



Mission Partners Newsletter

Missionary Benedictine Sisters
P.O. Box 18, Peramiho-Songea, Tanzania

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Making a Difference in Three (not so easy) Steps!



2012 will be the year to make a significant difference! We have seen the critical need for proper care and education of children! We have been discerning, God's will, saving, and planning for two years.

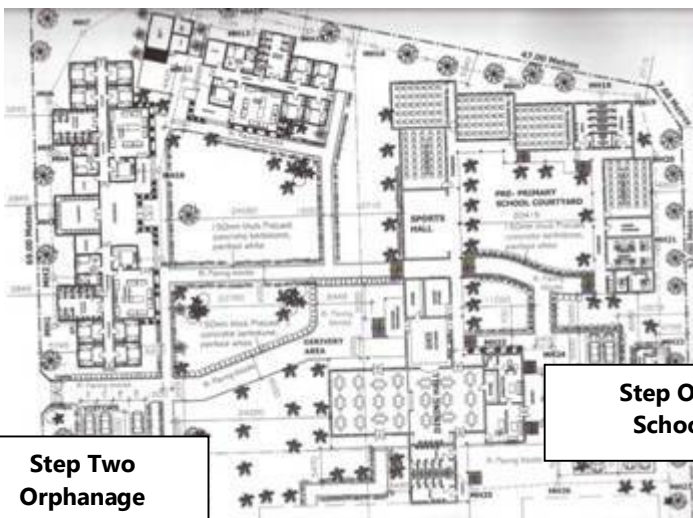
We have a three-step building plan:

1. Build a kindergarten and pre-primary school for 170 children in 2012 (see below & page three)
2. Build an orphanage in 2012 to replace our current delapidated orphanage (See page two).
3. Build a convent (in 2012 or 2013?) to house the sisters

serving in these ministries and in the parish.

Making a Difference, Step One, Good Shepherd School

The overall quality of all levels of education in Tanzania is pitifully poor. I visited with one Peace Corp volunteer two weeks ago. She is working in a highschool of over 600 students which has THREE TEACHERS!!! If that is a sign of the overall quality of secondary school education (which is highly esteemed in Tanzania) you can imagine how the young children fair. The sense for "early childhood development" is next to non-existent in Tanzania. I



If this country will experience change, it must start at an early level!



Step Two
Orphanage

Step One
School

This is a change that makes a difference.

REPORT: The United Nations Human Development Index Components Comparison 1990-2010 shows that education remains one of Tanzania's biggest challenges.... "key indicators – including PLSE pass rates and primary to secondary transition rates – have deteriorated recently, highlighting the ongoing challenges of achieving the goals of quality and equity at all levels and ensuring that young people develop the skills to secure decent livelihoods...." <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/TZA.pdf>

Making a Difference, Step Two, Good Shepherd Orphanage



These are some of the children in our family and they need a new home.

The current orphanage is crumbling and major repairs would be costly and only a temporary measure.

Phase two of our project is to build three homes, each with a house mother. The children will have a family environment.



One Child's Story One day two women were out walking in the forest and suddenly they heard the weak cry of an infant. They stopped – listened and followed the whimper to a wood pile where they found an infant who they believed was between three to six months old. They named her Blessing. They brought the child to the Njombe Municipality to make a report for the child. Upon its completion, the Municipality decided to send Blessing to our St. Anna's Infant Orphanage in Uwemba. When this precious gift arrived at her new home in March 2007, the Sisters and workers welcomed her with joy and faith-filled prayers that her health would improve. Blessing grew into a strong, happy, child. Now, no longer an infant, Blessing has moved to our orphanage in Morogoro where she is a blessing to everyone there.

THANK YOU, SISTERS!

The Missionary Benedictine Sisters want to take this opportunity to thank Sr. Dorothy Pilkington, SSJ, and her community, the St. Joseph Sisters of Springfield Massachusetts for the three and a half years that Sr. Dorothy has volunteered at our St. Anna Orphanage. The

generosity of the Sr. Dorothy, her community and benefactors has been a wonderful gift to us and our infants. May God reward all of you with a multitude of superb gifts.



Report: The Need for Change - Some Facts about Pre-Primary School Education in Songea

The Tanzania government now requires that all primary schools offer pre-primary education. However, the reality lags far behind the expectation. According to the 2010 Education Report for the Municipal of Songea:

- In 2007 there were 2,504 children in the Songea Municipal at the ages of 5-6, 84 % of whom were enrolled in pre-primary school.
- In 2010 there were 7,100 children of the same age of whom only 4,702 were attending pre-primary school, that is, only 66% of them are enrolled.
- Of the 4,702 pre-primary school children attending pre-primary school, only 95 students are attending Catholic schools.
- The Songea Municipal school system has 38.4% deficit of classrooms needed at the pre-primary and primary levels.
- The school system has a 91% lack of textbooks needed at the pre-primary and primary levels.

These few statistics are evidence that there is a **sharp increase in the number of children** ages 5 & 6 in the Songea area (an increase of 4,596 in three years!). The current school systems (both government and private) are **not capable to meet the need** of the children.

According to our Archbishop Norbert Mtega, the population of the Songea Metropolitan is estimated to be 62% Catholic. With only 95 pre-primary students enrolled in Catholic schools (out of the 4,702 students attending) we can conclude that there remains a strong need for a Catholic School presence in Songea.



iMakng a difference!

REPORT: USAID/Tanzania Education Strategy for Improving the Quality of Education 2009 – 2013

- Schools lack sufficient teaching and learning materials at all levels. Classrooms are overcrowded despite double or triple shifts.
- Poor school participation and performance in upper grades can be traced to poor mastery of the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy in lower grades. Children who do not learn to read in the first few grades are more likely to repeat and eventually drop out. A strong foundation in mathematics during the early grades is crucial for success in mathematics in the later years. Literacy and numeracy are fundamental to the educational process while science reflects the linkage of these skills to life and the environment. If strong foundation skills are not acquired early on, gaps in learning outcomes between students grow larger over time.



Making a Difference!

While walking along a beach, an elderly gentleman saw someone in the distance leaning down, picking something up and throwing it into the ocean. As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, picking up starfish one by one and tossing each one gently back into the water. He came closer still and called out, "Good morning!

May I ask what it is that you are doing?" The young man paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean." The old man smiled, and said, "I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the elderly observer commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!" The young man listened politely. Then he bent down, picked up another starfish, threw it into the back into the ocean past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one."

This story has is said to be paraphrased from "The Star Thrower" by Loren Eiseley, 1907 - 1977.



Please help us to make a difference in the lives of our children!



Mission Partners 2012,

Let's Make a Difference!

Prioress Sr. Rosann Ocken is pictured here with children from Peramiho.

Dear relatives & friends,

I invite you to share in our missionary work and help build the *Good Shepherd Pre-Primary School , Orphanage and Convent*. We are

most grateful for whatever you can share from your goodness by way of your prayers, sacrifices and financial support.

**WITH GRATEFULNESS, WE REMEMBER YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES
IN OUR PRAYERS.**

MAY YOU BE BLESSED THIS CHRISTMAS WITH THE JOY AND LOVE OF CHRIST!



Sr. Rosann Ocken, OSB

All USA donations can be safely and completely channeled through The Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler, Nebraska. Please indicate that they are for the Sisters in Peramiho and send to: Fr. Volker Futter, OSB, Christ the King Priory, P.O. Box 528, Schuyler, NE 68661-528 (402)352-2177 FrVolker@BenedictineMissionHouse.com.