

The History of Diaconia in Karagwe

In the following you will find an overview of the history of diaconia in Karagwe:

- Diaconia in Karagwe before the missionaries (before 1900)
- Diaconia in Karagwe before KAD (1910-1979)
- Diaconia in KAD before the Diaconia Department (1979-1997)
- The History of the Diaconia Department (1997-2009)
- Diaconia in KAD 2010

This history was presented at the Jubilee of 100 years of evangelization in Kagera in June 2010.

Diaconia in Karagwe before the missionaries Before 1910

- In the time before the missionaries came to Kagera, diaconia as a term was not used... but the work of diaconia was already carried out.

People were helping each other.

They knew their neighbours and if any of them had problems.

The custom was that they always went and greeted each other in the morning and through this custom, they always knew if everything was fine by the neighbour.

If someone was sick or very poor, the **neighbours helped** to fetch water and firewood, farm the shamba, contributed food and clothes.

Also by funerals and weddings people helped each other by contributing in different forms.

- If there was a problem within the village, it was discussed and solutions were found.
- Neighbours were helping each other.
- They were doing diaconia without having the vocabulary for it.

With Christianity the vocabulary of diaconia came, but the spirit of helping each other as a natural way of living together was not there in the same way any longer.

Diaconia in Karagwe before KAD 1910-1979

- With the arrival of missionaries in Karagwe the concept of diaconia was introduced.
- People in the villages were taught about The Good Samaritan and the importance of helping the neighbour.
- Deaconesses arrived from Germany.
 - They were not many so they could not cover all Karagwe and Kagera.
 - Some of the deaconesses stayed in villages and some worked in the institutions like Nyakahanga and Ndolage Hospitals.
- It was decided that Banyambos/Bahayas should also have the chance of being deacons/deaconesses.
 - 1960s The first group of five were sent for education in Germany.
- It was later decided that instead of sending people to Germany, an educational institution should be established in Kagera.
- 1972 Nyamirembe Kashura (School of Diaconia in Bukoba) was established.
 - 1972-1974 Sr. Regina Ntimba was educated, and 1977 she was ordained.

Diaconia in KAD before the Diaconia Department 1979-1997

1979 Karagwe Diocese is established

Bishop Mukuta continued the diaconia work like it was done, when KAD was part of North-Western Diocese: A sisterhood focused work. Sisters were trained in Bukoba, but in the young years of KAD the wish for an independent training institution was worked on.

The two most outstanding persons working with diaconia in the early years of KAD were Sr. Regina Ntimba and Deacon Obadiah Mukuta. Both were combining their main focus with diaconia.

1979-1985 Deacon Obadiah Mukuta was working in the Youth and Sunday School Section

1980-1981 Sr. Regina was working in Mabira District as a Sister in the District (practical year)

1981-1991 Sr. Regina Ntimba was working in the Women Department

1992-1997 Sr. Regina was principal of the Nwenda Diakonia School

1998-2009 Sr. Regina was head of Department of Women, Children and Social Work

Main focus: Teaching the youth and the women in the villages.

Sr. Regina Ntimba was teaching the women how to take care of the poor through seminars on personal hygiene, food protection, and nutritious food. The women were taught topics so that they could be self reliant.

The youth in the villages were taught how to build huts, assist in the shambas. They also fetched water and firewood for the poor people.

- 1980s Focus on the young mothers:
The girls, who got pregnant before marriage, were often chased away from their families. The youth section wanted to support the girls and show them love, like Jesus was also helping the society outcasts.
- 1992 Nkwenda Diakonia School was inaugurated
- 1992-1995 The first six women were educated at Nkwenda Diakonia School in KAD.
- 1998 The first three sisters were ordained.
Two of them, Sr. Ephrania Ferdinand and Sr. Petronia Kaihura, later worked in the Diaconia Department.

The History of the Diaconia Department 1997-2009

1997 The Diaconia Department was established

KAD had expressed a wish to Danish Mission Society (DMS) to help the poorest of the poor.

The initial idea: The congregations and its members should be trained in Diaconia so that they acknowledge their Christian responsibility to help those in need – those who have no one else to help them.

The motivation for diaconia work is:

- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29)
- “I was hungry you gave me food...” (Matt. 25:35)

DMS and later Danmission support the diaconical work in KAD through sending missionaries and financial support to the activities.

The missionaries were heads of department and had one or two Tanzanian counterparts, which were working with them in the Diaconia Department.

This was the staff of the Diaconia Department:

1997-1999 Susanne Rask (deacon), Carsten Brinkmeyer (project co-worker), Mr. Vennat Mugenyi, Mr. Abel Beebwa, Sr. Ephrania Ferdinand

Main focus: Social support to elderly, poor people and disabled children; seminars on Diaconia

1999-2000 Lillian Pedersen (deacon – volunteer), Sr. Ephrania Ferdinand

2001-2002 Sune Hjertmann Frederiksen (nurse), Else Bjerg (deacon), Sr. Ephrania Ferdinand

Main focus: Social support to elderly and poor people; children with epilepsy, mosquito net project, seminars on Diaconia

2003-2005 Janne Ernest Andersen, Sr. Editha Paulo

Main focus: Social support to elderly and poor people; seminars on Diaconia, nutrition and self reliance

2005-2008 Mette Lauridsen (nurse), Jørgen Thoro Lauridsen (teacher), Sr. Editha Paulo, Sr. Restuta Venant

Main focus: Social support to elderly and poor people; goat project, water project, mosquito net project, seminars on Diaconia

2008 Sr. Editha Paulo, Sr. Petronia Kaihura, Anne Juel Jensen (anthropologist)

Main focus: Restructuring the work according to the evaluation report from January 2008; follow up on the work

done in previous years, develop and implement a strategic plan

The **activities** up to 2009 can be divided in two main groups:

1) Social support (90%): All direct support to individuals and families by handouts, financial support and counselling.

Social support was in most cases carried out together with the local congregation, evangelist and pastor.

- Medical support at hospitals for poor patients
- Support to house/shelter building, water tanks, mosquito nets
- Support (nutrition) of infants and newborns
- Support in food
- Support in clothing
- Crutches for handicapped people
- Hand bikes for handicapped
- Education fees for Secondary Schools
- Support in starting income generating activities /self-reliance, goat project
- Ad hoc support when people are visiting and requesting the DD office for help

2) Meetings and seminars (10%):

- Diaconia
- Other subjects, like nutrition and child care

Diakonia in KAD 2010

The Diaconia Department has four goals:

1. To build strong and self-dependent Diaconia Committees in Karagwe Diocese by increasing their knowledge
2. To reduce the number of people suffering from no land, no house, no ability to work, and from illnesses in Karagwe Diocese
3. To improve the co-operation between Diaconia Department and other stakeholders in Karagwe (working to support the poorest of the poor) by increasing awareness of each other's work
4. To improve the co-operation between Diaconia Department and other Karagwe Diocese departments by increasing knowledge on each other's work

The Target Groups of the Diaconia Department

- The Diaconia Committees at congregational level
- Poorest of the poor (those who are not able to live/survive without support from others)
 - Those with **No Land** (or too little land)
 - Those with **No House** (or very bad house/shelter)
 - Those with **No Ability to Work** (e.g. elderly, physically and mentally sick, people with chronic diseases)

Activities in the Diaconia Department

Goal no. 1:

To build strong and self-dependent Diaconia Committees in Karagwe Diocese by increasing their knowledge

The activities to reach this goal will be:

- a. Field visits by the selected Diaconia Committees
- b. Seminar/workshop where the new structure will be discussed and a common agreement will be found
- c. Seminars for the Diaconia Committees on communication
 - i. Support on reporting and documentation
 - ii. Diaconia Department writes feed-back reports to the Diaconia Committees,
- d. Seminars on Diaconia for the Diaconia Committees, women and youth groups, NGO's in the congregation, governmental representatives, villagers
- e. Seminar for the Diaconia Committees on how to train (training of trainers)
- f. Seminar for the Diaconia Committees on how to identify different target groups
- g. Seminar for the Diaconia Committees and relatives/neighbours on individual and community development

Goal no. 2:

To reduce the number of people suffering from no land, no house, no ability to work, and from illnesses in Karagwe Diocese

The activities to reach this goal will be:

- a. Our office is open for poor people or those taking care of them (e.g. give sick sheets, support babies)
- b. In co-operation with the Diaconia Committees the Diaconia Department will buy land for those with too little land
- c. In co-operation with the Diaconia Committees the Diaconia Department will build houses for those with too bad shelters
- d. In co-operation with the Diaconia Committees the Diaconia Department will start income generating activities for those who are in need

Goal no. 3:

To improve the co-operation between Diaconia Department and other stakeholders in Karagwe (working to support the poorest of the poor) by increasing awareness of each other's work

The activities to reach this goal will be:

- a. To identify, visit and meet with other stakeholders
- b. Co-operation with the District in Kayunga
- c. Co-operation with the local authorities
- d. To involve local authorities when contracts are signed

Goal no. 4:

To improve the co-operation between Diaconia Department and other Karagwe Diocese departments by increasing knowledge on each other's work

The activities to reach this goal will be:

- a. Information on our workshop and the strategic and operational plan in management meeting
- b. Meetings with other departments

And what is Diaconia then?

In Mark 10:45 it says: Jesus "did not come to be served; He came to serve"

Often the story of The Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29 and the description of helping the ones in need from (Matt. 25:35) are often mentioned as the Biblical evidence for diaconia.

- But what about the people who were helping their neighbours before the missionaries came. Were they not doing diaconia?
- Are we only doing diaconia, when we are Christians and when we are conscious about doing diaconia?

When Jesus was helping the ones in need, he was not saying, he was doing diaconia, he was simply acting as the good neighbour to his fellow human beings.

- *What are your thoughts on Diaconia? Please write – in whatever language you prefer! – to diaconia@kad.or.tz*