



World Bulletin

Summer 2017

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

Coming to the Aid of Myanmar's Homeless Youth

To an outsider, Myanmar's breathtaking natural beauty belies a grim reality: the nation remains one of the least developed in the world, with a staggering 70 percent of the population living in profound poverty.

The causes, including an ongoing and brutal civil war and an oppressive government, are complex. Yet the effects are simply heartbreaking: high rates of infant and child mortality; the inability of residents to access basic health care, clean water or even electricity; and fewer than 50 percent of children successfully able to complete their primary education.

"Families living in rural areas suffer the most," observes Father Peter Myo Khin, director of the Don Bosco Friend of Youth Center in the capital of Mandalay. "They become trapped in a cycle they can't escape: they don't have enough to eat, so they often fall ill; if they can pay for medicine, then they can't afford food."



Desperation often drives parents to extreme measures – such as forcing their children to drop out of school to find work in order to support the family. Sadly, an increasing number of children choose to run away from home.

"They hope their situations will improve," Father Peter says. "But the sad reality is that things get worse, not better. They have no contacts in the city, no marketable skills. They have no place to live. They only eat what they can scrounge, beg or steal. And they make easy targets: for gangs, human traffickers, and even the police."

Today, almost 400 girls and boys call the streets of Myanmar "home." And it is to their assistance that Fr. Peter is called.

Since 2013, he and six dedicated staff have been working to address the needs of these children. Twice per week, they fan out across the city to meet them, gain their trust and invite them to access the Center's services: safe shelter, nutritious meals, basic health care, and recreational opportunities. Currently, 30 youth, ages 4-18, live permanently at the shelter, with plans in the works to expand capacity to 100.

Each child is either enrolled in primary school, or a professional training program, which provides the foundation they need to permanently leave the streets and become productive members of society.

"We treat them like family members," says Fr. Peter. "And the opportunities we offer truly change their lives."

This Month's Child



Name: Suntia
Age: 17 years old
Home: Freetown,
Sierra Leone

Suntia is no longer a little girl – but she has been able to recapture her lost childhood, thanks to Salesian missionaries.

At a young age, Suntia's parents sent her into the public square to sell trinkets and beg for money. Each night when she returned home exhausted, her father abused her. Finally she could take no more. She ran away to the city and got lost in its maze of humanity and its clamor.

"It was an unimaginable experience for me," she says, recalling the frightening trauma she endured. "Finally, I found people who would help me."

After local police referred her to Don Bosco Fambul, Suntia began to flourish. Safely living at the Girls' Shelter, with new clothes, daily meals, counseling and time to play, she realized that her life could follow a more hopeful path.

"Don Bosco Fambul changed my life!" she exclaims. "It helped me heal and to be a kid. Above all, it gave me the opportunity to study and realize my potential."

Today, Suntia is studying social work as a first-year college student. She hopes one day to return to Don Bosco Fambul as a role model and counselor for girls like her.

Please watch this powerful video about the work of Don Bosco Fambul at: www.SalesianMissions.org/videoSierraLeone

This Month's Call For Prayer

Millions of precious children call the streets their home. Some are escaping violence and abuse while others are orphaned or abandoned. Please pray that these innocent victims find refuge and comfort in a loving and safe environment.



Monthly Missions Report...

In India...

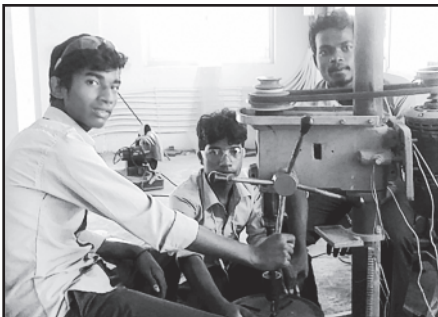
A new assistance center, established by Salesian missionaries in the southern state of Kerala, is connecting young migrant workers with critical social services and support.

Everyday, nearly four million young people gather in the capital city of Trivandrum seeking honest labor. While many fail to land a job, those who do are almost always victims of exploitation, forced to bid against each other in order to be hired – often for wages as low as \$8 per day.

Now, thanks to “Shramik Kalyan Kendra” (SKK), these migrant workers have a place to call or go to for help. Whether they need to advocate for themselves, gain access to health care, or enroll in training classes, they can rely on SKK to serve as an intermediary, helping to address such urgent situations.



In Nepal...



On April 2, 2017 – when the Don Bosco Institute Biranagar flung wide its doors to 55 eager students – a ten-year dream became a reality.

As Nepal continues to rebuild after 2015’s devastating earthquake, graduates of the Institute will play a crucial role in their country’s ongoing development: fanning out into the workforce armed with in-demand skills such as mechanics, plumbing, welding, and electrical wiring.

And they will be well prepared: students must complete intensive three-month training programs, followed by on-the-job apprenticeships, before being placed in their respective trades.

With a fee structure affordable for even the most impoverished students, the Institute promises to transform the collective futures of Nepal’s youth – as well as the country itself.

In Ukraine...

Amid what are perhaps Ukraine’s most turbulent times, the Don Bosco Youth Educational Center in Lviv stands as a model of stability for marginalized and at-risk youth.

Here, students aged 14-18 – many of them orphans, or from rural impoverished families – can learn to be cooks, tailors, hair stylists, carpenters, secretaries, computer specialists and more. A highly affordable tuition, coupled with a generous financial assistance program, means that girls and boys who previously couldn’t dream of going to school can now lay the foundations for financially secure futures.



At the same time, they can relax in the knowledge that their basic needs will be met. Students live on campus, receive three daily meals, and enjoy peace of mind in the library, on the athletic fields, or strolling through the acres of green space surrounding them.

Missionary of the Month: Fr. Jan Marciniak

His lifestyle may be simple; his responsibilities, much less so. For this Polish Salesian missionary serving in the rural village of Manguo, South Sudan, bringing hope to desperately impoverished children and families, is a full-time job.

Circulating among the three Salesian-run elementary schools and one high school in the area, Fr. Jan offers area youth the joys and opportunities of learning,

regardless of their families’ ability to pay. Students also receive daily meals and the chance to participate in constructive after-school activities, such as soccer, which teach them discipline, sportsmanship and cooperation.

“Our schools are a safe place where girls and boys begin to envision a much different outcome for their lives,” says Fr. Jan, whose nickname *Kikomoko* – “as good as an elephant” – has stuck with him



through his decades of service across Africa. And it is an appropriate nickname: he is as wise, resourceful and central to his villagers’ daily lives as is the continent’s most respected creature.

Please watch the amazing music video of the kids in this mission at: www.SalesianMissions.org/videoSouthSudan

Home Is Where Our Heart Is

Dear Friend,

When you think of “home,” what comes to mind?

While each of us may describe “home” in our own unique ways, I pray the description doesn’t include “a dark alleyway in a strange and frightening city.”

Yet sadly, *millions* of precious girls and boys around the world call such places “home.”

Just as our Saint John “Don” Bosco did before us, we Salesian missionaries dedicate our lives, and offer our hearts, to “these poor little outcasts.” We rescue them from the horrors of the streets, support their basic needs with compassionate care, and provide the education and training they need to reverse their circumstances and build better futures.



Because of *your* generous heart, these children now have true homes. I remain forever grateful for your loyal support.

May God Bless You!

Fr. Mark Hyde, SDB



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