



Education for Migrant Children

Thailand - 5th November 2013

The Marist Brothers are working alongside other congregations to provide educational opportunities for migrant children in Samut Sakhon, Thailand. Providing Burmese migrant children with educational opportunities is crucial in preventing children from being lured into the fishing industry to work.

The Fishing Industry ranks highest in hiring child labour in the Samut Sakhon region. It is also the number one job that migrant workers choose, as it is relatively safe from police arrest, it is possible to work without requiring documentation, and children are usually accepted within the fishing industry to work. Burmese migrant workers comprise up to 90% of the migrant workforce in the fishing industry in Samut Sakhon. Working conditions can be hazardous. Workers are exposed to dangerous conditions, often do not have over-time benefits, and salary payments are routinely delayed. In this context, child workers are the most exploited.

Against this backdrop, it is important to prevent the exploitation of children within the fishing industry. There are 3 centres working in collaboration in providing support to different groups; Myanmar, Karen and Mon. Within these 3 centres approximately 370 children come to learn every day. The Marist Brothers are working in the Marist Centre for Migrants with 97 children. Activities. The following activities are provided in the centres:

1. Education for migrant children aged between 4-15 years



old. (Language classes of Thai, Burmese and English; mathematics, arts, sports and life skills, morals and ethics. Providing free lunch and snacks for children. Providing related activities for self-care such as bathing, teeth brushing, haircuts and other health related self-care. Providing home visits to children).

2. Teaching Thai language to migrant workers on Sundays.

3. Promotion of health care.

4. Local cultural and traditional activities for migrant workers and children.

On the 1st of October FMSI is welcoming **Br. Evaristus Kasambwe**, who will work as an Advocacy Officer for the Rights of the Child. Br. Evaristus comes from Malawi and is a member of the Marist Brothers Congregation belonging to the Province of Southern Africa.

Br. Evaristus has worked in youth education both in the lay and religious environment. He worked in Malawi as a teacher and school principal for several years. He was elected Provincial Councillor of the Province of Southern Africa for two consecutive terms. In the course of his mandate as Provincial Councillor, in 2006 Br. Evaristus went to work in Haiti at the Marist Postulancy for 9 months. He also participated in the Mission Ad Gentes program, a Marist Brothers initiative, and carried out his apostolate in Canada, New Brunswick.

FMSI will greatly benefit from Br. Evaristus' competences and experience in the field of education, not to mention his international experience and knowledge of the African social context.

A new FMSI office in Latin America

Italy - 10th October 2013

The idea emerged during the training course for “links” with FMSI held in Rome in May 2012. A first informal request came from Álvaro Sepulveda, a Chilean Marist brother and local contact with FMSI, who then involved Analía Ruggeri, Argentinean, also an FMSI link person. Discussions and clarifications necessarily followed, especially after the visit to their countries of our Geneva agents Manel Mendoza and Vicente Falchetto, for the idea to mature... In May 2013 arrived the official request on the part of the superiors responsible for the three administrative units of the Marist Institute composing the “region” called Cono Sur: the Province of Santa María de Los Andes (Chile, Peru and Bolivia), the Province of Cruz del Sur (Argentina and Uruguay) and the District of Paraguay. The new regional office takes the name of “FMSI Cono Sur”.

The objectives of the new office are tied principally to the implementation of strategies for the promotion of the rights of children and adolescents in the countries of “Cono Sur”, so as to be able to enter into in dialogue with local government bodies and United Nations delega-

tions, FMSI having “special consultative status ECOSOC”, that is to say, the official recognition of the UNO. This also means access in full title to organizations already active in the countries and in all of Latin America, such as the Foro Iberoamericano, Nino Sur (Mercosur), Redlamyc, BICE, Save the Children, Unicef and other bodies, and together to affect in a more efficient manner public policies at national and regional levels.

All this is perfectly in line with the Marist mission which committed the Institute, after the General Chapter of 2009, to the defence and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents at all levels and not only to operate – as it has done for 200 years – in the field of education and solidarity, through formal schooling and other centres of assistance and social promotion for children.

To the proposal followed the positive response of FMSI, as responding perfectly to what in the statutes of the Foundation goes under the name of “Regional or national offices”. So an official document of accord was prepared and in September this document was signed at the Hermitage



(Lyon, France), during the General Conference of the Marist Institute, taking advantage of the simultaneous presence of the superiors of the three administrative units of Cono Sur, the President of FMSI and the directors of the Rome and Geneva offices.

We are not speaking in reality of a new institution, but rather of the formalization of something already existing and operational. In each administrative unit of Cono Sur, in fact, a solidarity office exists which is already active not only in assistance of local projects but also in the promotion of the rights of the child: it is sufficient to recall the part played by the FMSI link Álvaro Sepulveda in the creation of the National Observatory of Chile for the Rights of the Child which we have already referred to on this site.

Because of this continuity, the ordinary operation of FMSI Cono Sur does not require any particular investment in persons or office space, although it includes a budget placed at the disposal of applicants and with an initial contribution from FMSI. It remains to fix the name of the co-ordinator of the new office, something that will be done in October 2013. The person chosen will have a period of specific training in Geneva and Rome to gain greater familiarity with the internal procedures of the Foundation.



Pakistan: helping the victims of the attack in Peshawar

Pakistan - 12th October 2013

FMSI sent last week the first installment to support the victims of the suicide attack which occurred on the 22nd of September at All Saints Church in Peshawar, Pakistan. The money was sent to the Marist Brothers of St. John Vianney's Boys High School, who live close to the place where the attack happened and immediately got started on offering the community emergency relief.

According to the Brothers, the initial survey revealed that there are more than 300 families which are suffering directly from the consequences of the attack, with dead and injured;

there is immediate need of food supplies for the community, medical assistance, artificial limbs. Further-

more, in the coming days there will be need for the educational assistance of the children orphaned by the tragedy in Peshawar.



The Brothers in Peshawar are working in consultation with Fr Johny, the parish priest, who has taken a strong leadership in the aftermath of the incident, and will seek the collaboration of local agencies to make sure that the aid is channeled in the most effective way.

Read the testimony of the Marist Brothers from Peshawar.

For information and to send contributions, please contact: fmsi@fmsi-onlus.org

Last notification for FMSI micro-projects

Italy - 8th October 2013

It will be in the week of 21 October 2013 that the last session of evaluation of requests for the financing of micro-projects will be held. Contrary to usual practice and to what was previously announced, it will not be the session of December, while the September one has been postponed for several weeks. Those who intend to present to FMSI requests for financing have until 14 October 2013; any request arriving after this limit will be taken into consideration in 2014.

The micro-project programme serves for the setting up of minor projects in

favour of disadvantaged children and youth, in the areas of human rights, education, health and social development, mainly in developing countries where the Marists are present. The programme, born to support the commitment of the Marist missions in the world, is open to all who share the objectives of the Foundation, although linked to the Marist world by virtue of a relationship of collaboration and trust. The projects have the aim of promoting children's rights and creating the material conditions for their real enjoyment.

From the beginning up to today, in

the field of the micro-project programme, FMSI has approved 14 interventions in 12 countries, with a total allocation of around 62,000 Euros.



“Convention on the Rights of the Child and Follow-up Strategies on Human Rights” is the theme of the FMSI workshop for the Americas

Brazil - 17th October 2013

The Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI) organized at the Marist Centre Marcellin Champagnat in Curitiba, Brazil, a Workshop on the follow-up of the Rights of the Child and the Adolescent, animated by Br Manel Mendoza. The meeting took place from 3 to 5 October, and its main reference texts were the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UNO. The latter is considered an important mechanism for co-operation based on an interactive dialogue between each State examined, the member States and the observers of the Human Rights Council, with regard to each country's respect for human rights. Ten Marist Provinces and two Districts took part in the session, as well as representatives of FMSI in Rome and Geneva.

During the workshop there was a presentation of the methodology for drawing up, presenting and following up the Universal Periodic Review, on the topics relating to the rights of children and adolescents. The participants had the possibility of discussing the methodology for implementing what concerns this follow-up mechanism and of trying out the process of drafting recommendations based on the guidelines of the Human Rights Committee of the UNO.

A strong point of the meeting was the sharing between the Marist Provinces of the Americas about the actions of defence and follow-up of the rights of children and adolescents. Among the subjects presented :

The Observatory of childhood and adolescence – Chile;

The follow-up system of the Rights of the Child and the Adolescent based on the CADÊ (2009 – 2013) data – Brazil ;

The Marist Centres of Defence of Children – since 2009 (Marist Solidarity Network – PMBCS) – Brazil ;

The programme 10 x childhood – Mexico ;

The Working Group on the Rights of Children of UMBRASIL – Brasil.

For its part, FMSI explained its expectations of the contact person of the Provinces, whose mission is to set up a link with it. The contact person can be a powerful instrument through which FMSI, the Province or the District can work in concert in order to promote the rights of children and young people in our Institute, at all levels, and defend those rights before governments, non-government organisations and other public institutions.

The participants also had the possibility of putting into practice certain actions such as the performance of simulations of sessions of the Human Rights Committee of the UNO for the Universal Periodic Review. In harmony with the directives of the XXI General Chapter of the Institute, the meeting was an important opportunity for reinforcing the Marist mission directed especially to the defence of the rights of the most vulnerable people, that is, “to become experts in the defence of the rights of children and youth, in a courageous and prophetic manner before society. We feel compelled to go to the confrontation of social, economic, cultural and religious policies which oppress children and youth.” (XXI General Chapter)

