

## **SAINT MARTIN CATHOLIC SOCIAL APOSTOLATE, NYAHURURU**

### **Report #K28**

#### **ABSTRACT**

“Saint Martin Catholic Social Apostolate is a grass-roots religious organization that was established to mobilize and train communities to support vulnerable people in their midst. In our survey Saint Martin’s was among the top 15 organizations identified as having maximum impact. Survey respondents rated it particularly highly for having a good reputation locally and for working wisely in its local context.

#### **HISTORY**

“Saint Martin Catholic Social Apostolate is a grass-roots religious organization that was established to mobilize and train communities to support vulnerable people in their midst. It is located in Nyahururu town in Kenya and covers Laikipia West, Nyandarua North Districts” (Van Keulen et al. 2008, 14), and more recently two areas of Baringo-Mochongoi and Marmanet. The founder of St. Martin CSA was Father Gabriele Pipinato, who was a parish priest in Nyahururu. In 1997, he met Thomas (an age-mate) who was a person living with disability and who had been locked away for his whole life. In his words, “this unexpected encounter became a turning point with far reaching implications” (ibid) that resulted in the mobilization of a group of volunteers to visit Thomas and start the Community Program for People with Disabilities.

A few weeks after that meeting, Thomas died but not before he had inspired the group of volunteers to dedicate themselves to the program. It took two years to lay the groundwork and register the trust. In 1999 St. Martin Catholic Social Apostolate was born. The organization enlists more than one thousand volunteers annually who form the core of their community workforce. On average eighty staff members form the support departments for community work annually and a hundred and sixty management volunteers are enlisted annually. Starting with the Community Program for People Living with Disability they went on to start the Community Program for Street and needy Children, the Community Program for Active Non-Violence and Human Rights, Community Program for Alcohol, HIV and Drug Abuse and the Community Program for Savings and Micro-Credit by 2002.

#### **MISSION/VISION**

Vision- A just society in which communities fully involve and care for vulnerable groups of people, through the spirit of love and solidarity thus ensuring integral human development for all

Mission- To build a strong capacity, in communities of all faiths, that actively implements the gospel of service, by empowering and caring for vulnerable groups of people.

St. Martin focuses on building the capacity of the "Able" community members so that they can effectively care for the vulnerable among them. Based on their current programs,

- the vulnerable are the people living with disability with an emphasis on children, people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drug abuse, people affected by violence and breach of human rights, street and needy children
- the able are community members consisting of family members, neighbors, community volunteers, support organizations such as the church, other para-church organizations, government organizations

Geographically they cover Laikipia, Baringo, and Nyandarua Counties but are in transition to take on new areas (to be identified) and disengage from areas considered matured (process not completed and so details not available for interview).

## **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITH SIMILAR FOCUS/MISSION**

They do not know of other organizations in the area with the scope of operations that they have though Chemichemi La Uzima and PeaceNet are strong on Human Rights issues and in confronting violence especially in response to the election violence of 2008 and family-based violence between spouses. So it seems that there are other organizations that they partner with that have a focus on one of their areas but not all.

## **CURRENT LEADER**

The founder and first director, Father Gabriele Pipinato had announced three years earlier that his exit was due because in his view the organization was standing on its feet and the best thing was for him to leave to allow it to mature and walk on its own (Annual Report 2012-2013). He prepared for his exit by handing over key leadership responsibilities and concentrating in Spiritual Formation. He then introduced the new director Father Mariano and welcomed him in October 2012. He wrote his farewell in the book “Always With You” based on Jesus words “I will always be with you.” Father Mariano has been a priest in the area for ten years and is therefore not new to the organization, having worked with them for over five years, as a trustee and living with Father Gabriele (the founder) previously and so the staff didn’t feel like they were meeting a stranger. The director by default has to be a priest. He must have a bachelor's (degree) in philosophy and theology and be good at management, financial resources, working with people. So far, all the organization's trustees have been Italian priests.

## **BOARD STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION**

The board has a standard number of eleven members. Currently, they have ten, some of whom have served since the organization started.

- A veterinary doctor
- two teachers & a retired teacher
- two lawyers
- Accountant
- Retired chief
- the provincial administrator
- A counselor

There are three women and seven men currently. They will not tell what ethnicity is represented though I suspected that it was dominated by the Kikuyu, based on observation. [Inserted comment: 95% of survey respondents identifying this organization as having the highest impact were Kikuyu.] The board has appointed members and members by default because the five programs are represented by having the chairperson of each program's management committees on the board. The external board members bring in an outsider's and technical view while the internal board members bring in the program's views. The board is strong because the members are trained in various areas that are helpful to the organization, have high commitment, are open minded, and are active participants.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE& LEADERSHIP**

The staff team is composed of Community Volunteers who run the five programs. They are supported by Social workers specialized in the different areas. Field and Center Staff are also involved under the leadership of coordinators for each program. A volunteer's management committee of eleven members provides program oversight for each program. Support, logistical and spiritual formation departments provide help for the Community volunteer and Formal structures. There usually will be between three and four directors who then report to the management board of Volunteers. They maintain three trustee members. This structure is in the process of being re-done to reflect their central emphasis on spiritual formation. Mary Gachaara's sketch is attached in the appendix.

The role of the trustees is to

- Give direction so that the objectives of the organization are met
- Appointments- all appointments are made by the board of trustees, be they for volunteers, be they for the board, the management committee members, or for the staff
- Management of properties, bank accounts, approval of tenders from the tendering committee, the issuance of Agreements- to enter into contracts and to terminate contracts on behalf of the trust

The role of the board of directors is to

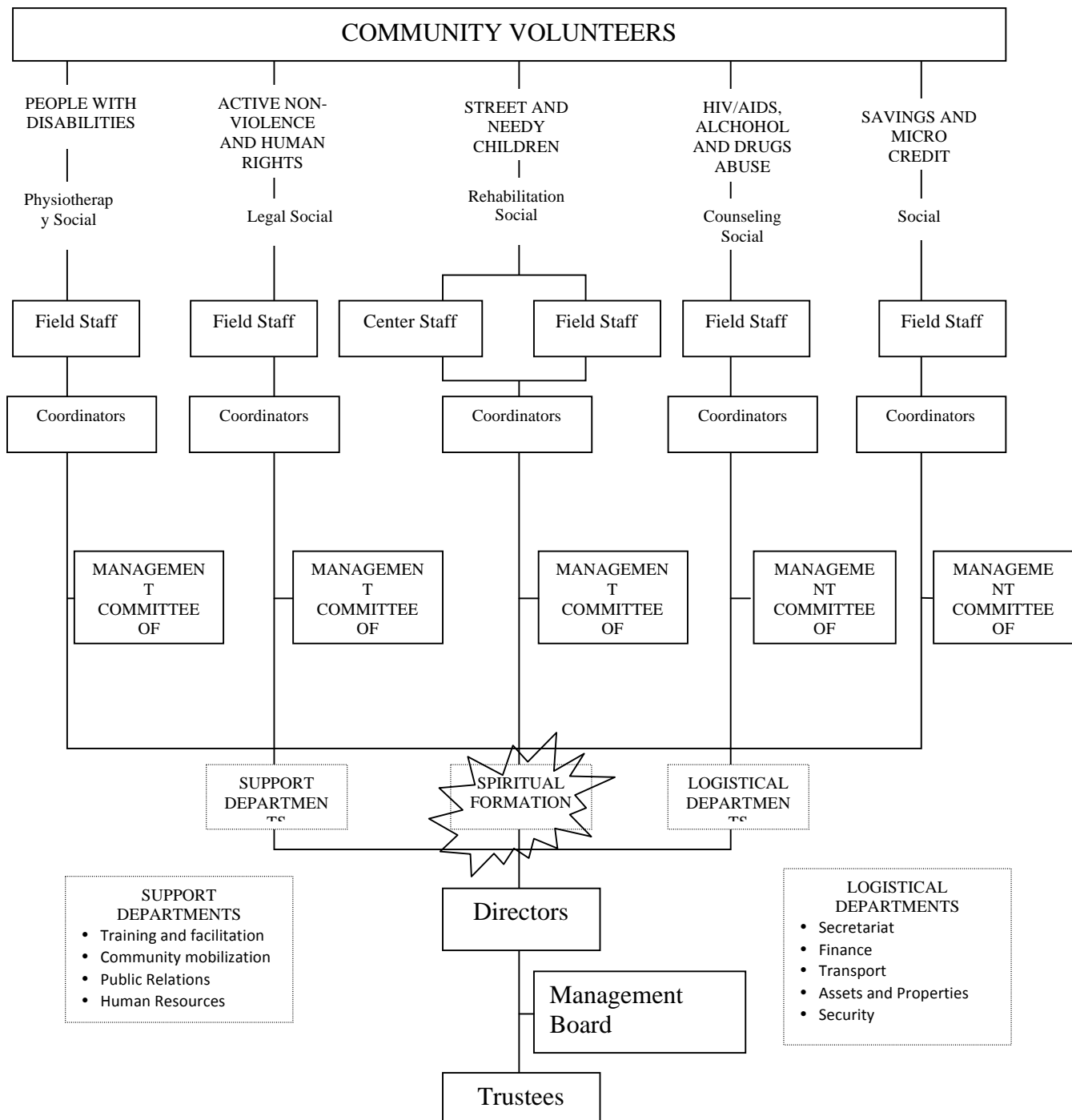
- Make recommendations from the programs to the trustees
- Monitoring and evaluation of the programs
- Custodians of the identity of St. Martin CSA and fostering a team spirit
- Make recommendations for staffing
- Deal with disciplinary issues, conflict resolution, appraisals
- Approval of budgets, monitoring, and approval of expenditure and overseeing requirements of financial partners
- Issue and approval of tenders
- Networking with sister organizations
- Ensuring movement and sustainability of operations

The role of the Administrative staff is

- Day to day coordination and supervision of activities
- Maintaining organization identity
- Ensure implementation of policy

- Staff discipline
- Maintaining all assets
- Reporting to the board of directors
- Networking

## Organizational Structure



## **BOARD AND STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

Staff members are “head-hunted” from within the community of inducted and active volunteers, student trainees and community volunteers. Character and internalization of the St. Martin approach to service are important. Capacity building, especially through training, helps them step up to the responsibilities they have been allocated.

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

Local communities, through family support groups engaged by the programs and a large number of volunteers sourced from the local churches, schools and other organizations consist of the majority of stakeholders in St. Martin CSA.

Local stakeholder organizations that actually started within St. Martin CSA before being disengaged are Talitha Kum that houses the children living with HIV/AIDS, Marleen Crafts that employs the people living with Disability, Flora Farm that hosts workshops, retreats and visitors and L’Arche Kenya that hosts adult people living with a disability. These stakeholders come together in different forums for induction, training, celebration, reflection and community action. The website and publications have numerous stories, pictures and videos depicting this.

## **FINANCES & OTHER RESOURCES**

The majority of finances come from partners in Europe-mainly Italy and Germany. At least 80% of total finances come from their European donors. Locally, individual people, beneficiaries, churches, and businesses contribute financially and in kind. Between 2002 and 2012, St. Martin received a total income of Ksh 764,408,511 [\$8,802,400 US] and spent Ksh 766,836,850 [\$8,829,360 US] ending up with an over-expenditure of 2.4 million [\$27,630]. Most over-expenditure took place in 2008 and 2011 because of election activity fall-out, presumably for emergency purposes. Extensive budgets are drawn up, activities monitored and reported in detail. Annual reports are available on their website (<http://www.saintmartin-kenya.org/category/1-annual-reports>), but budgets are considered internal and not available. Books are audited annually by Costa Lewis and Company, Certified Public Accountants from Nairobi and Kingori Muriethi and associates from Nanyuki that they used in 2012. This information is based on the annual reports posted on their website.

## **PARTNERSHIPS/LINKS**

They partner with many organizations such as Kenyatta University, local government departments such as prisons, police, the judiciary through the Court Users and the Juvenile Justice Committees, Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu and Marsabit, Paulines Publications, Gertrude’s Hospital-Nairobi. Locally, they have staff members sitting on government action committees such as those depicted in the table below. These government committees are related directly to the programs they run.

Programme Government Action committees in w different programs sit externally with the Missionary Office of Padova and Fontana Foundation, Stern in De Stad, Foundation Linking

People, Mensen met een Missie and Oom Gan Fonds from Netherlands; Provinci Autonoma di Trento, Regione Trentino Alto Adige, Banca Credito Cooperativo, AtaneMani, OPSA and Talitha Kum of Italy; BCC of Frane, Kindernothilfe of Germany, L'Arche communities in France, UK, Poland, Bangladesh and Ireland, among others. With the decentralization of their local stakeholders, each of the new organizations is building their database of partner-organizations.

<b>CPSMC</b>	1. Ministry Of Agriculture - Nyandarua North And Laikipia West Stakeholders Forum
	2. Ministry Of State for Planning And National Development - Poverty Eradication Committee
	3. Ministry of State for the Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Area - Drought
	4. Management Committee
<b>CMD</b>	1. District Executive Committee - Nyandarua North District
	2. District Development Committee - Nyandarua Central District
	3. Education Stakeholders Forum – Nyahururu District
<b>CPPD</b>	1. Special Units Committees - Muthengera and Ol Ng'arua special units
	2. Special Unit Teachers Forum - Nyahururu and Laikipia West Districts
	3. District Education Board - Nyahururu and Laikipia West Districts
<b>CPHAADA</b>	1. Constituency Aids Control Committee (CACC) – Laikipia West District
	2. District Technique Committee (DTC) - Laikipia West District
	3. District TB And STI Coordinating Committee (DTSCC) - Nyandarua North District
	4. Joint HIV/Aids Review Programme - Laikipia West District
	5. Health Stakeholders Forum- Nyandarua North and Laikipia West District
<b>CPSNC</b>	1. Area Advisory Councils (AAC) - Nyandarua North and Laikipia West Districts.
	2. Child Protection Team (CPT) - Nyandarua North District
<b>CPANVHR</b>	1. Prisoners' Discharge Board – Thompson Falls Prison
	2. Court Users Committee – Nyahururu Law Courts
	3. Probation Cases Committee - Nyandarua North District
	4. Community Service Orders Committee - Nyahururu Law Courts
	5. Justice Juvenile Committee - Nyahururu District

Taken from St. Martin CSA Annual Report for 2009-2010.

Local churches were inducted consistently for a few years before they began to feel a part of what they thought was a Catholic-only activity. Many people involved are non-Catholic, including the staff members interviewed. Most significantly, the annual volunteer celebrations are hosted by the churches and bring together thousands of people in the larger area.

## **SWOT: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS**

### ***Strengths***

- Their main strength is in their ability to bring together and build the service capacity of a large number of workers with different inputs to serve, through spiritual formation, relevant training, and celebration. Through inspiring people by the way they work, they have been able to build extensive relationships with government and other non-government agencies as listed above.
- The training and facilitation manager said that one of their strengths is that they are a religious organization and, therefore, are able to keep motivating the staff especially through the gospel of service to continue doing the hard work. Tuesday prayers are a source of encouragement and strength for them.
- The articulation of the “St. Martin Approach” which concentrates on involving the community in finding solutions and growing in solidarity is also a strength of the organization because it keeps them from being overwhelmed.
- The organizational structure of the programs and support departments increases efficiency. It also facilitates high levels of interaction between departments regardless of rank
- The image of the organization is strong because the organization is trusted by the community.

### ***Weaknesses***

This is a question that the staff interviewed found difficult to answer. Also, the online data from annual reports does not give sufficient detail.

- The Training and Coordination Manager sees their weakness as being stuck in the past, “the way they have always done things.” They don’t utilize the opportunities that they have sufficiently.
- During the 2008-2009 year, Coordination and Social Work staff attended a brainstorming workshop for impact assessment and found that the current report writing process, data management, assessment and presentation of impact needed work.

Other weaknesses they have mentioned are in the area mentioned under “challenges.”

### ***Opportunities***

- The local churches have been encouraged by St. Martin CSA through their ecumenical approach, to be involved and so they will be able to continue the work of St. Martin through the participation of their large congregations. The organization recognizes the strength of the church in strengthening and growing its work.
- The devolved government through the county government structure will allow them to access government resources at the grass-root level. With the governor and the social department in the local area, it will be easier to engage the government. The government has access to training opportunities they can take advantage of, the processing of government bursary and scholarship finances.
- The good-will that the organization has discovered in the community is an opportunity for bringing in people to serve and for maintaining the spirit of service.

- Networks- St. Martin has established a large network locally and abroad that provides funding, training and expertise. The table above showing partnerships and links is an illustration of the local networks that the organization has built.

### ***Challenges/Threats***

- Volunteer attendance of meetings and activities was at 60%, and motivation strategies are needed urgently, according to the 2012-2013 annual report. In the previous year, they reported being hampered by the lack of finances especially in paying transport for the monthly meetings. Hosting communities did not take up the responsibilities very well.
- People outside the target areas came for help but were not turned away. This meant that staff sometimes had to suspend their current work to respond to them. Also, some beneficiaries expected direct support from the organization and updating them on the organization's approach to ministry took time.
- As the organization became more publicized around the country, an increasing number of visitors strained the organization's ability to respond to their need for attention.
- Political activities around election periods affect them a lot because tensions produced by elections adversely affect the quality of care given to beneficiaries.
- The closing of the Savings and Micro-credit program will require follow-up so that the groups can function autonomously.
- The dependence on agriculture meant that many beneficiaries struggled when the rains failed and this impacted the organization's work among them.
- Disengagement strategies are difficult to effect considering also the attachment created between the organization, the volunteers, and the beneficiaries. In addition, it was a challenge disengaging Talitha Kum, the home for children living with HIV.
- Keeping volunteers motivated will need extended effort because they sometimes get overwhelmed by events in the field. The staff, therefore, took a lot of their time counseling them.

### **IMPACT/SUCCESS/ASSESSMENT**

According to the Administration Manager, it is difficult to quantify social impact, so they write stories

- When they observe communities solving their problems without the help of the organization, then they consider that to be of impact.
- St. Martin CSA has built strong ownership in the community, considering that they say that many of the people who were there when the organization started are still serving and that they can replenish their numbers when people leave for various reasons.
- Through their extensive training programs, the organization has been effective in creating awareness in such programs such as HIV/AIDs, the place of the community volunteer and the work of St. Martin CSA as an organization.
- They have also been effective in equipping community volunteers for their work so that the volunteers now regularly take the initiative to increase awareness of their work in the churches and other public forums.
- Case studies are used to depict the impact of St. Martin's work on individual people but as the Training and Facilitation Officer says, the website content is a small portion of



what they have been able to do. Every program documents their case-studies with narratives and pictures.<sup>1</sup>

## **TRAINING/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Training starts with induction into St. Martin, their ministry and work philosophy, their biblical basis for spiritual formation and then on towards capacity building through training in technical topics specifically targeting the need for different programs. A sample of this training program for the year 2009-2010 is attached. Training is made available for all stakeholders consisting of beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers from the community and collaborating organizations. They have internships, especially a one-year internship program which is where many of the staff started, but they also feel those who complete the internship and go with the philosophy and learning benefit. They needed external help in training on how to conduct baseline surveys and counseling which they got from Nairobi.

## **PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

As mentioned above, their website, <http://www.saintmartin-kenya.org> is full of information about their work. They distribute annual calendars, diaries, books such as the list below in English and Kiswahili. They would like to start a blog and Facebook fan-page to make interaction with stakeholders social and immediate.

### ***List of Books given as gifts from St. Martin CSA Current Director to Wairimu Kamau***

1. Sharing Talents and Resources: An African experience of promoting solidarity in the community
2. 2014 Month Planner with references for reflection
3. Annual Report- April 2011-March 2012
4. Finding My Way Home: Pathways to Life and the Spirit by Henri J.M. Nouwen
5. Befriending the Stranger by Jean Vanier
6. Dear...: Letters to Cherish and Challenge Education by St. Martin Volunteers
7. What Do You Want? By St. Martin Betania Spiritual Formation Team
8. Who Loves Me? By St. Martin Betania Spiritual Formation Team
9. Becoming Friends by Jean Vanier
10. Encountering the Other by Jean Vanier
11. Always With You: Extraordinary Gospels of Ordinary People by Father Gabriele
12. From Brokenness to Community by Jean Vanier

## **FUTURE**

The organization is being restructured to put Spiritual Formation at the center of their work. They also will be maturing some areas and doing feasibility studies to help them identify other areas they need to move to. One such area under study is Mochongoi in Baringo County. They have decentralised the Savings and Micro-Credit Program and “sent it back to the mother programs” having carried out extensive disengagement work. Also, the focus of the HIV/AIDS,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II for stories

alcohol and drug abuse program is moving away from HIV where many gains have been made and to alcohol and drugs because this where the highest need is currently. From Father Gabriele's writing, building solidarity through a spiritual formation foundation rather than bank accounts is the gospel that he believes in and is preaching. Henri Nouwen, one of their inspirations agrees in his own writing.

***Strategic planning***

2016	Begin writing five-year proposals for programs
	Begin rolling out into new target areas
2015	Develop a three-year proposal for Community for People Living with Disability
	Develop a two-year proposal for Community Program for People living with HIV/AIDS
	Develop a four-year proposal for Community Program for Community Program for Peace and Reconciliation (formerly known as Active Non-Violence and Human Rights)
2014	Develop a plan for rolling out into new target areas
	Write a five-year proposal for Community Program for Children in Need
	Restructure the management committees
	Integrate economic activities into programmes
2013	Carry out a needs assessment of Mochogoi area for CPPD
	Begin progressive reduction of St. Martin assets
	Change names of programs to reflect current reality
	Close down the Savings and Micro-credit program
	Develop a new St. Martin structure
	Establish a fund-raising department

Taken from the annual report for 2012-2013

**REPORT PREPARATION INFORMATION**

Report prepared by Wairimu Kamau under the supervision of Steve Rasmussen

Interviewees- Hilda, Mary, Moses, Benson, James, Kariuki, and Gakunga

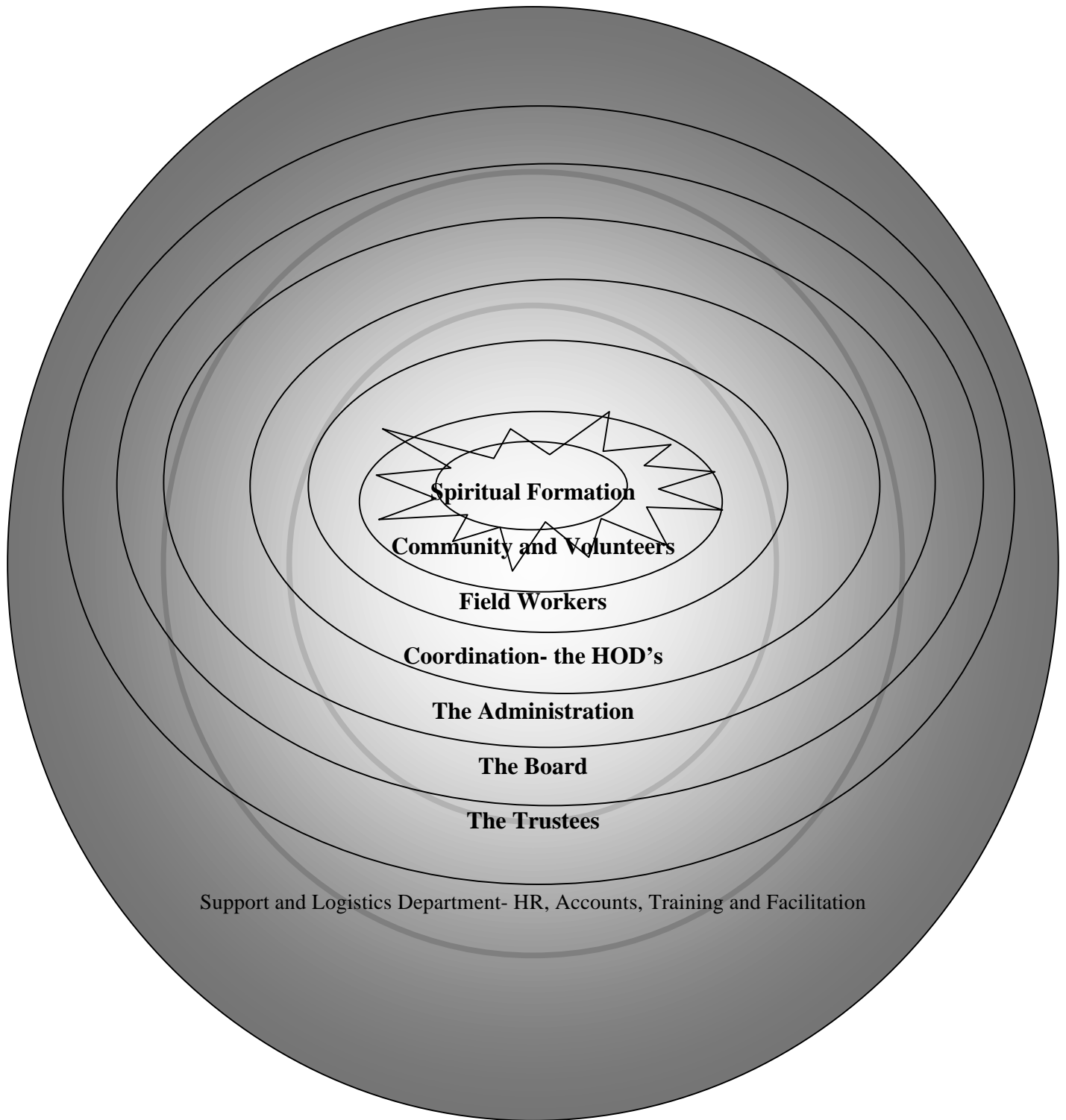
Interview Dates: 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Other Sources: The St. Martin CSA Website

Book- Sharing Talents and Resources (Van Keulen et al. 2008)

## APPENDIX I

*Organizational Structure Two- Draft by Mary Gachaara- Human Resources Manager*



## APPENDIX II

*Stories of Impact. From Annual Reports 2009-2010 & 2012-2013.*



### **Through love I am healed**

Five year old Peter was rescued and brought to our centre in May 2009. He and his mentally retarded mother live under the care of his grandmother who survives by taking up seasonal menial jobs in small scale farms around her home. When drought struck, it became very difficult for Peter's grandmother to fend for them. Therefore, they started begging for food in the neighbourhood. One day, Peter went to a neighbour's house and found her absent. He entered the house and found some dry beans which he carried home in a small container. When the neighbour returned home, she realized that her beans had been tampered with and upon enquiring, she learnt that Peter had been seen entering the house. She reported the case to Peter's grandmother who angrily beat the boy with a stick. In the process of the beating, Peter fell into the fire and burnt his hands severely. For three days, Peter's grandmother hid him in the house for fear but the neighbours sensed that something was wrong and decided to go to the home and ask where Peter was. Upon arrival, they heard him cry and demanded to see him. Shocked by the condition of the boy, they quickly sought the intervention of the children's office and the programme volunteer in the area. The boy received medical care and was placed in the custody of the programme while the grandmother was arrested and arraigned in court. She was committed to community service orders and ordered to exercise parental responsibility over Peter with due respect for him. Peter has since returned home and started schooling. The watchful eyes of the volunteers and material support from the community have made a difference in his life. The scars in his hands have been healed by the concern of the volunteers and the pain in his heart has been healed by the love of the community.

Community Programme for Addiction and HIV.

In the picture, Simon, on the far right tells his story to the Committee



When he was twelve years old and in class six, Simon's parents died in quick succession out of HIV/AIDS related causes. His relatives buried them and left without caring about what he and his four younger siblings would live on. The community volunteer in this village called Simon's relatives to a meeting but none of them came. So he mobilized the neighbors to take up the roles of parenting the children and providing for their needs.

The couple next door agreed to mentor the children but they could not take them in. The church members of the nearby church agreed to provide food and clothing as often as it was needed. The head teacher of the nearby school pledged to allow the children in school without the major levies. A friend of Simon's late father offered to support the children in growing sufficient food and generating income from their farm.

Since his youngest sibling, a sister, was only one year old, Simon had to take on a parental responsibility at that tender age. He vowed to himself that he would do all it takes to see that his siblings are fed, dressed and educated. And he set out to do that with the support of the volunteers and the neighbors. He tilled the land and bred the livestock that his parents had left behind. When there was extra produce, he sold it and bought other necessities. When he needed money, he took menial jobs in the neighboring farms, and when there was nothing, he begged from the neighbors.

Eleven years down the line, Simon speaks about his experiences with a sense of pride. "The volunteers and our neighbors have been with us throughout, They never got tired of our constant begging and calls for help".

His immediate follower is now through with secondary school. Two others are in secondary school and the youngest, his baby sister, is in class six. Asked what drove him to make such a sacrifice for his siblings, Simon simply says 'it's love'