



JESUITS
EASTERN AFRICA



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Shukran

Shukran: Swahili/Arabic for Gratitude



WE COUNT OUR BLESSINGS THAT YOU MAKE POSSIBLE

God has blessed our province with a rich diversity. The Eastern Africa Province is home to many nationalities and a blend of various cultures and ethnic groups. This diversity has produced many gifted and inspirational Jesuits. Like many other Provinces of the Society of Jesus, we are confronted with myriad challenges: high illiteracy levels, thousands of refugees, high prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS, and perennial conflicts and wars in some countries of our Province.

Guided by our mission to 'respond to the call of Christ to work in solidarity with the marginalized in our Society and to bring the good news to the people of God', we continue to counter these challenges through various ministries and apostolates. Thanks to the generosity and support of our partners, and the dedication and courage exhibited by our Jesuit companions.

Looking back on 2012, we count many achievements and blessings: we conducted ongoing formation programmes for Jesuits in Formation, Brothers, Newly Ordained Priests, and Project Directors; 13 young men entered the novitiate; and we ordained 3 priests. This will go a long way in supporting our mission in Africa. We also hosted a meeting of Jesuits from the universal Society (Congregation of Procurators) in Nairobi, the first to be held outside Europe since the foundation of the Society. It was a huge success!

Therefore our dear friends, partners and companions, we cannot afford to carry out our mission without your invaluable support and commitment. Because of you, we are where we are, and we are counting our blessings! On behalf of all the Jesuits of Eastern Africa Province and the curia staff, I wish you and your family MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Fr. Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator, SJ Provincial.



Emmanuel Mading (left) looks on as he is shown how to weed his crops. Inset: Women from the village pumping water from a borehole at the farm school.

MAJIS: A service of hope towards self-reliance

Christmas time is here yet again. And as we prepare to sing with the angels, eat with our families and laugh with our friends, we have so much to think about: our countries and the hope for tomorrow. For South Sudan, the newest Nation in Africa, a lot has to be considered. Even after emerging from 20 years of civil war, it still has to deal with reconciliation issues and mending of broken hearts in addition to reviving her economy and empowering the local population.

Still, the south Sudanese will celebrate with the whole world. As Dr. Howard Thurman put it, "Christmas symbolizes hope even at a moment when hope seems utterly fantastic." And so we are put here for the benefit of others: to be an inspiration and pillar of strength when they are in need. To give them hope. For this reason, Jesuits of Eastern Africa is among some of the organizations working in South Sudan to help the Sudanese people re-build their lives. We are redoubling our efforts by giving hope to people at the margins of society.

Empowering the Powerless

When we decided to initiate a farm school (MAJIS Program) to empower a small community in Rumbek town, Emmanuel Mading' Yar, a 32 year old South Sudanese, was among the volunteers who helped to clear and fence the 1.5 square meters piece of land.

Mading' comes from the Acholi tribe, a pastoralist community in South Sudan. Although he rears a few cattle in his home, he has for a long time wanted to practice farming. He had gotten accustomed to

growing domestic seeds in a small piece of land without any agricultural skills. This was nonetheless not sustainable as the produce was only enough for his family. In addition, he could not plant during the dry season.

As soon as he heard about the 3 month pilot project, he quickly signed up for the training hoping to empower himself with proper agricultural skills. "I appreciated the project very much because it is what I had wanted for a long time... It has helped me a lot and I feel it in my blood..."

Located in Akol Jal village, the farm school was a result of continuous deliberations between the Jesuits in South Sudan and the local chiefs in Akol Jal village. The meetings revealed the need for a school that would directly empower the locals with agricultural skills. In 2009, a pilot project with 60 participants was initiated. The program, implemented by Fr. Francis Njuguna, SJ, focused on equipping the beneficiaries with basic agricultural skills.

Mading' explains that since the Jesuits initiated the project, they are able to eat healthy food even during the dry season. He points to a small boy staring at us from a distance "... that is my son. When he is of the right age I will send him to school instead of the cattle camp." Like Mading, all the beneficiaries of the project have so much to look forward to. "I hope that in the near future, this knowledge will spread to other villages so that we can teach them what we have also been taught." says Mading with pride in his eyes.

Diana Karua, Communications Coordinator, Jesuits Eastern Africa

Lubango Centre:

Empowering Women and Children of Nyashana

Lubango centre in Nyashana sits on one of the many hills on the outskirts of Mwanza, Tanzania's second largest city. Originally occupied by landless squatters who came from rural areas hoping to improve their lives, Nyashana is still one of the poor parts of the city, with no electricity or water.

Unemployment is also a big problem. Youths living here do not have relevant life-skills and for this reason, there is a lot of idleness. Many who cannot afford to continue their education do not know how to spend their time. While girls are often busy at home with housework, boys are left wandering the streets. Some youth, however, work as day labourers (kibarua) in an effort to provide food for their families.

For this reason, Jesuits at St. Francis Xavier Parish of Mwanza, decided to build a Centre, Lubango, for the youth and women in Nyashana. Father Raymond Manyanga, SJ, the parish priest, believes that our future lies in the hands of women and the youth. According to him, he "...wanted to create a special place, where people can meet, learn and spend their free time in a good ambience..." The centre is open to everyone regardless of their religious beliefs. Our projects at the centre are aimed at offering equal opportunities to women



Participants from the cooking class display their skills

and the youth on life-skills and educational projects for the benefit of the community.

Our programs: Montessori Kindergarten

The kindergarten, located at the centre, provides a creative start to the children's education. It has two teachers and 53 children (24 girls and 29 boys) in total. Although most of the children come from middle class families, only 4 children, out of the 53, are sponsored through a donation from a Choral group in Liechtenstein. The kindergarten provides meals and a safe environment to nurture the children. It also provides an opportunity for the training of individuals interested in primary education instruction.

Library:

Our centre has a fully functional library stocked with primary and secondary school textbooks for use by the pupils in the local schools. Since most government schools in the area do not allow students to take textbooks home, the students in the area come to the centre whenever they are free to read in a quiet and adequate environment. Aside from studying facilities, our centre also has facilities for boarding games and sports for the youth. Although the centre provides equal opportunity to both boys and girls, most of the youth at the centre are boys because girls have to take care of household chores.



Children from the Montessori Kindergarten at play time

Home Craft Training:

Through the centre, we are able to offer women support through life skills' training. Our home craft training program empowers women by giving them skills in tailoring, cooking, production of herbal medicine and basic jewellery making. Aside from these major programs, we also teach these women basic arithmetic, how to read and write. Most of the products of these classes are sold by the women to generate income for themselves. Part of this income also covers administration costs for the centre. The program currently has 17 women; 5 of them are sponsored by well-wishers because of their difficult financial situation.

Future:

In an effort to ensure the sustainability of the program, we hope to increase the production of jewellery, soap and herbal medicine for sale. We also intend to manufacture special cotton-textiles, offer secretarial services, and open up a coffee shop. The needs expressed by the community of Nyashana and their work to achieve them will however be at the fore.

Johanna Sele-Rutinwa, Assistant Coordinator, Lubango Centre

About the Jesuits

The Society of Jesus was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1540 and is today the largest religious order in the Catholic Church. We serve in 127 nations on six continents and are organized in administrative regions called Provinces. The Eastern Africa Province consists of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and North and South Sudan. Though the province was established in 1986, the earliest missions date back to the times of St. Ignatius in 1557, in Ethiopia.

Our works in Eastern Africa include:

- **Education** - through our educational institutions we form well rounded and competent persons committed to a faith that does justice. Our students are aware of the social ills that are present in Africa and they generously give themselves to put an end to these ills. We train 'men and women for others.' We currently run seven schools in Eastern Africa.
- **Retreats** - for more than 470 years, Jesuit spirituality has led countless women and men to a greater intimacy with Jesus Christ and to a dedication to serve those most in need. We maintain retreat houses in Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia. In addition, we run mobile retreats in all countries of

our province.

- **Parish ministry** - we run 4 vibrant parishes with a variety of pastoral, formation and service programmes. All our parishes give emphasis to 'community' and have dynamic Small Christian Communities.
- **Social Justice and Communication** - we aim to transform unjust structures and offer hope to the marginalized in society. We reach out especially to refugees, those affected or infected with HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence. Our justice and communication ministries include: Jesuit Hakimani center, African Jesuits Aids Network (AJAN), Jesuit Refugee Service and Radio Kwizera.

Visit www.easternafricajesuits.org for more information on our work

Jesuit Hakimani Center (JHC):

Effectively responding to the complex challenges of today

“...when the world can turn around and see a group of God’s people exhibiting substantial healing in the area of human relationships in their present life, then the world will take notice...” Francis Schaeffer, 1912-1984 (The God who is There). Our role as Christians and as humanity is to help each other heal no matter the circumstance. And so the message of peace, reconciliation and justice, resonates in all our works.

Part of our mission as Jesuits of Eastern Africa is to promote justice in dialogue wherever we work. Through our social justice and communications apostolate, Jesuit Hakimani Centre (JHC), we aim to advance the ideals of a democratic society. We are dedicated to the study and action on issues of Christian faith, social justice and peace building.

Since the year 2001, JHC has been engaged in transforming structures that shape society through in-depth structural analyses and interventions. Central to this is the quest for justice, peace, equity and fair distribution of resources to citizens. For this reason, we offer trainings to various groups, conduct thematic research, lobby and advocate for policy reforms, formulate policies and publish books, journals and policy briefs.

Over the years, JHC has evolved into a center for social concern continuously supporting local communities, especially



Hakimani Director Br. Elias Mokuja, SJ, has an informal discussion with women from the Maasai community in Kenya

through the Church structures. This is due to the increasing demands for informed response to social justice issues. The center has four programmatic areas including economic justice, good governance, peace-building, and media, research and publications.

On enhancing peaceful co-existence, especially in areas where the political landscape is uncertain, we undertake trainings on peace-building in an attempt to empower individuals, communities and structures. This is achieved through the provision of frameworks and strategies for peace-building and conflict transformation. We emphasize on the need to be aware of the dangers of ethnic intolerance, poor governance

and leadership, inequality and tribalism. Throughout the trainings, we engage communities in self-examination of routines and practices, constructive dialogues and social conversations. Consequently, we help these communities devise innovative interventions to social challenges.

These community-led dialogue projects are aimed at sensitizing the public on civic responsibility, community leadership, and cultural diversity. At the same time, they encourage vital social conversation on ethnic diversity. Aside from this, they offer healing. And so in our efforts to transform Society into a just and peaceful HOME for people to lead lives they value, we invite you to work with us for a better tomorrow.

Sch. Augustine Ekeno Edan, SJ Acting Director, Jesuit Hakimani Centre



Hope your season is filled with much joy, peace & happiness

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Lo, how a rose ever blooming, From tender stem hath sprung!

Of Jesse's lineage coming, As men of old have sung

Jesse was a big-boned giant of a man, father of a hearty brood of seven sons. When Saul was unfaithful to the Lord, God told Samuel the prophet to go down to Bethlehem and anoint a new king. When Samuel saw these seven brawny boys, Jesse's best, he started to unpack the oils for anointing the new king. Not so fast, God said. There's another little one who's out on the hills tending the sheep. He's the one I have in mind.

God, we know, is not fooled by external appearances; he looks into people's hearts. And he sees things that the rest of us miss completely. David, sinner though he was, was always God's favorite and became the forbear of all the generations that led to the birth of Christ.

Americans standing around the baptismal font on a Sunday afternoon used to say: "Look at that little guy being baptized. Who knows? He could become president some day." You never know. But I think even Jesse couldn't have foreseen the future of his little shepherd boy.

As we look forward this year to the birth of Christ our Saviour, we see every night on television a great number of emaciated children, many with cherubic faces, but oh so somber beyond their years. All are



An illustration of David tending to his father's sheep

undernourished, all lie down at night listening to freedom fighters shouting out about enemy snipers, hearing bombs shattering buildings and houses all

around them, large numbers of them crying themselves to sleep, saddened by the death of an older brother or a father who used to tell them bedtime stories.

We ask why are these things happening? How is it all going to end? Cannot the God who gave us the infant Jesus wrapped in the tender arms of his mother give relief to these grieving mothers of Mogadishu and Homs?

As we prepare for Christmas and the Child of Bethlehem, let's not forget these children's nightmares and continue to pray that God will bring peace and the chance for a normal childhood to these unfortunate victims of the Moslem Spring. 🍎

Fr. Ted Walters, S.J.,

Province National Secretary of Apostleship of Prayer, Dar-es Salaam



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