

the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and at the same time the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in employment and access to services. The Government of Mauritius should strive to achieve a better quality of life for all its citizens by increasing employment and education opportunities, fostering

healthy and safe communities, and promoting sports, arts and culture. This strategy should focus on reducing the number of people who experience social exclusion

services and facilities being offered by NEF, executing arm of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (MSIEE), advocate the promotion of fair and inclusive society.

These services, which are being offered to beneficiaries of NEF who are eligible under the SRM, are:

- educational support such as School Materials Scheme for students of pre-primary, primary and secondary
- Child Allowance Scheme for students of pre-primary, primary and secondary
- Creche Voucher Scheme for children 03 months to 03 years old
- Free Exams Fees Scheme (resit) for students of SC and HSC, and School Premium for students of SC and HSC.

- NEF caters also for the construction of houses under the Full Concrete House (FCH) scheme and upgrading of housing units.
- A project of pre-fabricated housing units is also in the pipeline.

and poverty, while improving their lives. Investments in social inclusion not only improve the circumstances of the most vulnerable, they also bring people back from living on the margins of society and increase their ability to participate in the community."

Geerish Bucktowonsing, Former MACOSS President, social and economic observer, argues that to be able to become an inclusive society, Mauritius needs to overcome exclusion. "Mauritius has so far done lots of progress but we still have a long way to go. It is a sad reality that extreme poverty is continuing."

Priscille Noëi, Chief Serving Officer of Lovebridge, argues that an inclusive society is one which does not leave anyone behind and aims at empowering and promoting the development of all citizens. "As an NGO working constructively towards the inclusion and empowerment of families living in poverty, we can say that many initiatives exist in Mauritius, yet the challenge

as long as poverty alleviation does not become a top priority for the Government, Mauritius will face many difficulties in any attempt to build an inclusive nation. "On paper, everything looks so nice and proper. However, in reality we can see that things are much more different. Our country has its own set of functional realities but it is very unfortunate that today itself, meritocracy remains a utopia," claimed the president of SOS Poverty.

SAAJIDAH DAUHOO:

"There is a lack of follow-up for poverty cases"

The president of SOS Poverty, Saajidah Dauhoo, feels that a lack of proper follow-up makes it difficult to combat poverty. According to her, "little things are being done in several remote areas" while she reckons that a concerted effort would have had a greater impact. "In Mauritius, there is a lack of follow-up for poverty cases. Many people think that helping the poor means to only give them food or money. But combating poverty goes



well beyond that," she said. Additionally, Saajidah Dauhoo strongly believes that