

Helping youth build a better future



Salesian Missions NEWS

2021
Vol:2

Solomon Islands

Education is at the core of all Don Bosco works and in the Solomon Islands the Salesian Centres continue to make a substantial contribution.

At the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Henderson, they continue to provide training in automotive, electrical, carpentry, machine fitting and life skills for more than 200 young men and women. Whilst at the Don Bosco Rural Training Centre in Tetere, local youth acquire training on current farming techniques to improve the production of food and livestock.

The Salesian Sisters' Hostel in Henderson provides safe accommodation for young women, from economically challenged backgrounds, as they come to Honiara for university and other studies. Responding to a local 'need' the Home Economics Course continues to provide training for women from disadvantaged backgrounds who have had very little formal education. (In the Solomon Islands only 20 per cent of female adults are literate.) Classes are held in basic literacy, numeracy, computing, dress making, cooking and health awareness. The women learn practical skills with textiles and sewing, home and small business management. Sr Claudia Aragon gratefully explained "with the help of Australian donors this year we were able to replace broken sewing machines and provide food for struggling boarders."



Unfortunately, given the current unrest in Honiara, Sr Claudia reports "the situation has become very scary and worrying. We have closed both the school and boarding house and sent the girls back to their villages. We hope that the overseas assistance will soon calm the situation in time for the planned graduation celebrations in December."

Merry Christmas

I would like to thank you for all the messages of encouragement, congratulations and well wishes I received during the past year. I am very grateful for your support and it is only with your help that both Olga and I can continue this wonderful gift of helping those in need.

Our Don Bosco Partners continuously express their gratitude for the support they receive from Australian donors. Due to your generosity opportunities are provided through education, nourishment during disasters and hope given for a brighter future.

As a congregation the focus on sustainability is at the forefront to ensure Don Bosco's vision and work in assisting those in most need. The aim has always been to support education projects, which will ultimately have a greater outreach amongst the marginalised.

Our News Update includes highlights of:

- *the success of Community Sewing programs in Samoa,*
- *the conversion of schools into Covid-19 treatment centres in India, and*
- *the return of students to technical and agricultural education in Timor Leste.*

Finally, as we all come together around the world to celebrate the joys of Christmas, we reflect on how thankful we are to be able to gather with our families, friends and community. From the Salesian Missions office, we wish you all a Blessed and Happy Christmas and hopeful 2022.



Kind regards

Tina Newton
Director
Salesian Missions
Australia





Samoa

With 50% of Samoa's population under the age of 20, and youth unemployment at almost 18%, both Don Bosco Technical Centre (DBTC) in Alafua and the Don Bosco Technical and Vocational College (DBTVC) in Salelologa, are providing education and training which is focused on teaching employable skills so that all students have the ability to develop a career.

DBTC offers a vocational education comprising of a three-year course. All first-year students experience a combination of trades including plumbing, motor mechanics, carpentry, and hospitality. In following years, students specialise in a trade offering an Accredited Certificate in their chosen field. The school also promotes personal, moral and spiritual growth, leadership skills development and teamwork through cultural and sporting activities.

In recent years the school has gained a growing reputation and enrolments have doubled. Unfortunately, not all students are able to complete their education due to lack of family financial support. Student scholarship assistance is always welcomed.

Upon graduation, many students secure employment promptly so they can help their families and develop their own careers. This is a significant achievement in a country with high unemployment.

DBTVC is a High School which offers an integrated curriculum with academic and technical subjects designed to provide students with employment and human relations skills, as well as self-reliance. Through the school's work experience program, students meet potential employers and use skills they have learned. We are thankful for the continued support of Dominic College, Glenorchy for providing scholarships for poor students who otherwise would not have the opportunity of an education.

New Hospitality Facilities

With assistance from NCOBF Pty Ltd and St John Bosco Parish Engadine, DBTC is improving its facilities with purpose-built Hospitality and Cookery classrooms. The practical facilities will ensure students have use of equipment that replicates a commercial kitchen and café. This will provide students with a better quality and more cohesive course.

Upon initial research and consultation with the community, it was highlighted that resorts in Samoa have difficulty acquiring suitable employees with the appropriate hospitality skills. Qualified local staff are preferred rather than hospitality staff from overseas. DBTC is attempting to fill this void. When the facility is not utilised by the school it can be hired out in conjunction with their existing event space (the Fale – a traditional undercover area) to private functions and provide an income stream for the course and school at large to ensure its sustainability. The building will be ready for the commencement of the 2022 school year.

In 2022 we are hoping to renovate existing classrooms to offer the Accredited Hospitality Course at the DBTVC in Salelologa. This course will also offer students Resort and Hotel related job skills within the developing Tourism Industry. Currently we are seeking funds to update the facilities to meet the Accredited Course requirements.

Community Sewing Course at Don Bosco Technical College, Alafua

With a donation in 2020 by the Australian High Commission Office in Samoa, 20 sewing machines were purchases as previously, students were sewing by hand. To fill a need expressed by the wider community, a 10-week evening course was offered consisting of 20 places. This has now progressed to 30 students with the 6th groups graduating in October 2021.

Mane Su'a, past pupil and current School Principal explained at a recent graduation ceremony, "the sewing course started late September 2020 and is an initiative that aims to improve the quality of life of vulnerable women and girls through learning new skills." He went on to congratulate those involve in offering this opportunity and reminding everyone "it is never too late to learn."

The course has given local women and men the skills to have the ability to earn an income for their families. We hope to be able to raise the funds to purchase a selection of industrial sewing machines so that the students can gain the necessary skills and knowledge to work in the textile industry.



Furnish Fiji

Filled with much needed tables, desks, chairs, clothing, books and sporting equipment, the shipping container will be on its way to the newly completed Don Bosco Youth and Education in Nasinu, Suva, Fiji. We would like to thank the many involved who either donated goods or held fundraisers to assist with the freight costs. We would especially like to acknowledge the following school fundraisers: despite the continued lockdowns, St Josephs Ferntree Gully for their 'Tropical day', Salesian College Sunbury Pancake Day, St Mark's College Port Pirie Feast day, Salesian College Chadstone and St Therese's Essendon for their donation of desks.







Timor Leste

Despite an exceptional challenging year for the people of Timor Leste facing major floods in April and the continued Covid-19 lockdowns forcing schools to close, a great amount has been achieved. The Salesians of Don Bosco communities and schools have used this time to conduct much needed repairs and maintenance. Unfortunately, the challenge to find funds for salaries and general running costs remain as the absence of government support continues.

At the Flood Victims Camp, within the **Don Bosco Technical Training Centre, Comoro,** a bore was drilled to provide clean water for those residing in the grounds. To improve the conditions for families living in tents and sleeping on the ground, the school students have constructed beds to provide a healthier living environment. We provide food, supplies and assist with utility bills.

Students have recently returned to the classrooms in Comoro after ongoing lockdowns to complete their studies, graduations have been delayed until early 2022. The Scholarship support from the Australian Ron Archer Trust and the John Herbert Foundation is always welcomed as it enables marginalised students to develop a career in either general construction, automotive or office administration.

With more than 75 per cent of the population deriving their livelihood from farming, **Don Bosco Agricultural College, Fuiloro** plays an important role in improving traditional farming methods. Students are taught ways of increasing the yield from crops through practical experience. The food produced on the farm is consumed by the students in the boarding house, thus helping to reduce the overall running costs. Fr Jose reports, "with the replacement of the roof now complete, our aim is to become more self-sustainable by increasing farm production of corn, animal feed, horticultural production, coconut oil production and improved livestock intake."

Sr Olga Belo from the **St Dominic Savio Orphanage in Venilale** is pleased to report the completion of the replacement of the dormitory roof and ceiling which houses 100 girls between the ages of 6-16 years. It has certainly improved the living conditions of the girls, as they are no longer concerned about a leaky roof especially with the oncoming rainy season.

The Salesian Sisters Medical Clinic assists the poor in the surrounding remote villages of Venilale, otherwise they would not receive any medical care. It is an essential service where patients are treated for common ailments such as malaria, tuberculosis, asthma and pneumonia with a focus on care for mothers and children. As a high proportion of the local population live in poverty and experience food shortages, access to the Clinic is an important alternative to a hospital visit, which is both costly and difficult to access. Sr Carolina said "It has been particularly concerning this year as the focus shifted to the pandemic, with attention to other medical issues being neglected. We ensured that the Clinic remained open so that we could continue conducting health checks and education on Covid-19."

With the generous support of the Montagner-Zembruzuski Family Foundation, the **Don Bosco Technical School, Maumali, Maliana** has completed the piggery and poultry construction. The students and boarders from the surrounding villages have welcomed this new venture in the caring of livestock. Emergency repairs to the water system and replacement of part of the educational workshop roof were undertaken with the support of Australia donors.

In Balide, a tank was installed at the **Salesian Sisters Training Centre** to provide clean drinking water to those from rural villages attending the secretarial and computer courses.



Ethiopia

The armed conflict in the Tigray region continues with bombings during recent weeks. This has increased the number of civilian deaths and further isolated the area where more than 400,000 people are starving. The 17 Salesian missionaries are assisting the locals. It is estimated that the conflict has caused thousands of deaths, internally displaced two million people and driven more than 100,000 refugees to Sudan.

The Salesians continue to accompany the population and distribute the aid they receive. Overall, they are helping around 8,000 families, paying special attention to mothers and malnourished children. The latest news from the Addis Ababa is that their fellow Don Bosco Salesians in the conflict areas are doing well, despite the worsening of the situation in recent weeks. The need for food is increasing every day and any help that arrives will save the lives of many starving and malnourished people. We are grateful for the solidarity received from Salesian communities all over the world, with the hope and prayer that peace may finally prevail.





India - Don Bosco – Heroes Giving Hope

The pandemic has had an unfortunate fallout on the entire country with continual surges in the number of Covid-19 cases. Lockdowns have left many migrant workers, poor labourers and needy families with no income, access to food, supplies and medical care. Villages and slums lack good hospitals and health care facilities such as oxygen, ICU facilities, medicinal kits etc. to treat patients.

Devoted to helping the most vulnerable, Salesians of Don Bosco are assisting where needed from the most remote villages to the slums and surrounding suburbs. Don Bosco Centres and Schools have opened their doors providing shelter, food, relief packages, medical care and financial assistance to those in need. A co-ordinated approach was established amongst Salesians and volunteers launching relief activities such as:

- deliveries of food to the doorstep of Covid-19 patients at home in isolation,
- hold numerous classes on the education of the pandemic and the importance of hygiene precautions of washing hands, sanitizing, and wearing masks,
- establishing counselling services for patients and assist Don Bosco Psychology and Social Work students to initiate a mental health "help desk" to offer support,
- converting schools into Covid Care Centres in areas where hospitals are overwhelmed.
- train volunteers to assist nurses and doctors in the hospitals,
- established Vaccination Centres to administer vaccines to thousands prioritising the elderly and vulnerable.
- supply oxygen, medicines, PPE kits, masks, etc., to those in need,
- provided financial aid assistance for those who required ambulance services, hospitalization, ICU facilities and burials.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, Salesians are assisting those whose houses have been affected by floods, endorse women and children's support centres, deliver online classes where possible and provide "meals on wheels" to thousands in need.

We thank the 'Justice Squad' from St Gerard Majella School, Woree Primary who through their commitment and passion for change, raised funds during the annual 'Fast against Famine' to assist Covid-19 victims in need, Well Done!



BEQUESTS

Continue to make a difference

A bequest or legacy is a gift included in your Will. It is an act of generosity that can continue into future generations. By naming the Australian Salesian Mission Overseas Aid Fund (ASMOAF) as the beneficiary of a fixed cash amount or a percentage of the estate will ensure that the funds are dispersed to the project of your choice. For further information, please contact the Salesian Missions Office 03 9377 6060 or by e-mail salmiss@salesians.org.au or our website for more information.

ONLINE DONATIONS

Can be made through our secure website www.salesianmissionsaustralia.org.au

A tax-deductible receipt will be sent to your email address.

BANK TRANSFER

to Australian Salesian Mission Overseas Aid Fund

Bank: Commonwealth -
BSB 063 003
Acct 0012 7879
Ref: **Your Donor Number** if receipt required.

ASMOAF – SALESIAN MISSIONS

PO Box 264 ASCOT VALE Vic 3032

Enclosed please find my donation $ ..... for the support of .....

OR: Please debit my – *(tick one)* ❑ Visa ❑ Mastercard **Amount $** .....

Card Number ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Cardholder's Signature: ..... Expiry Date: .....

Name: ..... Phone: .....

Address: ..... P/code: .....

Email Address: .....

This Donation is for – *(tick one)*

❑ Alleviation of poverty ❑ Most Needed

❑ Non Development (Not Tax deductible)

Donations to this Fund of $2 and over for development projects are tax deductible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Salesian Society (Vic) Inc. ABN: 43 206 946 086 Endorsed as deductible gift recipient (Subdiv. 30-BA ITAS 1997, item 1)

Please send your donation to:

Salesian Missions AUSTRALIA

PO Box 264 Ascot Vale
Victoria 3032 Australia
Ph: 03 9377 6060
Fax: 03 9377 6066
Email: salmiss@salesians.org.au
Salesian Missions:
www.salesianmissionsaustralia.org.au

Make a Donation

Support Salesian Mission Projects via our website using GiveNow