superior in Kenya	70	40
Your congregation in Kenya	68	42
The local diocese where you live now	61	35

Source: Field data, 2018

- Eight in ten and more report being at least “somewhat” satisfied with the support of their Sisters in their local house (83 percent), congregation in their home country (81 percent), and from the person/group who invited them to Kenya (80 percent). Between about half and two thirds say they are “very” satisfied with the support from these persons.
- Seven in ten and three in four report they are at least “somewhat” satisfied with the support from others from their home country who live here (76 percent), and their religious superior in Kenya (70 percent). Four in ten say they are “very” satisfied with the support of these persons.
- Six in ten and almost seven in ten report they are at least “somewhat” satisfied with the support from their congregation in Kenya (68 percent) and from the diocese where they now live (61 percent). About a third say they are “very” satisfied.

Satisfaction with Support from Religious Superior

In this item, the researcher wanted to understand whether different arrival patterns might be a factor in their satisfaction with the support they receive from their religious superiors in their home countries. The study reveals that those who transferred to a Kenyan province of their congregation from another province outside Kenya (100 percent) are more likely than those who arrived by another way to report being “very” satisfied with the support they receive from their superiors in their home country. Others reporting a higher level of satisfaction with the support they receive from their superiors in their home countries are those sent to Kenya for ministry (73 percent) and those sent to Kenya for study (71 percent).

Table 9: Satisfaction with Support from Religious Superior

Source:
data,
Current

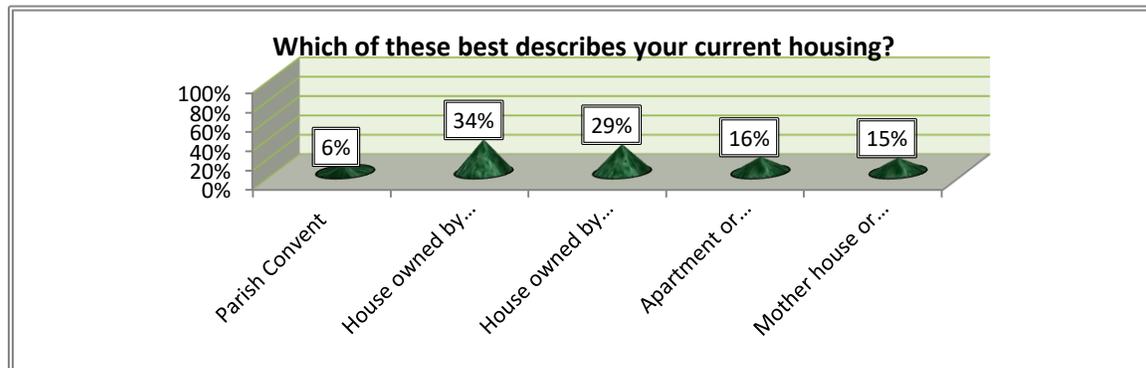
Satisfaction with Support from Religious Superior in Home Country, by Arrival in Kenya		
	“Somewhat” or “very”	“Very” only
I transferred to a Kenyan province of my congregation from another province outside Kenya	0%	100%
I came to Kenya prior to entering religious life	80	40
I entered religious life in this congregation outside Kenya then was sent to Kenya for study	88	71
I entered religious life in this congregation outside Kenya then was sent to Kenya for ministry	85	73
I entered religious life in this congregation outside Kenya then was sent to Kenya for part of my religious formation	91	42
I transferred to my congregation in Kenya from another congregation outside Kenya	50	50

Field
2018
Housing

Situation

In regard to their current housing situation, a third (34 percent) report that they live in a house owned by their own congregation. Three in ten (29 percent) say that the house they live in is owned by another congregation.

Figure 8:
housing
Source:
2018



Current
Field data,

- About one sixth report that they currently live in apartment owned by another congregation (16 percent) or in the Mother house or some other institutional setting (15 percent).
- One in 20 report living in a parish convent.

Current Legal Status in Kenya

Respondents were further invited to answer a question about their current legal status in Kenya. Just over four in ten (44 percent) report being non-immigrant students while three in ten (30 percent) say they are non-immigrant religious workers.

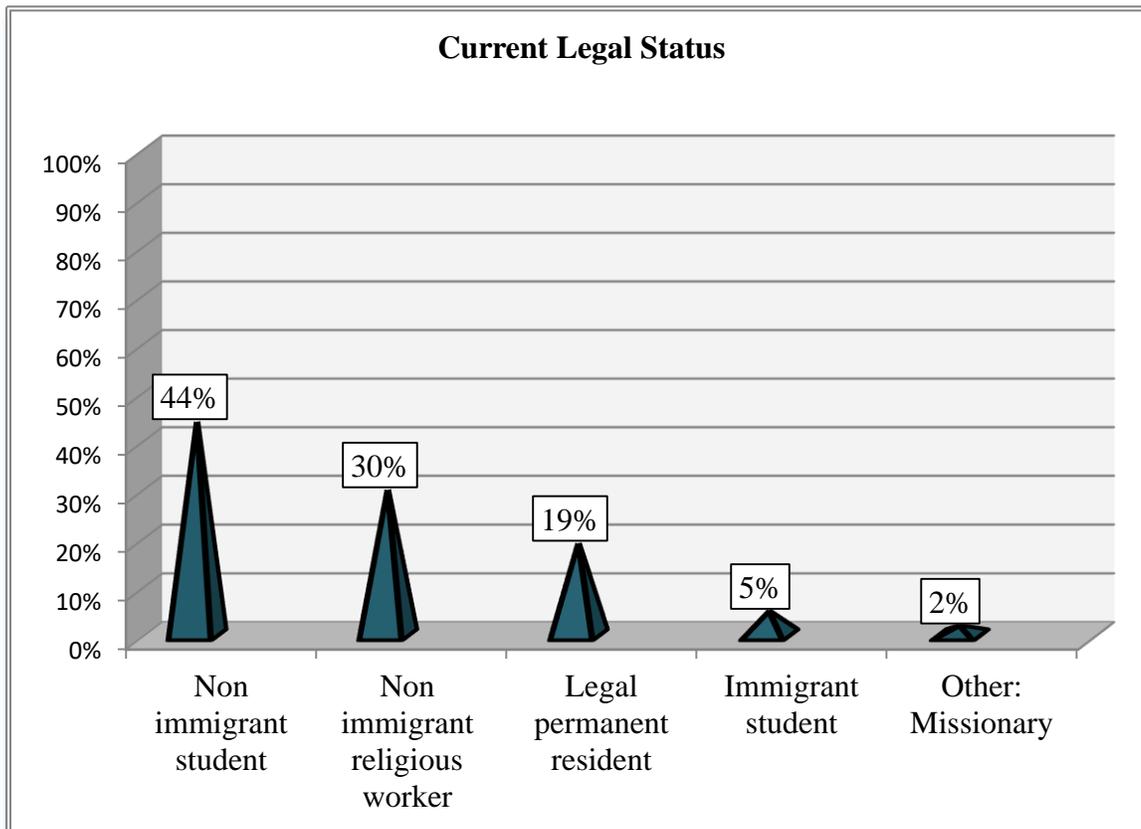


Figure 9: Current legal status

Source: Field data, 2018

- Two in ten (19 percent) say that their status is legal permanent residents.
- One in twenty (5 percent) say they are immigrant students while 2 percent say they are missionaries to Kenya.

Future Plans

When asked to describe their discerned future plans, a majority of respondents, six in ten (61 percent) say their future is determined by their religious superiors. Nearly two in ten (17 percent) say they plan to return to their home or be send to another country.

Table 10: Future plans

<i>Which of these best describes the plan as discerned for your future?</i>		
	Frequency	Percentage
My future is determined by my religious superiors	196	61%
To return to my home or be sent to another country	54	17
To stay in Kenya permanently	24	8
To return to my home country when I am no longer engaged in Kenya	25	8
To return after my studies	21	7

Source: Field data, 2018

- Nearly one in ten plans to stay in Kenya permanently (8 percent), to return to their home country when they are no longer engaged in Kenya (8 percent), or to return home after their studies (7 percent).

Responses to an open ended question

What is most needed to improve the life and ministry of international women religious?

International women religious were also invited to respond in their own words to an open-ended question: “What is most needed to improve the life and ministry of international women religious?” Respondents shared many aspects of life and ministry of international women religious that needed improvement including: involvement of superiors in the lives of their sisters, need for holistic support of women religious, student sisters to opt for relevant academic disciplines, need for openness to cultural diversity/internationality, insertion of sisters into a new culture, Collaboration and harmony among internal women religious, housing and accommodation of sisters. A few of their responses related to these aspects are listed here below. A full transcript of all open-ended responses is appended at the end of this report.

Involvement of Superiors in the Lives of Their Sisters

International women sisters outside of their home countries need a lot of support from their superiors. Being away from their home countries and most of them from their communities can be quite challenging, hence the need for one to remain closely connected to the leadership team of her institute. Some of their responses concerning involvement of superiors in their lives as international women sisters in Kenya included:

- *Networking and collaboration among the sisters of different congregations within the country and in the home countries where the sisters come from.*
- *To listen to sisters' complaints. To hold frequent meetings with members of one's congregation or else they lose track*
- *Ensure sisters are in the country legally. Close follow up in case members are stranded*
- *Exercise charity in dealing with sisters whether students or those working.*
- *Arrange for sisters accommodation on time and to provide enough finances to enable a sister be comfortable*

Holistic Support of Sisters

Respondents also mentioned several other elements for which they highly require support, not only of their superiors but also from persons that connect with them in different ways. These areas are financial, psychological, health, moral and spiritual. They included:

- *Spiritual support to strengthen one's religious life should not be taken for granted*
- *Continued offering of scholarships for more sisters to gain knowledge to be is something to be considered.*
- *Financial support will enhance academic and life performance. Its lack may derail vocations*
- *Monetary support to enhance academic and life performance of sisters is paramount*
- *Spiritual encouragement to sisters in order to strengthen one's religious life should be a priority to superiors sending sisters to study*
- *Spiritual life of sisters should be considered highly and every support given to strengthen one's religious life and life in general*
- *Medical care of sisters not to be taken for granted*
- *Insure the sisters for proper medical attention*
- *What is most needed is financial and spiritual support*
- *Moral support for sisters to feel that they belong to their religious institutes*

Openness to Cultural Diversity and Internationality

Aware of the reality of cultural diversity in the country where they currently reside, and more so among themselves as international women religious, their responses included:

- *Sisters can become more ready to learn from other cultures other than feeling frustrated by new things and ways.*
- *Sisters coming into the country to be open to cultural diversity/internationality*
- *Need for openness to cultural diversity/internationality among natives and visiting sisters*
- *Learning the language and culture of others is necessary for new sisters to Kenya*

Relevant Education

Another common element reported as one that needs improvement was acquiring education that was relevant to current apostolic needs. Some of their responses include:

- *Sisters should be encouraged to attend workshops and gatherings that help them grow in their vocation and apostolates*
- *Should be given a chance to choose what is best for oneself*

- *Refresher courses to update one's skills and knowledge*
- *Train and educate women religious to be equip them with skills and knowledge necessary in their apostolates in a changing world.*
- *All sisters should be exposed to accounts and administrative courses*
- *Short courses should be encouraged for student sisters and also those working. This is good for them to remain relevant*
- *Education of the sisters is needed in modern disciplines*
- *Prioritize and educate the sisters to equip them with skills and knowledge*

Insertion into a New Culture

The responding international women religious further expressed the need for sisters to be properly inserted and introduced to cultural elements in Kenya. According to them, proper orientation would facilitate their smooth settling in. Some of their responses are:

- *There is need for proper orientation and insertion into a new culture. I felt a bit alienated when I first arrived in Kenya*
- *Learning about spiritual life from other religious houses is not easy and so tolerance is needed*
- *Proper orientation into a new cultural environment should be carefully done to ensure proper learning of new things*
- *Language and cultural orientation and learning necessary for new sisters to Kenya*
- *Language/culture learning necessary for new sisters to Kenya*
- *Sisters to be helped to feel at home*

Collaboration and Harmony among Internal Women Religious

In addition, respondents felt that there was need to improve on the element of collaboration among international women religious in Kenya. Their responses included:

- *Discussion forums where sisters can express their problems is a necessity even if people are strangers to each other*
- *Discussions necessary where sisters can express their problems and needs*
- *A spirit of friendship to be cultivated among students for their healthy living in a foreign land*

Housing and Accommodation of Sisters

Furthermore, among the issues raised for improvement were housing and accommodation. The following were some of the responses on this element:

- *Construction of affordable hostels to accommodate women religious*
- *Sometimes the living environments of the sisters are not conducive to religious life*
- *Hostels for sisters only should be increased*

1.4 Conclusion

As just highlighted, it is clear that, Sisters living outside of their homeland experience many challenges. In summary, it has emerged that their challenges are diverse and therefore, proper orientation into a new cultural environment should be carefully done to ensure proper learning of new things including social, political, ethical and religious and cultural practices. Moral and spiritual support from one's own religious community as well as financial support is critical for all the sisters. In the practice of the vow of poverty, all salaries for those working should be deposited into a common account of the community. This means no one is allowed to take any part of their remuneration for personal needs. The respondents to this survey were again categorical that education of sisters should be a priority. This calls for a consideration in personal training pertaining to ministry and a time for spiritual renewal after some years in the ministry e.g. 5-10 years according to the needs of the person. Training is necessary for one to keep abreast with current information. Another important approach needed to improve the life and ministry of international women religious is proper insertion into the country's culture. One sister says, "I felt a bit alienated when I first arrived in Kenya because no one realized I needed help. I needed to know how things work in Kenya" Culture here refers to knowledge of different ethnic communities in Kenya and their nature. Within these ethnic groups there is language and other elements such as dressing, behavior and beliefs and practices that define the diversity of persons found in learning institutions and other places of work. This knowledge would help in understanding others whether in class or in work place. Some respondents decried their lack of preparation for the new apostolates in Kenya. One of them said " When adequate time is given for a sister to properly handover a ministry and then gradually inserts oneself in another there is a good flow and effective delivery of services" The sisters further noted that financial support to enhance academic and life performance of sisters is paramount.

1.5 Summary Recommendations

In summary most respondents recommended the following for a sister to live her religious life away from her homeland as required:

- Spiritual support to strengthen one's religious life should not be taken for granted.
- Networking and collaboration among the sisters of different congregations.
- Women should be empowered through education.
- Needs to be rooted in Jesus and try to grow in holiness taking every opportunity to love, to pray and to serve my community and the people around me so as to be truly happy and holy.
- Hospitality, regular evaluation of an individual's performance, b given a chance to choose what is best for her.
- Networking and regular evaluation of an individual and her wok/study.
- Learning about spiritual life from other religious houses is not easy and so tolerance is needed.
- Openness to cultural diversity/internationality is something to be improved upon.

APPENDIX 1: FULL SURVEY WITH SUMMARIZED RESPONSES



Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate International Women Religious Women in Kenya



This survey asks about your experience as a woman religious who was born outside Kenya and is now living in Kenya. Your responses are completely confidential and no individual response will be shared with anyone. If a survey question does not apply to you, please leave it blank.

Current Ministry

1. Which of these **best** describes your current primary assignment? *Please check only one response.*

- 46 Student at a Kenyan college/university/school of theology
- 4 Campus ministry at a Kenya college or university
- 6 Education (e.g., teaching or administration at a school)
- 5 Hospital/health care ministry
- 4 Social service ministry
- 3 Ministry to my ethnic/cultural group
- 3 Leadership for my Institute or Province
- 3 Parish ministry (e.g., religious education, youth ministry)
- 13 Diocesan ministry (e.g., vicar for religious, chancellor)
- 4 Vocation/formation ministry for my congregation
- 1 Retired/no longer active in ministry

Arrival in Kenya

Note: Even if you entered Kenya many years ago, your responses to this survey are still very important to us! Please respond to all questions to the best of your ability.

2. Which of these **best** describes your arrival in Kenya? *Please check only one response.*

- 5 I came to Kenya prior to entering religious life.
- 10 I entered religious life in this congregation outside Kenya, then was sent to Kenya for part of my religious formation.
- 61 I entered religious life in this congregation outside Kenya, then was sent to Kenya for study.
- 22 I entered religious life in this congregation outside Kenya, then was sent to Kenya for ministry.
- 1 I transferred to a Kenyan province of my congregation from another province outside Kenya.
- 1 I transferred to my congregation in Kenya from another congregation outside Kenya.

3. Which of these **best** describes your reason/purpose in coming to Kenya? *Please check only one response.*

- 14 My superior sent me here for a part of my religious formation.
- 56 My superior sent me here to study.
- 20 My superior sent me here for a particular ministry.
- 5 A priest/bishop from Kenya requested sisters from my congregation for ministry.
- 4 A friend or family member invited me to come.

When you arrived in Kenya, who provided these services to you? Select N/A for any service you did not need.

	Not Provided	My Congregation	Other Religious Congregation	Parish/ Diocese	Someone Else	N/A	NR
4. Accent reduction/language acquisition	43	30	2	1	1	22	<1
5. Acculturation training or orientation	20	54	6	1	6	13	<1
6. Education	9	54	5	4	6	21	1
7. Employment	12	37	8	3	3	36	2

8. Financial support for education	6	66	8	3	6	11	1
9. Housing	6	67	13	7	5	3	<1
10. Immigration legal services	5	60	7	6	13	5	6
11. Interpreter or cultural liaison	21	37	11	2	3	26	1
12. Mentoring or support group	19	39	17	3	5	15	3
13. Spiritual support	7	60	20	4	6	3	0
14. Stipend/benefits	13	60	9	1	4	13	<1
15. Transportation	3	82	7	3	2	1	2

16. Please describe any other services you needed when you arrived that were not provided:

- Holiday job
- Traditional African hospitality
- Transportation from the airport
- Mentor and guide

Please use the following scale for items 17-54 below.

1=Not at All

2=Only a little

3=Somewhat

4=Very much

How satisfied are you with these aspects of your life in Kenya?

1 2 3 4 NR

8 15 28 48 1 17. The welcome I received from my local congregation at the time of my arrival in Kenya

2 12 21 66 0 18. My life as a woman religious

3 18 37 42 0 19. The friendships I have made in Kenya

10 13 32 41 3 20. Opportunities available to me in Kenya

10 19 37 33 <1 21. The neighborhood where I live

12 13 43 32 <1 22. The parish in which I am living

5 10 32 53 0 23. My housing situation

9 17 30 45 <1 24. The food

5 12 23 59 0 25. My health care

4 13 32 52 0 26. My transportation

7 11 28 55 0 27. My financial support

10 14 28 49 0 28. Someone available for help if I needed it

6 10 21 63 0 29. Opportunities to meet in person with other members of my congregation living in Kenya

How satisfied are you with the support you receive from these people?

1 2 3 4 NR

3 5 29 72 0 30. Your family

7 14 36 41 3 31. Others from your home country who live here

2 10 22 61 5 32. The sisters in your local house

6 7 32 48 7 33. The person/group who invited you to Kenya

7 6 20 66 <1 34. Your religious superior in your home country

3 12 15 65 4 35. Your congregation in your home Country

8 11 27 42 12 36. Your congregation in Kenya

6 8 30 40 15 37. Your religious superior in Kenya

13 10 37 35 15 38. The local diocese where you live now

How satisfied are you with these aspects of your current life and ministry?

1 2 3 4 NR

3 7 37 51 2 39. Community life where I live

2 8 36 50 4 40. My relationship with the sisters in my local community

1 8 31 56 5 41. The prayer life of my local house

1 5 12 80 2 42. Availability of daily Eucharist

3 10 28 57 3 43. The spiritual support I receive from my local house

10 19 20 52 0 44. Availability of retreats in my preferred language

7 13 40 39 1 45. My current ministry assignment

10 18 33 40 1 46. Support from my local house for my current ministry

12 17 38 33 1 47. The preparation I received before

starting my current ministry

8 15 36 40 **1** 48. Resources available to support my
ministry

4 19 45 30 **2** 49. The balance of work and leisure in
my life

Since you came to Kenya, how much of a concern is each
of these to you personally?

1 2 3 4 NR

37 26 14 21 **2** 50. Chronic illness

23 32 26 20 **0** 51. Anxiety/stress

12 15 26 46 **1** 52. Sense of belonging

16 28 30 25 **2** 53. Tiredness

48 19 18 13 **3** 54. Depression

55. Which of these best describes your current living
situation? **Please check only one response.**

13 I live alone.

46 I live with other sisters of my congregation.

29 I live with sisters of another congregation.

13 I live with lay people.

56. Which of these best describes your current housing? *Please check only one response.*
- 6 Parish convent
 - 34 House owned by my congregation
 - 28 House owned by another congregation
 - 16 Apartment or other rental housing
 - 15 Motherhouse or some other institution setting (e.g., student housing, hospital)

57. Which of these best describes your current status? *Please check only one response.*
- 0 Kenyan citizen
 - 19 Legal permanent resident
 - 30 Non-immigrant religious worker
 - 44 Non-immigrant student
 - 5 Immigrant student
 - 2 Other: Missionary

58. Which of these best describes the plan as discerned for your future? *Please check only one response.*
- 8 To stay in Kenya permanently
 - 17 To return to my home country or be sent to another country within the next five years
 - 8 To return to my home country when I am no longer engaged in ministry in Kenya
 - 61 My future plans are determined by my religious superiors
 - 7 Other: To return after my studies

About you

59. **With how many other sisters do you live?**
- 59 1-10
 - 9 10-20
 - 5 20-30
 - 1 30-40
 - 3 40-50
 - 8 50-60
 - 3 60-70
 - 1 70-80
 - 13 NR**

- 60. Year you were born.**
- 8 1949 and earlier
 - 10 1950-1959
 - 18 1960-1969
 - 27 1970-1979
 - 32 1980-1989_
 - 4 1990 and later
 - 1 NR**

- 61. Year you entered religious life**
- 10 1969 and earlier
 - 8 1970-1979
 - 12 1980-1989
 - 20 1990-1999
 - 39 2000-2009
 - 11 2010 and later
 - 0 NR**

- 62. Year of perpetual profession**
- 41 2010 and later
 - 24 2000-2009
 - 12 1990-1999
 - 10 1980-1989
 - 7 1970-1979
 - 2 1969 and earlier
 - 4 NR**

- 63. Year you first moved to Kenya**
- 68 2010 and later
 - 16 2000-2009
 - 7 1990-1999
 - 4 1980-1989
 - 3 1970-1979
 - 2 1969 and earlier
 - 0 NR**

- 64. In what country were you born?**
- 34 Eastern Africa
 - 27 Southern Africa
 - 2 Central Africa
 - 18 West Africa
 - 12 Europe/America
 - 7 Asia

65. What is your native language?

Runyakore/rukinga, Chichewa, Igbo, Italian, Luganda, Bemba/cibemba, Tonga, Spanish, Amharic, Kinyarwanda, Portuguese, Ibibio, Bangwa, Tagalog, Swahili, Chagaa, Kihaya, Hindi, Tigrinya, Philipino, Ligala and Nyanja among other native languages

66. Please indicate your level of proficiency in English:

	None or Limited	Basic Proficiency	Fluent or Native	
a. Comprehension	3	42	54	NR 1
b. Speaking	3	39	58	NR 1
c. Writing	3	39	57	NR 1

67. In what other language(s) are you proficient (spoken and written)?_____

68. Please select the category that best describes your primary ethnicity/cultural background? **Please check only one response.**

- 82 African/African American
- 12 Caucasian/European/American/white
- 6 Asian/Pacific Islander

69. What is the highest level of education you have completed? **Please check only one response.**

- 28 High school/secondary school diploma or less
- 2 Trade or technical school
- 25 Some college, but not a Bachelor’s degree
- 27 College or university undergraduate degree
- 19 Graduate or professional degree

70. In your experience, what is most needed to improve the life and ministry of international women religious?

71. Name of your Religious Institute:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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