

Supporting communities to care: Catholic Sisters highlight key values of presence, encounter and service

On International Day of Peace, UISG reflects on the unique approach of Sisters to community empowerment, and their contribution to building a more just and peaceful world

Rome, 21st September 2022 – The [International Union of Superiors General](#) (UISG) has released **New Leaders: Supporting communities to care**, the third and final instalment in its campaign to celebrate Catholic Sisters promoting justice, peace and integrity of Creation.

The message of this video is summarised in its closing statement: ***Sisters embody a culture of care based on presence, encounter and service***. The approach of Sisters to community engagement is rooted in three fundamental values, underpinning their unique contribution to global development. Presence: Sisters live among the world’s most vulnerable people, sharing their experiences, challenges and hopes. Encounter: Sisters welcome difference in all its forms, striving to recognise and value each person in their full human dignity. And service: Sisters are committed to promoting the empowerment of all people and the wellbeing of our common home, giving their time, their energies and [even their lives](#) in service of others.

Sister Mary John Kudiyiruppil, Associate Executive Secretary at UISG, says: *“The foundational drive of most congregations of women religious has been one of care and nurture, especially where systems and structures have been weak in caring for the vulnerable. UISG is committed to supporting communities to care, as is evident in the number of its initiatives related to direct care and to support for care-givers. My wish and prayer is that people see this video, draw inspiration for their lives, tap into their fundamental urge to care, and support persons and structures engaged in care-giving.”*

Marking the United Nations’ [International Day of Peace](#) on September 21st, this video shows Sisters serving vulnerable communities around the world. Underscoring the inextricable link between community empowerment and peace-building, the video features Sisters working for [Solidarity with South Sudan](#), a Catholic network training educators, nurses, farmers and community leaders as a means of building resilience and stability in one of the world’s most conflict-ridden countries.

Father David Gentry, Mission Promoter at Solidarity with South Sudan – which was launched as an inter-congregational initiative of the UISG and the men’s [Union of Superiors General](#) (USG) – says: *“Solidarity with South Sudan is founded on the model of capacity building. Our projects are not involved in direct services, like staffing schools for the young or hospitals for the sick. Instead, we seek to educate and train the people of South Sudan to take on these roles for themselves, so they do not become dependent on “charity” from afar, but rather come into possession of their own powers, in order to be agents of their own history.”*

Reflecting the diverse reality of their service, other scenes in this video show Sisters who do work directly with children in marginalised or under-resourced communities. Sister Niluka Perera, Coordinator of the UISG initiative [Catholic Care for Children International](#) (CCCI), says: “CCCI supports religious Sisters, helping them to read the signs of the time and make their charism of care relevant to today’s context. The creation of the CCCI office at UISG is the result of Sister-led care reform in Uganda, Zambia and Kenya during the past few years. We are called to dream big in order to find a better, more sustainable future for the children in our care; we are called to let go of old ways of responding to issues related to caring for children. For this, we need to open ourselves to the new with an open mind, open heart, and open will, nurturing new ways of thinking, being, and doing.”

Finally, the release of this video falls within the [Season of Creation 2022](#), highlighting the profound link between the wellbeing of all people and the health of our planet, and echoing Pope Francis’ call for “a covenant between human beings and the environment.” Mindful of the Holy Father’s call – and of the urgent need for strong advocacy around COP27 on climate change and COP15 on biodiversity – UISG will be launching its new campaign, *Sisters for the Environment*, at the start of October.

To watch **New Leaders: Supporting communities to care**, please click [here](#).

To download the **press pack**, click [here](#).

To contact the UISG communications office:

comunicazione@uisg.org

0039 349 9358744

To find out more about *Sisters for the Environment*:

advocacy.comms.coordinator@uisg.org

0034 633 119362

Additional information

Founded in 1965, the International Union of Superiors General is a membership organisation for the leaders of Catholic women’s congregations worldwide. Its members number more than 1,900 Superiors General, whose Generalates are located in 97 countries. Representing over 600,000 Sisters, the network of UISG congregations is estimated to be one of the largest providers of direct community support in areas including health, hunger relief, and care for children.