



SALESIAN MISSIONS

World Bulletin

Winter 2023

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

Leveling the Playing Field

Caste, class, and gender.

More than anything else, these three things contribute to a lack of opportunity among India's working-age population. Through the Don Bosco Job Placement Network, underserved youth find support to secure livable-wage employment. And our missionaries are proud to say that nearly half of them are female.

"Around the developing world, women lack the same opportunities for employment that men enjoy," said Father Gus Baek. "They hold lower-quality jobs in vulnerable conditions. They are less likely to work in formal employment and have fewer opportunities for business expansion or career progression. And, when women do work, they earn less."

Unsurprisingly, the global pandemic further widened these gender-based employment gaps, which affect women in India to an even greater degree than elsewhere in the world. According to a study



from the International Labor Organization, the current labor force participation rate for women is just under 47 percent globally, compared to 72 percent for men. In India, those numbers are 19.2 percent and 70 percent respectively. Even though India's economy is the fourth-largest in the world, this means that millions of women are trapped in multidimensional poverty—the effects of which ripple far beyond their own lives and into their families and communities, too.

Headquartered in Delhi with regional centers throughout the country, the Job Placement Network provides career guidance and skills training.

Staff intentionally build strong relationships with employers and recruiters. This facilitates access to quality opportunities with adequate wages and decent working conditions. Once they have a job, youth get continued support from the network so they may remain successfully employed and advance in their careers.

According to missionaries who oversee the network, 47 percent of recently placed job-seekers are young women between the ages of 18-30 who previously lacked social support, employment skills, and confidence. The Job Placement Network has empowered them with all three.

"Such success shows the heart of our mission around the world," said Fr. Gus. "In India and wherever gender disparities rob women of opportunities, our missionaries remain committed to helping them level the playing field—through education, training, and workforce development programs that lead to livable wage employment."

This Month's Child



Name: Carlos
Age: Unknown
Home: Madagascar

What happened to young Carlos is difficult to grasp.

One moment, he was helping out at home. The next? He was tied up, beaten, and nearly scalped by his own father—all because he'd accidentally burned the family's dinner.

Carlos easily could have become another sad statistic ... a promising life lost to the frustrations and violence borne of desperate poverty. Instead, Salesian missionaries intervened and took him to Notre Dame de Clairvaux in Ivato.

Since 1984, this Salesian-run center has served thousands of at-risk kids ages 12-22. In addition to basic education and vocational training, youth receive safe shelter, daily meals, and medical and psycho-social care. Recently, Carlos completed a welding apprenticeship and now works in a machine shop with ongoing support from the center.

Although his emotional scars will take time to fully heal, Carlos already has become a role model for his peers: his infectious smile an example of overcoming adversity through perseverance.

This Month's Call For Prayer

This winter, please pray that those who are suffering the most will receive the love and support they need to overcome the challenges they face – and the hope and faith that better days are ahead.

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

Go to our website for details: SalesianMissions.org/mass



Monthly Missions Report...

In Burundi...



Ongoing violence. Abject poverty. Insufficient education. Widespread despair.

These heartbreaking challenges define the boundaries of daily life in Burundi. And that's why our missionaries have deepened their commitment to the children and families who live there.

At Kagwema, a remote mountain village further isolated by lack of infrastructure, services, and schools, a new Salesian campus will serve 60,000 people with a parish church, a youth oratory, and a community center. In addition to spiritual sustenance, missionaries will provide clean water, nutritious food, and a variety of programs to help residents live in dignity. Over time, they will establish basic education and vocational training opportunities so that youth can achieve their potential, improve their circumstances, and positively contribute to society.

In a country that ranks nearly last on the UN's Human Development Index, this new Salesian campus is an oasis of opportunity.

In Chile...

Until recently, Alesio Castillo lived on the streets of Santiago with his wife and two young children. At Casa Pinardi, a Salesian-run family residence, all four now enjoy safe shelter.

Launched this past August, Casa Pinardi joins several similar homes funded by the Don Bosco Foundation throughout the city. Operated in partnership with local government and social welfare entities, these programs provide temporary housing, nutritious meals, medical care, psychosocial support, workforce training, and help finding stable living situations.

Currently, 19 adults and children stay at Casa Pinardi. Like the Castillos, many have migrated from Venezuela in search of better opportunities and brighter futures. Eager to contribute to their newly adopted country, they nonetheless face barriers to integration. Casa Pinardi offers an invaluable lifeline.

"Casa Pinardi has given us hope," agrees Mr. Castillo. "This place feels like a home."



In Dominican Republic...

Thanks to 75 years of tireless dedication, Salesian missionaries in 12 locations throughout the country have helped tens of thousands of impoverished children transform their futures through education.

At a new environmental training center located in Arroyones de Básima near Santo Domingo, the next generation of Salesian students will pay that history forward: by learning to steward our common home toward a better tomorrow for all.



Known as EcoBosco, the center will teach aspiring leaders about effective natural resource management, which will develop and promote sustainable actions for reforestation and agriculture. Youth who enroll will enjoy an immersive natural experience, as the campus includes access to a forest, a lagoon, and farmland.

EcoBosco represents the latest Salesian-envisioned, concrete response to *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis's call to protect and nurture the Earth for future generations.

Missionary of the Month: Boonmee Charusakon

This past September, 28-year-old Boonmee Charusakon embarked on a journey of faith: one that led him more than 5,000 miles from home.

Today, he serves in South Africa as the very first Salesian missionary from Thailand.

It's a distinction he accepts eagerly and with reverence. Inspired by role models beckoned to Thailand by Don Bosco—and guided by his desire to bring poor youth closer to

God—Boonmee answered His call to bear Christian witness abroad.

"Even if one comes from a country where Catholics are very few, like [mine], one can still be called by God to be a missionary," he explains. "I prayed, discerned with my spiritual guide, consulted [the Salesian Provincial], and I responded to that call."

Boonmee is currently preparing for his role by learning a foreign language, studying a foreign culture,



and above all, heeding the advice he offers other newly appointed missionaries around the globe:

Be open! Be generous!



In Loving Memory

Dear Friends,

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the passing of Father Augustine Woon Taek Baek on December 30, 2022.

Affectionately known as Fr. Gus, his loss is a tremendous one. Despite being diagnosed with cancer shortly

after his appointment to New Rochelle at the end of 2019, Fr. Gus fulfilled his executive duties with warmth and enthusiasm.

"I have big shoes to fill," he acknowledged upon succeeding Father Mark Hyde—and then he set about doing it.

Fr. Gus's passion for his Salesian vocation helped him persevere through the challenges of his illness. So, too, did his deep gratitude for our many friends—whose generous support of Salesian Missions reinforced his calling to steward Don Bosco's legacy.

Fr. Gus, a professed Salesian of Don Bosco for 35 years, was 64.

As I step into his role, I do so humbly and with a commitment to carrying Fr. Gus's spirit—and dedication to his work—forward. Please pray for us both.

In peace,
Father Timothy Ploch, SDB
Interim Director, Salesian Missions

If you would like to read Fr. Gus's full obituary, you may do so here: salesianmissions.org/fr-gus-obl.



SALESIAN MISSIONS

Tel. (914) 633-8344

Visit our website: www.salesianmissions.org

CONSIDER A DAF GRANT TO SALESIAN MISSIONS TODAY

Please remember Salesian Missions in your will.

2 LEFEVRE LANE • NEW ROCHELLE NY 10801-5710

facebook.com/FindYourMission

twitter.com/SalMissions

instagram.com/salesian_missions

linkedin.com/company/salesian-missions