



CHRISTIAN BROTHERS COLLEGE High School

MISSION REPORT

“You should learn to recognize Jesus beneath the rags of the poor children... Adore him in their person. Cherish poverty and honor the poor.”

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Taking care of the poor has been a tradition of the Christian Brothers for three hundred years, dating back to our founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle. Today we continue that tradition as we begin



another year of collections for our mission school, St. Paul's Secondary School, Marsabit. This newsletter presents some information about Kenya, the country

where Marsabit is located. Also you will find facts that will help you to understand the need of your support to continue working with the poor people who are attending our Lasallian School at St. Paul's.

Over 42 percent of the population is under 14 years old. The unemployment rate for the country is over 50 percent.

Although Northern Kenya is remote and isolated, it is home to numerous tribal groups who have hardly been touched by the 20th century. The tribes that live here include the Samburu, Turkana, Rendille, Boran, Gabra, Merille and El Molo. Most of

them have little contact with the modern world, preferring instead their traditional lifestyles and customs. Many have strong warrior traditions and have clashed over land as recently as 1980. Since most of these tribes are nomadic pastoralists, they share a long history of land competition and disputes. The conflicts

are traditionally settled through compensation so outright violence is rare. Although pride in their heritage is strong, change is slowly coming to the people of Northern Kenya. The combination of many factors are guiding these changes including the aggressive Christian missionary activity, the development of schools and aid agencies, increasing employment as rangers and anti-poaching patrollers in game reserves and national parks, the construction of dams and roads, and the tourist trade. The younger generation of these tribal groups seems to move effortlessly between the sophistication of the modern world and the simplicity of their traditional villages.

This is a barren region in sharp contrast to the green, fertile land of the Central Highlands. Much of Northern Kenya is desert scrub where only the hardiest of vegetation



is able to survive. Numerous dry river beds spring to life only during the infrequent flash floods caused by brief torrential rains that cannot penetrate the rock-hard ground. Recent droughts have exacerbated the already formidable conditions and the nomadic people and their herds continue to suffer. The combination of dangerous desert travel coupled with frequent Somali bandit raids make this region a risky very proposition for all travelers.

Facts about Kenya

Area 582,650 sq km (twice the size of Nevada)
Population 30,765,916
Capital Nairobi
Major cities Mombassa, Nyeri, Nakuru
Life Expectancy 50.7 years
Languages Kiswahili, English
Per capita income \$6.70 a day
Literacy 78%
Population/square kilometer 52 people per sq km
Infant mortality rate 68/1000 births.

The climate in Northern Kenya is as varied as the landscape. The plains routinely reach dangerously hot temperatures by midday (50 C and above) without even a hint of wind. Evenings often bring brief violent thunderstorms that shatter the calm, followed by clear, cool nights. Like the climate and the geography, the wildlife is also a study of contrasts.

History of St. Paul's Christian Leadership Secondary School

St. Paul's Christian Leadership Secondary School was founded in 1990 to provide a secondary education for the sons of the nomadic pastoralists of Marsabit Catholic Diocese. At that time, the Diocese was comprised of Marsabit, Moyale and Samburu Districts. The school is under the management of the Catholic Bishop of Marsabit and run by the De La Salle Christian Brothers of Kenya. The students pay a minimum school fee, which supports less than 50% of the running cost. The Bishop subsidizes the school with outside help. The people of the area are very needy and there is no way that they could support such an endeavor. But they are encouraged and in fact made to contribute to the running of the school so that they can claim some kind of ownership and responsibility for their children education.

The students come from the tribal groupings of Borana, Gabra, Rendille, Samburu, Turkana, Wata and other small nomadic pastoralists. Aside from the students who originate from Marsabit Town, a small percentage, the other students come from the northern areas of the Chalbi and Kaisut Deserts where their parents are for the most part camel and goat herders.

Alongside the secondary education provided by the school there was to be component of Leadership Training so as to prepare the young men to return to their *Manyattas* (house holds) after completing their secondary education and during the term holidays to help out with their own people. They would be expected to help out with parish activities or if living away from the mission station to help out with groups associated with the mission, small children, youth groups, etc.

To fulfill this dual purpose, a highly academic school with basic training in self-reliance skill was set up. Incorporated into the curriculum were periods of time when Seminars in Leadership training conducted by the Diocesan team members were offered to the students on a yearly basis. The whole set-up of the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities lens itself to building up leadership skills.

Since its foundation in 1990, over four hundred sons of the nomadic pastoralists have graduated from this school, close to six hundred counting the students presently studying at the school. It has proven its worth in its academic excellence, as it is tops in all of the secondary schools in the Northern Frontier area. It is the only secondary school in the area, which sends students on to the State universities for higher education. In recent years the school has been sending twenty-five to thirty percent of its graduates to the State universities and more than half of the others for diploma course at other centers of learning. It is hoped that the sons of the nomads pastoralists will be able to take their place among the professional serving the people of the north. The school has the necessary buildings for a well-functioning school, living areas, dormitories and dining Hall. It has adequate spacious classrooms, Science Laboratories, Library, two computer labs and an Administration Block. Computer Education is offered to all the students so as to prepare them for the technological age they are living in. Adequate playing fields and good-sized recreation Hall is available for use by the students. It is well-built and well-equipped secondary school.

In recent years the school has been ranked among the top one-hundred and fifty secondary schools in the country out of a total of three thousand. It is the top school in all of the Northern Frontier District, which caters for the children of the nomadic pastoralists.

The school has a strong policy on education for self-reliance. It has initiated a number of projects, which are for this sole purpose, to give the students hands-on learning experiences in certain practices (Agriculture and animal husbandry) This is part of the educational philosophy of the school as well as an effort to make the school, itself self-reliant. Students are called upon to actively participate in these self-reliance projects on a scheduled and unscheduled routine. The students have an hour of community service each afternoon and

Saturday morning during which time they take care of keeping the school buildings and campus in good condition. They also take care of the school animals, a milking herd, which provides milk for the students dining Hall and also school gardens, which provide vegetables for the school kitchen. In all of this work they oversee themselves thus providing leadership training for the students and also giving them a sense of providing in a small way for themselves.

There is a school government in place in the form of a school prefect body by which they look after their own affairs. Side by side with the school prefects are managers, who look after specific work areas and make sure that the work gets done properly. Students and managers are rotated in their work areas so as to provide all with an opportunity to exercise leadership skills. This is all done with the cooperation of a teacher responsible for the area or activity, who then makes sure that everything is getting on, as it should.

Because of the ethnic diversity of the school population, every effort is made to mix the students in their living areas, dormitories, and dining hall and at work and play so that they have an opportunity to meet with each of the tribal groupings. Tribal dancing and singing is encouraged on certain occasions, so that each group will appreciate each other's culture and traditions. Since they do live side by side, they are aware of each other's customs and traditions, but this gives them an opportunity to join in with each other in celebrating each other's culture. In the north because of the problem of the scarcity of pasture there are sometimes tribal clashes, but having all the tribes together in the school working, studying together does bring about a sense of peace and harmony.

Because of its excellent academic, leadership and self-reliance components St. Paul's Christian Leadership Secondary School serves well the needs and aspirations of the sons of the nomadic pastoral of the North.

***Presented by Br. Michael Kimotho Principal St.
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