

Chutzpah and shoe leather

Christina S.N. Lewis | Jan. 2, 2011



Within five minutes of meeting Sr. Margaret Maitha, a Kenyan who runs

an organization devoted to children's education and women's empowerment, she made me feel guilty for not spending a full week with her. But I will spend three days with her (including sleeping at her house) to learn about her organization, Kenya Family Charities.

The group assists tens of thousands of families all over Nairobi, she tells me. In this photograph she shows me liquid soaps made by her group's beneficiaries. They sell for 130 to 180 shillings (about \$2)

Having been swept up by her quiet but firm manner, I think I have a sense of how Sr. Margaret raises money for her organization: chutzpah and shoe leather.

A representative from Catholic Relief Services, who has partnered with Kenya Family Charities in the past, tells me that I have an arduous schedule ahead of me. Sr. Margaret and her compatriot, Sr. Angelina, wake up at 5 a.m., apparently, and walk about 15 miles a day. They are the group's only two full-time employees so they need to cover a lot of ground.

My stay with her begins tomorrow. Should be fun. I just hope she gives me enough time to take notes.

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