



World Bulletin

Summer 2018

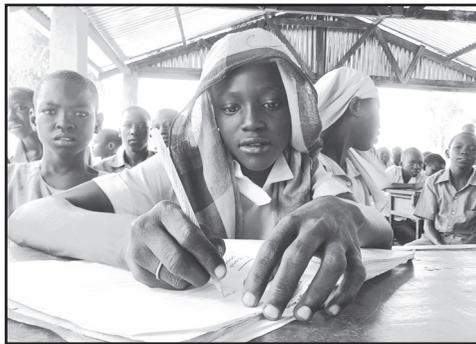
Prepared Exclusively for Special Friends of Salesian Missions
A Written Testimony Of How You Bring God-Saving Grace To A Troubled World

Prioritizing Education for Refugee Girls

Today, nearly *23 million* refugees have been forcibly displaced from their homes by war, persecution, disaster or poverty – more than half of them, children under the age of 18. And, among their countless deprivations, education sits near the top of the list.

“When children flee their homes, it becomes virtually impossible for them to go to school,” says Father Mark Hyde, director of Salesian Missions. “Yet education is the single most effective way for them to build better futures. In addition to maintaining a sense of normalcy, education equips refugee youth with the knowledge and skills they need to find long-term employment, achieve economic stability, and make meaningful contributions to the communities in which they resettle.”

This is especially true for girls, who – according to United Nations statistics – comprise fully half of the school-age refugee population. Research demonstrates that the further they



progress in school, the better they can develop their leadership skills, self-confidence, and entrepreneurship: traits that ultimately benefit their host communities as a whole. In fact, when girls enjoy equal access to education, per capita income rises by 23 percent.

Sadly, refugee girls consistently struggle to achieve an education: inadequate facilities, gender-based harassment, cultural biases, pre-existing achievement gaps and other factors mean that female refugees are half as likely to attend school as their male counterparts. This is a situation Salesian missionaries are working hard to address.

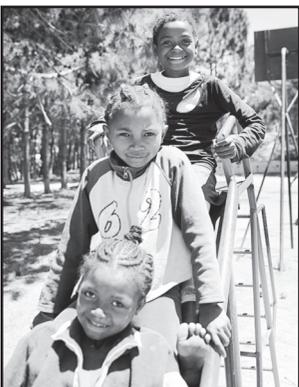
“We have long recognized the importance of inclusive, equitable education,” says Fr. Mark, “As the refugee crisis grows, so, too, does our commitment to ensuring that every girl, and every young woman, can go to school.”

In Uganda’s Palabek refugee camp – as one small example – missionaries offer mother-child support initiatives and basic agricultural training for women. “Educated mothers are much more likely to send their daughters to school; our efforts in this regard therefore have a compound effect,” explains Fr. Hyde. Missionaries have also started building three kindergartens, with primary, secondary, and vocational training schools to follow. Enrolling girls is among their top priorities.

“In solidarity with the United Nations’ recent demand for equal educational access for refugee girls, we wholeheartedly add our voices – and our resources – to ensure that reality,” Fr. Mark concludes.

This Month’s Children

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Names: Delina, Osna and Fleurette
Ages: 6, 8 and 8
Home: Mahatera, Madagascar

They were just two and four years old when their mother suddenly died: three precious little sisters with an absentee father, left to live with an aunt who lacked the means – or desire – to adequately care for them.

Malnourished and neglected, with nowhere else to turn, Delina, Osna and Fleurette languished in poverty’s prison. Unable to attend school – and too hungry, anyway, to concentrate or learn – it seemed they would forever be shackled by the chains of lost opportunity.

Fortunately, a local priest

learned of the girls’ predicament, and notified our Salesian missionaries serving in the nearby village of Bemaneviky. With their aunt’s permission, these missionaries placed the sisters with a loving host family who fully meets their every need.

The results have been immediate. Now enrolled in school, and provided with daily meals, the girls are flourishing. “We are very happy to be studying!” they exclaim.

Thanks to the Salesians, their futures now burn bright.

This Month’s Call For Prayer

Your thoughts and prayers bring hope and healing to millions of suffering children, women and men. Please continue to pray that they will gain the strength to overcome their misery and lead fulfilling, productive lives. Thank you for caring.



Monthly Missions Report...

In Guatemala...

A Salesian-run medical dispensary is fulfilling a critical need in San Benito Petén – where a single hospital serves a population of nearly one million people.

“In a country where more than half the population lives on less than one dollar per day, health care is not a recognized right,” explains Fr. Giampiero de Nardi, director of the Zatti Clinic. Named for the blessed Artemide Zatti – a Salesian pharmacist noted for his devotion to the sick – the clinic treats basic conditions, such as intestinal and respiratory infections, that residents would otherwise wait months to address.

Noting the growing number of patients seeking basic and urgent care at Zatti, Fr. de Nardi hopes to expand the clinic’s services and capacity. Already, thanks to a generous benefactor, his staff will soon offer electrocardiograms, dental examinations and x-rays, and some laboratory services.



In Mali...



Until recently, 12- and 13-year old children from the small town of Touba had one option for continuing their studies after primary school: move to a city more than 12 miles away, without the support and care of their families. The new Salesian-run St. John Bosco High School now offers more than 400 boys and girls a better choice.

Such opportunities for learning are crucial in Mali – a country that ranks among the world’s ten poorest. Ongoing drought, compounded by widening income inequality, means that more rural families are living in desperate circumstances that are difficult to escape. Local education offers an essential gateway.

In addition to quality academics, St. John Bosco offers a library, an all-day study hall, homework assistance, and enrichment activities. Teachers, too, can participate in professional development training which, the Salesians intend, will ultimately improve educational quality as a whole.

In the DR of Congo...

How do you alleviate extreme poverty in a rural mountain town?

You empower its women. And in Mont Ngafula – where geographic isolation and lack of economic opportunity means that most residents can’t afford to feed themselves – Salesian missionaries are doing just that: equipping 107 mothers with the advanced agricultural knowledge and skills they need to effect meaningful change.



Organized into a collective called *Femmes Maraîchères* (“Women Market Gardeners”), these visionary entrepreneurs intend to create a sustainable model for nourishing the entire community. After completing their training, participants will cultivate small plots of land at St. John Bosco parish: keeping enough of the harvest for their families, donating a portion to others, and selling the rest. By reinvesting their profits – into their enterprise, their children’s education, and the greater community – these mothers will truly sew the seeds of new hope.

Missionary of the Month: Fr. Lazar Arasu

Father Lazar Arasu’s reason for being in Uganda is clear: to care for thousands of vulnerable people – the majority of whom are women and children – living in the Palabek refugee camp on the South Sudanese border.

“They are hungry, thirsty, do not have a home, and have no clothes or education,” he explains. So, at the special request of Rector Major Ángel Fernández Artime, he left his

post as director at St. Joseph Vocational Training Center in Kamuli to serve as director of the Salesian community there.

The fit has been natural. For nearly 28 years, as a school administrator and pastor, Fr. Lazar has tended to the educational, spiritual and physical needs of some of East Africa’s most impoverished children and families. At Palabek, he and four fellow missionaries meet



the refugees’ basic requirements, while offering vocational training opportunities to youth.

The road is long, but Fr. Lazar is optimistic. “In a short time, we have made great strides!” he reports.

Agents of Positive Change

Dear Friend,

Recently, the United Nations published a report highlighting the urgent need to educate refugee girls. Such education, says UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, is “crucial for their empowerment, and the prosperity and increased resilience of their families and communities.”

We could not agree more. In fact, our Salesian missionaries

around the world have long recognized the transformative power of education in the lives of girls and women – especially those living in adversity. Whether inside the borders of a refugee camp, or outside under a tree in a rural impoverished village, equipping girls and women with new knowledge and skills helps them realize their full potential, and prepares them to become agents of positive change.



With our help, and your support and prayers, these girls and women are learning to create much brighter futures.

May God Bless You!

Fr. Mark Hyde, sdb



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