

International Conference
***“Economy of Communion:
A new paradigm for African development”***

NAIROBI
JANUARY 26-28, 2011

**Catholic University of Eastern Africa
in collaboration with the Focolare Movement**

**1st EoC School for young aspiring entrepreneurs
January 23-25**

in Mariapolis Piero, the small town of the Focolare in Kalimoni, Nairobi

The African people, on one hand, is in urgent need of entrepreneurial culture and economic development, and on the other, is searching for an economic and business model that does not destroy community and communion, values that are deeply rooted in their cultures.

Fr. John Maviiri, provost of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi (C.U.E.A.), and Dr. Aloys Blasie' Ayako, Dean of the university's Faculty of Commerce, see great hope for the continent in the Economy of Communion culture, and they have strongly encouraged this International Conference in which, **for the first time, the Economy of Communion project will be presented in an African university.**

The Conference that will be hosted from January 26 to 28, 2011, is organized by the International Commission of the Economy of Communion, made of scholars, entrepreneurs and social workers coming from the United States, the Philippine and various European countries. Participants will also include civil and religious authorities, entrepreneurs, bankers, people who work for development projects in Africa, representatives of local NGOs, and young students coming from many African countries..

To give continuity to this important initiative, **there is a professional development course in the works at C.U.E.A.** It is aimed at spreading an economic business culture for Africa and will be entrusted to a group of economists and scholars that work throughout the world developing the Economy of Communion.

Genevieve Sans, from the Central African Republic and member of the International Commission of the Economy of Communion, affirms, *“The experience of the EoC lived helps us understand that it is not possible to escape the trap of extreme poverty with money, even if it's abundant. Neither is it possible with the redistribution of wealth or by building public goods. Nor is it possible with an increase in commercial relationships between the North and the South... We will come out from this trap when we will be capable of building authentic and deep human relationships among people who are different but equal; when we know how to understand that there are no people in the world who are so poor that they are not able to be a gift for others. The world then will see fraternity and communion flourish.”*

In the days just before the C.U.E.A. conference, from **January 23 to 25**, in Mariapolis Piero, the small town of the Focolare in Kalimoni, Nairobi, there will be the **first EoC School for young aspiring entrepreneurs** coming from 12 African countries (and including some participants from Europe, United States and Asia).

Formation, reciprocity, and enculturation are the fundamental pillars of the school. *“The Pan African EoC School is based on three assumptions,”* said Luigino Bruni, responsible for the worldwide EoC project. *“The first: today, cooperation in development is done with people, not with capital. Without quality universities, no serious development can take place. Second: the method of the school is reciprocity. There will not be any professors from the West who are coming to teach the African youth. Starting from the high esteem that we hold for the culture, everyone will learn from everyone. Thirdly: development cannot happen without business culture, and this is what Africa is missing today. Africa needs to open itself up to the market while saving the “community” roots that are so strong in its culture’s DNA. So, one can understand how “Economy” and “Communion” can truly be an important opportunity here.”*

2011 is the twentieth anniversary of the Economy of Communion project, launched by Chiara Lubich in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on May 29, 1991. The anniversary will be celebrated in Brazil from May 25–29, 2011, with a week of events dedicated to evaluating the project’s current situation and projecting new developments for the project.

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