

The Missionary Approach to Development: Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for the most marginalised

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Faith-based organisations across all denominations are vital to providing quality inclusive education; often being the only providers of quality education for marginalised people. According to the *Global Catholic Education Report 2021*, 62 million children are enrolled in Catholic pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools globally.

To better understand this special contribution to achieving SDG 4, Misean Cara conducted research among its 88 member organisations. The resulting *Missionary Approach to Development Interventions (MADI)* is based on five core principles:

1. **Crossing boundaries:** Missionaries draw on technical resources and personnel of their global network; working across the boundaries of nationality, identity, marginalisation, and the accepted status quo.
2. **Long-term commitment:** Being deeply embedded in communities through a strong local presence provides missionaries with insight into the local context, culture and practices, and affords them a high degree of credibility, trust and influence within these communities.
3. **Personal witness:** A high level of dedication to their work, a simple lifestyle and solidarity with the poor, allows missionaries to build trust and respect in communities.
4. **Prophetic vision:** Striving for a better life for all, missionaries build on the inherent knowledge, strengths and capacities of communities to identify and address needs, without being afraid to take risks or forge new pathways.
5. **Holistic approach:** Missionaries see and treat individuals and communities not just as project beneficiaries, but as dignified human beings with a wide range of capacities, needs and rights to be addressed.

This approach enables missionaries to contribute to equitable quality education, especially reaching those usually left behind. With their deep understanding of the communities they serve, and strong national and international networks to advocate for change, missionaries contribute to education system strengthening and influence the education agenda from grassroots level up to different forums at the United Nations, tackling the problem of unaffordable, inaccessible, and inequitable education by:

1. Creating safe and equitable access to quality education for all; especially girls, persons with disability, and people forcibly displaced, including refugees and migrants
2. Increasing the quality of learning outcomes for students, with special emphasis on teacher training
3. Contributing to education system strengthening, in cooperation with a strong network of state and non-state actors

Missionaries are specifically committed to reaching those furthest behind. In South Sudan, girls are more likely to die giving birth than to complete high school. A missionary-run secondary school for girls enables 98% of its students to complete their secondary education thanks to a holistic approach, tackling GBV and early marriages.

In Zambia, a missionary-run special needs school is the only school in the country providing education to deaf-blind children; and has been recognised as centre of excellence by the government.

In South Africa, the Three2Six Project offers support for refugee and migrant children to access public education. The project enabled over 500 children to register at state schools and was recognised as a champion of inclusive education in UNESCO's *GEM Report 2020*.

For additional information on MADI, please see the following resources:

- [The Missionary Approach to Development Interventions \(MADI\): Conceptual Framework and Current Context](#)
- [How the Missionary Approach to Development Interventions \(MADI\) addresses the concept of Reaching the Furthest Behind First](#)