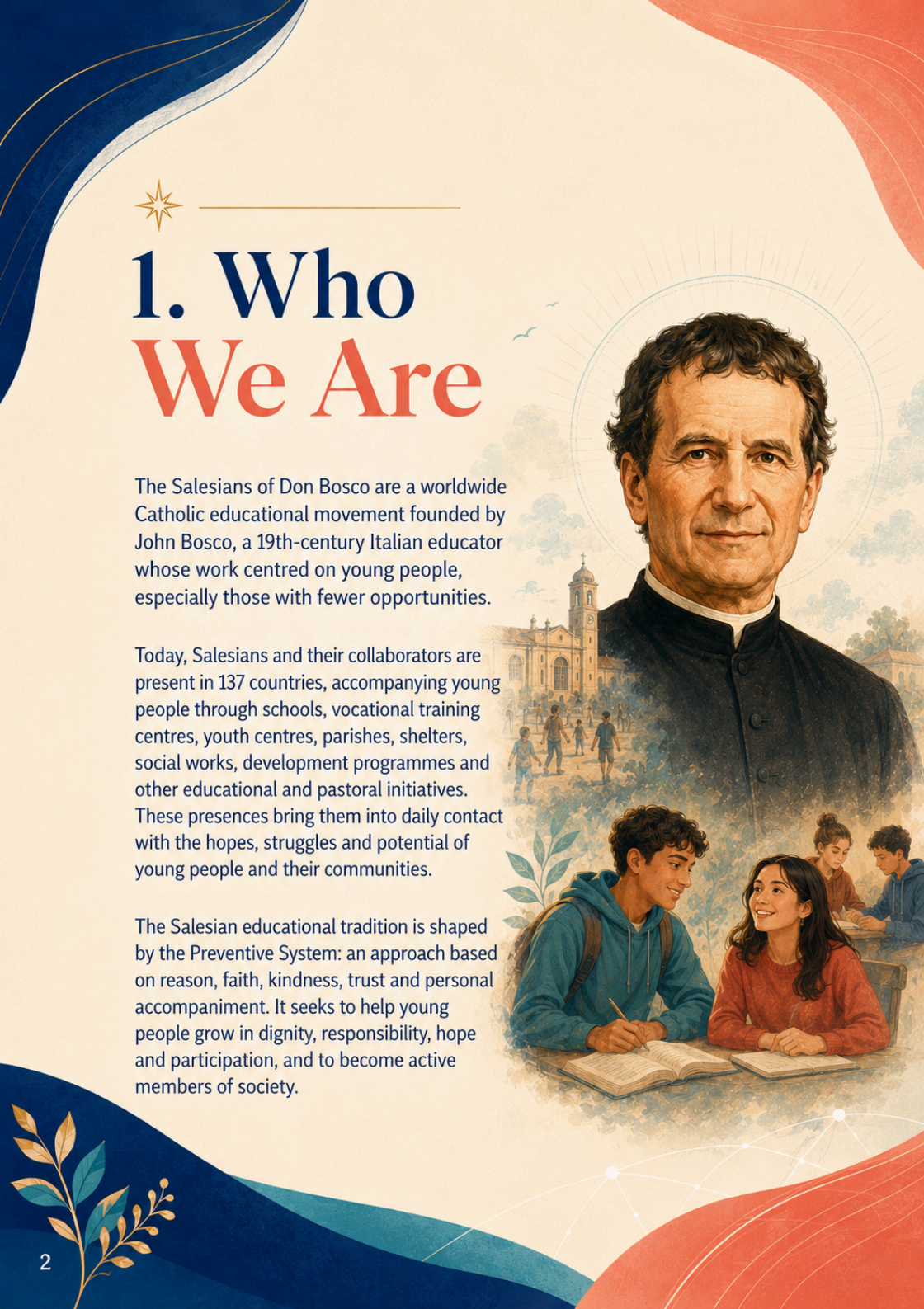


Salesian Advocacy



— • Part I: A concise presentation • —



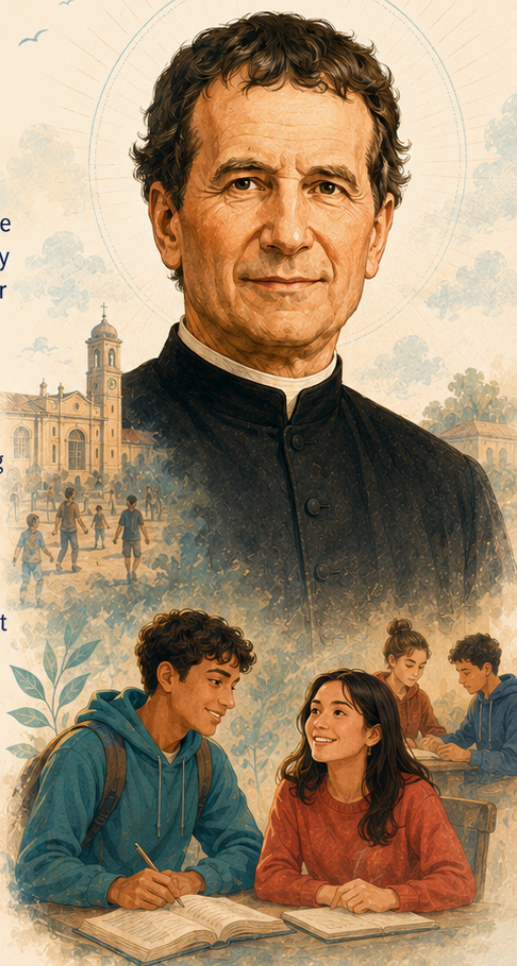


1. Who We Are

The Salesians of Don Bosco are a worldwide Catholic educational movement founded by John Bosco, a 19th-century Italian educator whose work centred on young people, especially those with fewer opportunities.

Today, Salesians and their collaborators are present in 137 countries, accompanying young people through schools, vocational training centres, youth centres, parishes, shelters, social works, development programmes and other educational and pastoral initiatives. These presences bring them into daily contact with the hopes, struggles and potential of young people and their communities.

The Salesian educational tradition is shaped by the Preventive System: an approach based on reason, faith, kindness, trust and personal accompaniment. It seeks to help young people grow in dignity, responsibility, hope and participation, and to become active members of society.



2. What Salesian Advocacy Means



Salesian Advocacy is the Salesian mission expressed in the public sphere. It stands with young people, especially those experiencing poverty, exclusion, displacement, violence, lack of protection or lack of opportunity, so that their dignity, rights, needs and voices are recognised in policies, institutions and public decisions.

It begins from the lived experience of young people in Salesian schools, oratories, shelters, parishes, training centres and social works. These experiences need to be listened to, documented and, where possible, supported by reliable data, testimonies and case studies. In this way, Salesian Advocacy speaks not only from conviction, but also from evidence.



3. Why It Matters

Salesian works respond every day to concrete needs: education, protection, formation, accompaniment, food security, access to clean water, employment pathways, social inclusion and safe spaces for growth. Direct service remains essential. Yet many situations affecting young people are also shaped by policies, laws, public systems, institutional cultures and social attitudes.

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Salesian Advocacy therefore asks not only, **“How can we help this young person today?”**

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but also, **“What needs to change so that fewer young people are placed in this situation tomorrow?”** Its purpose is to contribute to changes in policies, practices, institutions, resources and social attitudes that affect the lives of young people.

4. What Makes the Salesian Approach Distinctive



The Salesian approach to advocacy arises from direct educational and pastoral experience. It is:



field-based — grounded in presence among young people and not in abstract ideology;



youth-centred — born of the conviction that every young person has dignity, potential and a contribution to make;



preventive — concerned with causes, not only consequences;



educational — promoting awareness, growth, responsibility, participation and empowerment;



rights-based — recognising and promoting the rights of children and young people to protection, education and participation;



dialogical — favouring constructive engagement, practical proposals and collaboration;



coordinated — seeking shared priorities and common messages across Salesian presences.

While Don Bosco's vision shapes the Salesian identity, in today's world this can be universally expressed through the language of human dignity, human rights, responsible citizenship, participation, solidarity, integral development, hope and the search for a meaningful and happy life.

5. Priority Areas



Salesian Advocacy focuses on issues closely connected to the lives of young people and to the experience of Salesian works. These areas are interconnected, since poverty, exclusion, unsafe migration, lack of protection, environmental insecurity and limited access to education or work often affect the same young people and communities.

The seven broad priority areas are:



Education for all — quality, inclusive and meaningful education, including technical and vocational training.



Child protection and safeguarding — protection from abuse, exploitation, trafficking, child labour, violence, neglect and online harm.



Youth participation — helping young people speak for themselves and take part in decisions that affect them.



Poverty and social inclusion — contributing to responses to the structural causes that place young people and families in situations of poverty, exclusion or lack of opportunity.



Migration, refugees and displacement — defending the dignity and rights of young migrants, refugees, displaced children, unaccompanied minors and families.



Work and decent livelihoods — promoting vocational training, employment pathways, entrepreneurship and decent work.



Integral ecology — linking care for the environment with justice for young people, communities experiencing poverty and future generations.

6. How We Work



Salesian Advocacy begins by listening and remains close to young people, educators, families and communities. It documents experience, gathers evidence, analyses needs, identifies policy gaps and brings practical proposals into dialogue with decision-makers, institutions, networks and public forums and thus gains credibility. It works through institutional meetings, statements, position papers, policy contributions, campaigns, coalitions, expert groups, youth participation processes, formation resources and communication tools. It also requires coordination of priorities, messages and responsibilities, so that local, regional and international efforts reinforce one another.



Salesian Advocacy is not simply campaigning. It is constructive engagement rooted in mission, education, accompaniment, evidence, human dignity and the lived experience of young people. In this sense, our method is itself part of our message: it is the cradle that carries the content.



7. Where We Are Present



Salesian Advocacy takes place locally, nationally and internationally. It takes root in Salesian communities, schools, youth centres, parishes, shelters and social works, and it also engages education systems, safeguarding structures, public authorities, Church bodies and civil society networks.

Internationally, Salesian Advocacy engages with spaces such as the United Nations system, the European institutions, UNESCO, UNEP (UN Environment Programme), regional platforms, Catholic and faith-based networks, educational networks, civil society coalitions and Salesian organisations.

In all these spaces, the purpose is the same: to connect the lived realities of young people with the decisions that shape their dignity, rights, protection, education, participation and future.

