



World Bulletin

Spring 2017

Prepared Exclusively for Special Friends of Salesian Missions
A Written Testimony Of How You Bring God-Saving Grace To A Troubled World

Expanding Opportunities and Rights in Burundi

In Burundi, simply being female can sentence a child to a lifetime of poverty.

Throughout the country, institutional and structural discrimination have margin-alized women and girls to a great degree. Consequently, they struggle accessing education, healthcare and other basic services they need, such as banking and transportation.

Perceived as inferior to men, they often fall victim to physical and emotional abuse, both at home and at the hands of strangers. In fact, gender-based violence is so pervasive and accepted that most victims don't even report. With no support from law enforcement or the legal community, the effort is futile. Additionally, maternal death rates, especially among young mothers, are among the highest in the world.

This is why, in partnership with the Spain-based Salesian organization Don Bosco Solidarity, Salesian missionaries on the ground are working to



improve rights and opportunities for these degraded people.

To this end, the Salesians recently launched a new project called "Improving the Opportunities of Women in Rugako," offered at the Don Bosco Vocational Training Center in Buterere. The project offers courses in the culinary arts and hotel management to rural women eager to develop marketable skills. The program also holds complementary workshops designed to educate the broader community on the importance of gender equality and the benefits of decent employment

opportunities for women.

Don Bosco Solidarity has a long history of implementing projects to empower girls and women, especially in developing countries. In addition to classroom studies, participants in the program will receive practical, on-the-job training under the supervision of skilled managers and mentors.

These apprenticeships will help advance their knowledge, sharpen their skills, and develop confidence in their abilities to perform in a professional setting. They will also provide real-world experience that employers find invaluable.

While "Improving the Opportunities of Women in Rugako" represents but one small step toward a more equal and just society in Burundi, the work is crucial. With the kind generosity of our many friends, we can break the chains of generational poverty and oppression in Burundi – one girl, and one woman, at a time.

This Month's Child



Name: Thant
Age: 15 years old
Home: Mandalay, Myanmar

His mother brought him to work in a tea house, and never returned.

Just nine years old, with no relatives to return to, little Thant was alone in a city far from home – forced to wash dishes, wipe tables and carry water for a few morsels of food each day and a floor to sleep on at night. Soon, he fled to the streets, where he joined hundreds of other children living outside of their homes. Vulnerable to violence, trafficking, substance abuse and despair, every day was a struggle to survive.

When, a few weeks later, Thant learned of the Don Bosco Project for Street Children, he immediately ran to its doors – where our Salesian missionaries welcomed him with food, clothing, shelter and the chance to go to school.

Now 15, Thant is determined to succeed in the classroom. With hard work and the kind support of our friends, he can achieve his dream of becoming a tourist guide – using his favorite subject, English, as his ticket to a brighter future.

This Month's Call For Prayer

Our work takes place in some of the most dangerous and impoverished locations in the world. Please pray that our missionaries – as well as the suffering children and families they serve – remain safe so they can continue to make a positive impact.



Monthly Missions Report...

In Cambodia...

Recently, Don Bosco Kep officially became the country's first fully handicapped accessible school campus – serving as a model for Cambodia's educational system.

Using funds from our generous donors and USAID grants, administrators were able to install elevators in the school's main buildings, and make necessary modifications to bathrooms, community spaces and dormitories. Now, students who rely on wheelchairs can attend school independently.

Such integration and education are crucial in a country where youth living with disabilities are among the most marginalized members of society: unable to attend school, and actively excluded from the workforce.

A grand opening ceremony was proudly attended by representatives from Salesian Missions, including Fr. Mark who assisted the students on this wonderful day. *Learn more at: www.salesianmissions.org/kep*



In Colombia...



Students at a Salesian-run school in Bogotá have chosen to build a better future for themselves and their country through serving as instruments of peace.

Their decision promises to demonstrate to others that “peace” is a deliberate choice that can be achieved every day. This message, says principal Father Mauricio Cuadros, is increasingly important at a time when Colombia ever teeters on the brink of violence.

During a recent retreat, students, teachers and Salesian priests first reflected on how to invite peace into their own lives, saying “I can, because I believe.” Then, they practiced concrete expressions of it: shaking hands with each other, and then discussing tolerance and acceptance of differences.

“Because of the retreat,” says Fr. Cuadros, “these students better understand that they are the vehicle through which peace can become a reality in our country.” *Learn more at: www.salesianmissions.org/bogota*

In Sierra Leone...

A repurposed municipal bus is bringing help and hope to the streets of Freetown. Operated by Don Bosco Fambul, the bus serves as a mobile crisis unit – delivering crucial food, clothes, medicine, personal hygiene and psycho-social support to thousands of homeless youth.

“The bus is a reference point for children with nowhere else to turn,” says Father Jorge Crisafulli, director of Don Bosco Fambul.



The Ebola epidemic, combined with ongoing endemic poverty and a lack of respect for children's rights, has forced increasing numbers of youth onto Sierra Leone's streets in recent years. There, they battle malnutrition, disease, abuse, labor exploitation and worse.

In addition to providing basic necessities, Fr. Crisafulli notes that “one of the most important goals of this bus is to prevent risk situations, and return children to their homes or safe foster care.” *Learn more at: www.salesianmissions.org/br-lothar*

Missionary of the Month: Edwin Fernando Cárdenas

Edwin first professed his intention to join the Salesians in 2013. Now, as he enters his practical training and first pastoral ministry in the Amazon forest, he does so enthusiastically and with great passion.

These characteristics will serve him well, as Edwin's days – and evenings! – are long: beginning at 4:25am and concluding at 9:30pm, he supervises 120 young men who live and attend school at the

Wasakentsa mission. Together, they clean the dormitories and maintain the grounds, share meals, study and pray: with Edwin as their guide in the ways of Don Bosco.

Since the 1970s, at the request of the Achuar people, Salesian missionaries have offered educational and workforce training opportunities to local youth, in order to better equip them to overcome the



economic challenges of living in the Amazon forest. Edwin's participation in this effort promises to make a meaningful impact not only on his students – but also on his own formation.

In Solidarity with Girls and Women

Dear Friend,

As I write this letter, I find myself reflecting on the countless mothers around the world with nothing to celebrate.

For a variety of intersecting reasons – cultural norms, institutional discrimination, impoverished parents unable to support them – these mothers marry young and often bear children when they are just babies themselves! Forced to drop out of school and unable to

work while caring for their children, they are particularly vulnerable to poverty and its ill effects: poor health, chronic malnutrition, and a lack of resources to change the trajectory of their lives.

This is why I am proud of our unwavering commitment to programs that empower girls and women: with the education, social support, and employment opportunities they need to lift themselves, and their children, out of poverty.



We could not do this good work without the generosity of kind friends like you. I remain forever grateful for your loyal support.

May God Bless You!

Fr. Mark Hyde, SDB

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