

FRIENDS OF ALLAMANO: BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH: A DISABILITIES OUTREACH

NETWORKING:***: INITIATIVE for the Children of Allamano Special School For Mentally Handicapped in Kenya

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awbHTc-U6bo> Getting to know the World we live and coexist in : an internet perspective

Presenting case Studies from the Friends Of Allamano Special School for Mentally Handicapped Children _____
Worldwide ___on the Internet and Utube. AND

COMMEMORATING THE BIRTHDAY OF THE FOUNDER OF THE CONSOLATA
MISSIONARIES JOSEPH ALLAMANO 21st January 1851-21st January 2012

1:0:1:- SYNOPSIS

COMMEMORATING THE BIRTHDAY OF THE FOUNDER OF THE CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES JOSEPH ALLAMANO 21st January 1851-21st January 2012

Over a year ago on January 17th 2011 this website was launched as a B.I.D to provide information relevant to the Friends Of Allamano Special School project, and disseminate an awareness on persons with disabilities and our common unique disabilities, but even more to continue a legacy that began in the 19th Century into a transitioning world of the 20th century and into the 21st century of the 3rd millennium . Most of those involved in starting the Allamano special school for mentally handicapped children project, persons of diverse cultures and continents, have since passed away living behind tons of information from the past, for the future generations to digest, in the hope that accomplishments and/or mistakes made in dealing with such virgin projects or cultural transitions will hopefully not be repeated owing to lack of knowledge of the challenges that abound in moments of change. Some aspects were potentially or apparently risky and perhaps dangerous to the individuals who unaware, though well intentioned destabilized the status quo of long held traditional values,

as archaic or contemporary they may be towards persons with mental and physical disabilities: or transgress on attitudinal biases based on community or international diversities in cultural approaches. As we proceed beyond the 2012 mark of the initial B.I.D initiative: do we see a physical message? Do any new reflections or any new perceptions and ideas come our way? Only time will tell, as we pass on to the next generation what were initially mystical esoteric and exoteric aspects that are no longer shrouded in mystery in the new age of instantaneous transfers and interchange of relevant information. Hopefully to make the world we live in more accommodating and peace-full in facilitating cross cultural coexistence.

Children of Allamano Special School For Mentally Handicapped in Kenya
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awbHTc-U6bo>

1:0:2:- FRIENDS OF ALLAMANO and ALLAMANO SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

When at the close of the 19th Century a zealous sickly caretaker of a shrine in Turin Italy became sick while attending to a patient in the attic, he didn't expect to live long. Born on January 21st 1851, a short life it was going to be: life just didn't play fair. On his deathbed he made a promise, and somehow reversed his fortunes and destiny and, he lived on, and kept his promise, a promise that meant reaching out beyond the boundaries of the mystical shrine for which he was a caretaker. The Consolata Shrine in Turin Italy it was. His name Canon Giuseppe Allamano a.k.a Joseph Allamano. He never set foot in Africa but his disciples did in 1902, and towards the end of the 20th century, yet another sickly man, one Father Antonio Gianelli IMC made a promise, the doctors gave him a short timeline to exit, August 10th 1996, during a lunchtime appointment, was the day he confided of his fate and appointment with **CANCER**, "2two years and no more"- he said, **he made it to 4four years, January 23rd 2001, it was,** and left behind a still unfolding legend. The story of the Allamano special school for mentally handicapped children and of one Blessed Joseph Allamano. In 1999 the late, now Blessed Pope John Paul II, awarded the Allamano special School initiative the "Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice" gold medallion. Read more in the upcoming book "THE BRIGHT DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL" and on websites WWW.friendsOfAllamano.Com, WWW.AllamanoSpecialSchool.Org and WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.Org or Google up the "ALLAMANO SPECIAL SCHOOL" one that became:-

"a meeting point and a talking point for diverse cultures:-NORTH to EAST to WEST and SOUTH".
NEWS' http://en.ismico.org/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=167 Retrieved , January 16, 2012...
 The long gestation of an "ideal"... "January 29, 2001 is the anniversary of the foundation of the Consolata Missionary Institute. It is at the same time the first centenary of life of that institute, since it was founded on that same day in 1901. The Institute began in Turin and was given birth by Fr. Joseph Allamano. Allamano had been born himself on January 21, 1851 at Castelnuovo d'Asti. His father was Joseph Allamano and his mother was Maria Anna Cafasso. Joseph Allamano died near the Consolata Shrine on February 16, 1926. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 7, 1990. During 64 years, that is, from his entering the seminary in 1886 until his death, Allamano was deeply influenced by the social and ecclesial events of the city where he lived. BUT:- "IDEALS" take time to gestate, far beyond the life of the visionaries and dreamers

..... During a lengthy conversation with the late Coretta Scott King at the Ebenezer Baptist Church on Auburn Avenue, in Atlanta GA, Coretta talked of her husband's wish to have visited a country named Kenya to witness the independence cerebrations, but it never was to be. * But their IDEALS lived far beyond their physical life, for its easy to kill or silence a messenger or a dreamer but impossible to kill or eliminate an ideal and



idea whose time of birth has come. It is tempting to blame our ancestors and forerunners, the likes of chief



Wangombe Wa Ihura, Missionaries and Shaka Zulu, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaka> who Shaka came from a humble and harsh childhood to become the founder of the Zulu nation. Much like Genghis Khan he won his place and power through his own prowess and ability rather than any birth right and lived in the 19th and 20th Century, easy it is to blame Haille Selassie



<http://changeandrevolution.blogspot.com/2011/05/top-30-african-leaders-continues.html> and all others before us for not having envisaged the realities of the future 21st century when dealing with complex disability issues. But, they did their part within the cultural frameworks that existed then. That some of us survived the onslaughts of trying to change such systems and establish such institutions as the Allamano Special school is true testimony of the perhaps less physically violent times, the days of the spear and the shield on the warfront. Today we confront or fight a different war, a war of conscience, compassion and empathy. But Somewhere in Kohima among the TOMBSTONES lies a universal Epitaph to those that left for "HOME" early, preceding us all who read this piece on this day, and one day it will be the same for us all too:- Myths and legends will be told across the hills and in the airwaves of a generation that came after the likes of kenya's Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, Oginga Odinga, Kwame Nkurumah, Haille Selassie, Henri Nouwen, John F Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jnr, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Senator Edward Kennedy, Pope John Paul II, among many others who started the ball rolling, but who have long since "GONE HOME": sacrifices were made, So beware of the Kohima Epitaph and:-

"When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,

For Their Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today

The verse is thought to have been inspired by the Greek lyric poet Simonides of Ceos (556- 468 BC) who wrote after the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC:

"Go tell the Spartans, thou that passest by,

That faithful to their precepts here we lie."

When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,
For Their Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today.
circa WWI by John Maxwell Edmonds (1875 -1958)

<http://www.burmaster.org.uk/epitaph.htm>

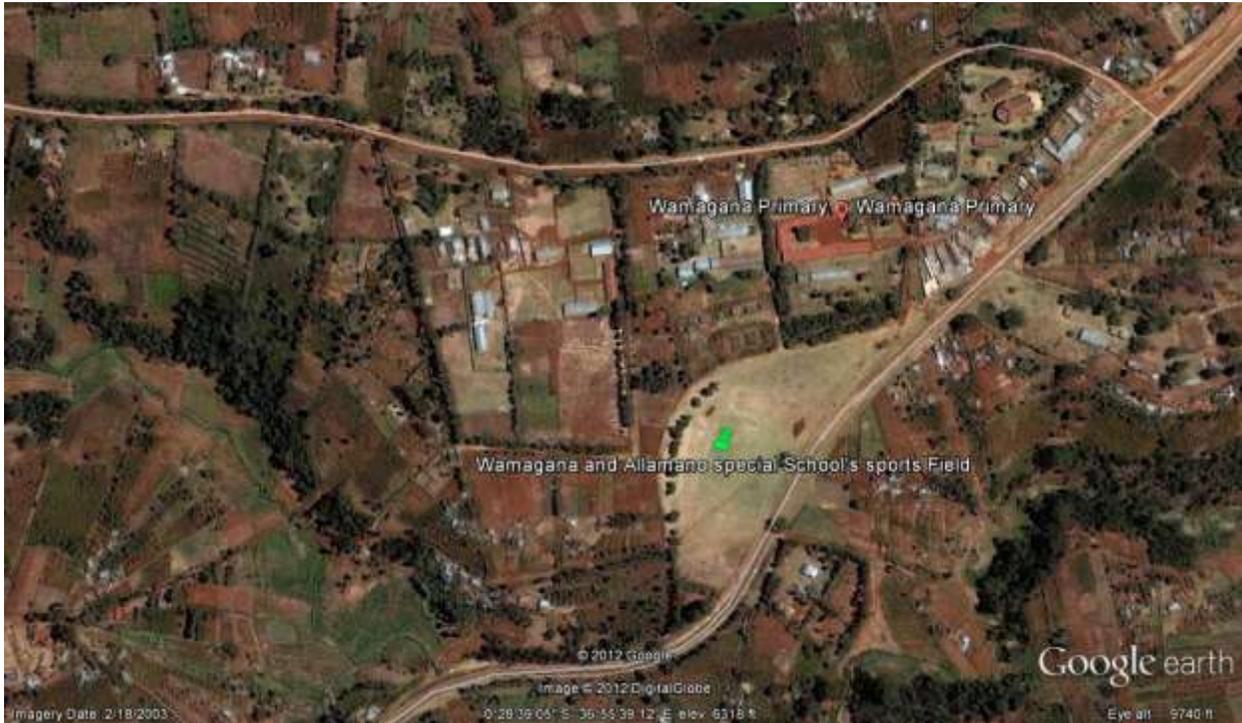
Internet source acknowledged

WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.Org

Children of Allamano Special School For Mentally Handicapped in Kenya

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awbHTc-U6bo>

Changing perceptions and attitudes towards persons with disabilities



Satellite Image from google showing the location of Wamagana Allamano Special school Kenya

A WINDOW INTO THE WORLD OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

___ Mal-treatment Of Disabled Children in early 70's Robert F Kennedy ___

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqlkGkDujw&feature=related>

Tzohar = A Window to the World for Disabled Children in Israel

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i48JFYkJdJA&feature=related>

St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children Part 1

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ows67VABUP8&feature=related> 5,534

___St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children Part 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xja3CoBS3eM&feature=related> 1,958Views 1/21/2012 6:35:07 AM

“My daughter doesn’t not and yet she speaks volumes ___ comment by a parent on the Utube. _____

The case Study Paper below reproduced with permission from the Author Peter Ndiang'ui reflects an updated situation on efforts made in addressing disability issues at the Allamano Special School for mentally handicapped children and the ongoing worldwide initiatives of sharing information and promotion of similar initiatives.

Impact of Allamano Special School on Changing Attitudes Towards People With Disabilities among the Wamagana Community of Central Kenya.

By

Peter Ndiang'ui

Research Paper presented as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

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Florida Gulf Coast University

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WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.Org



Mentally handicapped children at Allamano Special School thank donors for having made it possible for them to live beyond the dream.

(Reproduced with permission of Allamano School Principal)

WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.Org



*A view of Allamano Special School in Wamagana of Central Kenya
{reproduced with permission of Allamano School Principal}*

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank several people who contributed a great deal towards the writing of this paper. First and foremost, I sincerely thank John Warui, who currently lives in United States. He was one of the founder members of the school. He is also in the forefront of a group known as friends of Allamano. Besides introducing me to Allamano, he also provided me with a lot of helpful information and contact information of several people who later assisted me in the interviews. John Gikunju (87 years old), a friend and well-wisher of the school who was also was one of the founders of Allamano Special school. He provided me with information on the founding of the school and the teething obstacles that the institution faced. Sister Jane , the Allamano School Principal was very helpful in providing me with information on how the school operates. She also gave permission to reproduce the illustrations used in this paper.

Several elders were very helpful in providing information about the Kikuyu people's cultural attitudes of people with disabilities (PWDs) and the changes that have occurred in recent years. They included my uncle Silas Ndung'u (72 years old), Mzee Tiras Kagwimi (83 years), Margaret Kagwimi, (80 years old) and Njogu Gathu (retired school principal).

A number of Florida scholars endowed with immense knowledge on the topic read the draft paper and made very helpful comments, suggestions and accolades. We appreciate them all a great deal.

I am thankful to my classmates Isaac Brundage and Charles Small who worked with me on the group project and also helped in getting some of the literature review included in this paper. Lastly, I sincerely thank my professor Dr. Doug Carothers for his support and guidance in this project.

Background

This case study was carried out through interviewing several people currently involved in the school and others who were involved in its founding. The primary goal was to seek an understanding of the challenges of providing special education in an exclusive setting in a developing country. In this integrative research, the study included an understanding of the challenges in founding of a school for people with disabilities (PWDs) within a culture that considers PWDs as responsibilities of the family and not the community at large. The researcher developed ten research questions to guide in the process of collection of data.

Research Questions

1. What are the local community's cultural attitudes towards PWDs?
2. How was Allamano Special School founded?
3. How did the cultural attitudes affect the founding of the school?
4. What types of disabilities are catered for by Allamano Special School?
5. What are the academic and extra-curricular activities provided for the special needs children in the school?
6. What is the level of inclusiveness within the exclusive setting of the school?
7. What kind of institutional support is provided to the school by the local, national and international communities?
8. How has the existence of Allamano helped to change the cultural attitudes of PWDs within the local community?
9. How successful has the institution been in changing attitudes?
10. What challenges does the institution face?

Literature review

A lot has been written about attitudes towards people with disabilities among different communities. Although the factors influencing the attitudes differ from one community to another, it is evident that lack of knowledge triggers negative images. When working or interacting with people with disabilities, cultural and religious attitudes, understanding and beliefs all play a part in how care is ultimately sought, planned, and delivered (O'Hara, 2003). Several studies have showed that increased literacy leads to more positive attitudes towards PWDs. In a research conducted in Australia, Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly(2003) observed that community members' attitudes and opinions on inclusive education was more positive when they acquired more accurate knowledge of Down Syndrome. Their attitudes towards disability in general had changed, and they reported greater ease when interacting with people with disabilities. Less literate communities are more bound by traditional attitudes and end to have more negative attitudes about PWDs. Amin, Willets & Eames (1987) observed that the nomadic Maasai group in Kenya and Tanzania tended to treat children with disabilities more negatively than those who were sedentary.

The ideal way of ensuring the changes in negative attitudes is through exposure. Kleeman & Wilson (2007) noted that the legislation in Victoria, Australia did not change the attitudes as much as the interaction with and inclusion of people with disabilities in various programs. Chan et. al. (2002) noted that that prior contact with people with disabilities increases the positive attitudes due to the availability of correct information. Lack of social exposure to people with disabilities fosters negative attitudes by creating anxiety and confusion among the able-bodied.

Institutions like Allamano Special School tend to increase the positive attitude through regular contact between both people with disabilities and the able-bodied people. Positive attitude leads to acceptance whereas negative attitudes elicits a negative reaction which may lead to avoidance and rejection.

When examining disabilities in any setting, it is important to consider the different models of disabilities. First, the most dominant model of disability is the medical model. The medical model is most dominant because of its technical superiority and its relation to asking questions that point to understanding the mechanics of the phenomenon of disabilities and that a medical solution can be found. The second model of disability is the moral model. The moral model is based on the never ending competition between good and evil and locates unfortunate events as the working of evil (i.e. in people, witches, the devil, etc.). A third model is the social model of disability. The social model conceptualizes disabilities as the result of social relations between people and their material conditions and environments. This is probably the most applicable model in the case of the Kikuyu ethnic group within which Allamano Special School is located. The social model differs from the other models in three ways:

1. It does not does not emphasize on the existing juxtaposition, but on the intertwinement of modes of thought depending on particular situations and circumstances.
2. The location of the disability is situated in meaning itself, information, and communication.
3. It points to culturally determined behavior in which one develops and excels in an identity, community worldview that embraces disabilities rather than rejecting it (Devlieger, 2005).

Attitudes towards persons with disabilities (PWDs) among the Kikuyu ethnic group

Perceptions and attitudes of a different group are usually based on familiarity. The longer the period of familiarity, the less the negative attitudes. Research has shown that this is true in both developed and developing countries. In a study conducted in China between business students and rehabilitation students, Chan et.al. (2002) found that at the end of the first year of working together, rehabilitation students had significantly more positive attitudes, whereas the business students were more negative but not as bad as it used to be before the initial interaction. . In the third year, there were positive attitudes about the others. This attitude was prevalent among both groups of students. The attitude also prevailed among the Kikuyu people about people with disabilities.

The Kikuyu are a sedentary group that has lived in Central Kenya for many centuries. With a population of slightly over 10 million people (Kenya census, 2009), they are Kenya's most populous ethnic group. According to Muriuki (1974), the Kikuyu are among the early Bantu Eastern migrations that moved from West and Central Africa in the 13th century and settled in the area surrounding Mt. Kenya. The snowcapped mountain was first described by the German explorer Krapf in 1849, though his stories of snow on the equator were mostly dismissed as ridiculous. The British found the highlands of Kenya to be ideal for settlement and farming. They settled in the land that used to belong to the Kikuyu and turned the original owners to be squatters in their own land. During the colonial period, the Kikuyu were widely displaced. Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa* is an interesting European perspective of the initial relationship between settler and Kikuyu on her coffee plantation just outside Nairobi. The only way of getting rid of both the Europeans and the disabilities that haunted the community was by praying to Ngai

and fighting the invaders. The British were shocked to find that Kikuyu elders were sometimes found high on the snowline of the mountain, making pilgrimages to their God In an interesting parallel, the Hawaiians made pilgrimages to their god Pele at the top of Mauna Kea (a.k.a., white mountain, which is snowcapped much of the year) so that they could bury the umbilical cords of their children, thus tying them to the land). Muriuki (1974) noted that such climbs seem to have been a regular custom. Only selected elders were allowed to make them whenever the tribe was threatened. This was followed by a movement called the *Mau Mau* that was finally able to get rid of the British out of their land.

Allamano School caters for students not only from the Kikuyu people but also from other surrounding ethnic groups with similar attitudes towards people with disabilities. It is important to note that the Kikuyu share common historical and cultural roots including attitudes towards disabilities with the Kamba, Embu, Mbere, Tharaka, and Meru. According to the school principal, Allamano's population includes children from all these ethnic groups. These Bantu groups called the mountain Kirinyaga meaning the shining mountain. They believed that their god *Ngai* lived at the peak of Mount Kenya, which no human being would be able to reach. The Kikuyu associated most of the climatic and environmental occurrences to the prevailing mood of Ngai. For instance, thunder and lightning were associated with Ngai fighting with others who wanted to take his empire. Heavy rainfall meant that Ngai was happy with the people and drought meant that he was upset. Consequently, the attitudes towards disabilities was in many ways associated with what the community felt was Ngai's feeling towards that family. Jomo Kenyatta (1938) the first president of Kenya wrote an invaluable work depicting the principles underlying culture-contact and change of the Kikuyu people. This included the factors influencing their attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

Factors influencing the attitudes towards PWDs among the Kikuyu people of Kenya

Kenyatta (1938) noted that the Kikuyu's cultural beliefs greatly influenced their interpretation of disabilities and treatment of children with disabilities. Continued stigma, stereotyping and discrimination of children with disabilities and their families greatly affected how the children with disabilities were treated. In many ways, the fear of giving birth to a disabled child was used to instill moral values among the community. There were taboos and curses associated with disabilities. For instance, a disability was seen as a punishment by the gods for something bad that somebody in the family had done or had failed to do. For example, within a polygamous relationship, if the husband was supposed to sleep in the hut of the second wife, but sleeps in the hut of the first wife, they may have a child with a disability.

Due to the lack of an explanation of why a family would get children with disabilities, medicinemen were often consulted to figure out what could be done to ensure that there would be no disabilities in the family. In case there was a disabled person, there was a lot of finger pointing. Supernatural forces were often blamed when a family got a disabled child. Several communities believed that human or environmental elements like floods or drought may lead to misfortune and disability. One interviewee noted that, "disabilities may be human driven or spiritual when one is put in a state of misfortune, for example when fighting for land."

When a family had a disabled child, there were a lot of accusations and counter-accusations. For instance, in families where there had been no history of disabilities, the mother of the disabled child was blamed and young men in the family were warned not to marry girls from the family in which the mother of the disabled child had come. In some communities, if there is a normal first born child and a disabled second born child, it was assumed that the first

born child did not “open the womb” properly and was therefore responsible for the disabilities of the other children. Some communities may get rid of the first child in order to appease the gods.

Having a disabled child meant that the family was not blessed and there were satanic forces within them. Most other families would avoid such families because interacting with them would be interacting with the devil himself. Before any marriage, elders of the future groom were required to investigate whether the family of the supposed bride had a history of disabilities, epilepsy or madness. If there had been such a history, the boy would not be allowed to marry the girl of his choice. Thus, disabilities led to the fact that the girls from such a family would not be married. This caused a lot of emotional stress in the community.

In fear of the survival of the ethnic group, it was assumed that disabled people would give birth to children with disabilities. This was seen to be a way of weakening the society as a whole and ensuring that the children with disabilities did not survive was seen to be important for the survival of the community as a whole. Perceptions on stereotypes and discrimination against persons with disabilities are greatly influenced by poverty and other economic forces. Since the Kikuyu comprised of subsistence farming, each and every member of society (children, men and women) had a specific role to play in ensuring the overall productivity of family and community as a whole. Disability worked against productivity. Disabled people were seen to be unproductive elements to society and were therefore despised. Interestingly, the mistreatment of the disabled people denied them the opportunity to participate actively in society. Depending on the nature of the disability, most disabled people could play a positively significant role in the society. If the disabled people were left at home, somebody had to be assigned to take care of them. They were therefore liabilities that adversely affected the overall productivity of the family

Kenyatta (1938) also noted that attitudes about disabilities among the Kikuyu were due to economic reasons. Due to the custom of bride price, girls were seen as a source of wealth. Disabled girls were not expected to be married and they therefore could not be a source of wealth. On the other hand, boys were trained to be warriors to fight for the society and defend it when attacked. The stronger the warrior, the greater the family was viewed in society. Weaklings or cowards were seen to bring shame to the society. Disabled boys could not be involved in the war and were therefore despised. Due to the inadequate economic resources, sacrificing the children with disabilities was seen to be a way of giving the others a greater chance to survive. These are the traditions under which Allamano, an institution to cater for children with disabilities was founded.

Founding of Allamano Special School

Allamano was founded in March 1988 as a special unit of the Kenya government with an effort to incorporate special education within Wamagana Primary School in Kenya. It remained as part of Wamagana Primary school until January 1996 when it became a separate and independent entity under the name of Wamagana Special School. The community treated it with suspicion. Later that year, it was handed over to the Catholic Church under the local priest named Fr. Gianelli. The name was changed to Allamano Special School. It was named after Joseph Allamano, a catholic priest from Turin, Italy who was the founder of the Consolata missionaries.



Joseph Allamano of Turin, Italy after whom the special school in Wamagan is named

The move to change the name of the school to one of an Italian priest heightened the suspicion of the local community. The community viewed the move as a way of the government conniving with the White man to take away land from the local community in the name of helping people with disabilities. This suspicion was largely based on the people's experiences during the colonial era when the government had used the Christian missionaries to take away land from the local people and give it to the European settlers. It is important to note that the Kikuyu were widely affected by the coming of European settlement.

In December 1996 the "Friends of Allamano" were formed under the leadership of Consolata missionaries from Turin who were friends of the late Father Gianelli and some local leaders like John Warui. Warui, in support of other individuals and corporations went on to raise a lot of money for the initial funding of the school. He is deeply involved in the school up to now. This was an important help in changing the attitudes about disabilities because the group supporting the projects largely comprised of local leaders who the local community could associate with.

It is important to note that the existence of the school as it is today is largely due to the work done by the Consolata Fathers in spite of the local opposition at the time. The institutions owe their existence to Father Antonio Giannelli from Italy and the Consolata missionaries. After being approached by pioneer teachers, he joined the institution with a lot of vigor. In order to start the much-needed boarding facilities, he provided the school with the initial 12 beds. He became an outstanding personality in looking for donors to assist the institution. He initiated a fundraising project that netted a substantial amount of money. This initial sum provided the necessary funding for the construction of the classrooms, offices and other facilities.

Since then, the institution has been instrumental in bringing awareness to the local, national and international community about the needs of people with disabilities in the region. It caters for children from seven year-olds to the age of 25; the graduation age. Although it was primarily set up to help the mentally challenged children, it has worked and assisted children with many other disabilities. Currently, it has a student population of 82 students. It has been very successful in its mission of helping the persons with disabilities (PWDs). In recognition of its work, Allamano School was awarded the *Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice* gold Medallion by the late Pope John Paul II in the year 1999. Although it is primarily a Catholic sponsored institution, it accommodates students from various religious groups and diverse cultures and faiths.

Mission of Allamano Special School

One of the statements in the mission of Allamano Special School reads “To seek to demystify disability by inculcating reason and faith in understanding the causes of mental and other disabilities.” This school was therefore primarily set up to help in changing the attitudes towards mentally children with disabilities among the Kikuyus of Central Kenya and other ethnic

groups in the region. The school aims at facilitating the formation or sustenance of centers of excellence for persons with various disabilities/handicaps by creating and facilitating an exclusive institution for persons of various religious diversity, to address issues on human disabilities with a special emphasis on physical and mental disabilities and other affiliated disorders/limitations.

Objectives of Allamano Special School

The primary objective of the school was to provide a support system for people with disabilities in the region. This would be done through the process of providing a suitable education system to them. There would be as much exposure and inclusion with the able-bodied students as possible. Besides assisting the people with disabilities, an important objective of the school was to facilitate the change in attitude among the community in which it is located. The exposure of the people with disabilities was seen to be instrumental in increasing the positive attitudes

According to the interviews and the school records, the specific objectives that led to the establishment of the school are:-

- i) To assist the learners with intellectual disabilities to acquire adaptability skills to enable them cope in their environment
- ii) To enable learners to develop a sense of purpose and improve their social and economic lives
- iii) To train on daily living skills to enable them cope with the environment and carry out basic daily tasks
- iv) To encourage and improve on social interaction for a positive social development and reduce social stigmatization

- v) To enhance the motor and mental abilities of the students by promoting and developing their residual abilities

Types of disabilities catered for in Allamano

From the interview with Sr. Jane Gacha, the principal and information obtained from the website of Friends of Allamano, (www.friendsofallamano.com) medical experts have categorized the students into five groups:

First category - This comprises of mentally handicapped students divided into three categories as follows:

- a) Mild mentally handicapped
- b) Moderate mentally handicapped
- c) Severe mentally handicapped

Second category - This category consists of multi-handicapped students. They have been categorized as follows:

- a) Children who are Mentally and Physically handicapped
- b) Children who are Mentally handicapped and their ears are impaired
- c) Children who are Mentally handicapped and have Cerebral palsy

Third category - This is wholly devoted to autistic children

Fourth category - Includes children who have cerebral palsy.

Fifth category - Includes children who have speech and mental disorders.

Placement of students

According to the Principal Sr. Jane Gacha, placement of each student is a result of a thorough process. Initially, there is a testing team comprising of assessment center officers from the district that does the evaluation and recommends children to the school. Those who are recommended are then tested by the faculty of Allamano School. The ones who qualify through this test are admitted on a probationary basis. They are closely monitored by the faculty. After one term (3 months), they are tested again. Those who qualify after this process are admitted fully to the category in which they qualify.

Academic programs offered to special needs children in Allamano School

Although several other forms of disabilities are accommodated in Allamano Special School, the institution is primarily set up to cater for the needs of the mentally handicapped children. The intellectual levels of learners are diverse and range from mild impairment to severe. There are also learners with multiple disabilities which also includes learners with cerebral palsy (C.P.). A number of learners have speech disorders while others are autistic.

The school curriculum is essentially based on national goals of education. However, as a result of the diversity in disabilities there is no standardized curriculum but Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) teachers have developed syllabi which are applicable to learners who are mentally handicapped. This is done after consideration of the level of learners and the severity of the disability. The school adapts both formal and informal kinds of curriculum.

In the formal curriculum, it includes three types that are adapted. These are:

- a) **Adapted curriculum:** This is where the regular curriculum is modified to suit a specific group of learners with a certain special need. The materials in the regular curriculum are examined to ascertain their importance to a certain group.
- b) **Specialized curriculum:** This involves the exhaustive modification of curriculum to suit the target learner. The severity of the handicap is the main determinant factor in the modification.
- c) **Specialist curriculum:** This curriculum is entirely different from the regular curriculum. This curriculum is geared towards assisting learners with severe disabilities to acquire basic daily living skill (ADL) and also giving them perceptual training to improve on the residual abilities of the learner.

Within its formal curriculum the school offers pre-vocational and vocational training where learners are trained in weaving, carpentry, cookery and agricultural skills.

Extra-curricular activities offered at Allamano Special School

Besides the academic programs, Allamano students also participate in games and sports where they compete with other special schools locally and at national level. The school also participates in the Para-Olympic events. The main sports for the mentally handicapped include: -

- a) **Individual events** – There is a rigorous athletics program offered in the school. There are five major individual events. They include:
 - i) **Throws:** Shot put, Javelin & Soft Ball
 - ii) **Jumps:** Long Jump & High Jump

- iii) Short and long distance races
 - iv) Relays
 - v) Walks
- b) Team events – The school also offers three team events. They include:
- i) Handball
 - ii) Volleyball
 - iii) Football (soccer)



Sports activities in Allamano School (reproduced with permission of Allamano School Principal)

As shown in the photograph above, students of Allamano School are greatly involved in competitions in virtually all these sports. Competition starts at the local level within the school. They then compete at district, then provincial and up to the national levels. After the national competitions, children who excel in particular events represent Kenya in the world Special Olympics. A number of Allamano students have been very successful in sports and it has been able to produce a number of very successful participants in each of these individual and team sports. Several students have students represented Kenya in the World Special Olympics at different times. For instance, in 1991, two of the students represented Kenya in the Special Olympics held in Minnesota, USA.

Institution inclusiveness within an exclusive setup

Although Allamano is primarily geared towards children with disabilities, many children from the neighboring Wamagana Primary school regularly come to study and play games with the Allamano students. According to the school principal, this brings an element of “normalcy” to the disabled students. Similarly, it helps in reducing the any negative attitudes towards disabilities by the other children. Students from Wamagana Secondary School carry out their community service activities in Allamano School. They play with Allamano students and this is of mutual benefit to both groups. Similarly, through the various sporting activities, Allamano children interact with others from different schools (both regular and special). This again adds to the element of inclusiveness. It is interesting to note that negative attitude is lessened by familiarity. Research in New Zealand has indicated that the more younger children without disabilities are exposed to children with disabilities, the more accepting they become. As might be expected, those studies also found that girls tend to be more accepting than boys. Though I

didn't notice the age at which the students you describe were integrated, I was pleased to read that it is already resulting in more integration and community acceptance as adults.

The institution mainly caters for children who come from different parts of Central Kenya. The learners have a very diverse intellectual mental and developmental disabilities. Although the school is an exclusive institution the activities given to learners are geared towards inclusiveness. This is to encourage them to interact socially and economically easily with the community as they leave the school. The school is on the process of starting a Community Based Rehabilitation (C.B.R) activities. A team from St. Martin's in Nyahururu had visited Allamano School to educate both parents of the children and teachers on the running of Community-Based rehabilitation (C.B.R) programs..

Institutional Support

Although the school has a strong Catholic background, it is currently organized and managed as a government (public) institution. It also gets help from organizational and individual donors including several non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The government gives grants annually which are used to support the learners and also helps in purchase of learning and teaching materials. The teaching staff is the responsibility of the government through the Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

The community through the parents also supplements the government assistance by paying a small levy for the upkeep of their children. The government of the republic of Kenya, through the funds for persons with disabilities has assisted to put up some constructions and has also given cash for the purchase of twenty double decker beds. The construction for the workshop has been done by the government in conjunction with friends of Allamano from Italy.

The government also employs and pays salaries of the class teachers, teacher-aides and other support staff. It also provides professional development for the teachers and support staff.

Other donors who have some inputs in the institution includes:-

- a) Friends of Allamano from Italy, who have done a lot of construction, like the school laundry, physiotherapy room and equipment, the kitchens and an extension of the dining hall, guest house and water reservoirs have been built by the same organization in conjunction with Consolata Missionaries. They have really supported the children wholeheartedly.
- b) The American embassy has donated training equipment which includes sewing machines, knitting machines, spinning machine and materials for use by the said machines.
- c) Manos Unidas from Spain - Sunk a borehole for the school and put up a dairy and poultry project.
- d) Norwegian RED CROSS assisted in construction of some classrooms.
- e) Other organizational donors include Barclays Bank, the Kenya Charity Sweepstake and National Fund for Persons with Disabilities (NFPD) office.
- f) Individual donors like an Asian businessman who donated money for the construction of the school hall.

In March 2011, the international business machines (IBM) donated a lap-top and all the accessories that go with it, and a camera.

Allamano School's role in changing attitudes towards PWDs

The parental and local community support of Allamano School is evidence of the role that the school has played in changing the community's attitude towards PWDs. According to Sr. Jane Gacha the school principal, there is a positive attitude and acceptance of PWDs within the community after people have seen what the children can do. Some of the graduates of the school have been employed in various institutions and they are actually seen as productive members of the society. They are no longer seen as liabilities of the family.

Parents and other members of the community have teamed up and formed groups aimed at starting and organized community-based economic projects for the PWDs. The aim of these projects is to set income generating projects where the children with disability challenges will be trained and participate in being actively involved in the projects within their communities. Parents of the children with disability provide financial assistance, look for donors to sponsor the projects, borrow funds from organization like Kenya Trust Funds for disabled and at the same time assist in starting and monitoring the running of these projects. They also look for the market for products from their projects. The money earned from these economic projects is shared by the community and most of it goes towards helping families with PWDs.

By their involvement in these projects, the children with the disabilities have become more productive members of the society. These in turn have helped in reducing the social and cultural stigmatization and promote interaction with PWDS.

Many members of the community regularly visit Allamano School, something that was not done in the past. Weekends are preserved days for visitors and the community to visit these children and interact freely with them. There is also a day set for parents to visit their children. These have promoted a community touch of the institution. It's in the same visit that the locals have learned that "disability is not inability" as they witness the children perform various activities.

In many ways, Allamano has helped in demystifying disability by inculcating the "Reason & Faith" policy which was initiated by the Consolata Fathers. There are efforts to include religious, secular, scientific, and cultural to facilitate the changing attitudes.

Institutional achievements

A lot have been done by the government, sponsor, donors and other stake holders to improve the life's of these unfortunate children who needs to better their lives. The School has trained some individuals who have left the school with skills which have empowered them to be useful members of the society. Some of its graduates have been employed in the institution as non-teaching staff.

The school has been in forefront in enhancing the developmental and cogitative abilities of the learners. Few simple tasks can be performed by those who are modality impaired. Through pre-vocational and vocational training, learners have been able to carry out productive activities in agriculture, weaving and knitting. This will assist them grow economically as they get out in the communities. Through the community-based rehabilitation the mentally impaired learners will feel accepted within their society. This will also assist them to overcome cultural and social bearers and at the same time reduce stigmatization. Although the borehole was primarily constructed for Allamano school, it has been a great benefit to the neighboring institutions like Wamagana Secondary and Primary schools. This has significantly helped in changing the attitudes towards PWDs in the region. Through this borehole, the local community has come to view the PWDs as a blessing to them. Lastly, the local community has benefited directly or indirectly from the institution in terms of employment and supply of materials and foods required by the institution. Thus, the school has been seen by the local community as a beneficial project.

WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.Org

Institutional challenges

Although the school is excessively set, it has its own challenges. Some of the challenges experience by this learning institutions are-:

a. Transport

The school has a small van which is only capable of carrying out minor transport services. As a result extra expenses are met for the transport of firewood, and other heavy items. The school also needs a mini-bus to transport pupils to excursions and to take part in the sporting competitions.

b. Drop –Outs

The school usually experiences some learners' dropout before they are well trained. This has happened even without the knowledge of the school administration.

c. Non-effectively used equipment

As stated in the donor funding. It's of importance to note that the school received donations in form of machines. These have not been put into effective use, because the school has not been provided with technically qualified staff to man and work with these machines. The government should ensure provision of this technician to maximize the use of this equipment.

d. Inadequate facilities

The school facilities were for a much smaller student population than what the school caters for today. There is also a waiting list of eligible students but there are government regulations

against overcrowding. The facilities are not able to accommodate a large number of pupils. The space is inadequate compared to the demand. Learning and teaching materials and the boarding facilities are not enough to support the current population as funds to purchase them is not sufficient.

e. School levy

In order to maintain collaboration and community spirit, parents and guardians are supposed to supplement the up keep of their children by payment of a small levy. This has not been forthcoming and it has been a big challenge to the sustainability of the children in school.

f. Health

A number of children have diverse disabilities e.g. mental handicap and seizures this have made some break for a time as they go looking for medical attention and clinics.

Poverty has also contributed to poor health. Parents and guardians at times fail to provide balanced diet when the school closes for holidays. The indicators are emaciated children when they come back from holidays.

Conclusion

The changing attitudes towards PWDs among the different communities can be attributed to many factors. Modernization and increase in literacy rates have played a profound role in this aspect. It is however important to note that individual institutions serving the PWDs within a rural setting are rather rare and unique. Where they exist, they provide a practical forum to which the local community can relate.. Allamano School has been an integral part of a local rural community and it is important to appreciate its role in changing the community's attitude towards PWDs. It has consequently played a significant role in changing the attitude of the local community's negative attitude towards its disadvantaged members.

In conclusion, the author is grateful towards the opportunity of learning the operations of an institution within his own community. Writing this research paper provided an opportunity to learn more about the ethnic group of the author and its attitudes towards disabilities.

END

Getting to know the World we live and coexist in :- an internet perspective

[Marian devotion among the Agikuyu - Tangaza College Library](http://41.215.46.90/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=2057) 41.215.46.90/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=2057 May 9, 2007 – **Marian devotion among** the Agikuyu. by MURAGE ... [Book] Published by : 1995 (Rome) Subject(s): **Kikuyu** (African People) | Mariology Book ... (*Disabilities page 36*)

[Evangelization and inculturation of ... - Boniface Murage - ...](https://books.google.com/.../Evangelization_and_inculturation_of_Mari.ht...) books.google.com/.../Evangelization_and_inculturation_of_Mari.ht... **Evangelization and inculturation of** Marian devotion among **the Agikuyu of ... By Boniface Murage ... Subjects, Kikuyu (African people). Export Citation, BiBTeX ... (*Disabilities Page*)** - Bibliographic information

The above are suggested alternate references on treatment of persons with disabilities-John Warui

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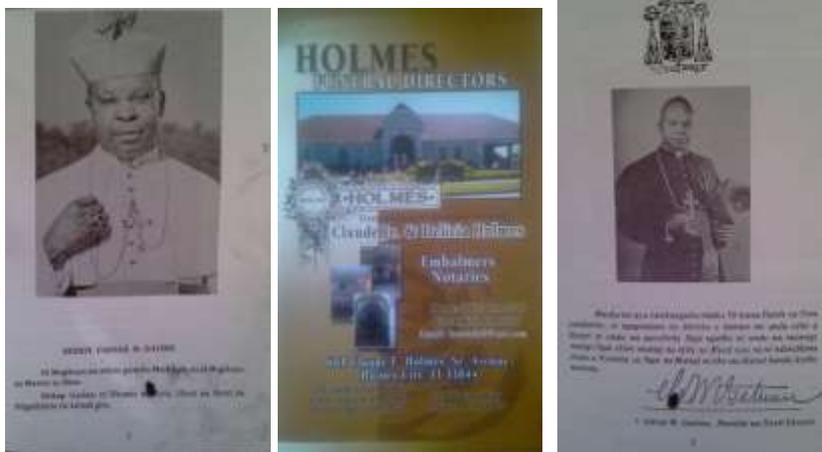
www.friendsofallamano.com

“MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OTHER PEOPLES LIFE” Over 161 years ago January 21st 1851 Joseph Allamano was born, in 1901 he founded the institute of consolata missionaries and finally passed away on February 16th 1926. The late Bishop Ceasar Maria Gatimu, a product of the Consolata missionaries started and pioneered initiatives for persons with physical disabilities in the then Diocese of Nyeri. [Caesar Gatimu - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesar_Gatimu The Right Reverent **Caesar Gatimu** (b. 18 May 1921, Limuru, Kenya - d. 20 February 1987, Nyeri, Kenya) was the Roman Catholic **Bishop** of Nyeri, Kenya. His successor the late Archbishop Nicodemus Kirima started the initiative for the Mentally handicapped children at Allamano Special School and launched the start of “Friends Of Allamano”.

[Nicodemus Kirima - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicodemus_Kirima He was appointed as Bishop of Nyeri in 1988 to replace the late **Bishop Caesar Gatimu**. Pope John Paul II elevated Kirima to metropolitan see in May 1990.

His successor the late Archbishop Nicodemus Kirima started the initiative for the Mentally handicapped children at Allamano Special School and launched the start of “Friends Of Allamano”. Cardinal John Njue, currently in the Archdiocese of Nairobi Kenya, consolidated the very shaky foundations that once threatened the initial start of the project, he served on the board during his term as adjunct Archbishop of the Archdiocese of nyeri under archbishop Kirima. [Kikuyu \(African people\)](#) 110 pages

Evangelization and inculturation of Marian devotion among the Agikuyu of central Kenya in Nyeri archdiocese yesterday and today
[Volume 62 of Dissertations ad lauream in Pontificia Facoltate Theologica "Marianum"](#)
 110 pages



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 Murage Boniface, [Evangelization and Inculturation of Marian Devotion Among the Agikuyu of Central Kenya in Nyeri Archdiocese Yesterday and Today, ...](#) www.afrikaworld.net/synod/bibliography.htm Bibliographic information

TESTIMONIES :- -FROM FRIENDS OF ALLAMANO @ ALLAMANO SPECIAL SCHOOL

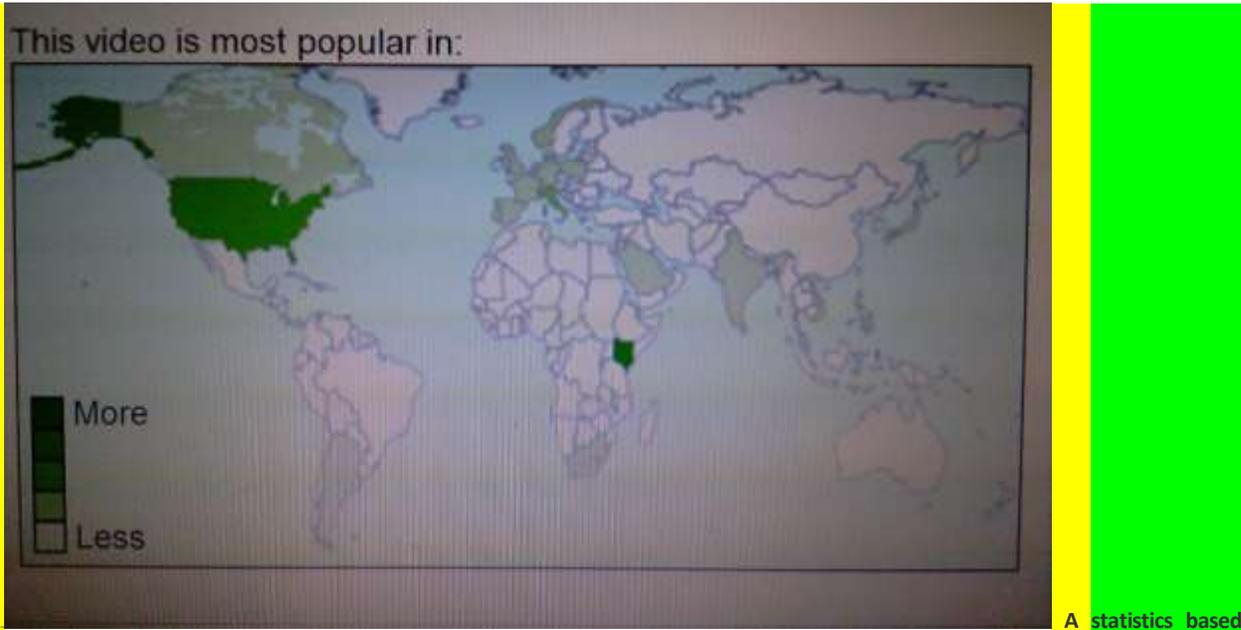
When in March 2011, a team from 9 countries representing the giant computer Company IBM visited Kenya in East Africa they visited, among other institutions, the Allamano special school, a school for mentally handicapped Children, with various developmental disabilities:-some of whom have over the years been integrated in main stream education at the neighboring Wamagana Primary School. It was a life changing encounter and experience for some of the world's best minds in computer technology. They left their footprints at Allamano's and unleashed a wave of testimonials across the world of the World Wide Web on the internet. The website WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.com, an initiative started by an Information Technology University student became one of the IBM reference points > <http://fpapetti.blogspot.com/2011/03/community-day-at-nyeri-friends-of.html> . There after they were extensively reviewed by others across the world. Read more on> WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.Org and on Blogs of the respective IBM team members among others.

<http://www.friendsofallamano.org/blog/>

Retrieved Saturday, January 21, 2012 1:43:17 PM



A Google satellite image showing the zones of the influence and impact of the Consolata Missionaries



shaded- UTube -world map showing areas impacted by the images viewing of the Friends Of Allamano Video clip on the Children of Allamano Special School For Mentally Handicapped in Kenya <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awbHTc-U6bo> 364 views

10/04/11 11/27/11 01/20/12

Ratings: 3
 Likes: 3 |
 Dislikes: 0 |

Comments: 0
 Favorites: 1

Significant discovery events

	Date	Event	Views
A	12/11/11	First view from a mobile device	5
B	11/30/11	First embedded on – africanvoices.it	38
C	11/30/11	First referral from – facebook.com	6
D	11/02/11	First referral from – friendsofallamano.org	28
E	10/31/11	First referral from – allamanospecialschool.org	104
F	10/29/11	First referral from related video – Visit to Happiness Centre for the Mentally Disabled Children	4
G	10/28/11	First referral from YouTube search – mentally handicapped	7
H	10/14/11	First referral from – www.google.com	4
I	10/05/11	First referral from – www.friendsofallamano.org	33
J	10/05/11	First referral from – www.allamanospecialschool.org	25

An edited modified version of The article below was published in a Magazine in the United states the full unedited original script is reproduced below by John Patrick Kamau



Audiences

This video is most popular with:

Gender	Age
Male	55-64
Male	45-54
Male	65-

This video is most popular in:

More
Less

Uploaded by FriendsOfAllamano on Oct 5, 2011

Friends of Allamano Special School presents a video of the children of the Allamano Special School for the mentally handicapped in Kenya. Please visit www.friendsofallamano.org, www.allamano.specialschool.org and www.friendsofallamano.com.

Category: Nonprofits & Activism

Tags: Africa school children handicapped Kenya Allamano

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WWW.friendsOfallamano.Org

ADAPTED FOR WWW.FriendsOfAllamano.Org

A recent interview with John Patrick Kamau, author of the upcoming book, *“Bright Dark Nights of the Soul,”* was an insightful conversation on a subject that elicits both fear and compassion in the hearts of humankind.

For five hours seated in a quaint café, we discussed Kenya – its infamous history of eliminating children with mental or physical handicaps, and how his leadership role transpired to sensitize the Global Village to the world’s disabled. According to the United Nations, there are 650 million people in the world who suffer from a disability.

“Originally, my leadership role was confined to Africa,” he explained. John Patrick’s speech is a scholarly blend of various ethnic dialects and foreign lingua. He is a graduate of St. Paul’s Seminary in Nyeri, and Kagumo High School in Kiganjo, Kenya. Among a variety of accreditations, he is also a graduate and corporate member of the United Kingdom’s “The Chartered Institute of Supplies and Logistics,” and is fluent in four languages.

His book describes his personal history with the last of the Consolata Missionaries and how he is living the promise he made to a dying Catholic priest 14 years ago.

Assigned to Kenya, Africa from Europe for more than a century, the courageous Consolata Missionaries sur-vived insurmountable chal- lenges as they tried to modernize the country’s beliefs, and saved and educated Kenya’s mentally and physically challenged babies that had been parentally

abandoned to the jaws of hyenas and beasts, and the ravages of starvation.



Deceased Father Antonio Gianelli, the Last of the Consolata Missionaries

Their makeshift intelligence operations enabled them to locate and rescue babies that were suffering from various diseases, including among others, cerebral palsy, Down’s Syndrome, epilepsy, autism and mental retardation.

In our conversation, John Patrick explained that living in the United States for the past 10 years has enabled him to witness a wholly new and inspiring experience with disability.

“The U.S. has made it possible for me to see the complete stages of develop- ment of the mentally or physically disabled, including their spiritual death and revival in the process of learning to live with a mental or physical challenge. This is difficult to experience in Africa.”

Little or no access to sound healthcare diagnoses and treatment plans hinder the traditional African families’ opportunities to understand or be educated about disability and the people who suffer from them.

As a result, although some hold disabled babies in divined reverence during or for ritual sessions, many remain allegiant to ancient Oriental, Native, European and African beliefs not practiced since the Medieval period. Many live in scriptural times and among African tribes that believe babies suffering from mental or physical challenges are evil or recompense for maternal sins.

Historically plagued by convoluted social, cultural, religious and political issues, the best of inventions for creating pathways to remarkable and lasting progress get squashed from any one or more of these powerful forces. Included in the complexities of creating change is the familial dread – the instinctual fear – of dying in the hands of tribal aggressors. How do you flee the enemy with a child who cannot listen or learn, or stand on his own feet and run?

The brave and persevering Consolata Missionaries (as well as other compassionate groups), suffered greatly. Although the tribes initially welcomed them as strangers, their exposure to unfamiliar rituals and ceremonies, including Latin utterances, incantations, communion and seemingly esoteric sorcery and supernatural antics, led them to believe that the missionaries were “evil mystics” and cannibalistic conjurers that consumed bodies and blood. Literal in their interpretations, the tribes could not perceive the symbolisms behind the missionaries’ practices.

In Kenya, according to documented descriptions by a Catholic metaphysical and theological scholar-priest, Dr. Father Boniface Murage, “Obstetricians and midwives establish at birth who is fit to live, and who will die.

Babies born with physical challenges or unusual features, such as fully grown teeth, are terminated. Some babies are presumed to be strangled, while others are starved to death.

At best, cultural beliefs and social pressure force some parents to hide their children (especially when a disability presents itself later in childhood), or surrender them to hospitals, orphanages or special schools. John Patrick’s life of fulfilling a promise begins with a Father Antonio Gianelli and a Father Rossi Riccardo.

Father Gianelli was a Consolata priest in charge of the Allamano Special School located in Tetu, Nyeri, Central Kenya. In August 1996, after battling skin cancer and leukemia for eight years, he invited John Patrick to lunch with Father Riccardo to discuss important affairs.

He explained to the young Kenyan of 39, “John, I have only two years left to live. They want me to go back to my motherland, Italy. I started a clandestine school for the mentally retarded, but there’s opposition from the shamans, soothsayers, certain politicians, and the general culture of the people.”

In tears, he broke down and cried, “Who will take care of my children when I am no more?”

He then requested that John Patrick take the message of sensitivity towards the disabled and spread it throughout the business community, the youth, adherents of various denominations and schools, and the African community and society at large.

John Patrick was quickly productive for the protection and advancement of the disabled, raising over Kshs 1.2 million that provided the care of over 60 children during 1996. He later served as the first chairman of the school's board of governors by appointment from Kenya's Minister of Education. He utilized executive-level supplies and logistics experience from the private sector to assist the school, and initiated numerous public relations and media campaigns to share the school with an international network.



But he did not esteem himself from these and other successes, except to be content that he was fulfilling a duty to which he had committed.

In 1999, three years later after granting Father Gianelli (and Father Riccardo's) wish, John Patrick was lauded by the Vatican for "advancing ... the course of persons with physical disabilities and mental retardation by addressing their spiritual, social, mental, and physical challenges and requirements in society, through research and information dissemination locally and internationally." John Patrick was also recognized for founding the Association of "Friends of Allamano Special School." The late Pope John Paul II showed great favor towards his work and publicly awarded him the *Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice Gold Medallion*. It is the prestigious gold medal that was awarded to the late Mother Theresa in 1993.

As a witness to how Kenya's disabled children secretly and quietly develop, he explained that, "Many of the disabled children possess artistic abilities.

I met one nicknamed **Samora Machiel**. He is physically handicapped on his lower extremities, and uses crutches. However, he's a nationally acclaimed acrobatic dancer and was one of the promoters of the Allamano Special School projects.

And superb singers exist. In fact, one of the Allamano students is nicknamed 'Michael Jackson' for his drama and dancing. Special Olympics Medal scoops are yet another testimony.

They all could be world famous celebrities, but no one has yet tapped their story and broadcast it for the world to see."

John Patrick said he has also seen the disabled artists who paint by using a mouth brush, despite being crippled at their upper extremities. There is much left to do to eradicate humankind's fear and cruelty toward those who cannot fully help themselves.

When I asked John Patrick what he would say to the American people, were he to publicly address them tonight, he replied, "Keep the candles burning. Pass the torch of compassion and acceptance, if only to one person at a time.

Adapted from an Article by Deborah K. Childress

With much gratitude

Saturday, January 21, 2012-6:41:40 PM

IN Loving Memory of The LAST OF THE CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES

DEVOLUTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
on HUMAN DISABILITY ISSUES.

ADAPTED TO COMMEMORATE THE 110 YEARS OF OUTREACH
INITIATIVES THAT LED TO THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE
ALLAMANO SPECIAL SCHOO FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED
CHILDREN and: January 21st 1851-January 21st 2012

By _____

November 21, 2008

Devolution of corporate social Responsibility On human disability issues

Abstract

The field of intellectual and physical challenges (Mentally and Physically handicapped) is an evolving field of research and application. Mainly pioneered by persons or members of families and individuals with disabilities, who have taken the courage to engage the subject and call in on others to join them. For a long time more so in developing countries, only missionary organizations had taken a frontline role by engaging members of their faith based communities involved in the Corporate, Secular and Political sectors to confront the subject.

CSR is about how organizations and companies manage the incorporated entities and business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society. Within the context of leadership, management and organizational behavior one area that stands out is the impact on society by persons who have been trained or educated through the initiative of religious based or missionary efforts to shape corporate social responsibility.

Use of the term devolution

In the field of human disability the word evolution, which suggests a systematic, gradual and well-organized transformation does not appear to be the correct term. On the other hand, revolution, which is a radical all round complete change, appears an overstatement. It has in been a process of devolution, oscillating on between highs and lows and even stagnated at times in history. It is still a process of passing down or descent through successive stages of time.

Introduction: a perspective of disability

Anderson W.A (November 2004) states that , Recent decades have witnessed considerable improvement in the way persons with disabilities are viewed in the United States and other Western nations. Concerns for social justice, including recognition of equal rights and provision of equal opportunity, spirited by the success of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, have increased awareness of the needs and abilities of individuals with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities.

While efforts to create an inclusive society are ongoing in the West, in many developing nations, persons with disabilities continue to be devalued, dehumanized, and rejected. This is so, despite many of these nations having assented to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Devolution of corporate social Responsibility On human disability issues

In addition, Member States of the Organization of African Unity adopted the Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which affirmed the right of children with a disability to protective services under conditions which would guarantee their dignity, encourage self-reliance, and enable active participation in the community.

It is estimated that there are over 80 million persons with disabilities in Africa (Masakhwe). Poverty and malnutrition, inadequate or inaccessible health care, diseases, accidents, crime, and violent conflicts are among the primary causes of disability. Many in strife-filled African nations become disabled through warfare or intentional maiming designed to intimidate and control. Segregation and marginalization keep disabled individuals at the bottom of the economic ladder by denying equal opportunities and equal access to many aspects of society. The continued disempowerment and marginalization of people with disabilities is not just economic; it has a spiritual and social dimension as well.

It is within the above concepts that I have opted to use the Institute of Consolata missionaries as an example of an organization that has applied its broad outreach to impact on changes in society.

The Institute of Consolata Missionaries and Disability issues

The Institute of Consolata Missionaries was founded in Turin, Italy, on 29th January 1901 by Blessed Joseph Allamano. In 1902 they established their first official outreach in Kenya, East Africa on 29th June 1902. Since then, they have opened missions in Ethiopia (1913), Tanzania (1919), Somalia (1924), Mozambique (1925), Great Britain (1936), Brazil (1937), Portugal (1943), Argentina (1946), USA (1946), Colombia (1947), Canada (1947), South Africa (1948), Spain (1955), Venezuela (1970), Congo DRC (1972), Uganda (1985), Korea (1988), and Ivory Coast (1995), Mongolia (2003), Djibouti (2004). (<http://www.consolatashrine.org/Section.asp?ID=6>)

During their presence in Kenya they established hospitals, dispensaries, teachers training colleges, Seminaries, regular primary and secondary schools that formed the basis of cultural transformation and training for the leadership that would constitute the transition team in various aspects of society. It is against such background that the two-consolata missionaries, Antonio Gianelli and Rossi Ricardo found themselves at the end of their tour of duty in Kenya, at the close of the 20th century, addressing disability issues.

Affiliation with the Consolata missionaries for people in the secular and corporate sector, in establishing a project for mentally and physically handicapped children posed many

Devolution of corporate social Responsibility On human disability issues

historical, administrative, cultural, moral and political perspectives. Multiple issues that would have sabotaged the project during its initiation and after the departure of the Consolata missionaries in 1999 were in play.

This project paper seeks to highlight some of these challenges that face projects in developing countries whose nature involves people with disabilities whom society has tended to place in the background. In most societies and communities, it takes either a persons own disablement or disabling experience, or that of a close friend or family member to rise to the occasion of what it means to be disabled in any way, especially, to be physically and mentally challenged. Corporate social responsibility initiatives have helped in this sector. Based upon work by Dr. wolf wolfsberger on Social role Valorization aspects have been studied that would help in shaping behavior in organizations and in efforts to effectively reach out to people with disabilities and understanding the wounds caused by society as in the challenge faced by the Consolata missionaries at Allamano special school in Africa.

[Jeff & Kathi McNair. California Baptist University <http://jeffmcnair.com/jafsrv.ppt>: *Effectively Reaching out to People with Disabilities by Understanding the Wounds Caused by Society.*]

Understanding background to the problem

With Africa as my initial foothold, and using the challenges to the Institute of Consolata missionary incorporated in Italy as the bases for my outreach, I hope to expound on the role of the interactive social forces on a specific project the 'Allamano Special School' for Mentally handicapped/challenged children in Kenya East Africa.

Anderson W. A (November 2004) points out that, Disability exists throughout the world, without respect for national, ethnic, or cultural boundary. The history of the treatment of persons with disabilities has been one of ignorance and isolation. In developing nations, people with handicapping conditions are yet victimized by neglect, superstition, inaccurate stereotyping, and exploitation. Cultural

beliefs about disabilities and attitudes toward persons with disabilities often include shame, prejudice, and exclusion from community (McConkey & O'Toole).

Kwei, writing in Ghana's Daily Graphic, spoke to the point: "People with disabilities are often isolated, discriminated against and considered inferior. While sections of society consider them an accursed group, others subject them to various abuses that cumulatively make them bitter against society" (Kwei 11).

African folklore often promotes attitudes of tolerance and respect for individual differences (Kisanji). Nevertheless, disabilities are often feared by the people. Disability

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may be associated with supernatural forces, such as the gods' anger at a parent for wrongdoing or breaking a taboo ("Creating an Environment for the Disabled"; Marfo).

Some believe that an offended individual paid a witch doctor to curse a family, causing someone to be born, or to become, disabled. Still others believe that living a wicked life may be punished by being reincarnated as a person with a disability. "River blindness," a parasitic eye disease and a leading infectious cause of blindness, may be attributed to spirits who live in the rivers. Persons with a severe disability such as autism (a neurologically-based impairment of behavior and communication) are often thought to be possessed by an evil spirit.

Such beliefs are deep-seated in traditional culture and religion and may be held to some degree even by more highly educated individuals. Hospital physicians, for instance, have been known to ignore patients who are disabled, giving preference to able-bodied patients. Whether rejected as less worthy because of the disability or because they may be less able to pay for services, this clearly communicates disrespect and devaluation of the person who is disabled.

The stigma of the disability attaches both to the individual and to the family. Since a disabled child is seen as a curse, a bad omen, or an incomplete person unworthy of life, many families abandon the child to the care of a hospital, orphanage, or special school (Mwiti). The baby may simply be killed, or be kept hidden from public view.

Murage B., sums the historical cultural problem in the community:

The midwives or the obstetricians had a very radical role for the tribe. They not only assisted at child-birth but had the duty of deciding who was fit for life or not. her role had a social dimension as she was to make a full check-up for fitness.....: babies born with physical handicaps were not to live and would not even be given the chance to suck. No naming was to take place before the checkup for fitness. The tribe had no room for handicaps, from birth. Being agricultural and pastoral and at war with Masai who would invade, they could not afford to have someone invalid from birth. They needed able bodied people who could also run into hiding whenever the enemy invaded. There were also other cases of babies born having fully grown teeth etc. these were considered a taboo to keep and hence they were eliminated at birth.

If a mother were to die while a baby was still at the breast i.e. not weaned, she was thrown away with the baby and it was babies like these that missionaries saved and brought up. [B.(1994) Marian devotion among the Agikuyu- Pg 36]

These attitudes often prevent the family from seeking assistance or from following through on recommended interventions. Becoming disabled through illness or accident often results in the child's rejection by the family, forcing the child to live on the streets by begging or prostitution. Women who are disabled are especially vulnerable. The likelihood of experiencing sexual abuse in the home is high, and threats of violence keep such abuse from being reported.

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Confronting and Overcoming the Problem

These cultural beliefs are obviously counterproductive to promoting the well being of persons with a disability. Obtaining an appropriate education, entering the workforce, and being accepted in society are difficult to achieve when disabled citizens are viewed negatively or dismissed out of hand. Even when national leaders do not hold limited views of persons with disabilities because of cultural beliefs, national indebtedness or corruption result in limited resources to tackle the issues. Thus, resolutions are passed which recognize the basic humanity of disabled persons, but the government lacks the ability (or the will) to implement action. Disability-related

issues remain “the least prioritized and inadequately factored section of the national budget and planning” (Masakhwe).

The situation is compounded by the tendency to locate the “problem” of disability solely within the individual. The result is failure to acknowledge the effect of cultural beliefs or to address the negative, discriminatory attitudes, which ensue. Solutions which have been proposed through governmental policy tend to focus more on prevention or cure than on changing society (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka, and Stubbs). Emphasis is on “fixing” the individual so that he or she can fit into society, rather than on addressing elements within the culture or society which lead to exclusion and denial of human rights. In many nations of Africa, inadequate health care and social services is another reason behind a significant number of cases of disability (Eleweke). Many disabilities can be attributed to the absence of primary health care programs such as childhood immunizations against diseases typically resulting in disability (e.g., polio). Other common factors which interfere with both civil and educational rights of persons with disabilities are absence of enabling policies and legislation, lack of a systematic structure for funding special education services, inadequate personnel training programs, lack of facilities, and failure to promote inclusive attitudes individuals with disabilities continue to be denied what the world considers a basic human right to education.

The development and status of special education programs in Kenya has been described by Ndurumo (Exceptional Children) and Anderson (Special Education Needs).

Government-related special education programs and schools exist, many having originated during the colonial era, but they are often poorly equipped and under-funded, staffed with under-qualified, under-paid, and over-burdened teachers. Private schools for children with disabilities are usually equipped to provide better services, but many families cannot afford the tuition (Mulama). children. An informal survey confirmed that governmental policy statements in Kenya fail to reflect actual practices in schools (Eva Nyoike, personal communication, September 8, 2004). Although Non-Governmental Organizations serving persons with disabilities exist, they also face

insufficient financial and manpower resources. Many are staffed by good-hearted but inadequately trained persons.

Along with cultural beliefs and practices, there is an issue of value in terms of what disabled persons can contribute to society. Given the problems associated with national poverty, governmental instability and limited effectiveness, and fiscal irregularities, it is no surprise that accessibility to education and society by those with disabilities in developing countries is not a high national priority. Social and educational programming tends to focus on able-bodied citizens who may contribute to the economic development of the country. Persons thought to be weak, such as those with a disability, tend to be less valued and viewed as incapable of engaging in meaningful employment or of contributing to national self-reliance (Muchiri). Waste of resources and talent because of societal prejudice and discrimination. The societal attitudes described above, however, suggest that citizens with disabilities continue to be unnoticed and unserved, despite official proclamations to the contrary.

Attempting to address this problem using a top-down (legislative) approach is likely to have little impact. Efforts to promote services to persons with disabilities which build from the concept of community-based rehabilitation seem to hold greater promise. The intent is to work within the person's home area to promote participation in all aspects of community life. Community-based rehabilitation links persons with disabilities, non-governmental organizations, and key members of the community (professionals and agencies)

Churches and church-related schools are appropriate places to initiate socio-cultural change within developing nations. It is within this context as above that the Allamano Special School for the mentally Handicapped was started through the commendable efforts of the Late Consolata Missionaries Rev Fr. Antonio Gianelli and Rev Fr Rossi Ricarldo.

It is an example of what is possible through responsible efforts in corporate social responsibility and collaborative initiatives in society in a developing country.

The project Scope: A recent outreach on the Internet

Almano Special School for Mentally Handicapped

Kenya: <http://www.volunteerabroad.com/listingsp3.cfm/listing/44217>

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Description: Located in central Kenya, it's in a beautiful location only 3 hours drive from Nairobi. Lush tropical valleys, tea and coffee plantations, waterfalls and rivers make this an idyllic (and always overlooked) location to volunteer. This institute was started by an Italian priest called Padre Antonio Ceianellic after he saw a need in the community for a school for the mentally challenged. The community was lacking such an institution and the ones available were not effective as they were far off. The school houses 51 children with all kinds of mental handicapped from cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism, epilepsy to dyslexia. Disability being a severe ammonic state in a person attributed to mental and physical impairment or in most cases a combination of both; as a result the institution's main priority is to teach these children basic activities to lead their lives as normal as possible and physic-therapy to strengthen their limbs, as some are very weak.

Highlights: The school is situated 30 minutes away from Nyeri town, where it is possible to find all things modern - from Internet to pubs and five star safari clubs. This part of

The country has a beautiful topography that is well covered by tall and green trees that gives a perfect setting for bird watching, or evening walks. For the adventurous, Mt Kenya is only an hour away, thus an attempt to climb to any of its three peaks would be a fulfilling move. Besides that, most of us would visit Meru reserve that is famous for Joy and George Adamson's hand rearing and releasing of animals. The famous lioness 'Elsa', whom most of us know from the film

'Born Free.' The area is rain forested so game spotting is hard and an easier alternative is Aberdare a few hours away, or Samburu where you are likely to spot the elusive Leopard.

Qualifications: Volunteers with skills or backgrounds handling such children of these types of needs. Regular teachers or trainee teachers are also welcome to participate in class. Other volunteers who are willing to help in the other domestic side of this school are also welcome. If you feel you have any skills or experience that would be relevant we would most like to here from you.

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Planning information

Allamano Special School caters for physically and mentally handicapped children. Attached to it is a cerebral palsy class (C.P.), which serves approximately 300sq Km , in the Central Province of Kenya. The children are refereed for assessment by teachers,

parents, health workers, education assessment centers, and the administrative branch of the government which includes, the Chief, Assistant chiefs and local leaders.

The school has an area of about 3 acres situated at the Eastern slopes of Aberdare forest with an altitude of 2400M above the sea level thus the climate is fairly cold especially in the months of May – August. It is located approximately eight Km south west of Nyeri town off Nyeri road.

The school runs on contributions from local well-wishers and parents of the children, which are insufficient for the upkeep of the school. Due to the poor economic status of the parents the drop out rate from the school before attaining/acquiring the skills has become a bit high.

Brief history

The above-mentioned school is a public (government) entity. It started as a unit for the mentally handicapped children in 1988 after the local Nyeri District Education Office carried a survey, which established the need to cater for the increasing number of children who required special attention. With the assistance of the Red cross Society in (Norway), and through the Local branch of the Red Cross a small home was started and was completed in 1994. In 1995, the late Fr. Antonio Gianelli of the Institute of Consolata Missionaries then In charge of the local Parish helped to secure a donor organization Manos Unidas from Madrid Spain.

Aims and objectives

The project revolves around children with special needs and aims to assist the children to acquire: A sense of purpose, Social Development and adaptability, Self-respect and acquisition of basic social survival and behavioral skills. Once accomplished this would give the mentally handicapped children an opportunity to be self reliant through the development of their pre-vocational skills making them socially acceptable and enhance public awareness of the physically and mentally handicapped.

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Needs and requirements

The school had no wheelchairs, or formal transport facilities consistent with requirements for the mentally and physically challenged. This was required for mobility during emergency sick calls, transportation of supplies, taking the children for visits and extra-curriculum activities and transportation of day scholars who walk for long distance to and from school. Due to the disability of the pupils, the school required staff houses within the school compound and immediate vicinity. The education of the mentally handicapped is geared mainly on giving them vocational skills and not in academics. The institution as such required the construction a workshop, a Home science room and purchase of appropriate equipment.

The school is endowed with two acres of arable land that is under utilized due to lack of reliable irrigation system. In order for the school to be self-sustaining in food there was need for assistance towards the irrigation project using water derived from a borehole. The farming project would help the children to acquire some skills. The Parents, Sponsors and Guardians would be responsible of feeding their children through the payments of hostel maintenance fee. Due to the current economical crisis many parents would not be able to pay maintenance fee for food and medical expenses. The cost of pumping water from the borehole plus other use of electrical power was a problem for the parents to pay.

Physical facilities

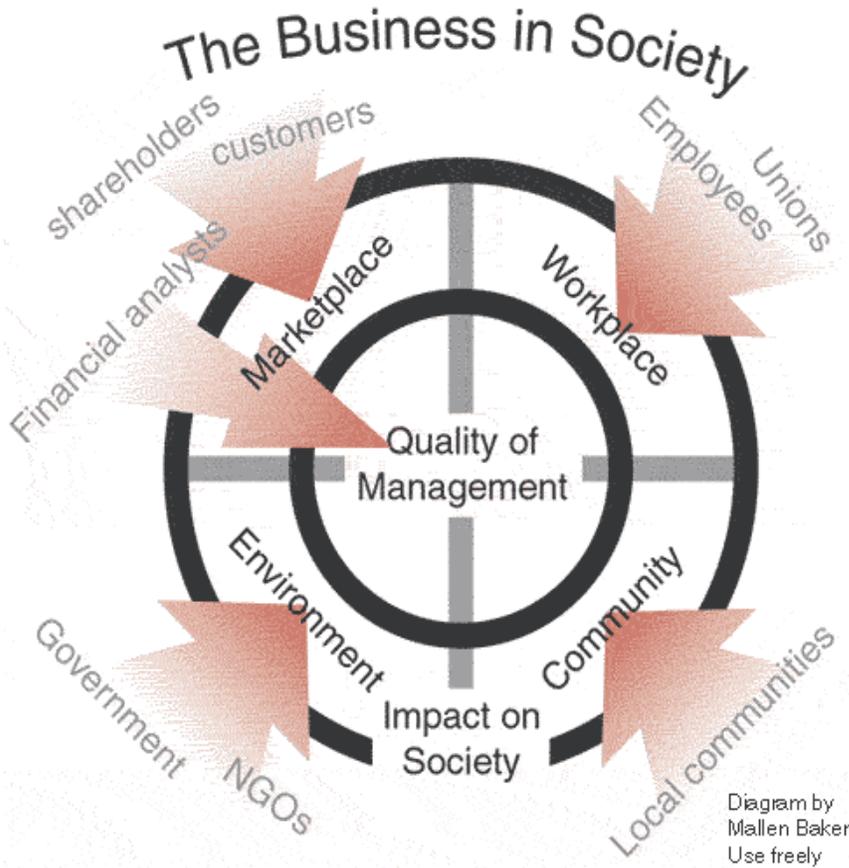
The school’s initial plan could only accommodated sixty children in the boarding section this fell far short of the large number of applicants on the waiting list. A dormitory, kitchen, dinning hall and laundry room had to be expanded. All these called for financial, technical and administrative skills far above those available from the local community and their good will to assist.

The institution used professional volunteer services and prepared a provisional budget.



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What started as a local proposition to deal with a taboo subject and stigmatization of the mentally and physically handicapped, took a broader coverage through local and international efforts to tap aspects of corporate social responsibility professional initiatives in the business, charitable organizations, and community good will.



<http://www.mallenbaker.net/csr/CSRfiles/definition.html>

Retrieved November 14, 2008

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Successful initiatives were carried out through research and information dissemination,

Creating opportunities for community awareness and sensitization on socially and mentally challenged persons, and publicized through; Production of Video Feature on the school. Organizing Television talk

shows for officials of school, use of the press, and radio/audio news. Feature articles in various outreaches and related Publications. Sports participation in Special Olympics and other collaborative social events for projects involving mentally challenged children. Fund raising initiatives and facilitation of equipment and facilities provision. Networking among Charitable bodies and organizations through corporate community affairs coordinators. Local and national artistes, comedians, actors and musicians were involved to attract all age groups to functions in the new school. I had an opportunity to be involved among others. Over a period of 5 years the foundations of the new institution were consolidated through formal registration and involvement of the Government Ministry and other state Agencies. A transitional Management Crisis at the school was resolved, and a trustee board entrusted to run the institution following the departure of the missionary school founder. Modalities for the introduction of a Trust Fund were also established with long term succession plans on transfer of responsibilities and bank signatories

Project Analysis, Implementation, and Evaluation

To achieve the intended purpose a thorough research and study of official files was done to establish the Strengths,Weaknesses,Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The chairman of the board of governors in collaboration with the Sponsor's manager Catholic Archdiocese of Nyeri and the ministry of Education felt the need of this Research for the smooth running of the institution ensuring an efficient transition of Administration and Management.

This would ensure that the aims and objectives of creating an opportunity for the self reliance of the handicapped through acquisition of vocational skills, the creation of public awareness, support and socially acceptability were started on a strong footing.

The special school for the mentally handicapped had started as a unit attached to a regular primary school in march 1988.This was after the District Education office carried out a survey which established that there were a number of children in the surroundings who required special education.

Later on the unit within the primary school was separated to be an independent special school and the government office appointed a head Teacher. In response to the arising needs the head Teacher started sending out letters of appeal to would be a donor. A letter sent to Red cross society of Kenya, local branch was able to receive aid from Ostfold Red cross society of Norway which agreed to

put up a hostel which was completed in 1994. Due to lack of sufficient funds to equip the hostel, the teachers who

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were manning the unit approached the late Fr. Antonio Giannelli, the local missionary parish priest with the intention of creating a small home for the mentally handicapped.

With their detailed listing of requirements Fr. Giannelli appealed for AID from Manos Unidas an organization based in Madrid, Spain who donated enough funds that uplifted the school standards in achieving the basic requirements needed in its structural and physical plan. On January 12th 1996 the school was opened and the hostel was officially opened and handed to Rev. Fr. Antonio Giannelli on behalf of the Sponsor by the Red Cross Society of Kenya.

As a consequence through a collaborative effort of the Government, local community, external agencies and the church as the Sponsor manger the school was started . It was resolved that the name of the school be changed from "Wamagana Special School" to "Allamano Special school" (named after "Blessed Joseph Allamano", the founder of "Consolata Missionary Institute. On 4th May 1999, the school was formally approved and incorporated and given a "Certificate Of Registration" from the Ministry of Education. (REGISTRATION NUMBER:SP/ED/42/99) (personal Communication 2006)

Strengths and opportunities

The land on which the school stands was donated by the local primary school. In a meeting held by the school committee on October 14th, 1995 the headmaster of the primary school identified to all those present the area allocated to the special school. On June 13th, 1996 another resolution was passed by District development Committee, the primary school and special schools committees with regard to the extension of the plot occupied by special school and the resolution was agreed upon unanimously.

The executive committee members of both primary and special schools drew an agreement and signed it to confirm the transactions. The special school was thus allocated specific land next to the primary school. Another settlement carried out was concerning the class built in the primary school with the help of the National Fund For the Disabled. With all transactions finalized on June 19th, 1996 the new Special school was inaugurated as a separate entity.

Assets included 4 acres of land, 4 permanent classes, offices and staff room, kitchen and two stores, laundry, permanent classroom for cerebral palsy, workshop, borehole of 400 feet depth and storage tank, 4 cows, chickens, 2 rabbits, 2.5 acres of land was set aside for cultivation and grazing.

The school was thus set to accommodate 65 children, 58 of them boarders .In the boarding there were 27 boys and 31 girls. 7 children [5 boys and 2 girls] started as day scholars. The Hostel had 34 beds in the side of girls and 30 in the boy's side.

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The first appointment of B.O.G. of Allamano special school was done on 6th November 1998. Those that received appointments by The Minister of Education and Human Resources Development in accordance with Education Act, Cap211, and Section 10.

In their inaugural meeting the Board of Governors conducted [Min/4/2/99] an election of the executive and appointment of a Chairman, Secretary, and Treasure. Board members were also confirmed to represent gender, a researcher, donors, local community leadership, health, business, special interests, and lobbying and sponsor interests.

The project was unique and the first of its kind in the area and thus attracted much interest in the community. In order to control some behavioral disorders like Autism and hyperactivity the children are occupied with interesting activities. They already have recreational facilities and equipments; such as swings, climbing ladders, play toys and continue to expand. The school continues to require donors

willing to donate various equipment specifically suited for the education and rehabilitation of the physically and mentally handicapped. The school started with basic facilities which allows admittance of children with cerebral palsy in settings known as Peto class, prepares students for prevocational and vocational rehabilitation training for job placement and utilizing their potentialities.

The school has continued to maintain a wide donor network that includes local schools, banks, businessmen, the National Fund for the Disabled, International Lions Club, seminaries and various advocacy groups. An association of 'Friends of Allamano' that was formed in 1999 continues to coordinate, lobby and call on more sponsors, professional medical and regular services from the network supporters.

The parents have been equally involved in the day to day running of the institution. They pay salaries for the non-teaching staff. These include cleaners, kitchen staff, guardians, security personnel and a matron nurse. These are the responsibility of the parents and donors as the government provides and pays for the teachers. The parents also contribute towards Fundraising functions and any health expenses incurred by their respective Children. One of the issues that this involvement solves is the abandonment of the children in the school. Fortunately some children have committed sponsors. There are ongoing efforts to encourage collaboration between Parent, teachers, members of the board and the local community.

Future challenges weaknesses and threats

Projects for persons with disabilities as in the above case will continue to face challenges that require corporate community responsiveness. Good transformational change requires that change agents carefully think through the full implications of such projects. While

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overcoming cultural resistance and prioritization of community needs is still at issue, this process of devolution needs sustenance to evolve to an acceptable level. This calls for continuous education and communication, encouraging participation, building support and commitment, implementing changes fairly and sensitively. The project is not above political interference and in times of economic hardships projects of this nature are likely to be considered a social luxury that may be dispensed with.

Planning as in the above project calls for proactive purposeful change activities and intentional goal oriented activity aimed at impacting on organizational and community behavior towards the physically and mentally challenged in society. This will continue to call for and require change agents as catalysts who will assume responsibility for managing change activities. A large proportion of people who initiated the Allamano Special School project have either died or retired from active participation, a factor that requires continuous reassessment and transitional change management.

The desire is that students majoring in organizational management, community development, biblical and religious studies, psychology, business, and communications would also take courses designed to help them understand the abilities of persons who experience handicapping conditions. Graduates are employed in positions of leadership and influence at various levels within society. Being exposed to accurate understanding of disabilities, the services needed, and the potential contribution which properly educated persons may provide will enable more people to be better informed and effective advocates for abilities and rights for disabled individuals.

The way Forward

In September 1999 the Allamano School project we were involved with in Africa was awarded a gold medal by the late Pope John Paul 11. It has continued to face various cultural and organizational challenges. As such, this outline is a basic effort to create a better understanding of the challenges that confront individuals and corporate entities participating in the disability field. It seeks to impact on organizational behavior by highlighting issues involved in addressing the challenges and removing attitudinal attributes and biases in the advocacy for persons with mental and physical disabilities.

There is still more need to look into comparative research relating to Cultural diversity and knowledge gap in developed and developing countries, and their impact on Multicultural and Interfaith disabilities advocacy. Into the contribution of current corporate efforts and cooperation in scientific research initiatives as an aspect of good corporate and social citizenship. Continue to encourage efforts in developed countries

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and missionary lands to demythologize disabilities and further open more closed doors. Ultimately, there is a need to address the various generations Age gap, social dynamics and acknowledge the causes and possible solutions or approaches to disabling aspects. This will relevantly impact and breach the social stigma of this community service outreach .It will also strengthen corporate presence and marketing strategies, social and cultural cohesion even among communities and people of diverse backgrounds, faith, religious affiliations and social status.

Advances have been made in scientific research for use of computers and software in advancing the welfare of persons with various disabilities. This is on the rise, particularly in the United States of America and other developed countries and opportunities exist for cooperation with developing countries in community service outreach.

There has been an Increase in disability awareness in society owing to the publicity given in the mass media worldwide, of disabilities occurring to Key Persons and public figures in society. Alzheimer's, Autism, Polio, Parkinson's, Cerebral Palsy, Downs syndrome, Spinal cord injuries, Head and brain injuries, dementia, strokes and paralysis, and other opportunistic diseases consistent with today's 'social issues and style of living'.

There is a spreading culture of personal and corporate conscience devolution as demonstrated through philanthropic initiatives. The impact of the Internet and mass media is on the rise in proliferating institutionalized and individual disability outreach initiatives in the global village and the consequential impact on traditional approaches of cultural and belief systems on disability.

We continue to witness the proliferation of various positive efforts and contributions to society by persons with disabilities, philanthropic individuals, corporations and organized society to improve the welfare of persons with disabilities. Emphasis on tapping ability not disability, and availing opportunities rather than pity and sympathy. And as outlined in the Allamano special school project there exists a Universal capacity for Corporate and Faith based Initiatives to influence change in personal individualized and societal discipline. A capacity to change attitudinal biases on persons with disabilities by involving youth groups, staff and business executives through community mobilization and service to resolve serious social problems in the community.

Conclusion.

One of the greatest challenges and complex area that offers a wide scope of opportunities and success for persons with disabilities is merging and harnessing the combined

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goodwill of various International Foundations; and roles of the United Nations General Assembly efforts, Churches and denominations of various faith groups seeking unifying opportunities, localized traditional cultures and norms in different societies, the private sector companies in search of publicized responsive and responsible corporate citizenry opportunities, Charities, Individuals and other interrelated persons and aspects.

International foundations through various initiatives in developing countries have been spearheading the global campaigns to eradicate or cope with effects of human disabilities. Among these, the Special Olympics foundation stands out prominently in furthering the involvement of persons with disabilities in sports and society by attracting corporate sponsorship of events and participation of volunteers in such events as evidenced on their website.

(<http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/default.htm#>)

However, scarcity of financial resources, constitutional safeguards on personal freedoms and human rights, a lack of a standard curriculum, and the sensitivity of various aspects of faith, beliefs and opinions are still an impediment and pose risks for persons and institutions interested in advancing the disciplines and agenda in favor of Persons with Disabilities. Hopefully, the current encouraging trends will evolve through and consistently overcome the devolution process.

November 21, 2008

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[Volunteer Abroad Program - Almano Special School for Mentally ...](#) :

Almano Special School for Mentally Handicapped. Kenya. Description: Located in central Kenya, it's in a beautiful location only 3 hours drive from Nairobi. ...

Guera G. (February 12,2006). Father Antonio Gianelli 1923-2001. Extract retrieved on 11/19/2008 : <http://en.ismico.org/content/view/332/3/>

He had an acute social conscience and built a school for handicapped children – one of the few in Kenya. In a letter he wrote to Father Piero Trabucco, the Superior General, to thank him for his financial help, he said: “On the same day the school was inaugurated we established the “Friends of Allamano.” This association will sponsor and support the school, as well as spread knowledge of and devotion to our Founder is highly esteemed by all the Christians at Wamagana.

“With this work I believe I have fulfilled my obligation towards him who made it possible for me to become a missionary. Next year I will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of my ordination; in these fifty years my greatest accomplishment has been this school for the handicapped. For this I thank God, Our Lady and our Founder” (December 11, 1996).

This was not the extent of his work in Wamagana – at great expense he had wells dug that would provide water and electricity to the mission and the people.

Hours before his death he was still thinking about the handicapped children at Wamagana – he left them his few possessions.

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Bellagamba A. (February 12,2006) Father Rossi Ricardo 1912-2000.

Extract retrieved 11/19/2008 : <http://en.ismico.org/content/view/352/3/>

He found financing for students – some of whom studied abroad – in an effort to create leaders for society and the Church. During the Mau-Mau uprising he was often in great danger – but his charity reached out to all sides.

His letters to superiors in Italy were full of statistics – the best reflection of reality. At the same time his visions for the future revealed a creative imagination, the ability to think and make long-term plans.

Fr. Riccardo was brought up in this tradition. He went even further and continued to perform baptisms as long as his physical strength held out.

Another of his characteristic trait was his love for the poor. He was always ready to give concrete assistance to whoever knocked at his door. While he was pastor at Sagana he established St. Mary's Village, a shelter for elderly, abandoned women; in his final years at Wamagama his devotion to the poor and disabled increased exponentially: he was instrumental in establishing a Special School for spastic children and those who had suffered from polio.

Fr. Riccardo is the model of an authentic missionary for all of us; he was concerned with the spiritual, material and intellectual well-being of his people; he was devoted to welfare of his flock, the progress of the Church and the dignity of every human person. Fr. Antonio Bellagamba

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November 21, 2008

Downloaded on THANKS GIVING DAY- U.S.A -Thursday, November 26, 2009

FATHER ANTONIO GIANNELLI 1923 – 2001



Written by Fr. Guido Guerra

Sunday, 12 February 2006

Father Giannelli, the son of Pasquale Giannelli and Settimia Vigna was born at Parabita (Lecce) in 1923. He entered our Institute in 1933. In 1943 he consecrated himself to the Lord through religious profession and in 1947 he was ordained to the priesthood. He was sent to the Kenya mission – diocese of Nyeri – in 1949. It was the time of the Mau Mau uprising; tension, danger and fear made an already difficult mission more difficult. He was assistant pastor in Rocho (Nyeri), Fort Hall and Gekondi. In 1954 the Bishop, Msgr. Carlo Cavallera sent him to work in the coffee plantations at Tinderet Farms. He really didn't like this assignment and when he returned on leave to Italy in 1954 he chose to remain there.

He was involved in mission promotion at Darfo, Milan and Bologna. In 1975 he went back to Kenya and was involved in pastoral work in Kiangonyi, Gaturi and Kerugoya. He was the pastor at Gaturi from 1977 to 1983 and supervised the renovation of the decrepit old people's home. The renovated home had spacious private rooms and all the necessary services. At the same time he was very much

involved in building chapels at the mission out-stations.

From 1983 to 1987 he was assistant pastor first in Ichagaki and then in Tetu. Here he saw Wamagana for the first time. It was one of the largest chapel schools in the mission. He devoted himself to the school and built schools and stone houses for the priests and sisters. With the help of friends who came to visit him in Africa, he built one of the most beautiful churches in the diocese and dedicated it to Our Lady of Parabita (his hometown). He had an acute social conscience and built a school for handicapped children – one of the few in Kenya. In a letter he wrote to Father Piero Trabucco, the Superior General, to thank him for his financial help, he said: "On the same day the school was inaugurated we established the "Friends of Allamano." This association will sponsor and support the school, as well as spread knowledge of and devotion to our Founder is highly esteemed by all the Christians at Wamagana.

"With this work I believe I have fulfilled my obligation towards him who made it possible for me to become a missionary. Next year I will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of my ordination; in these fifty years my greatest accomplishment has been this school for the handicapped. For this I thank God, Our Lady and our Founder" (December 11, 1996).

This was not the extent of his work in Wamagana – at great expense he had wells dug that would provide water and electricity to the mission and the people.

His work and his forthright, affable personality made everyone his friend. The celebration of his Golden Anniversary in 1997 was a veritable triumph that celebrated all his many works.

His health was in decline – the first signs of cancer had appeared in 1988 and cancer would eventually take him to his grave. In 1999 he returned to Italy and began his long Calvary in the Motherhouse infirmary. He went to the House of Our Father on January 23, 2001.

His funeral was celebrated on January 26th. Father Clemente Barlocco presided at the celebration and spoke about Father Giannelli's life. His talk was a well documented disquisition on "Who was Father Giannelli" for our Institute and for the young Church of Nyeri. He spoke of his virtues and his shortcomings – but above all he spoke about his great merciful heart, the gift he made of himself, his fidelity to his vocation, his affection for all he met – especially the poor, the vulnerable and those who could never pay him back.

Hours before his death he was still thinking about the handicapped children at

Wamagana – he left them his few possessions.

His body was taken to his hometown, Parabita, and now rests with his loved ones near Our Lady of Parabito.

Fr. Clemente Barlocco

and Fr. Giuseppe Mina

TESTIMONIALS

An Instrument of Charity

Father Antonio Giannelli has left us forever, he was a small man but great missionary. His big heart, unshakable faith, slightly rebellious and playful spirit made him a formidable channel of charity and love.

He created two important centers of hospitality in a very short time in 1950's Kenya: a house for abandoned old people and a refuge for children with serious motor and psychological problems. They were two stars in a constellation of goodness. He gave himself unstintingly to others regardless of their race, religion or political beliefs.

Federico Cesarani

Tireless Missionary and Great Friend

I remember as if it was only yesterday. I felt emotion and a little apprehension when my husband, William, and I landed at Nairobi. We were both doctors and we had been invited by Father Antonio Giannelli to spend time at his mission in Wamagana (Nyeri).

Impressions crowd my mind as I think back to that time: new and exotic smells, the general confusion that surrounded us – but most of all I see the reassuring smile and liveliness of "Father Generi" as everyone affectionately called Father Antonio.

A trip lasting a few hours brought us to Wamagana at the foot of Mount Kenya. During that short trip we came face to face with the whole of Africa: poverty and majesty beyond anything one could imagine. Those were days filled with activity: William worked in the hospital at Mathari, we visited nearby villages and had a chance to see all Father Antonio had done. We made many other visits to Kenya, and encouraged by Father Antonio made joyful changes in our life in Italy: we renewed our political commitment and took up volunteer work. He was a tireless missionary and a great friend. There of great sadness in these last years – the

premature death of William, my husband, and now the death of Father Antonio.

Dear Father Antonio I will return to Kenya with the spirit you taught me, with your *Jambo* in my heart. It will not be like those happy days of yours when I watched you look lovingly at the children in school, or witnessed your superhuman efforts to provide the disabled with a dignified and acceptable level of assistance.

Doctor Leda Schirinzi

BROTHER GUERRINO VOLPATO

1915 – 2001

Brother Guerrino was born in Piombino Dese (PD), the son of Giuseppe Volpato and Regina Montin. He entered the Institute in 1928 and consecrated himself to the Lord with religious profession in 1935. He then spent thirteen years in Italy as porter, commissionaire, gardener, sacristan, etc. in a variety of communities: Turin, Caselleto, Cereseto and Parabita.

In 1948 he left for the Pirané mission in Argentina where his missionary spirit found expression among the impoverished natives and outcasts of Chaco. In a letter to Father Vittorio Sandrone, Vice-Superior General, he wrote: "I work with Father Burati teaching catechism to the young people and am on my feet from six in the morning to seven at night. Along with the catechism I am very much occupied with household tasks – all of this makes time fly ... I am tired but I am happy ... My rheumatism has disappeared. Since my arrival in the missions I have had a chance to learn so many things. I bless Jesus and thank our Lady, the Consolata, that I am a religious and a missionary of the Consolata" (August 1, 1948).

In a spirit of sacrifice and charity he did all he could to meet the many material needs of his people; with spiritual and brotherly advice he prepared them to receive the sacraments. He was so filled with priestly spirit that people called him "Padre Hermano" (Father Brother). In a letter to Father Fiorina, the Superior General, he wrote: "Certainly, Most Reverend Father, when I see how badly priests are needed I would almost wish to be one myself so that I could go and preach the word; I suffer enormously when I see those who are priests not bother to do so ..." (June 29, 1956).

In 1958 Brother Guerrino returned to Italy where he dedicated the remainder of his life to serving the Institute in a variety of capacities. From 1959 to 1963 he was the porter at the house in Turin and the assistant to Father Gaudenzio Barlassina. He served as porter in Rome (1963 – 1971) and then returned to the Motherhouse to work, he collaborated with CIM and was the sacristan of the Church of the

Founder. In his humble position he served the Motherhouse day and night. "I am happy to welcome all of our confrères who arrive and say farewell to those fortunate ones who leave." In 2000 after a series of heart attacks he retired to the house at Alpignano. It was there that the Lord called him home on January 30, 2001.

Cheerful and helpful he had great spiritual rapport with simple people – he could put them at their ease and nurture their hope. His prayerful spirit and love of the liturgy were outstanding.

Father Gottardo Pasqualetti, the Regional Superior, presided at his funeral Mass. Many of his relatives came from all over Italy and Father Guido Guerra paid homage to our brother during the homily. His remains now lay in the cemetery at Alpignano.

Fr. Giuseppe Villa

TESTIMONIALS

Padre Hermano

Brother Guerrino was at the Casa Beato Giuseppe Allamano for about a year – he had not asked to come here since he hoped to end his days at the Motherhouse where he had lived for almost thirty years. We knew each other for many years – from the time at Comotto. He was remarkably consistent – I noticed no changes when he arrived at Alpignano. He found it difficult to adjust to the restrictions his several heart attacks forced upon him. I saw him pushing around the serving carts to be helpful. Father Riccardo Rossi was especially attached to him – Brother Guerrino was always there to offer his quiet, patient and smiling help.

Brother Guerrino came from the house at Pederobba. He made his first profession in 1935 and some years later he was sent to Argentina. He arrived there just as our foundation was getting underway. He came to know and love Pirané passionately – the Chaco, the grassy plains, the treacherous rivers and the poor and abandoned natives who lived there. One thing the Fathers at the mission immediately noticed about Brother Guerrino was his concern for the spiritual welfare of those he met. He did all he could to meet the material needs of these destitute people but was always quick to bring up the subject of salvation, of Jesus the Redeemer and of Mary, his mother. He loved Mary with the simplicity of a child. He was so devoted to preparing people for the sacraments that they began to call him "Padre Hermano" (Father Brother). As far as I can recall none of the other brothers was ever called this.

He performed a variety of tasks at the Motherhouse: acting as porter and guestmaster, running errands, driving ... but his favorite job was working as sacristan in the Church and caring for the Founder's chapel.

When we happened to travel together on public transportation I was always charmed by the way he greeted everyone – as if they were his friends. He could always reprimand those who were acting badly in public – but he did it with so much grace that the mischief-maker usually asked his pardon. He sometimes asked me to celebrate Christmas Mass in run-down neighborhoods and I could see that he was respected as a genuine friend of the poor.

People often gave him large or small amounts of money to give to the poor – and he was always scrupulous in seeing that the money reached the needy.

He would attend prayer meetings – charismatic or otherwise – it didn't really matter to him as long as people were praying. In his own way his life was centered around prayer, God and Mary his mother. He was never absent when a local feast of Our Lady was being celebrated. He would later tell me all he had seen and how much he had enjoyed it. I never saw so many people in our chapel as I did at his funeral on January 31. They were not just relatives – but many, many who learned of his death and came to bid him farewell, thank him and say a prayer for him. We realized then that "Father Brother" was a genuine minister of consolation and reconciliation.

Fr. Giuseppe Mina

Trusted Collaborator

Brother Guerrino arrived in Argentina several years before me – I came to the promised land in December 1952. Brother Guerrino was waiting for me at the Paraguay River port of Formosa to take me to Pirané. He had the advantage of three or four years of working in Argentina and acted as my guide and interpreter. We spent four years together working first at Pirané and later at El Colorado on the Bermejo river at the southernmost boundary of our parish.

Brother Guerrino was always at my side as a collaborator; he handled the practical aspects of our work, sought out assistance, organized meetings and celebrations, launched projects, etc. People trusted his ability to organize things. Without being asked he took responsibility for the people who lived in settlements, and taught the children catechism and songs. He was indefatigable traversing the country roads, visiting ranches and seeking out the people who lived all over the grassy plains. His pastoral zeal was straightforward and unaffected and he was not at all embarrassed

to go from door to door and invite people to novenas and feast day celebrations.

He was very able at finding help and official support for our various projects. He would go to the military and provincial authorities without hesitation and few could refuse his requests on behalf of Pirané or one of our other settlements. His humility, conviction, simplicity and innocence were irresistible – even the hardhearted gave in to him.

Simple people called him “Padre Hermano” (Father Brother). He was responsible for many religious marriages; he could convince those involved in common-law marriages to regularize their situation with relative ease. His was the apostolate of the practical: he was the one who prepared the Masses, baptisms, marriages, funerals and then at the appropriate time call in the priest to do his part. With very little education but a good deal of common sense Brother Guerrino handled a great many responsibilities.

He had great confidence in the priests he worked with. During long horseback rides together or the periods of rest in between he would talk with candor, seeking and giving advice and spiritual counsel. Whether he traveled on foot or on horseback the rosary was always in his hand – he was a classical missionary.

He was an affectionate man, and as a good Paduan he never lost his sense of humor. Now that he has gone – I hope to meet him once again, waiting for me at the gate of heaven as he did so many years ago in Formosa.

Fr. Guido Guerra

FATHER ROSSI RICCARDO 1912 – 2000



Written by Fr. Antonio Bellagamba

Sunday, 12 February 2006

Fr. Rossi was born the son of Francesco Rossi and Vittoria Nuccetelli on November 8, 1912 at Scurcola Marsicana (L’Aquila). He completed secondary school and entered the Institute in 1933. In 1935 he consecrated himself to God through religious profession and on June 20, 1939 he was ordained to the priesthood.

That same year he was sent to Kenya, to the mission at Egoji. He had only just put his hand to the plough when war broke out and he was

interned in a concentration camp – first at Kabete (Nairobi) and later at Koffiefontein (South Africa) and then back to Kabete.

He was finally freed in 1944 and began his work in earnest. Years of hard work followed; the missions had been abandoned for years, but they were brought back to life and to an unprecedented level of development. As a young missionary, Fr. Riccardo was capable and decisive. He was frequently called to mission stations to help older colleagues, or replace sick or vacationing confrères. Between 1944 and 1954 he worked in Icacaki, Gaincanjiro, Fort-Hall, Tusso and Karema.

His was an enthusiastic character endowed with tireless energy. He dedicated himself to pastoral work in the spirit of a fisherman who casts his nets as far as possible to gather in as many fish as he can. He brought new life and fervor to already existing Christian communities and established new school-chapels everywhere. These schools had thousands of students in whom and in whose families and communities he planted the seeds of the Gospel. He developed handicraft and farming methods and created agricultural and small industry cooperatives. He found financing for students – some of whom studied abroad – in an effort to create leaders for society and the Church. During the Mau-Mau uprising he was often in great danger – but his charity reached out to all sides.

His letters to superiors in Italy were full of statistics – the best reflection of reality. At the same time his visions for the future revealed a creative imagination, the ability to think and make long-term plans. These letters are evidence of his devotion to work and his trust in the Lord.

In 1946 he wrote to Fr. Sandrone, the Vice-superior General from Gaicanjiro. “ ... there is so much work, it is always on the increase, and there are so few workers, *‘Rogate ergo Dominum messis ut mittat operarios’* is our constant prayer. Here at Gaicanjiro we are only two priests and a brother: Vincenzo Quaglia. But there is enough work for five priests, two brothers and seven sisters. There are 600 students in the central school and another 700 in outstations schools: 1300 altogether ... we lack money, personnel, support. Fortunately we do not lack the Lord.”

The following year in a letter to Fr. Barlassina, the Superior General, he gives an insight into the spirit with which he shared missionary life with his confrères: “The companionship was good – no great! We were working all the time and got along splendidly. One supplied what the other lacked.” He made no attempt to downplay difficulties but described his work with confidence: “I am the superintendent of

schools, both here at the central school and at the 'out-schools'. There are enough problems to make one scratch one's head! We have twenty-five teachers on the staff and keeping them in line is no easy job. We have 1200 students and we hope to recruit even more. But how very much it all costs, Father, to keep our schools in working order. Disputes over teachers' pay, insistence on admission fees, new buildings or old ones to be remodeled, a battle against poor hygiene, disorder, dirty clothes, tardiness – in short I'm sure you know and understand what I'm talking about. But our schools are in good shape; the teaching is good and at a high level. We are respected by all the other neighboring schools of other denominations."

For Fr. Riccardo the future of the mission was clear: "A mission that has a good school is respected, wanted, helped and filled. In Kenya there is at present a 'race for schools.' He who hesitates is lost." In spite of difficulties – among which a large number of elderly and sick fathers, he carried on with patience. What counted for Fr. Riccardo was the missionary spirit: "... dear Father, we are still good and worthy Consolata missionaries. We still have that spirit, and have it in abundance; charity and zeal are not lacking. I feel obliged to say that the charity and zeal that I saw in the past, and that I see even more today here in the missions, is like nothing I ever saw in Italy. I may be wrong, but that's the way I see things."

In 1954 Fr. Rossi began his ministry as a pastor. He worked first at Ngandu for ten years where he was known as "*muthuri*" (elder) of the Kikuyu tribe. Later he opened the mission of Karatina (1964-1965) where he established schools and chapels throughout the parish. He was then sent to Kerugoya (1965-1969) where he built five stone churches in the most important centers and founded the Association of Parents who do praiseworthy work supervising and developing the schools. From 1970 to 1978 he was the pastor at Sagana. During all these years he was Vicar Forane of the Vicariate of Kerenyaga, a member of the Schools Committee and on the Commission for Development in the district. From 1978 to 1980 he lived in Nyeri and worked as the pastor at Mathari.

The years went by and age caught up with him; his legs began to give way. Fr. Riccardo returned to being an assistant to pastors who were younger than he was. From 1980 to 1999 he was assistant pastor at Karima, Othaya Tetu and Wamagana.

On October 10, 1999, Fr. Rossi was forced to return to Italy and begin his long stay at Alpignano; although confined to a wheelchair he took part in community meetings and community Masses. On

Thursday, December 7, 2000 he returned to the House of the Father. On Saturday, December 9, the community celebrated a Mass of farewell. Fr. Emanuele Maggioni, the Vice-superior presided at the funeral and Fr. Antonio Giannelli spoke about Fr. Riccardo's work in the missions and its outreach to so many basic communities. Fr. Gabriele Soldati said, "He had dedicated his parish to Mary Immaculate, and Mary Immaculate has called him home on the vigil of her feast."

Confrères from neighboring communities attended the Mass. Fr. Riccardo's body was taken to Scurcola Marsicana where it was buried.

Fr. Giuseppe Villa

and the editors of Da Casa Madre

TESTIMONIES

He had the "charism" of the apostolate

I came to know Fr. Riccardo Rossi in 1958 when I came to launch Catholic Action in the diocese of Nyeri. Msgr. Carlo Cavallera of blessed memory had gathered all the missionaries together for a presentation of Catholic Action as a means to channel the efforts of the laity whose Christianity had been put to the test during the Mau-Mau persecution. A priest I didn't know was the one who spoke most frequently during the conferences. I asked Fr. Giovanni Casolati what his name was. He answer with that wry tone he often used, "He's Fr. Riccardo Rossi. The Africans call him 'the mute one' because he's always talking."

I quickly realized that he had the gift of gab; he knew and used the local language with ease and he managed to inject into it some of his native warmth ... his advocacy of an advanced and far-reaching apostolate became his "charism." When it came to launching an Africanized (today we would say inculturated) Catholic Action, he did it and did it very well indeed.

He told me that he had always liked Catholic Action in Italy and thought it would work very well in Nyeri. He was one of the first to turn this into a reality. He was always the best one to explain the concept of Catholic Action to teachers. I well remember the debates that took place on all levels in an effort to help people "understand." We started our first groups in his difficult parish at Ngandu and he introduced us to John, his catechist. John was a convert and a former Mau-Mau with all the talents of a leader and the eloquence of a neophyte. He offered John's assistance in our visits to outlying missions. Later it was Fr. Riccardo who gave us our first diocesan president of the movement, Mr. Patrick, one his Head Masters and a leader of the district.

Fr. Riccardo stayed at Blessed Giuseppe Allamano House for a little more than two years. Being confined to a wheelchair was very difficult for someone with his personality. But in spite of that confinement he took part in community Masses, he came down to meals, he attended gatherings and conferences, he watched television, he read and he prayed – he certainly was not idle, all the same he gave the impression of a lion inside a cage.

But this was the will of God and this seemed to be enough for him. He died suddenly, and went to meet the Lord Jesus on the vigil of the Immaculate Conception, to which he was so devoted. Fr. Emanuele Maggione presided at his funeral Mass and Fr. Antonio Giannelli who had worked so long with Fr. Riccardo preached the homily. With moving and heartfelt words he gave witness to Fr. Riccardo's apostolic zeal. He was a missionary known to everyone in Nyeri; he founded communities in which he baptized thousands and thousands of children.

His charitable work during the fratricidal Mau-Mau struggle was tireless and without concern for his personal safety. Fr. Antonio spoke about the missions he had founded, the primary and secondary schools he had established and the cooperatives he initiated. He did much to foster religious vocations and led so many to the priesthood – the local bishop was one of his protégés. And there was still more. He was awarded a Papal Honor just at the moment that his legs gave way and ceased to obey him. He was forced to return home. He went to receive his Honor, like a good soldier of Christ. He now rests with other members of his family in his hometown cemetery at Scurcola Marsicana. Yes, Fr. Richard, rest in the peace of the Lord!

Fr. Giuseppe Mina

A splendid example of missionary zeal

Fr. Riccardo Rossi was the pastor at Karatina during the years of the African struggle for independence. He devoted all his efforts to winning the area that had been entrusted to him: the District of Mathera. The Protestants who had got there before us and were settled in their mission fortress at Tumutumumu believed that influence in the territory was their exclusive prerogative. Only a few years previously there had been a good deal of opposition to the founding of the Ngandu mission. Fr. Giacomino Camisassa, the first priest saw his newly built school burnt to the ground.

To block aid to guerrillas in the jungle the local villages had been sealed off – almost becoming concentration camps. Msgr. Cavallera asked the District Authorities for permission to enter all the local

villages. This permission opened doors to places that had previously been closed to us by the network of Protestant schools opposed to our expansion.

Within a few years Fr. Rossi had established the catechumenate in all the villages and had baptized thousands of converts. The results of his efforts were later apparent when the district was divided into six parishes that boasted flourishing Christian communities.

During the seventies he was one of the early pastors at Sagana. There too he found land that needed tilling. In his eight years there he built chapels for catechumens at strategic points with extraordinary results. Sagana, today, has twenty stone churches and there are plans to divide the mission into two parishes.

He was an open and cheerful person; he brought a light note to any company with jokes, anecdotes, predictions, gossip – he was known as “Radio Karatina.” His conversations were always of a pastoral nature. His comments on the Saint or liturgy of the day were always flavored with humor.

At the end he was assistant pastor in the mission at Wamagama. He celebrated Mass daily with the basic communities, and urged them on to further efforts, cooperation and apostolic endeavor. When the mission was handed over to the diocesan clergy, Fr. Rossi went to Sagana – but remained only a few months. After celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination he collapsed. His legs would no longer support him and he was forced to return to Italy.

Fr. Riccardo Rossi left us a splendid example of missionary zeal, sacrifice and a long life spent totally and uninterruptedly for the cause of the Gospel.

Fr. Luigi Mongiano

Fraternal and charitable

Although I never had occasion to do pastoral work with Fr. Riccardo, I have beautiful memories of this missionary confrère who spent sixty years working in Kenya.

Every time I went to visit him he welcomed me fraternally and made me feel at home. He found meeting and offering hospitality to his confrères a genuine pleasure. Fr. Riccardo was always very well informed about what was going on in the missions and about the personnel of the Region.

He recounted with gusto the successes he had had opening school-chapels in areas completely dominated by Protestants and other denominations. His good humor and endless anecdotes were known to everyone and he was ironically known as “the mute one” – a sobriquet that did not displease him at all.

He gave his undivided attention to his pastoral work and to his parishioners and worked with his catechists in all his activities, especially in preparing catechumens for baptism and Christian life - he considered these catechists his "right arm."

After 59 years in the mission Fr. Riccardo lost count of how many baptisms he had performed, but he would affirm without exaggeration that they numbered in the thousands. "Cross the sea, save a soul and then die!" This was a slogan among old-time missionaries; Fr. Riccardo was brought up in this tradition. He went even further and continued to perform baptisms as long as his physical strength held out.

Another of his characteristic trait was his love for the poor. He was always ready to give concrete assistance to whoever knocked at his door. While he was pastor at Sagana he established St. Mary's Village, a shelter for elderly, abandoned women; in his final years at Wamagama his devotion to the poor and disabled increased exponentially: he was instrumental in establishing a Special School for spastic children and those who had suffered from polio.

Fr. Antonio Citterio

He was an evangelist in the full sense of the word

Those who knew Fr. Riccardo Rossi will not hesitate to affirm that he was one of the most active and dynamic missionaries in Kenya. His work of evangelization produced almost unbelievable results. He baptized thousands of children and adults; he built several churches and a large number of chapels; he witnessed the foundation, development and eventual dissolution of several missions; he paid special attention to catechesis, kept it up to date, and made sure it made sense to the mentality of his faithful.

His work was not confined to the pure and simple proclamation of the Gospel. He was devoted to the social welfare of the people among whom he worked and did all he could to improve their tools and means of production. He helped his faithful adopt up-to-date methods of working the land for the production of coffee and tea and was instrumental in setting up agricultural and small industry cooperatives.

He was especially interested in the welfare of young people and was responsible for opening several elementary and secondary schools. He financed studies both at home and abroad for promising youngsters who would one day be leaders in the Church and in society at large.

His heart was always open to the poor. The extent of his charity is known only in heaven! During the struggle for independence in Kenya he assumed responsibility for feeding thousands of desperate people and cared for the sick and wounded on both sides of the conflict.

Anyone who has lived with him can testify to the many people he helped; as

he walked along the street he was continually accosted and thanked for something he had done. He was surrounded by a "litany" of thanks and was one of the most loved and respected missionaries in Kenya.

Fr. Riccardo is the model of an authentic missionary for all of us; he was concerned with the spiritual, material and intellectual well-being of his people; he was devoted to welfare of his flock, the progress of the Church and the dignity of every human person.

Fr. Antonio Bellagamba



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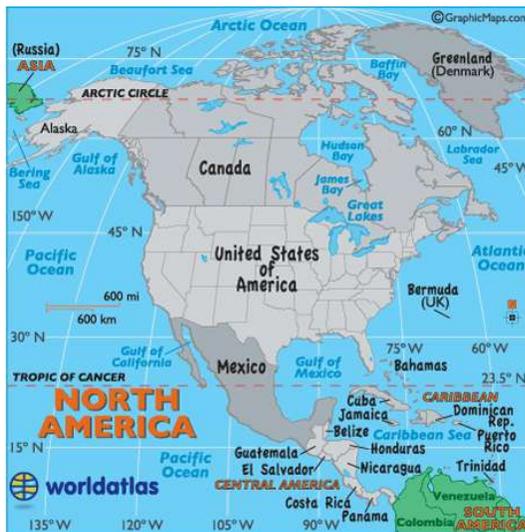
THEN ...LEARN SOME BASIC COMMON ENGLISH and SWAHILI ...WORDS





<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/au.htm> **Geography Notes** (Hawaii, Johnston Atoll and Midway Islands are located for reference only, and are not a part of Oceania.) **Melanesia** includes the independent countries of Fiji and Vanuatu, as well as the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia. **Micronesia** islands are all part of the same volcanic zone, and include the Marshall Islands, the nations of Micronesia (FSM), Palau, Kiribati and Nauru. In addition, it includes Guam, Saipan, the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as Wake Island. **Polynesia** contains numerous island groups, including all of French Polynesia and the Austral, Gambier, Marquesas, Society and Tuamoto islands. In addition, the Cook Islands, Easter Island, Niue, the Pitcairn Islands, Tuvalu, and Wallis and Futuna. **North America**, the planet's 3rd largest continent, includes (23) countries and dozens of possessions and territories. It contains all Caribbean and Central America countries, Canada, Mexico, the United States of America, as well as Greenland - the world's largest island. Positioned in the planet's northern and western hemispheres, it's bordered in the north by the Arctic Ocean, in the east by the Atlantic Ocean, in the southeast by the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, and in the west by the Pacific Ocean. Additional North American countries (not shown on this map) include: **Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago**

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<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/af.htm> **Africa**, the planet's **2nd largest continent** and the second **most-populous continent** (after Asia) includes **(54) individual countries**, as well as Western Sahara, a member state of the African Union whose statehood is disputed by Morocco. Note that **South Sudan is the continent's newest country**. With just over **a billion people (a 2009 estimate)** it accounts for just over **14% of the world's human population**. It also contains the **Nile River system**, the **world's longest**, and the **massive Sahara Desert**, the **world's largest**. Africa is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, both the **Suez Canal** and the **Red Sea** along the **Sinai Peninsula** to the northeast, the **Indian Ocean** to the **southeast**, and the **Atlantic Ocean** to the west. The continent straddles **the equator** and encompasses numerous climate areas, and is **the only continent to stretch from the northern temperate to southern temperate zones**. **Africa, particularly central eastern Africa, is widely thought (by science) to be the origin of humans as evidenced by the discovery of the earliest hominids and their**

Saturday, January 21, 2012

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