

St. Margaret College Senior Secondary School students research poverty in Uganda while proposing practical solutions to Missio Malta in aid of Uganda.

Every year Missio Malta raises a charity fund campaign in aid of a particular mission project in a poor country round the world. This year the charity fund campaign is in aid of Catholic clinics in Uganda so they can be able to buy ambulances to save as many patients as possible especially to treat pregnant women on time.

A group of fifth formers at St. Margaret College Senior Secondary School were invited by their teacher Martin Azzopardi sdc to research poverty in Uganda while proposing practical solutions to Missio Malta in aid of this country.



Photo 1

Though Uganda remains a poor African country, throughout recent years there has been significant progress in eradicating extreme poverty. In fact, Uganda has been listed as the 9th most successful country in Africa for its effort in eradicating extreme poverty. This success has been attributed to various efforts from the local government, NGO's and Church to combat poverty in the country by numerous national strategies.

The following are some facts and statistics of poverty in Uganda as researched by St. Margaret College Senior Secondary School students:

Life expectancy in Uganda is one of the lowest in the world with an average age of 59 years. 67% of Ugandans are either poor or vulnerable to poverty. Providing for their family is hard to accomplish. More than half of the population in Uganda lack drinkable water and Malaria has been found to be the primary killer amongst adults. AIDS has become a big threat to many lives in Uganda.

Very few schools have a lending library available to students in Uganda. Lots of students in Uganda go to school without having breakfast and a decent lunch. Many Ugandan people still live in slums and in very poor conditions.

Apart from researching the poor conditions in Uganda, St Margaret College students were also invited to share practical solutions to Missio Malta in aid of Uganda. Here are some of the students' proposals:

Dean Genovese proposes that **"Well off countries can contribute to improve education in Uganda by offering student sponsorship"** and Kyle Attard says that **"An engineering campaign is necessary to dig water reservoirs and underground bore holes or wells to guarantee potable water and less illnesses due to contaminated water"**. **"School sponsorship is requested to guarantee better education in Uganda and provision of books, copy books, desks and chairs for students"** says Daniel Schembri while Maclaine Vella insists that **"Rich countries can contribute by sending books to Ugandan schools so they can have their own lending libraries"**. When it comes to sponsoring, Ismael Magro recommends **"Sponsoring schools to buy rural land around the school in order to involve students in growing crops so they can provide their own food"** and Daniel Busuttil suggests **"Sponsoring clinics and hospitals to improve medical treatment and access to medical help in Uganda especially in cases of emergency"**.

With regard to provision, Islam Nessim recommends to **"Provide agricultural tools and machinery to help people in the rural areas of Uganda cultivate their own crops"** and Deacon Cauchi recommends to **"Provide vaccines and medicine to inoculate Ugandan people against maladies especially against Malaria"**.

However, Reuben Cauchi insists that **“Access to clean and potable water is a priority and developed countries can send architects and engineers to help Ugandan people remedy their situation”**.

Contributing to Missio Malta in aid of Uganda through a charity fund campaign is not enough. Firstly, we need to change our approach towards Third Country Nationals living in our own country by being more tolerant towards their mentalities, religion and culture while helping them to integrate more in our Maltese culture.



Photo 2