



SALESIAN MISSIONS

# World Bulletin

Winter 2022

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

## New Mission, New Hope in Angola

Far too often, simply being born in Angola predicts a lifelong cycle of poverty. In Huambo, Salesian missionaries are building the foundational programs and services youth need to overcome their odds.

And there's no better time than now.

Despite surviving decades of violent civil war, the country's population continues to face diminished prospects for the future. As many as 50 percent of children under the age of five are malnourished. Fewer than 20 percent of adolescents ages 12-17 continue their education into high school. Partially as a result, more than 65% of Angolans are illiterate and close to 70% struggle to live on less than \$2 a day.

"This is why our work here is vital," says Fr. Gus Baek, director of Salesian Missions. "Nearly half of Angola's population is under the age of 15. This offers a remarkable opportunity to address the root causes of poverty before they set in."



Salesian missionaries first arrived in Angola during the 1990s, when children fleeing the war began teeming into the capital city of Luanda. Since then, their presence has expanded into nine locations to include comprehensive support for street kids; technical and vocational training opportunities; youth activity centers; nutritional programs; and more. When Huambo's archbishop requested a Salesian presence in his area, our missionaries readily agreed.

Nearly 100,000 people live in 15 different communities around Huambo—a largely rural area where most residents rely on subsistence

farming or daily wage jobs to survive. Erratic weather, soil degradation, and outdated agricultural practices contribute both to ongoing food insecurity and missed opportunities to create sustainable land-based enterprises. In order to address these challenges and harness possibilities, missionaries first intend to establish an agricultural training

program for Huambo's youth.

"This program will help participants learn relevant skills to become self-sufficient adults," says Fr. Gus. "And, because the training is based on local need, graduates can apply what they've learned where they already live. Ultimately, this can improve living standards and future prospects for the community at large."

Already, the Salesians have launched a modest vegetable and chicken farm that provides food and learning opportunities for local residents. No doubt, this is the beginning of a long and fruitful mission.

## This Month's Child



Name: Kirabu  
Home: Uganda

No one knows the circumstances of Kirabu's birth or early days ... only that he was abandoned on the doorstep of the Church of Salesians of Don Bosco Bombo Namaliga as an infant.

Thanks to that providence—and our Salesian missionaries at Don Bosco Children and Life Mission (CALM)—Kirabu is now a thriving 7th-grader with big dreams for the future.

Since 2006, missionaries and staff at Don Bosco CALM have rescued and rehabilitated hundreds of orphaned and abandoned youth like Kirabu.

Currently, 165 boys enjoy a welcoming home where their basic needs are met and their education is a given. Younger boys attend Don Bosco Primary School while older ones attend Salesian-run high schools or technical training centers.

Today, Kirabu's teachers describe him as a "bright humble boy" who loves school and soccer. And he's trained his eye on a big career. "I want to work hard and become a bank manager!" he says.

We can't wait to see what he achieves.

## This Month's Call For Prayer

*While we have reason to be hopeful that vaccines and treatments will alleviate the devastation caused by the global pandemic, we must continue to remember, and pray for, the millions of impoverished children and families whose suffering will continue.*

**Join us every Wednesday at 10am EST for our weekly Chapel Mass - Live Streaming NOW!**

**Go to our website for details: [SalesianMissions.org/mass](https://SalesianMissions.org/mass)**





# Monthly Missions Report...

## In Bangladesh...



Official statistics often hide a harsh reality in Bangladesh.

On one hand, poverty has steadily declined since 2000. On the other, 32.8 million people still struggle to survive on \$2 per day. Families in this situation simply can't afford to feed their children, which far too often leads to hopelessness and abandonment.

At Blessed Zepherino Hostel in Utrail-Telunjia, Salesian missionaries offer a second chance for youth with nowhere else to go. Located in a rural northern community, the hostel offers housing, meals, and education for 60 boys each year, free of charge. Younger kids attend Salesian St. Xavie primary school, while older boys study at the nearby Salesian high school.

The hostel is well known among local day laborers, many of whom hope to send their own sons for the transformational opportunities it provides. With your help, they can!

## In Egypt...

Education is a golden key that can unlock the chains of poverty. Unfortunately, far too many youth in Egypt lack access to its power—a situation further complicated by global migration and the ongoing pandemic.

Here, 26 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, a rate that nearly doubles in some areas of the country. Access to education—and the quality of education available—is uneven, and already-disadvantaged children suffer the most. This includes young people who are among the more than 265,000 refugees and asylum-seekers currently living in the country.

To help address this growing challenge, missionaries recently provided scholarships for 235 students enrolled in one of three Salesian-run primary or vocational schools. Funded by generous Salesian Missions donors, these scholarships ease stressful economic burdens for promising youth so they may continue building the foundations for brighter futures.



## In Mali...

Joy. Peace. Education.

Perhaps for the first time, young people who have never known any of these now can experience all three, thanks to our Salesian missionaries.



Each day, hundreds of youth ages 12-25 stream through the doors of Père Michael Training Center in Bamako. Primarily, the center aims to keep at-risk young men and women away from the streets through constructive alternatives including sports, music, and cultural activities. But it does more than that, too.

It provides a much-needed safe haven for youth affected by ongoing instability and violence—a place to spend quality time, contemplate the future, study, and learn to collaborate. With support from caring adults, participants cultivate solid values to last a lifetime—and have fun in the process.

Currently, youth are planning a musical celebration to recognize the many donations that make their experiences possible.

## Missionary of the Month: Bro. Dieudonné Ramizani Lukundula

Like Don Bosco himself, Dieudonné Lukundula discerned at an early age that he wished to serve the young. Today, he's doing just that in Tunisia—his first assignment since receiving his Missionary Cross last November.

Dieudonné is living outside his comfort zone, as many Salesian missionaries do, but he's had some practice. A Congolese native raised in a Muslim family and community, he converted to Catholicism as a

teen in order to pursue his priestly calling. In 2017, he entered the Salesian novitiate with his parents' blessing.

As he acclimates to his new home and responsibilities, Brother Dieudonné fully embraces his role as Don Bosco's envoy. "I wish to indicate to Tunisian youth the concern to seek human, evangelical and social virtues in this postmodern world," he says. To this end, he hopes to lead by



discreet yet authentic example, all while living "the Gospel like Christ, like Don Bosco, and in the silent benevolence of St. Francis of Assisi."

## From Practical Roots, We Grow Hope

Dear Friends,

Last August, at the local archbishop's request, four Salesian priests established our newest missionary presence in Huambo, Angola—a story you can read more about on page 1.

Why bring this up here? Because I'm proud to say this isn't the first time my fellow Salesians have been invited to lead communities toward brighter futures. Nor will it be the last. Our reputation for

educational excellence, rooted in Salesian practicality and a deep understanding of local needs, means that we serve a growing number of youth each year. And the opportunities a Salesian education provides can truly be transformational—for the young, for their families, and for society at large.

Amid so much uncertainty in our world today, this fact gives me hope. Thank you for helping our



missionaries amplify that hope in the more than 130 countries where they serve.

With sincere gratitude,

*Fr. Gus Baek*

Fr. Gus Baek, S.D.B.



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