

## GHANA

### **A brief on the Hunger and Poverty situation in Ghana and instances where the Knights of Marshall are collaborating with other Faith-Based Organisations to alleviate them**

Poverty and hunger are closely linked in Ghana and constitute the biggest challenge to National Governance. The twin factors define nearly 90% of all civil society actions in Ghana. Active in this area of civil society action are Faith-Based Organizations including Caritas Ghana and the Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES), the social development wing of the Knights of Marshall, Ghana. Agriculture and food systems are important considerations.

While Agriculture accounts for the livelihoods of 60% of the population, poverty among rural farmers overall in Ghana is increasing! The worst category are peasant farmers, as cash crop farmers are relatively better off due to Government attention and in some cases stability in market prices for their produce.

The Knights of Marshall, through MAREDES, actively collaborates with the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference's Charity Agency - Caritas Ghana to respond to the situation of Agriculture and food systems in Ghana. Work in this area are categorized under three priority tracks under the United Nations Food Systems Summit as follows:

#### 1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all:

- \* Teaming up with Civil Society organizations to promote SDG 2 especially focusing on family farming systems, protection of indigenous seeds, food sovereignty campaigns and nutrition education for rural women.
- \* Monitoring the implementation of Government's Agricultural programmes to ensure they prioritize peasant farmers; especially women. See research report at <https://www.caritas-ghana.org/index.php/2019/07/07/report-on-the-assessment-of-the-planting-for-food-and-jobs-programme-in-ghana/>
- \* General advocacy and promotion of the SDGs in Ghana. See Caritas Ghana Report: 'Bringing the SDGs to life in Ghana' at [www.caritas-ghana.org](http://www.caritas-ghana.org)

#### 2. Boost nature-positive production:

- \* Working with Dioceses in the fragile ecological zones in Northern Ghana to organize farmers and support them on Agri-ecological practices like organic farming, composting, no-burning of farm residues etc. Success stories exist in Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese.
- \* National Anti-Land Grabbing Campaign to protect community farmlands from big Companies interested in Commercial Agriculture (heavy mechanization and external inputs - fertilizers & chemicals). See report on 'Unmasking Land Grabbing in Ghana' at [www.caritas-ghana.org](http://www.caritas-ghana.org)
- \* Ongoing advocacy engagement on the UN Binding Treaty for Corporate Accountability to control pollution and destruction of nature reserves. See webinar and media engagements with President of UO.

#### 3. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress:

- \* Promoting alternative livelihoods by offering decent work (SDG8) opportunities for vulnerable displaced unemployed Youth in the cities through resettlement and reintegration programmes in their communities.
- \* Working with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to address menace of Artisanal Small-Scale Mining in Ghana (referred to as GALLAMSEY) to reduce destruction of farmlands, pollution of inland water bodies thus killing fish stock and impeding health of rural populations.
- \* Reforestation programmes especially in the very fragile ecological zones in Ghana. The Noble Order has just adopted a Marshallan Environmental Action initiative for its entire membership.
- \* Working on a Special Peace Initiative in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to address the social and environmental impact of Nomadic Herdsmen (Pastoralists) in Northern Ghana.
- \* Collaboration with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) on economic Empowerment of vulnerable groups affected by the pandemic; especially those in the food value chain in the city of Accra (Agbogbloshie food market)
- \* Direct relief intervention to families in Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese who lost their livelihoods and homes in recent floods. See media stories at <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1032721/caritas-ghana-gives-relief-support-to-flood-victim.html>
- \* Working with CRS to develop research and action programmes focusing on the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerabilities especially among poor families.

#### Conclusion

The Noble Order and other Faith-Based Organizations are very active in national discourses, consultations and webinars in preparation towards the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021. We are also linking up with other

voices in the Catholic Church like SECAM, Caritas Africa, the Jesuits Ecological Network of Africa and Bishops' Conference of West Africa (RECOWA) on advocacy issues that promote food, nutrition and Ecology in Africa.

Reported by Samuel Zan

Email: [szan@caritas-ghana.org](mailto:szan@caritas-ghana.org)  
[szanakologo@gmail.com](mailto:szanakologo@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.caritas-ghana.org](http://www.caritas-ghana.org)

## **KENYA**

One of our members formed an initiative last year 2019 to try to mitigate the impacts of poverty in a local community that is marginalised. The initiative is addressing two themes:

### 1. Providing more inclusive reading/education opportunities

This has been done by establishing a small community library that is free of charge for the children to come and read books.

### 2. Providing more self-employment opportunities to the Youth

This has been done by proving a revolving fund whereby the Youth are given some Business start-up capital of which they have to return a small percentage out of the profit obtained in order to support more Youths.

Reported by Paul Okelo

## **ROMANIA**

Here a short report from Satu Mare / Romania:

Solidarity is the key word that represents Satu Mare County / Romania, where people of different denominations: Catholics, Orthodox, Reformed work together for a noble cause: HELPING THOSE IN NEED. In our county, many NGOs (such as Romanian Red Cross, Caritas, The Romanian Maltese Relief Service, Hans Lindner Foundation and Skt Josef the worker Catholic Men's Movement) had always actions and programs that alleviate hunger and poverty, such as: distributing packages with basic food, but also sharing packages with hot meals. Christian people of different religions came together volunteer for a common purpose: to prepare meals and distribute them to needy families and elderly people without belongings. The number of prepared food portions increases from week to week, and this shows how much it matters for people even a hot meal received. For poor families, it is difficult not to have something to put on the table for their children, food being a basic need for all of us. Hunger and poverty can only be combated if we stand shoulder to shoulder and share what little we have with those who have none.

Related by Tibor

## **ZAMBIA**

### 1.0 About ZAMBIA

Zambia, officially the Republic of Zambia, is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. The neighbouring countries are the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north, Tanzania to the north-east, Malawi to the east, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to the south, and Angola to the west. The capital city is Lusaka, located in the south-central part of the country. The population is concentrated mainly around Lusaka in the south and the Copperbelt Province to the northwest and the population of Zambia is estimated at about 17 million.

Zambia is one of Africa's most urbanized countries; much of the country remains wild, underdeveloped, with a great percentage of land allocated by the government to conservation projects, national parks and game management areas. Many of these parks are home to incredible numbers of Africa's most-feted wild mammals and extraordinary birdlife.

Zambia's remaining open rural areas are, for the most part, rich and fertile, with Zambia's consistently warm tropical climate made less oppressive by the altitude of many parts of the country. One of the most water rich countries in Africa, Zambia has 5 vast lakes, 3 major rivers, 17 waterfalls and various wetland areas. Many of Zambia's 72 ethnic groups still inhabit these rural areas, relying on subsistence farming to get by.

1.1 Economically Zambia is one of the fastest growing economies on the African continent with massive investment in infrastructure development such as Hospitals, Schools, Road, Bridges, and Hydro Power as well as Solar power generation.

Despite the massive infrastructure development embarked on especially during the current Party in Government, the Patriotic Front (PF) which assumed office in the year 2011, very little have been done to change the poverty situation in the Country which has continued to affect more families especially poor of the poorest families.

Although Zambia has the world's ninth richest copper deposits, three out of four people are living in poverty. Forty percent of the GDP of Zambia is based on copper deposits while 95 percent is based on exports.

## **1.2 The About 64% current poverty situation in Zambia is attributed to the following factors.**

1. Poverty in Zambia is the result of decades of economic decline and neglected infrastructure. The north western province of Zambia hosts the poorest people and is the least developed in the country. Distribution of wealth is unequal with few rich and middle-income people, and the maximum proportion of the people in Zambia is poor. However, things are slowly changing for the better because of new infrastructure development including heavy investment in mining as well as road infrastructure

2. Another major cause of poverty in Zambia is corruption by high-ranking government officers and lack of monitoring of the public resources. The government budget has not prioritized poverty, which JCTR has constantly been highlighting on a monthly basis especially on food basket and on the other hand Poverty in has been exacerbated by the external debt. The country is paying over huge sums of money per year to clear the external debts due to which the education and health services are not receiving enough financing.

3. Diseases have taken a toll as well and are worsening the poverty level. Zambia suffers from an HIV/AIDS pandemic. This has caused major undercuts on the development initiatives and contributed to the poverty in Zambia.

4. Illiteracy is widespread and is a huge hindrance for economic growth. Education has not been made a priority by the government and majority of the Zambians cannot read and write. Literacy is needed to create confidence in the people, which can then incorporate a drive to overcome poverty.

5. Poverty in Zambia is rooted in historical, geographical and social factors. Geographically, Zambia is isolated, which denies it access to services and markets. Technical knowledge is limited, and the country is suffering from a transition from state led to the market economy.

2.0 Umbrella Organization - The Zambia National Council for the Catholic Laity (ZNCCL) which is the umbrella organization for all the National Lay Apostolic Movements and Organizations, and Diocesan Laity Councils in Zambia. National Organizations or Movements; being those that are operational in at least 50% of the existing Dioceses of Zambia and currently the organization has 27 affiliated member organization.

2.1 Aim and purpose for which it was established

2.1.1 Purpose: The role and purpose of the ZNCCL is to promote the effective participation of the laity in the life and mission of the Catholic Church in Zambia.

2.1.2 Mission: To facilitate the development of a mature laity by offering training for our mission in the Church and in society,

2.1.3 Goal: To facilitate the laity to understand and fulfil the evangelization mission that is ours by virtue of our baptism,

2.1.4 Vision: To promote unity and dialogue among the laity and with other members of God's family in order to build up the Church as a family.

3.0 Partner Organizations in the fight against Poverty Through its affiliates ZNCCL support the Church in poverty alleviating Programs through monitoring and supervision and the following is the member organization that supplements the Government and Church efforts in addressing poverty.

**3.1 Society of St. Vincent de Paul – (SSVP) ZAMBIA** The National Council of Zambia, Society of St. Vincent de Paul has set education program as one of the priority areas in the fight against poverty. Through the Education Bursary support program National Council of Zambia supports three community Schools in three Dioceses, Chigayo Community School in Ndola Diocese, the other one is under the project titled “Assist a Student” at St. Francis in Mongu Diocese and Lusaka Diocese respectively. Additionally, SSVP, National Council supports identified students from all the 33 (Deaneries) Centrals Councils who meet selection for the School Bursary support targeting both junior and Senior Secondary Schools with exceptional cases in higher learning institutions.

**3.2 St. Joachim Men’s Organization** St. Joachim Men’s Organization is the breakaway men organization from St. Anna Catholic Women’s Organization committed to bring salvation to all creation through preaching, teaching, celebrating and witnessing to the Word of God in the spirit of faith, prayer, love, hope and unity so that all may have the fullness of life. Through family support the organization seeks to fight poverty and its causes through encouraging its members, the community to be faithful and caring husbands and fathers, responsible and hardworking; working to promote happy and economically stable families in various homes, Parishes and in society at large, as families are the basic unit of the Church and society.

**3.3 St. Anna Catholic Women’s Organization** St. Anna Catholic Women’s organization is a local National Lay organization whose mission is for the promotion of Women of faith, called to holiness in communion with the Church with, families and our communities and the organization help in the fight against poverty through marriage and family life, gender inequality in the church and our communities.

**3.4 Nurses Guild of Zambia** To co-operate with Our Lord in the Church’s healing mission to all mankind and to help the Nurses to fulfill His Command of loving service to the neighbour by deepening the faith of its members through retreats, pilgrimages, seminars, lectures; by caring for the patients in the Christian way, because nursing is the continuation of Christ’s mission while on earth.

**3.5 Zambia National Council for Catholic Women Organization** is the umbrella body for all Catholic Women Lay Organizations in Zambia. The organization promotes the participation of women in the Church through actively involvement of the life of the Church in Zambia. Through its presence throughout Zambia, it monitors and encourages its member organization in promoting programs that are aimed at supplementing Government and Church efforts in the fight against poverty.

**3.6 Nazareth Catholic Women Organization** - Organized groups according to strict international statutes, devoted to personal spiritual life and systematic apostolic work under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Exist within many parishes in Zambia. The organization supports poverty alleviation efforts by respecting family unit and values as espoused by the first family, Mary and Joseph

### **3.7 Diocesan Councils;**

The Diocesan councils work with various partners at diocesan level in the fight against poverty such Caritas Zambia, JCTR, Community Radio Stations, the Youth, the Clergy, the Religious, and the Diocesan Administration

### **3.8 Conclusion**

Despite different objectives, aims, mission and charisms by ZNCCL affiliates, by and large the underlying establishments is poverty alleviation, participation, gender equality, Life and human dignity, charity and evangelization which is a call for the Laity by Church.

Reported by Justin Mumba