



PAX IN FAMILIA REPORT 2018

5-DAY WORKSHOPS IN SIX COUNTRIES IN AFRICA

In October and November, 2018, Dr. Christauria Welland, director of Pax in Familia, gave seven five-day workshops to pastoral workers for Episcopal Conferences in six African countries: Ghana, Cameroun, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa and Malawi. Attendees included Bishops, priests, religious sisters, diocesan marriage and family life coordinators, counselors, psychologists, etc. Michael Akong, L.Ac. filmed and edited each workshop and presented the material to the organizers at the end of each training session.

WORKSHOPS AT A GLANCE

SPONSOR OF WORKSHOP	DATES	FUNDERS	NO., LOCATION & LANGUAGE OF WORKSHOPS	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
Ghana Episcopal Conference	Oct. 1 - 5, 2018 Oct. 8-12, 2018	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	2 Koforidua & Sunyani. Ghana English	(60 + 80) 140
Cameroun Episcopal Conference	Oct. 15-19, 2018	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Missio Aachen	Yaoundé, Cameroun English with French translation	100
Diocese of Gikongoro, Rwanda	Oct. 23-26, 2018	Missio Aachen Missio Munchen	Gikongoro, Rwanda English with Kinyarwanda translation	130

Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops	Oct. 29 – Nov. 2, 2018	Aid to the Church in Need	Nairobi, Kenya English	55
Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference	Nov. 5 – 9, 2018	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	Johannesburg, South Africa English	100
Episcopal Conference of Malawi	Nov. 12 – 16, 2018	Pax in Familia	Lilongwe, Malawi English	35
TOTAL			7	560

INTRODUCTION TO PAX IN FAMILIA

Pax in Familia was founded in 2015 as a response to the terrible suffering of Catholic families that are troubled by domestic violence (intimate partner violence). It is an international ministry dedicated to peace, and to the prevention of violence and abuse in Catholic families. The founder is Dr. Christauria Welland, a Catholic clinical psychologist and specialist in intimate partner violence, and catechist for children, youth, adults and couples since 1972. Dr. Welland was an invited speaker at the World Meeting of Families 2015, in Philadelphia, USA, where she also presented the first edition of her book, *How can we help to end violence in Catholic families? A guide for clergy, religious and laity*, published in six languages. She and her husband Michael also presented copies of the books to all the participants in the Synod on the Family in Rome in 2015. This book is now in its second edition, with quotes from *Amoris Laetitia*, in English, Spanish and Korean. To date Pax in Familia has printed and shipped 20,000 donated copies of this book to Episcopal Conferences and other Catholic institutions throughout the world.

INVITATIONS TO PAX IN FAMILIA TO TEACH THE WORKSHOPS IN AFRICA

In February 2017, Pax in Familia shipped books to every Episcopal Conference in Africa in English, French, or Portuguese. There were two copies for each diocese, one for the Ordinary and the second for the Office of Family Life. The director of Pax in Familia, Dr. Christauria Welland, also included a letter of introduction to the ministry from H E Archbishop S. Cordileone of San Francisco, and a letter offering to come and teach workshops in Africa to train pastoral agents as trainers to 1) respond effectively and compassionately to families suffering domestic violence in their countries, and 2) to teach effective violence prevention strategies as a component of youth and adult catechesis, with an emphasis on marriage preparation. The six countries listed above, Ghana, Cameroun,

Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, and Malawi, responded positively to the offer of workshops, and arrangements were made through the Secretaries General or the National Offices of Family Life of each country, with the exception of Rwanda, where only the Bishop of Gikongoro made the invitation.



FUNDING FOR THE WORKSHOPS

Pax in Familia did not charge for the teaching of the workshops, nor for the travel expenses of Dr. Welland and her husband Michael Akong, who filmed each workshop and provided copies of the video for each Episcopal Conference, and for use in future online certificate programs. However, the Episcopal Conferences needed funding to be able to bring the participants from all over their countries, and in the case of Kenya, also from Uganda and Nigeria, and to accommodate them for the five days of the workshops. There was also a need to publish enough of Dr. Welland's books for all the participants, the second edition of the book mentioned above, as well as a new program for youth and adult catechesis, *Journeying through life with Jesus the Son of God*, a life skills program with an emphasis on violence prevention. Pax in Familia hired a grant writer, Ms. Kate Bosworth, who was able to identify the funding agencies, after making several unsuccessful applications elsewhere. To identify the Africa Solidarity Fund of the USCCB, Pax in Familia benefitted from the input and counsel of Catholics for Family Peace at Catholic University of America, the Office for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth at USCCB, Catholic Relief Services, and the Africa Faith and Justice Network. Mr. Ed Kiely of the Solidarity Fund for Africa was an invaluable colleague in explaining the process of the grant applications, and as a result, the Episcopal Conferences of Ghana, Cameroun, and South Africa applied to the USCCB's Subcommittee on Africa and the grants were

approved. Some funds were also dedicated to the follow-up to the workshops, and more may be requested by the Episcopal Conferences in the future. Six of the seven workshops obtained funding directly through the applications of the Episcopal Conferences. A total of \$156,000 USD went directly to the Episcopal Conferences that made applications. For the seventh workshop in Malawi, Pax in Familia provided \$11,500 for the training, as well as 50 copies of each of the two books.

NEED FOR THE PAX IN FAMILIA TRAINING

Until very recently, there has been little mention of violence in Catholic families in Papal documents, although some Episcopal Conferences, such as the US, have issued well-researched documents on the topic (2002). Worldwide, the lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) against women is one in three (30%). Since there are no existing global statistics for intimate partner violence specifically against Catholic women, an estimate using the 30% prevalence rate would be the enormous amount of 142 million Catholic women worldwide who have experienced IPV. If the number were to be lowered to 20%, although there is no empirical reason to believe that Catholic families experience less family violence, then we would be looking at a still mind-boggling 95 million Catholic women who have experienced this life-changing, traumatic experience. Pope Francis has made many references to IPV during his pontificate and it was mentioned for the first time at the World Meeting of Families in 2015. As a result of the silence on the issue, most pastoral workers at every level of the Church have received little or no professional training on the topic and they lack the skills to provide a compassionate and effective pastoral response. Up till now, they have also lacked the resources to help young people and couples to know how to prevent violence and abuse in their relationships. Recent revelations of abuse against religious sisters by clergy have highlighted the need for pastoral workers to be exposed to the training for their own relationships as they serve the People of God.



GOALS OF THE PAX IN FAMILIA WORKSHOP

These trainings fulfill a pastoral need of great importance for the following reasons:

- Many victims of intimate partner violence, particularly in developing countries, are more likely to seek support and healing from parish, school and hospital staff than from a secular or legal entity.
- In many areas, there are few agencies providing support to victims of intimate partner violence, but there is a presence of the Catholic Church in providing social services, healthcare and education.
- Clergy and lay ministers are in the position to educate and train others, which extends the reach and impact of the training.
- The Catholic Church's extensive educational and social service institutions provide an already-present infrastructure for responding to and preventing intimate partner violence.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project was to strengthen the Catholic Church's mission to families, and to relieve the suffering of Catholic families plagued by intimate partner violence, by transforming the pastoral response to intimate partner violence in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, and South Africa.

This goal was achieved through the following objectives:

1. Educate clergy and lay ministers on the causes of intimate partner violence and its effects on victims, perpetrators and children.
2. Equip clergy and lay ministers with the knowledge, skills and tools to effectively respond to and prevent further intimate partner violence in culturally-appropriate ways.
3. Enable clergy and lay ministers to educate others on the causes and effects of intimate partner violence and to equip others with the knowledge, skills and tools effectively respond to and prevent further intimate partner violence.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PAX IN FAMILIA TRAIN THE TRAINERS WORKSHOP

- Basic information on intimate partner violence (IPV): Statistics, including for Catholics, theories of etiology, risk factors, warning signs, effects on victims, children and abusers. Special mention is made of local cultural factors, and ample use of discussion and sharing is implemented.
- Pastoral responses to IPV, in general and by specific pastoral agents - Bishops, priests, religious, educators and catechists, laywomen, laymen. Responses among women, responses among men. What to say and do, what to avoid saying and doing. Issues of danger, separation, and teaching by a local canonist on the possibility of the declaration of nullity when there is violence, with discussion.

- Prevention of violence in general and especially of IPV. Presentation of course on specific strategies to employ as part of youth and adult catechesis to teach a deeper life in Christ through prayer and Scripture (the I AM declarations), as well as relaxation techniques, self-management, attitudes towards gender equality and complementarity, communication, respect, understanding abuse, addictions, maturity, responsibility, problem solving and service to others.
- Decision-making by diocese, parish, or apostolic group regarding actions they will take in the future, after conferring with the local Ordinary. Discussion of their local situation and local needs.
- Planning for follow-up meetings and ongoing sharing of the training.
- In 2019, Dr. Welland will complete the writing of a 16-week treatment program for Catholic victims/survivors of IPV and a 20-week treatment program for Catholic abusers, both using evidence-based psychological material and integrating Catholic spirituality, Scripture and the Magisterium. These programs will be sent to the workshop participants, many of whom are anxious to begin the work with survivors and abusers.

EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOPS

A pre-test and post-test were given to each participant at the outset and end of the training. The results were analyzed by Pax in Familia, demonstrating a significant increase in knowledge and understanding of the reality of IPV in Catholic families. Complicated areas such as understanding the severity of IPV and showing mercy to the victim, a focus on safety for the family, supporting separation when the case is dangerous, and promoting Christian forgiveness without necessarily allowing a dangerous abuser back into the family showed a great deal of attitude change. Participants came to understand that helping an abuser to change is an act of love, and although not always safe or successful, in many cases change can and does happen. Incorporating deep prayer and spiritual growth into this process can only make it more effective, by the power of the Spirit.

Written comments were also analyzed to receive feedback on the workshop. Though most were very appreciative of the workshop and the knowledge they gained, more than a quarter of responders expressed a desire to have more than one facilitator, and to shorten the days of the training. They also wanted more time for discussion and for examples from their own culture. As requested, they suggested ideas on how they would change or modify the workshop in their own context. Pax in Familia intends to have more than one facilitator and to have many local stories to share. This will now be possible, as the new trainers extend the work, collaborate in the trainings, and accumulate and share stories of their own of victims, children and abusers in their own culture. .

The initial analysis of the six-month follow-up survey, although the number of participants was small due to the difficulty of communication and a low response rate, shows that the high level of learning of concepts, statistics, basics of IPV, and effective pastoral responses has persisted over time. The surveys also provide information regarding what the trainers have done in the past six months to extend the teaching, and what they are planning for the future. This will be expanded on further below.

NOTES ON THE WORKSHOPS: DR. WELLAND'S OBSERVATIONS

Dr. Welland and her husband received a very warm welcome in all the countries that invited them, from the Bishops, priests, sisters, and laity. Sharing our work with African Catholics exceeded any expectation we could have had. Most impactful was the deep faith, the prayerfulness and openness to the Holy Spirit, and the commitment to sharing and to living the Gospel at every level of the Church. We also came away with several matching African outfits, as is the custom for married couples!



Made in Ghana, worn in Cameroun

GHANA

The first workshop in Koforidua was very animated. The participants were elated to receive some guidance on this very difficult and common pastoral problem for which they had received no previous training. Their faith and commitment to the Lord and the families they serve was inspiring. The group (60) was made up of more than 20 priests,

several Sisters, and many lay people. They had a plethora of excellent ideas about how to share their knowledge with families.

The second workshop in Sunyani had more participants totaling 80, including 4 Bishops, who were also meeting in Committee that week. The President of the Ghana Episcopal Conference, H E Most Rev. Philip Naameh, attended the entire training and showed great interest in the material. Participants in this workshop had many questions and were initially somewhat oppositional. This was not unexpected, given the difficulty of the topic and the lack of familiarity with such pastoral responses. The participants included about 25 priests, about 15 sisters, some counselors, and laity involved in family ministry. Dr. Welland noted that the presence and active participation of the Bishops lent credibility to the material. The counselors present made very helpful interventions.

CAMEROUN

This workshop was given in English, with the PowerPoint in both languages. Books had been published in both English and French for the participants. A competent interpreter was hired to translate into French. The 100 participants included 22 priests, and laity involved in family and couples ministry. The gathering was very enthusiastic and committed, and concrete plans were made for future trainings and action. The music, singing, and dancing at the celebration of the Eucharist and the closing ceremony were outstanding. Very dedicated laypeople carried forth the workshop and continue to organize nationally. Although the Secretary General attended when he could, no Bishop came to the training, except for the opening Mass. The high levels of violence in the country are a great concern for all, yet hope is palpable and they move forward with trust in God.



Msgr. Benoit Kala, Therese and Emmanuel Ngamo, Mike and Christauria, Cameroun

RWANDA

Coming to Rwanda, Dr. Welland and her husband were very impacted by the frequent presence of vast cemeteries resulting from the genocide of 1994. The transformation of the country since then is also remarkable. We received a warm welcome in Rwanda, and were very struck by the closeness of the priests and people to their Bishop, who had made the invitation and who attended almost the entire workshop. There were more than 20 priests and 20 sisters, and the rest were couples and counselors involved in family ministry, a total of 130. Several infants and toddlers attended the whole workshop with their mothers and were extraordinarily well-behaved. The interpreter was fluent in English as well as French, so he translated directly from English into Kinyarwanda, as there were mostly local people there who did not understand French well. Two couples gave very moving testimonies of past violence in their relationships and how the abuser has changed. The Chancellor of the Diocese has since translated the entire PowerPoint into Kinyarwanda, so the trainings can be given everywhere. The cool weather in Rwanda was very welcome after the extreme heat and humidity of Ghana and Cameroun. After the workshop, the Bishop and the Chancellor took us to the Shrine of Our Lady of Kibeho, which is in their diocese. Our Lady appeared to three high school students in 1981, warning of the terrible future calamity and calling for prayer and penance. It is the spiritual heart of Rwanda now.

KENYA

Our funding in Kenya was provided by Aid to the Church in Need, who wanted to keep the attendance small and from only four dioceses, as a pilot. Otherwise the workshop here would have been as large as the others, and many expressed disappointment that not all dioceses could participate. Kenya is the only country where no Bishop came to bless or pray with the participants, although we did have a visit from the Secretary General at the closing ceremony. There were about 20 priests and several sisters, as well as laity, totaling 55. Participation and discussions were intense and there was much fellowship. Three priests and a Sister came from neighboring Uganda to be trained, as well as a Sister from Nigeria who also consults with Aid to the Church in Need. There were a couple of disturbing testimonies by victims, affirming their faith and resilience. Follow-up to meet the needs of the most affected was offered. The workshop went off smoothly in spite of some last minute challenges, and was expertly organized by the National Office for Family Life. The laity provided some very memorable music at the wonderful Eucharistic celebrations. In Kenya many people came to me individually to share their concerns about violence in their country and their lives.



Partial group in Kenya with Secretary General Msgr. Rono

SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa the workshop was held at a beautiful ecumenical retreat center that was very tranquil. Two Bishops attended the workshop, including Bishop G. Sandri, who passed away in May 2019 from a stroke. He was instrumental in encouraging the Episcopal Conference to make the invitation after he received his copy of Dr. Welland's book in 2017. We mourn the loss of this holy man.

The National Office of Family Life did an excellent job of organizing the workshop and the Bishop of that office attended the entire workshop. There were over 25 priests in attendance, including some from Botswana, and many Sisters and committed laity, totaling 100. The fervor of the Eucharistic celebrations and the preaching on violence and peace at the Masses were noteworthy. We had two very painful testimonies from victims, including one woman who was burned all over her body with acid by her partner. Her attorneys are trying to get her admitted as a refugee to Canada before he is released from prison in six years. There were many animated discussions in this group, and some parishes that already had a very active ministry to families in place. We continue to communicate with them as they incorporate the Pax in Familia material into their curricula. The first book is being translated into Afrikaans at present, at the request of the diocese of Oudtshoorn, where most people use that language. There was also mention of possible translations into other local languages. The participants seemed very committed to reducing violence in their communities and were inspiring examples of faith and compassion.

MALAWI

Malawi was the only country where the Bishops did not initially request the workshop. It was the director of the National Office for Communications who made the invitation upon receiving a copy of the book in 2017. His recommendation was later taken up by the Episcopal Conference. For this reason Pax in Familia funded this smaller workshop, as no application was made from the Conference to the funding entities mentioned. However, the Bishop in charge of the National Office for the Family attended most of the training. The 35 participants included 24 priests, as well as married couples, media personnel, and the Secretary General of the Association of Women Religious of Malawi.

Woodcarving of Pax in Familia Logo, a gift from Malawi



SIX-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

The response rate over the month of May was too low to be able to make reliable inferences from the data. However, the responses we did receive show that 97% of those who answered found the training to be very relevant to their pastoral work. Ninety-four percent of respondents had used the training materials with **individuals** at least one to five times, and 10% of respondents had used the materials more than 10 times. Ninety-four percent of respondents had used the training materials with **couples and/or groups** a minimum of one to five times, and 6% of respondents had used the materials more than 10 times. 85% of respondents reported that their parishes or dioceses had completed one or more **parish education events or clergy/pastoral agent trainings on domestic violence**, and 15% reported that one or more of both events had taken place. **Violence prevention trainings** had taken place in 82% of parishes or dioceses, with parish education events being more common than clergy/pastoral agent training. 83% are planning **future IPV education events** for parishes and/or pastoral agents for 2019/2020 and 22% are planning for both audiences. 88% are planning **future violence prevention trainings** for parishes and/or pastoral agents for 2019/2020 and 40% are planning events for both audiences. The number of those responding was not large enough to report that these percentages would be similar, however, should we have received more responses. Pax in Familia will continue to stay in contact with the organizers and the participants. We are very heartened by the enthusiasm and commitment of those who responded.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

The **Secretary General of the Association of Women Religious of Malawi** attended the Lilongwe training, and has since organized a workshop for the leaders of every active women's religious congregation in the nation. She co-taught the workshop with another laywoman who was trained at the Pax in Familia workshop. The religious congregations in Malawi have set forth a detailed plan for trainings at every level of their apostolates for 2019.

From **Kenya**, Pax in Familia received this report from a social worker at a parish near Nairobi:

The impact of the training in our project for the 25 families was wonderful. We chose 25 couples who had been living in continuous violence and took them through three days session of Journeying with Christ [the violence prevention catechesis]. They were later encouraged to invite their spouse to come for counseling. All the 25 ladies reported that there was reduced violence, the love in the family had improved, and their relationship had thrived. This has made us increase the number of those to be trained next year to 50 men. In the past we were only training women on empowerment, but now we have incorporated men.

The couple that directs the **National Family Life Office in Cameroun** continues to stay in close contact with those who attended the workshop, and to give and plan trainings themselves and with other trainers. They are expecting a grant from Missio Aachen to cover the costs of the follow-up for 2019/2020 nationally, including the printing of more books in English and French. They are also planning to take the French trainings to neighboring Chad and Central African Republic, where violence is rampant as well.

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

Pax in Familia cannot find words to express our gratitude to the Lord and to Our Lady of Guadalupe, our patron, for making these trainings in Africa possible. They were the fruit of the merciful gaze of God upon his children, and of many of our collaborators' prayers.

We are grateful to the Episcopal Conferences and the Diocese that invited us and to the Catholic institutions that funded the workshops. Without their acknowledgement of the importance of this topic and their decision to grant the funding, none of the six workshops they funded would have been possible.

We are grateful to the organizers, the celebrants, the leaders, the interpreters, and the participants, who dedicated so many hours and months to the preparation and implementation, and who spent so many hours listening attentively to this new pastoral information, and to discussing it with passion and commitment, in spite of heat, thunder and lightning, and deluges of rain. It was a testimony to their love of Christ, of his gospel of love, and of their preferential option for the poor and suffering in His Body. It can only be described as an enormous privilege to be able to share these days with them as they embark on this new expression of the love of Christ for the Church.

May God be praised and may his Peace that passes all understanding, by the power of the Holy Spirit, come to inhabit every family on earth, especially those who are scourged by disrespect, abuse, and violence.

Jesus, Prince of Peace, have mercy on us.

Mother of Guadalupe, watch over your children.



Christauria Welland, Psy.D., Pax in Familia
Pentecost Sunday, 2019

