



SVD Kenya – Tanzania Apostolate Perspective

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Sustainable Development Goals for Maasai People In Simanjiro, Tanzania



As almost all parts of the world battle the effects of climate change of one kind or the other, here in the Maasai South Strip, we are experiencing a shift in rainy and dry seasons that have not been experienced before. Apart from some drought periods registered in the past, we are now facing very unpredictable, short, and scattered pockets of rainfall whose distribution is very parochial. With this, our people, mainly herders, are getting the brunt of it. Livestock has become very emaciated and some are dying. The source of livelihood for the majority of the people is being threatened.



It is against this background that formal quality education is the 4th of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that must take center stage. By making quality education accessible to the Maasai children, I believe that the future of the community will be secured in a sustainable manner. The Innovation Monitoring and Evaluation systems unanimously suggest that educated people are the ones who tend to innovate. Through proper education, learners develop the mental capacities to think outside the box. One of my points of emphasis in my ministry here in the Maasai mission is that all children must go to school in order to change the fortunes of the people for the better.



To help me do that, A Missionary group from Italy - Gruppo Misionario Cassago, has been collaborating with us to build nursery schools in remote villages where children did not go to school at all due to long distances from the nearest government primary school. For the last three and half years, we have been able to construct classrooms in three villages that accommodate an average of 120 children each. The latest project was inaugurated on 18 February 2023 at Katikati a sub-village of the larger Sukuro village.



To realize this dream, the village governments have been supportive. First, they have allocated land for the nursery schools under the name of the Church. They also bring locally available materials such as stones and sand and the women bring water for building with donkeys and sometimes men with bicycles. The local Small Christian Communities have been very instrumental in all the projects. In all the three sub-villages where we have done the projects, we started first by asking for some land so that the faithful can get a place to worship because the main village stations are far. It is during visits to these communities that the need for schools for the children arises. Other non-Catholic villagers have come to believe that through the Catholic faith, God is bringing education closer for their children.



I have many village heads willing to set aside land for their children to get a school closer to their homes. Some have to walk for as long as ten kilometers to the nearest public schools. Many schools have overcrowded classrooms. This is a good sign because not very many years back, classrooms were empty because parents did not find it wise to send their children to school while having enough livestock to graze. Today there is no grazing and only big boys and men are able to take the animals far in search of pasture. There is also little food at home and when children get lunch in school is a big relief for the parents.



With the effects of climate change, many Maasai parents are now getting convinced that education for their children is the best direction to take. We are sensitizing them about the benefits of formal education. These include acquiring knowledge for sustainable livestock keeping and agriculture as well as formal employment that does not depend directly on rain.



We are particularly grateful to the Gruppo Missionario Cassago for their continuous collaboration with us to make the dreams of many Maasai children come true.

During the Saturday 18th inauguration, we were graced by the visit of the Divine Word Parish Pastoral Council led by their Parish Priest Fr. Justus Rottuk, SVD, and accompanied by Fr. James Mburugu, SVD, Assistant Parish Priest from Mary Immaculate Parish in Nairobi.

Fr. Lawrence Muthee, SVD