



Santa Clara
University



Miller Center
for Social Entrepreneurship

SISTERS' BLENDED VALUE PROJECT

Field Report
February 2020





“I love innovation and always like to explore how to do things differently to benefit others. The skills training that we have received since the inception of the Sisters’ Blended Value Project is, therefore, a great asset and I believe it will help me to actualize my dream of helping our congregation and the people we are serving.”

—Sr. Christine Imbali
SBVP team leader of the Assumption Sisters of Eldoret



The Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA) has partnered with Santa Clara University's Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship to transform social ministries into social enterprises in Eastern and Central Africa where more than 30,000 Catholic Sisters serve some of the most marginalized people on the planet.

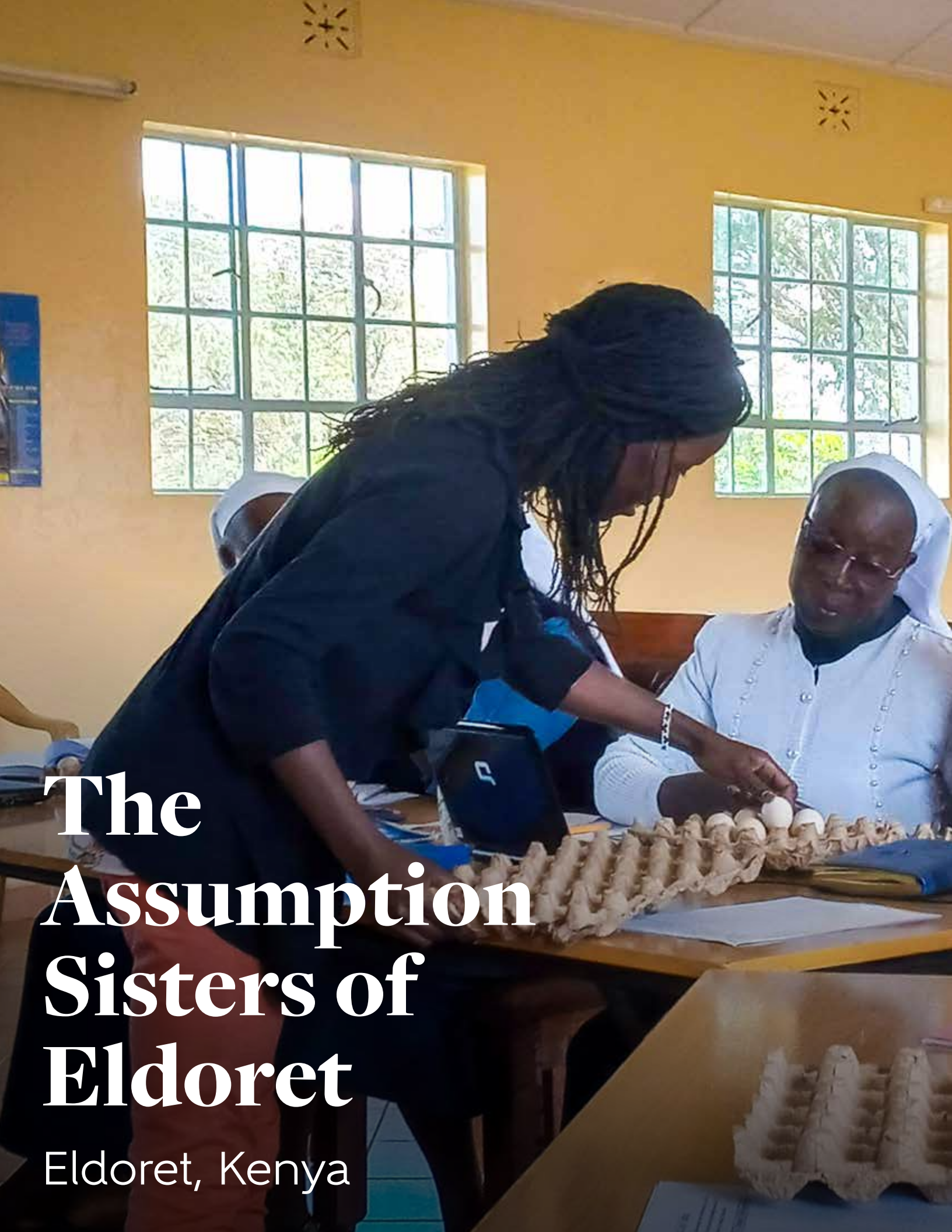


The Sisters' Blended Values Project (SBVP) will provide practical, hands-on learning experiences, apprenticeships, and start-up skills in social entrepreneurship for Catholic Sisters, enabling congregations to more effectively lead social enterprise initiatives. The end goals are for congregations to become self-sufficient and scale their own enterprises, for community members to improve their finances and their lives, and to spread entrepreneurial solutions to poverty with a special focus on women and youth.

"Catholic Sisters are uniquely positioned to unleash the potential of African women and youth in particular; they are trusted community-based leaders who solve complex social problems and have been at the forefront of building healthcare systems and social services in underserved areas," according to Thane Kreiner, PhD, Executive Director of Miller Center.

What follows are reports from the field from four congregations participating in the Sisters' Blended Value Project.





The Assumption Sisters of Eldoret

Eldoret, Kenya



The Assumption Sisters of Eldoret is a local congregation in Kenya founded in 1962. To fulfill their mission to serve the community, the Sisters are involved in pastoral work, education, health, social work, rehabilitation, and foundations for needy children. They foster a holistic approach in their ministry to help people regain their dignity and bring them closer to God. In addition to Kenya, today the Assumption Sisters of Eldoret have communities in South Sudan, Australia, and the United States.

As one of the congregations selected to participate in the Sisters' Blended Value Project, the Assumption Sisters are partnering with Eggpreneur to learn sustainable poultry farming. Eggpreneur advances chicken farming to eradicate childhood malnutrition and increase household income for rural women. The enterprise provides training, start-up resources, and access to markets for women to become successful poultry farmers and entrepreneurs.

One of the challenges the Sisters have faced is in helping their fellow Sisters understand the initiative. They want the Sisters to embrace SBVP as a new ministry that will contribute to improved opportunities and income in the congregation. Even as the learning process continues, some communities are already beginning to keep chickens to practice the skills and knowledge they have acquired so far.

According to the Sisters, "This partnership and collaboration have helped us to learn from others' experiences and opened our minds to new knowledge and ideas, which has been very helpful to us as a congregation." They are also excited to help those they serve to improve their livelihoods, moving from dependence on charity to greater independence through entrepreneurship.

"I am excited about the apprenticeship stage that we have just embarked on. I believe this will help to deepen our understanding of the business aspects of social enterprise."

—Sr. Agnes Kiplagat, SBVP team member of the Assumption Sisters of Eldoret



Founded in 1923 by an Irish nun, Sr. Mary Kevin Kearney, the mission of the **Little Sisters of St. Francis** (LSOSF) is “to reach out with compassion to the marginalized in the spirit of St. Francis.” Mother Kevin came to Uganda with five sisters in 1903 and settled on the outskirts of Kampala. As her team took up their mission, they found the health conditions of the people, especially women and children, were very poor with a high rate of malnutrition and preventable diseases.

A clinic that they began under a mango tree in 1903 is today one of the top privately-owned hospitals in Uganda. Primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges, a center for the disabled, and a school for the blind followed. Mt. St. Mary’s Namagunga, a girls’ secondary schools run by the Sisters, is among the top schools in the country and was attended by one of the daughters of current Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. The sisters operate in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

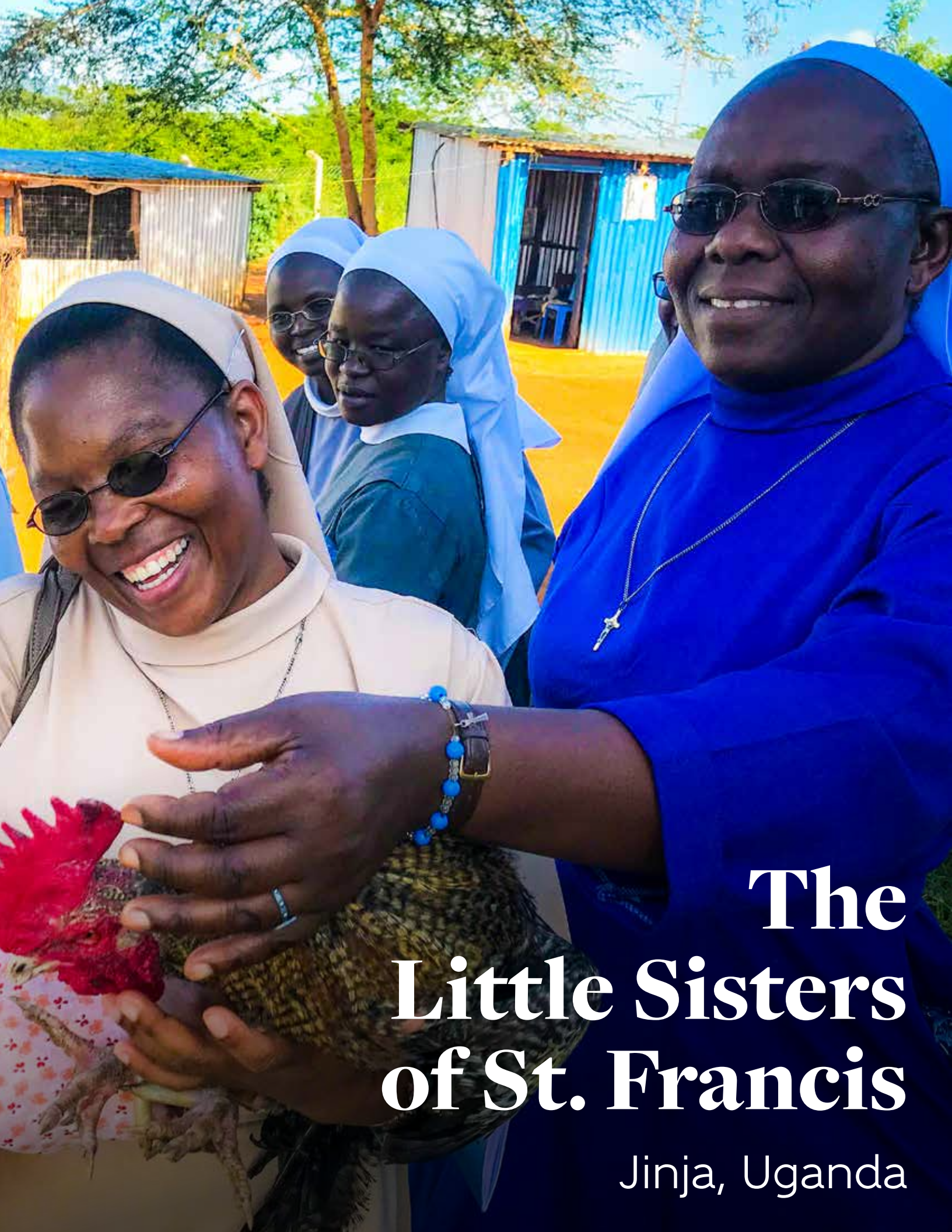
Their SBVP team has identified poultry farming as a way of sustaining the congregation and believes it will serve as a model for the communities they serve. The team first met Matt Dickson of Eggpreneur during a workshop he facilitated in Eldoret, and later traveled to Kenya to visit his demonstration farm. The Sisters realized that poultry keeping is relatively inexpensive and that the returns are almost immediate. As such, poultry farming could be easily adopted to supplement dietary needs and provide income for the congregation and local communities.

The Sisters also value the business skills they will acquire through SBVP. As they described, “Many of our projects are into big losses because we lack the technical know-how of business management. But the skills and knowledge that we are getting will be a great help to us,” helping to improve the financial base of the congregation and provide more services for their parishioners.



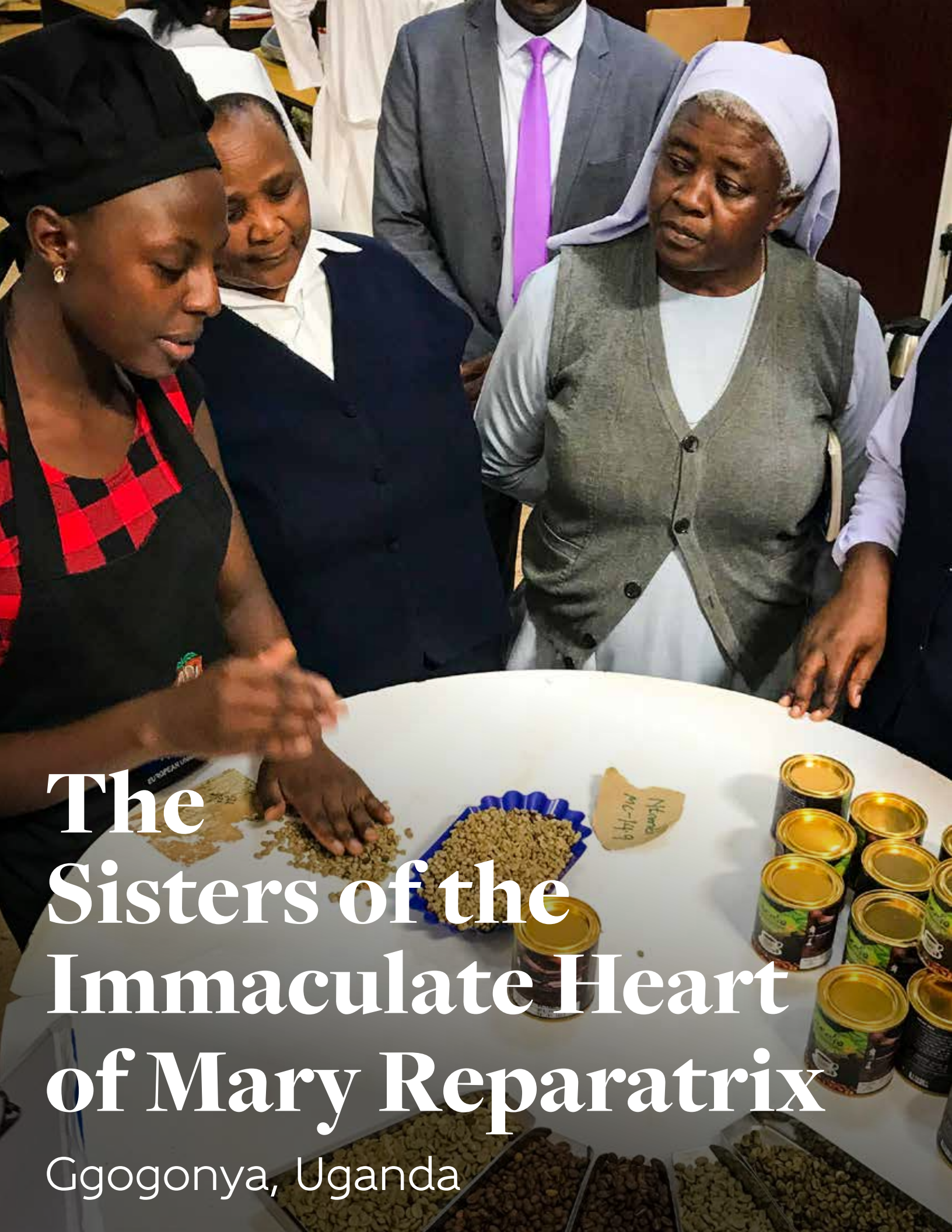
“I want to see us grow Mother Kevin Providence Farm into a model farm and transfer our knowledge and skills to the communities and people we serve.”

—Sr. Rose Thumitho, SBVP team member of the Little Sisters of St. Francis



The Little Sisters of St. Francis

Jinja, Uganda



The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix

Ggogonya, Uganda

The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix (IHMR) trace their origins to 1912 when the Sisters of Mary Reparatrix arrived in Uganda. The congregation was founded in 1948.

The early Ugandan Sisters suffered discrimination in their country as it was thought that African women could not live celibate lives since African men married several wives. The mission of the young congregation was, therefore, to restore dignity to those who were denied their rights, which continues today with special emphasis on women and children.

Prior to joining SBVP, farming had only been done on a small scale for consumption. Now the Sisters are partnering with ACWECA, Miller Center, and NUCAFE for training and apprenticeships focused on coffee farming as a social enterprise.

NUCAFE—the National Union of Coffee Agribusiness and Farm Enterprises—has pioneered a model in which smallholder farmers collectively own and operate their coffee farms, moving farmers further up the coffee value chain and thereby increasing their income. According to NUCAFE founder Joseph Nkundu, “NUCAFE works with the leadership of each cooperative to ensure that farmers receive training in coffee farming, operations, social entrepreneurship, marketing, and cooperative management. Only then can farmers operate sustainable entities that are financially stable and democratically governed.”

Through their partnership with NUCAFE, the Sisters are optimistic about the project’s viability. Sr. Mary Immaculate Nabatanzi states, “I see this venture as a good business opportunity. We have unused land that is good for coffee farming.”

More importantly, the Sisters are excited that coffee farming “will create employment opportunities, especially for youth and women where the coffee farms are. This will improve their quality of life as they will be able to educate their children...[and provide] an improved standard of living—better homes, better road networks, and other social services.”

“I see coffee growing as an income-generating activity that will bring joy to our members and hope to the youth and women we serve as we share our knowledge with them in their own coffee farming.”

—Sr. Judith Barnabas Nassaazi, SBVP team leader for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix



Founded in 1937, **The Daughters of St. Therese** currently serve in Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda. The congregation has three medical doctors—a pediatrician, an optician, and a general doctor. Other Sisters hold doctorate and masters degrees in education and social work.

The Sisters work with the most vulnerable in their communities—orphans, children, and women. They have established schools and formed associations for women. The associations provide a safe haven and counseling, especially for women suffering from domestic abuse. The sisters also work with those who are mentally ill, which has been particularly helpful in Rwanda since the 1994 genocide.

With declining donations, the Sisters welcome the opportunity to build a social enterprise. SBVP linked the Sisters with NUCAFE to optimize several existing coffee plantations and plant fertile land owned by the congregation. Already, the Sisters describe the technical guidance and mentoring from NUCAFE and the support from ACWECA and Miller Center as a wonderful experience.

The congregation currently employs 21 locals at their main farm, who are able to educate and support their families. The Sisters are also encouraging them to plant their own coffee farms and become more self-reliant. And SBVP is already bearing fruit. With NUCAFE training, a number of workers have planted their own coffee trees.

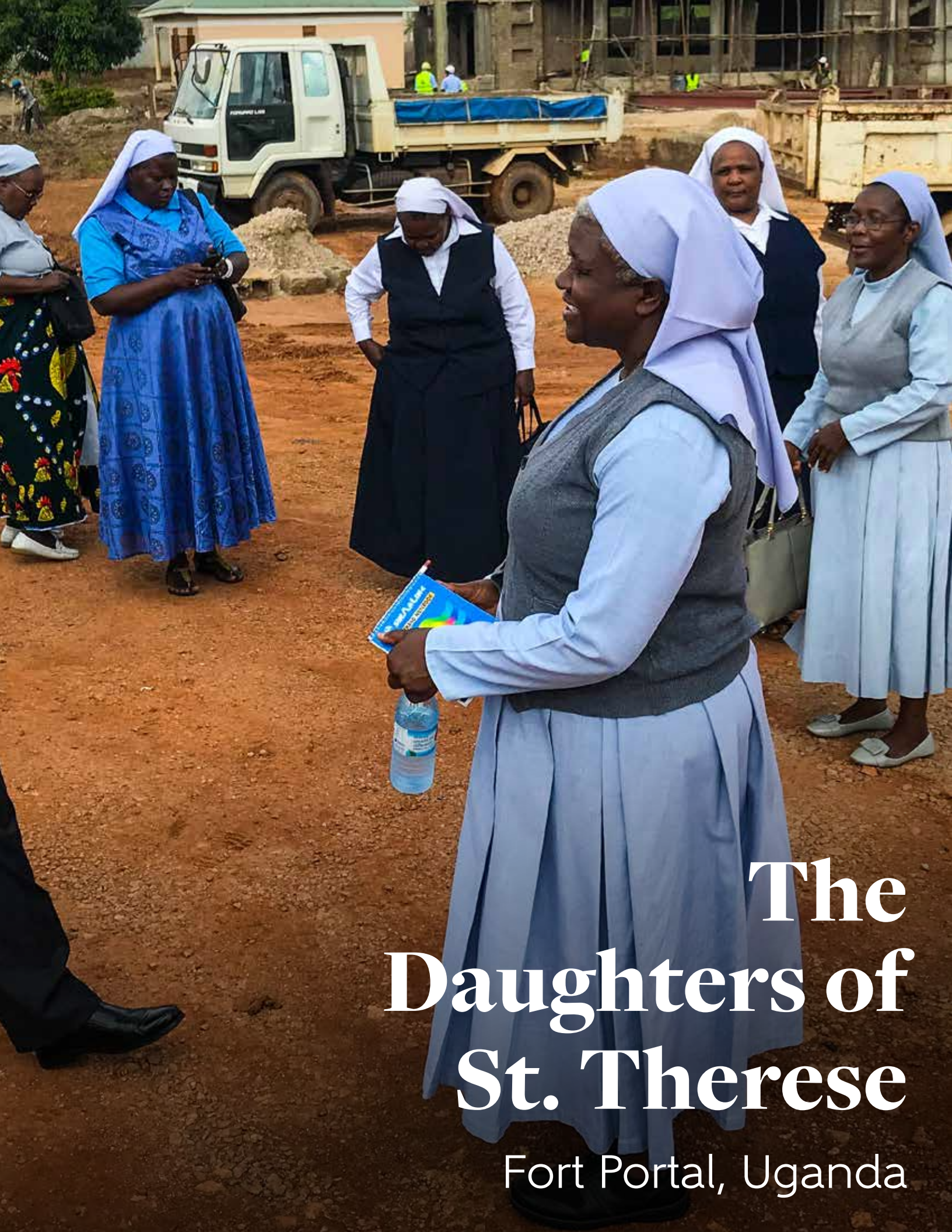
In order to produce higher-quality coffee, NUCAFE is teaching improved growing and harvesting methods, as well as a better understanding of the value chain. Although the congregation operates in a prime coffee growing region, many small-scale farmers had given up coffee for other crops due to meager prices and lack of access to markets. NUCAFE's cooperative model is encouraging local farmers to join the Sisters in coffee farming.

"As a congregation, we look forward to improved income for our congregation and the people we serve," state the Sisters. They also see their value and trust within the community increasing as they lead the way to improved income streams from coffee.



"We are taking on the homework we went through during training to immerse ourselves in the apprenticeship stage. We want to identify our value chain and move up from there."

—Sr. Gaudentia Kababiito, SBVP team leader of The Daughters of St. Therese



The Daughters of St. Therese

Fort Portal, Uganda



“With the guidance and mentorship that we will receive from our partners—Eggpreneur, Miller Center, and ACWECA—we will be able to identify challenges and seek the help we need to scale up the project throughout our congregation.”

—Sr. Florence Anaso, SBVP team leader of the Little Sisters of St. Francis



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