

KENYA PROVINCE

Kenya and Tanzania

Official Languages: Kenya – **English and Swahili**, Tanzania – **Swahili**

Vision Statement

To become an invigorated SVD province of missionaries who are united, committed and empowered by Christ to bring the Word of God especially to the marginalized people in Kenya and Tanzania.

Mission Statement

To evangelize all people through SVD characteristic dimensions (Mission Animation, Biblical/Pastoral Ministry, Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation and Communication) through formation and empowerment of SVD missionaries, in collaboration with the laity and other mission partners.

1. Societal Setting

Kenya: With a population of about 47 million from at least 47 ethnic groups, Kenya is a culturally diverse Eastern African country. Such diversity has often led to ethnic tensions which bedevil the country. The specter of 2008 post-election violence still haunts the victims whose cry for justice and reconciliation remains unheeded. With the presidential election set to be held in August this year, political fever is rising and peace is once again under threat. Kenya's sha-



red borders with Somalia and South Sudan also threaten the security of the citizens. Thousands of refugees from the two neighboring countries are staying in camps inside Kenya, while a number of them have made it to some of the SVD parishes in Nairobi. The nation's 2010 Constitution introduced a new system of economic and political governance in the country. Thanks to the devolution of power, it somehow stimulated accountability and delivery of public service at local levels. The World Bank placed the 2016 economic growth of Kenya at 5.9% and gives an estimate of 7% for 2017. Much of the economic impetus, however, comes from agriculture, forestry, and fishing, although the country is also

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reaping economic benefits from the information technology sector. Kenya is feeling the effect of climate change, with drought affecting the farmers yearly and threatening the survival of the populace living in semi-arid lands.

Tanzania: Tanzania's geographical proximity to Kenya has led to close economic ties between the two countries. Although having a much bigger land mass, Tanzania's 44 million or so people are lagging behind Kenya in terms of per capita income, which is one of the world's lowest. The World Bank estimates that roughly 24% of Tanzanians live below the poverty line - a figure seen as consistent since 2007 owing to high population growth. One-third of the country's GDP comes from agriculture, which employs 80% of the work force. The country suffers from high unemployment, HIV/AIDS prevalence, and poor access to health services, good sanitation and drinking water; yet, its people are enjoying peace and relative tranquility. This does not mean however that it has no security concerns. Both internally and externally, Tanzania has its share of terrorism threats. Host to Africa's highest mountain (Mt. Kilimanjaro) and wildlife-rich Serengeti Park, the country is also home to about 120 tribes which have found a way to co-exist peacefully. Despite its ills, the country is enjoying domestic stability which sadly could not be translated into prosperity.

2. Ecclesial Setting

Kenya: According to recent estimates, about 83% of the country's population is Christian, Muslims are about 11%, and the rest are mem-

bers of traditional religions or non-Christian faith-groups. Among the Christians, Catholics comprise 23%, with a leadership headed by 38 bishops, 2,744 priests 6,303 religious (798 male and 5,505 female), and 11,343 catechists. Kenya has an Interreligious Council which enables the Catholic Church and different denominations to come together in order to promote peace and understanding, as well as to work on issues like social justice, security, political stability, poverty, and the environment. The Pope's visit to the country in November 2015 highlighted interreligious dialogue as a necessity, not an option. The Catholic Church in Kenya is very active and alive. A vocation to religious life and priesthood in the country continues to attract and inspire many young people. The Church has about 12,000 educational institutions in the country, ranging from pre-school to university level. Church-run charitable and development projects as well as health centers are also plentiful in Kenya. The country's constitution ensures freedom of worship, and the influx of Catholic missionaries and evangelical and independent Churches to the country is a testament to this. In terms of the financial situations of parishes, the ones in urban areas are relatively stable and self-sufficient, whereas the rural parishes are still depending on subsidies from Caritas and other Catholic organizations around the world. The Archdiocese of Nairobi is taking the lead in addressing financial

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self-reliance by engaging in micro-financing and local fundraising initiatives.

Tanzania: In 2018, the Catholic Church in Tanzania is set to mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries in the country. One of the activities to be highlighted is the renewal of the missionary life in the country. Indeed, Tanzania's six archdioceses and 28 dioceses are heavily relying on missionary congregations to respond to the needs of the Church for evangelization and pastoral ministry to the people, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Thirty percent of the population identify themselves as Catholics, making it the largest denomination in the country. Small Christian Communities play a prominent role in the parish life of Catholics in the country, and indigenous liturgical music and original religious songs are very popular in many parishes. Catholic schools and social ministries are also numerous. In a 2009 nationwide survey, 24% of Tanzanians believed that religious conflict is a serious problem their country is facing. The same study revealed a high level of religious tolerance between Muslims and Christians. This however does not eliminate the fact that some Catholics, particularly those living in predominantly Muslim areas, experience intimidation and fear, and are being coerced to convert to Islam. Being a poverty-stricken country and heavily dependent on missionary congregations, many parish communities still rely foreign financial assistance to manage social and development projects, as well as to support Church personnel. To the extent that

they can, Catholics in Tanzania are known for being extraordinarily generous in helping the needy and their parishes.

3. Intercultural Mission – *Ad Extra*

Those in Final Vows

IN ACTIVE MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Parish	22	48.8	47.3	46.9
Education	3	6.7	5.2	0
Schools	1	-		
Universities	2	-		
Formation/ SVD Vocation	6	13.3	13.2	6.2
Administration/ Support	2	4.4	7.9	18.8
Other Apostolates	2	4.4	15.8	15.6
JPIC	0	-		
Bible	0	-		
Communication	0	-		
Mission Animation	1	-		
Others	2	-		

Those in Final Vows

NOT IN MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Studies/ Orientation	5	11.1	5.3	6.2
Retired/Sick	3	6.7	0	0
Others	0	0	5.3	6.2

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Since the inception of the SVD mission in Kenya in 1984, our ministry in the province has been mainly parish based. In Nairobi, we currently take care of three parishes, one of them established in 2016, when two parishes were handed back to the Archdiocese. Sts. Joachim and Ann and Divine Word parishes have a long history of serving the poor and the needy, among them many refugees from the Great Lakes region, DRC and South Sudan. Each parish has a primary school and medical institutions.

In the Diocese of Eldoret, we serve in three parishes, one of which—the Holy Spirit Parish—celebrated its Silver Jubilee in February 2017. All the three parishes are located in semi-rural areas, and in one of them confreres are engaged in part time university chaplaincy. These three parishes were places of ethnic tensions which were stoked and erupted into violence and death. Playing the role of peacemakers and reconcilers and being an international community, confreres became a symbol of hope to the people to live together.

The SVD took up missionary work in the Archdiocese of Arusha, Tanzania in 2000. Presently, we are ministering to five parishes there. In 2002, we accepted the rural parish of the Good Shepherd, Simanjiro, in the vast plains of the Maasai land. One of our parishes located on the outskirts of Arusha became a pilgrimage place after the attack in 2013. Another parish is growing rapidly, building a primary school, a parish house, and completing the church construction. In 2010, a parish 200 km south of Arusha was accepted.

It has been designated to become the headquarters of the envisaged Apostolic Vicariate Maasai Kusini, whose establishment is being planned. Two parishes are involved in pre-primary and primary evangelization among the well-known pastoralist Maasai people. A happy and fruitful ministry among them requires a long-term commitment, concomitant with language and cultural studies. It is a time of grace as they are open for the Good News.

Some confreres are involved in part-time retreat work, spiritual accompaniment and psychological counseling in a parish context, which facilitates healing and personal growth for the ordinary faithful. A secondary school for boys was put up in 2009 and is now being managed in collaboration with sisters. The school is located in the Machakos diocese but under the SVD Nairobi district.

Characteristic Dimensions

In early 2017, a Strategic Plan for the province was launched which in fidelity to our charism advocates for venturing into capacity-building through advanced studies for formation, education, administration, and our Characteristic Dimensions.

Biblical Apostolate: The Strategic Plan put a special emphasis on initiating a lively Biblical-Pastoral Ministry (BPM), mostly in parish settings or at the deanery level. One confrere is a lecturer in biblical scholarship at Tangaza University College in Nairobi.

Mission Animation: The mission secretary does some animation work in the parishes, especially among lay partners. Some funds for worldwide mission are also collected.

JPIC: The Strategic Plan also encourages various JPIC initiatives, mostly in a parish setting or at the deanery level.

Communication: One confrere is the director and a lecturer at the Institute of Social Communication of Tangaza University College in Nairobi.

Priorities among Congregational Directions

Our *ad extra* priorities are: ***Family and Youth, Reconciliation and Peace Building, and Primary and New Evangelization.*** Many of the initiatives are based in the Small Christian Communities. Our involvement in the education sector and formation, in parish youth and SVD youths, in campus ministry and a dream to establish a center for family support are expressions of these priorities. A big challenge is that many youths in Kenya and Tanzania become victims of religious radicalization, and more efforts are needed to ensure their healthy development.

Collaboration with SSpS and Others

Our collaboration with the SSpS has been strengthened by regular visits of the SSpS leadership and sisters of the Ethiopia/South Sudan region to Kenya. VIVAT International Kenya

has been revived in collaboration with various religious congregations in Kenya. A seminar on advocacy work was also organized. The tragic death of Sr. Veronika SSpS in May 2016 as a consequence of violence brought us together in a way we never imagined. After leaving South Sudan due to the civil war in July 2016, a small community of SSpS has taken up residency near our Philosophy House in Nairobi, where they come for daily Mass and regular sharing. The SSpS will decide about their future in Kenya-Tanzania after their regional chapter 2017.

We are members of the Conference for Superiors of Male Religious, and participate in commissions on JPIC and other activities. In some of our parishes, we collaborate with religious sisters who run schools and work in health centers. Confreres working in parishes are well integrated and have been given responsibility as deans and advisors to Bishops.

SVD Lay Association

The SVD lay association, officially known as "Friends of SVD," is promoted by our seminar-ians in our parishes through collaboration with the mission secretary. They have regular meetings at the parish level and one annual regional meeting, where members get introduced to SVD spirituality and intercultural living. Existing in six parishes in Kenya and three in Tanzania, its roughly 260 members attend important functions like vows, ordinations, and other events.

4. Intercultural Life – *Ad Intra*

MEMBERSHIP	2018	2012	2005
Bishops	1	0	0
Clerics	37	34	28
Brothers (final vows)	6	3	4
Brothers (temporal vows)	1	1	1
Scholastics	11	27	23
Total	56	65	56

AGE AND COUNTRY	2018	2012	2005
Average age	44.3	42.3	36.3
Nationalities	22	22	18

Spirituality: In our formation houses, there are regular recollections where guest facilitators from various walks of life share their journey. Bible sharing is an integral part of our basic formation, and also practiced in some of our communities. There are recollections and retreats at district and provincial levels. During assemblies, time is set aside for spiritual topics and faith celebration in an intercultural context.

Community Life: Seminars on intercultural living were organized and are found helpful. Confreres have facilitated such seminars beyond the SVD circle too.

Leadership: The topic of servant leadership has been addressed at district/community meetings and provincial assemblies.

Finance: Topics of accountability and financial transparency were covered at provincial assemblies and district/community meetings. Serious attempts towards self-reliance through regular financial contributions from most of our parishes are bearing fruit. Electronic accounting systems are put in place, which have helped in improving timely and accurate reporting, and offering support to the provincial treasury.

Formation: Some confreres have been trained in formation work, while others are starting in the near future, thus making formation a real priority in our province. There is a program of introduction of new/returning missionaries for reflection, sharing and mutual accompaniment. Confreres have gone for *Dei Verbum*, Bible, and formation courses.