

OZANAM NETWORK



Issue N° 1-2017

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Importance of Communications in the Context of the International General Council



I have the pleasure to introduce the March edition of the "Ozanam Network" bulletin, produced by the Communications Team of the General Council, headed by our brother Karl Hila.

In this edition, readers will find important information about the ongoing work of the members of the Council, in all its structures and commissions across the world. We hope you will enjoy the content of our bulletin.

It is imperious to highlight the role of the Communications Team inside the General Council. All our efforts are being made in this direction, as we know that communicating well is a great challenge for organizations, especially those composed of volunteers, like Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. The improvement of our international communication is one of the main mandate of this term.

I also take advantage of the occasion to make a special request to all members of the Superior and National Councils. The process of communications inside your structures, from Paris down to the Conferences (where our Vincentian members are hosted), is rich yet complex. For that reason, we need your support to disseminate, in all countries, the actions and works of the General Council.

As such, I dearly encourage you to share all the documents related to the communications field (such as this "Ozanam Network Bulletin", the letters of the General President, the numerous news from the ICG's website, videos, press releases, etc.) at the national level.

Some Councils have already been doing this spontaneously, which very much pleases us and shows the level of proximity and unity inside the SSVVP, especially with the headquarters of the Society, in Paris. Good communication promotes the unity and well being of our charity.

With this, we can achieve a really pro-active communication. We need to forge an effective partnership and collaboration with our Superior or National Councils so that our Conferences or grassroots can be well informed of the projects, programs and initiatives of the General Council. Only in this way we will, in effect, be "serving in hope".

In St. Vincent de Paul and Bl. Frederic Ozanam,
Renato Lima de Oliveira,
16th General President

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The General President started his official visits to the National and Superior Councils



Renato Lima de Oliveira (right) visiting Kidz Table Project - Baltimore

In January 2017, Renato Lima de Oliveira, 16th President General, began a series of official visits.

His first destination has been the United States. Between 2017 January 2nd to 9th, his agenda took him through the following cities: New York, Trenton, Baltimore, Miami and Philadelphia.

In all activities, the President was accompanied by Ed Keane (International Vice-president for Institutional Relations) and David Barringer (Executive Director of the United States National Council).

New York : lecture for 70 Vincentians of the Conferences of the region, home visit to a lady in economic difficulties, visit to Monsignor Robert Richie (St. Patrick's Cathedral - Archdiocese of New York); foundation of the first Conference at St. Patrick's Cathedral; dinner with the members of the Vincentian Office at the United Nations.

Trenton: various visits, among which: the special work "Selective Seconds", held by the Santa Rosa Conference, in Belmar; the "Furniture Warehouse"

that will be used by Vincentians as a bazaar for people in need.

Baltimore: visit to the special work "St Vincent de Paul Head Start" (nursery); visit to the special work "Beans & Bread" (community popular restaurant); visit to the special work "Kidz Table" (healthy eating for children); visit to the special work "Sarah's Hope" (temporary housing

Renato Lima de Oliveira and Pope Francis



for the homeless); dinner with the board of the Central Council.

Miami and Philadelphia: contact with local Vincentians and participation to the annual meeting of the Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family (VFEC).

"It was really impressive to know the actions being carried out by the Vincentians in US. I felt as if I were at home, such was the warm welcome I received from my dear brothers. In all the cities, I was very well received, not only by the leaders but also by the Vincentians of the Conferences. I have been closely acquainted with the special works and the Conferences. I was very pleased with what I saw and witnessed", commented President Renato Lima.

During March 2017, Renato Lima de Oliveira makes an official visit to 7 National or Superior Councils: Italy, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia and Chile.

In Italy, after being welcomed by National President Antonio Gianfico,

Renato attended the weekly public audience of Pope Francis at the Vatican. As in June 2016, he had the opportunity to greet the Holy Father and share few words with him. He also gifted him with a trophy representing the official SSVP logo, as well as reports on the Society's activities around the world. Other highlights of the visit include a meeting with Father Giuseppe Guerra, who kept him informed of the latest developments concerning the canonization process of Blessed Frederic Ozanam and an interview with Carriquiri Guzman, Secretary of the Council of the European Union.

Leaving Italy, brother Renato flew to India, where Joseph Pandian (Vice-President General) and Johnson

deeply touched and marked by the warm welcome and kindness he received.

Johnson Varghese (National President) about Renato's visit: *"What an experience! The visit of the President General has really boosted the vincentian spirit in our members. Wherever he went a huge crowd welcomed him and he found time to talk to as many vincentians as possible. He moved very freely with all our members. We could show him various activities taken up by the SSVP in India. So we consider the visit a great success and a real boost to all our members."* he said.

In Colombo (Sri Lanka), the President National Visaka Nilmini Weliwita

of building new houses for poor families, goats breeding and a crafts project. The General President ended his trip in Sri Lanka with a meeting with 200 members of the Society in Colombo before flying to Malaysia, the fourth step of his official journey through seven countries.

As soon as he arrived in Kuala Lumpur, Renato Lima de Oliveira was expected for a dinner with many guests, including: Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Bishop of Penang, National President of SSVP-Malaysia and his wife, former National Presidents, National Council officials and members of SSVP Councils across the country. His arrival coincided with a meeting of the International Twinning Commission which he also attended to.

The program also led him to visit the Society's works: The "Second Chance" Community Center, which provides help, friendly support, spiritual guidance and vocational training to former prisoners, in order to facilitate their reintegration. Renato Lima de Oliveira also visited a dialysis center operated by the **Sacred Heart** Conference, which currently serves 92 patients among the poor inhabitants of the neighborhood. During the visit of the *Rumah Ozanam* (Ozanam House), a SSVP shelter for women and children infected with HIV / AIDS, a highlight moment in emotion was awaiting Brother Renato: in his honor, the children sang "Jesus loves me" in before all the visitors, all were moved to tears. In return, the President General found his most beautiful voice to sing: *"Pelos Estradas da Vida"*.

Renato Lima de Oliveira is currently continuing his visits to New Zealand, then to Australia, to end in Chile which is the last stop of his official trip before his return to Brazil.

The Council General thanks the Superior Councils that are collaborating generously in the organization of these visits. Let us pray for the success of these visits, according to God's will and in favor of the people in need assisted by SSVP worldwide.



Renato Lima de Oliveira - Saint Vincent de Paul Special school - Goa - India

Varghese (National President) awaited him, along with a 5-day program in 3 parts: Goa, Chennai And Cochin. At each stage, the General President met with the archbishops, as well as local SSVP officials, visiting SSVP works and projects: a Saint-Vincent-de-Paul school, Housing for the elderly, an Ozanam center.

Despite the busy schedule of this marathon trip, he did not miss an opportunity to talk with the Vincentians, as in Kothamangalam (Kerala) where 800 members of the Central Council had gathered for his visit. The President General was

welcomed Renato. The National Council took advantage of the presence of the President General to launch its website, inaugurated on 11 March. Accompanied by Joseph Pandian (Vice-President General), our brother Renato attended a program of visits including interviews with members of the Hierarchy. He met Sem Emmanuel Fernando, Archbishop of Colombo, and local Catholic Church.

Between the meetings with the Vincentians and the scheduled activities, the President General also had the opportunity to visit special works of the SSVP, such as : a project

Commissions and Departments in Action



TWINNINGS

The International Twinning Commission has reformed with two new members to make up the Commission. The members of the Commission are as follows:

Tony Muir:

Int Twinning Commission Coordinator

Kathryn Weswick:

Coordinator for the Americas.

Josephine Obomighie:

Coordinator for Africa.

Terry Brown :

Coordinator for Europe.

Dunstan Dominic:

Coordinator for Asia Oceania.

The first mission of the new team has been to prepare for a meeting which took place in Kula Lumpur (Malaysia) on the 13th and 14th of March 2017 and coincided with the President Generals visit. The meeting was important for the new members to inform them of their roles and responsibilities and to discuss many aspects of Twinning. In this aim, the National Twinning Coordinators are invited to make contact with the International Coordinator responsible for their country to foster and build a working relationship.

TRAINING

Since its launch, the global training is available in 4 official languages of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (French, English, Spanish, Portuguese). Thanks to the active collaboration of Vincentians around the world, a translation work has been undertaken to make it available in additional languages, such as Arabic and Italian (downloadable on the CGI website). The modules are being translated into 2 other languages : Hungarian (by Father Michal Lipinski, CM), German (by the National President of Switzerland, Markus Jungo) and Indonesian (by the National President, Basukisworo Nugroho).

The aim of this formation is to give all members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul an identical, consistent message, without subjective interpretation, but imbued with the spirit of the Society and describing the way our association works internally. It is therefore essential to remove language barriers so that this training is accessible to a large number of members throughout the world.

In addition, the content will soon be enriched with new teachings, including a module on the fundamentals of the Catholic faith and 2 other training modules for personal and spiritual development of the Vincentians.

AGGREGATION

The ICG (International General Council), as warrant of the International Rule and the Statutes, receives requests for the aggregation of Conferences and the institution of Councils at the headquarters in Paris (France). Currently, 259 requests for aggregations and 11 applications for institutions are being processed. As to remind, the diplomas are only published when the aggregations have been validated by the Permanent Section, which meets on each June.

Furthermore, on the initiative of President General Renato Lima de Oliveira, the ICG will launch a program to evaluate the actual number of active Conferences in each country.

The results will allow for accurate statistics on the Society's presence in the world and to target areas where the development of the organization should be promoted and supported. During this year, the program will be tested in countries with few Conferences, then extended to all countries members of the Confederation.

Commissions and Departments in Action

CIAD: new Members and Guidelines

One of the urgent initiatives identified in the President General's vision and strategy for the CGI is the expansion of the scope of work of CIAD. Aside from the "Aid" and "Development", two additional areas were added to its responsibilities:

1) The reorganization of smaller National Councils especially in countries where SSVF faces bigger challenges such as lack of resources, proper organization, and formation. This will help strengthen SSVF's position and efficiency of work.

2) The expansion of SSVF especially in the countries where it is not yet present: this is part of President General Renato Lima's 'electoral platform', as more than 60 countries of the world still do not have SSVF Conferences.

Since the appointment of the new members of the Commission, the CIAD already held 2 meetings to review the projects and requests for assistance received at the CGI.

Emergencies :

Several programs/projects were initiated in response to the various emergencies and calamities all over the world like the CIAD financed projects for Tanzania (earthquake), Sudan (flooding), Haiti (hurricane Matthew) and Peru (heavy rains).

Lebanon: An anonymous Foundation from the USA has donated to CIAD an amount of \$ 330,000, of which \$ 230,000 are restricted for the use in Lebanon, mainly for the refugees. Last year, CIAD has granted a 'top-up' of \$ 20,000 to reach the \$ 250,000 budget for one year of assistance (food and hygiene kits, education, meals for elderly). The first installment of \$90,000 has been sent out at the end of December to start the services.

Projects:

Burundi:

A report has been received on the second and last phase of a € 33,000 reconstruction project after the floods. The original goal of this project was to build 10 houses and to improve the flow of potable water to the village. Due to the difficulties caused by inflation, it was only possible to build 7 houses, nevertheless, the rest of the project was conducted as planned. This difficulty was transparently raised in the report of phase one. The global report, a part from this, is satisfactory and well documented, with invoices, lists of beneficiaries, pictures, and other essential documentations.

Nepal

Caritas Nepal has provided with a very brief report on the first € 382,000 installment for the reconstruction after the earthquake. The report has no financial details yet, but it shows that a first tranche has been given to 296 households to rebuild their houses, out of which, 60 have been completed and 35 are 'inspected for second instalment'.

Tanzania

A report has been received on the use of the € 3,000 emergency earthquake fund: 70 vulnerable people have been assisted with food, pots, soap, especially for women, children, elderly and disabled people.

Uganda

A € 12,150 project of food relief and seeds has been approved at the last meeting. We have received the report, with pictures and receipts showing that the distribution was done on the second week of January 2017, allowing to serve 800 to 1,000 people instead of just the 600 targeted.

New CIAD's members :

Bertrand Ousset (France),

Former National President of France, Chairman.

Renato Lima de Oliveira (Brazil),

16th President General.

Thomas Joseph Pandian (India),

Vice President General, former ITVP for Asia.

Larry Tuomey (Ireland),

Treasurer General, former VinPaz Member.

Pius Ehiagwina (Nigeria),

Former ITVP for Africa, will be in charge of African projects

John Lee (Hong-Kong),

former Vice President General for Structure, and former ITVP Asia – in charge of projects in Asia.

Ulrike Mattfeldt (Germany),

Coordinator for Europe II and correspondent for Eastern Europe countries in former CIAD – she will be in charge of projects in Europe.

Rose McGowan (Ireland);

National twinning officer for SSVF Ireland, and correspondent with English Speaking African country in former CIAD – responsible for Africa, together and in partnership with brother Pius.

Eduardo Tsukamoto (Brazil)

Responsible for Latin America and Portuguese speaking countries.

Terry Wilson (USA),

Former Strategic Planning officer for CGI – responsible for North America and Caribbean.

Bruno Fabre (France),

CGI staff member and CIAD Coordinator.

International General Council in action

Institutional Collaboration and Partnership

SSVP attends a meeting at the United Nations

From 1st to 10th February 2017, representatives of Member States and non-governmental organizations from around the world accredited by ECOSOC met in New York to discuss the following theme: "Strategies for the eradication of Poverty to achieve sustainable development for all". Represented by Pattie Hughes, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, engaged worldwide in this fight against all forms of misery, took part in the debates last February alongside, among others, members of the Vincentian Family.

Other representatives of international organizations took the floor. Pattie Hughes tells us a story: *"In India, a former prostitute from a very poor environment managed to reverse the course of her existence: through a microfinance system, she started the creation of a farm breeding of chickens. Today, her company is self-sufficient and generates profits. This woman can thus pay an education to her daughter who can in turn work, and emancipate herself as a free woman. Beyond the material aspect, it was also in her head that a real change took place: she feels in peace, and freed from the networks of prostitution on which she was dependent. Her life has changed."*

Secretary General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, who officially took over from Ban-Ki-Moon last January. On behalf of SSVP, he recalled that in 200 years of existence the organization had acquired a strong knowledge of public policies for human development and wanted to continue to take part and support the collective effort aimed at building a true "culture of peace" everywhere in the world.

A first contact with Order of Malta

Last February, Renato Lima de Oliveira gave a very warm welcome to the President of the Order of Malta, France, Mr Yann BAGGIO, and Mr François GAUTIER, Director General of this Organisation, at the headquarters of the International General Council in Paris.

At this meeting, each one explained the objectives of the association he leads. Among other topics, the possibility of future partnerships between these two organisations was discussed. The meeting was instigated by the President General of SSVP who is interested in involving and working with other Catholic Organisations.

The Vocation of the Order of Malta is to provide help, in France and abroad, to people affected by sickness, disability, dependency, conflict, natural disaster or any other distress. The Order of Malta in France protects life from conception to its natural end. It also contributes to civil security operations, solidarity work and help for migrants.

During the discussions, the Permanent Mission of the Council of Ireland to the United Nations, presented to the members of the Assembly a document dealing with the Strategy for the Eradication of Poverty, entitled "Challenge of People's Commitment, Advocacy and Systemic Change".

SSVP, active within ECOSOC since 2012, intends to develop and maintain close relations with institutional bodies such as the United Nations and this topic is part of the program of the President-General, Renato Lima de Oliveira. Recently, he wrote a letter to the new



International General Council in action

SSVP Launches Literary Contest Entitled “The First Conference”



The International General Council (IGC) of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP) wishes to stimulate and develop knowledge and research on the figures who founded the first SSVP Conference and who were precursors of what is now an Institution present

in 151 countries and with more than 800,000 members.

Through the Literary Contest “The First Conference” we want to deepen in the service of each of the seven founders, in order to influence their personal contribution to the emergence of the first Conference and subsequent expansion of the SSVP.

The Conference as a Vincentian group of action and prayer has been replicating globally throughout the world since 1833, the year in which the first group met for the first time in Paris to ignite the flame of charity in the hearts of the lay people.

The Literary Contest is open to all active members of the Society. It

should be written by a single author, not exceeding 20 pages, and in any of these languages: French, English, Spanish, Portuguese or Italian

The deadline for the submission of documents will be on 06 June 2017. The prizes are: 1st prize – 1000 Euros, 2nd prize – 750 Euros, and 3rd prize – 500 Euros. The CGI will also reward the same prize to the Conference which the author belongs.

Please find the Terms & Conditions and the Annexes of this Literary Contest on the CGI’s website en.ssvpglobal.org – News section.

Introducing the New International Spiritual Advisor of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The International General Council (IGC) of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) is very happy to introduce to everyone our new International Spiritual Advisor, Rev. Fr. Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

Rev. Fr. Robert P. Maloney, C.M. was the 23rd Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission (CM), serving on this capacity from 1992 to 2004. He was born on May 6, 1939 in Brooklyn, New York, USA and was ordained priest at Mary Immaculate Seminary in Pennsylvania on May 28, 1966.

He is a Doctor in Moral Theology, Professor, a former Director, Rector and Superior of various Seminaries, and Author of various books and articles mostly on Vincentian Spirituality. He is currently a member of the Board of

Trustees of the De Paul University and St. John’s University, and Coordinator of the joint projects of the Daughters of Charity and the Community of Sant’Egidio in Project DREAMS.

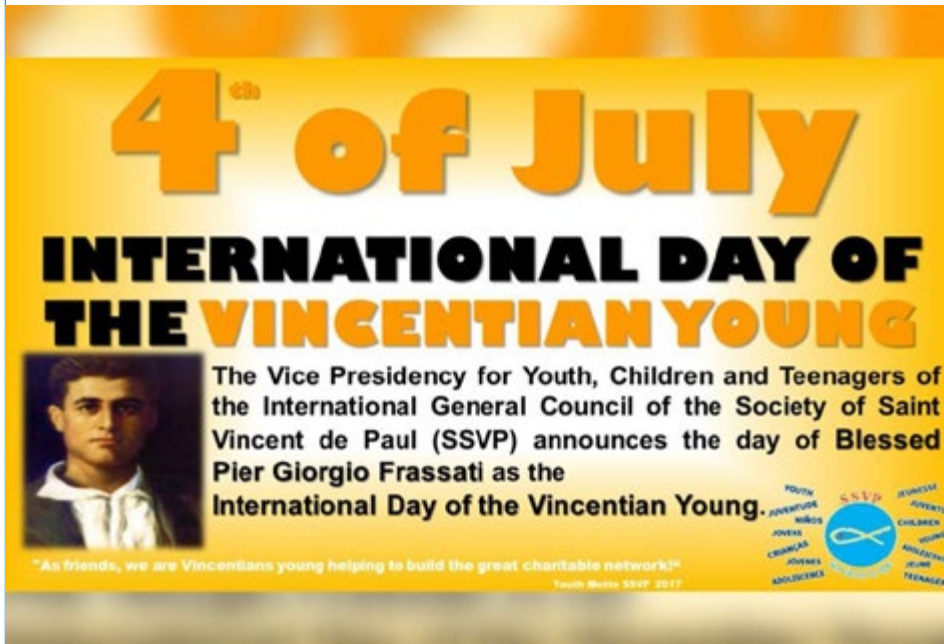
Fr. Maloney introduced many development projects in the Vincentian Family while serving as Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission. After ending his term as Superior General, he continued helping in various Vincentian Family projects.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is extremely happy to welcome Father Robert in his new role and is very excited about the future. With this great news, let us altogether continue the good works which the Lord is bringing about in the Society and the mission to the poorest of the poor.



Rev. Fr. Robert P. Maloney, C.M

Youth Space



The Vice President for the Youth, Children and Teenagers, Brother Willian Alves, has announced to the SSVP that the International Council General has chosen July 4 as the **International Day of Young Vincentians**.

July 4 is the memorial day of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, a Vincentian who was born in Turin in 1901 and died when he was 24. He started dedicating to the poor when he was very young, actively participating in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Pope John Paul II considered Frassati as "a friend of the poor because he saw Christ in them". He was beatified on May 20, 1990.

Having an international day to celebrate and remember the young Vincentians means maintaining the primitive spirit of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded by and for young people, and it encourages the recruitment and continuity of the mission of the young Vincentians in their service and dedication to the poor.

Young people enjoy celebrations, and July 4 is a good day to gather and celebrate the presence of the youth in the SSVP. This is also a day on which all Superior Councils and other councils

can promote actions to disseminate the SSVP in schools, universities, parishes, communities, as well as recruitment and educational meetings for the Vincentian youth, among other activities, and especially feasts, festivals, and a lot of celebration.

The joy and courage of the young Vincentians promote help to the poor by the SSVP more effectively, just as it was with Ozanam and his friends, Frassati, and the hundreds of young people present in our Society.

May all young Vincentians celebrate July 4 very much and renew their charisma on this day as active members of the SSVP who seek holiness through charity. The International General Council will send some suggestions for this July 4 celebration to the Superior Councils. News are coming soon!

Facebook: [SSVPYouthInternational](#)
Instagram : [ssvpyouth CGI](#)

Argentine SSVP Youth Meeting

From 05 to 08 of January 2017, at the "La Consolata and Juan Cinotto" Institute of SSVP, was held the IX SSVP Argentine National Youth Meeting (ENAJUVI). Under the motto "Let's transform the world in the manner of Ozanam!", 50 young vinctians gathered in the town of Sampacho, province of Cordoba, to celebrate together another ENAJUVI.

The meeting had 10 lectures, distributed over three days, each one of them connected to a key word (Protagonism, Identity, SSVP and union).

The main topics presented at the event were:

- "*Youth leadership like Vincent*" and "*Communication techniques*";
- "*Vincentian vocation*", presented by Father Daniel Alvarez (CM) and Sister Solange (FC);
- "*The importance of the Systemic Change in our vinctian identity*", presented by Father Gustavo González (CM);
- "*Reality of the vinctian youth*", theme presented by the sister Ada Ferreira (CGI - Brazil);
- "*The importance of the prayer in the Conferences*", presented by Adriana Molina, SSVP National Vice-President;
- "*My experience as a young vinctian*", testimony presented by brother Marcelo Ferrando.

News from countries

Syria: the SSVV at the heart of a war without end

In spite of the conflict, the SSVV continues its work with vulnerable groups.

Six years after the uprising against the regime of Bachar El Assad in 2011 was answered with force, thus plunging the country into complete chaos, the ICRC states today that there are 6.3 million people displaced within the country, 5 million people live in besieged areas and 4.8 million refugees living abroad. While a new meeting of opening for negotiations and peace for countries involved in the conflict: Iran, Turkey, Russia took place in Astana (Kazakhstan) on 23 January 2017, the number of those affected continues to rise.

are working at a local level, attempting to respond to the needs of the population. Among them, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, which has been present in Syria since 1863. SSVV continues its activities in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo and Hassake. For this reason, Michel (President of the SSVV in Damascus), Joseph (President of the SSVV in Aleppo) and Yolanda (President of the SSVV in Hassake) continue, not without difficulties, to put into place regular emergency aid in order to fight against all forms of material and human suffering: food,

and have reconnected with isolated people.

"In spite of the destruction and precariousness, our Society is mobilising" Joseph Ahmar Dakno (Aleppo)

In 2015, according to a UN report, more than 83% of the Syrian population was living below the poverty line, as Michel testified: "the longer the war continued, the more the destruction spread, eliminating factories and employment, accentuating the devaluation of the currency. The longer the war continued, the more the number of people displaced increased and the more the prices grew, exhausting middle-class incomes and making the poor each time more vulnerable, until one is not able to obtain food or able to hold on to human dignity...."

"The survival instinct is the strongest instinct, even if resistance is complicated" Joseph Ahmar Dakno (Aleppo)

In Aleppo, the number of people is decreasing. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has no more than 12 conferences and 70 members. There were 125 members before the war broke out. As Joseph Ahmar Dakno, President of the Aleppo Council sets out, the city has been object to numerous massacres and acts of destruction. "It is impossible to describe the destruction, enormous destruction of housing, industry, factories, infrastructure, schools, mosques, churches due to large-scale shelling, but also killings. The OAP nursing home was bombed a few months ago and has become



OAP nursing home -Aleppo

"The war rumbles on: "if you do not want me anymore, then leave", Michel Béni, SSVV President in Damascus

In spite of the massive forced exile of people to neighbouring countries, numerous inhabitants have chosen to remain in the country, in risk of their lives. Many humanitarian organisations

medical and financial aid.

This year, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul members and volunteers have been able to spend Christmas a little more serenely in the three cities: In Damascus, in partnership with Caritas Syria, 500 children have participated in a theatre production and have received a present. In Aleppo and Hassake, the SSVV have distributed winter clothes to the families that have been visited

uninhabitable". In spite of all of this the Society has been able to finance the relocation of around 40 elderly people to another centre, providing shelter alongside medical aid and food.

Local actors provide support in order to improve aid.

As resources reduce, the needs increase and the SSVP has established

National Councils. (SSVP-France, SSVP-Belgium).

SSVP-Syria, in partnership with SSVP-France, SSVP-Belgium, l'Oeuvre d'Orient – the Project of the East, the Pontifical Mission, the Syrian NGO American League and the Syrian NGO American Wish Association (SAWA) have put into place several medical,

Beirut: Family visits, food distribution, electricity bill payment.

*"We need the support of the Vincentian Community."
Michel Beni (SSVP Damascus President)*

Through the International General



and strengthened partnerships with international organisation and various institutions with the aim of improving the effectiveness of its action on the ground. In Damascus, the WHO (World Health Organisation) has provided specific material to allow the SSVP to carry out 300 sessions of haemodialysis within its specialist centre. Damascus SSVP has cooperated with Caritas on psycho-social support for children aged 6 to 15 who have experienced the trauma of war.

In 2016, the three councils: (Damascus, Hassake and Aleppo) received grants from Syrian non-governmental organisations (Syrian American League, Syrian Wish Association), from a French NGO (l'Oeuvre d'Orient – the Project of the East) and the SSVP

educational and humanitarian projects:

- Contribution to the purchase of housing reconstruction material
- Contribution to the purchase of petrol
- Support in rent payments for people displaced within the country and for refugees outside the country

In addition, recently, through the International Cooperation and Development Commission (CIAD), the SSVP has benefitted from the renewal of a grant from an anonymous donor in order to support projects for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Around 1.5 million Syrians are refugees in Lebanon which today represents a third of the population. The SSVP provides support to refugees in the camps of the Bekaa region and to the south of

Council (ICG) the Councils of Damascus, Aleppo and Hassake have launched and appeal to the entire community of volunteers of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul throughout the world. Alongside material requirements, it is moral support which is sought by the active members of the Society in Damascus; a need to feel held by the fraternal community so as not to sink into indifference and oblivion. As Michel Beni sums up: "we will not let either distress or despair overcome us".

News from countries

South Sudan : A Training Program Center Managed by the SSVP

After gaining its independence in 2011, South Sudan continues to face a worrying political crisis, which began in 2013 and has seriously weakened its economy and people, so that it now lacks human resources (the conflicts have destroyed families) and intellectual resources (illiteracy rates are growing). Such political and economic instability means that there is little development aid available, and funding providers are giving priority to emergency aid.

Despite this enormous humanitarian crisis, the SSVP is standing firm. Unlike the NGOs that provide emergency relief, the Society tries to offer a long-term response. It is endeavouring to ensure the longevity of its development initiatives, which encourage resilience in people, helping them rebuild lives in the long term, with nursery schools, centres for orphans, feeding and healthcare centres, and vocational training opportunities.

The CFPDC: contributing to peace and reconstruction in the country

In 2009, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, partnered with ASASE, opened a high-quality Vocational Training Centre, to help support vocational employment.

The programme established by the SSVP, based in the community of Lologo, in Juba, capital of South Sudan, offers training courses designed to meet the needs of the South Sudan job market. It provides training in basic trades such as construction, mechanical engineering and agriculture (among others). The main aim is to make the



young people immediately employable on the job market, after nine months' training.

At the same time, the centre aims to strengthen the personal and social skills of its students through its "living together" programme. Several joint workshops are held regularly, covering subjects such as conflict resolution, ethnic, religious or cultural diversity, human rights, respect for pluralism, etc.

Although it is complicated to analyse the impact indices, because of the prevailing conflict, the programme has still demonstrated its long-term effects. As explained in the evaluation report on the project, conducted by an external consultant for ASASE, "our observations on the ground allow us to state that the vocational

training programme has had a major impact on young people, who have little opportunity for training, and come from vulnerable environments. They have benefited from the courses, as have their immediate families indirectly, with the additional income from jobs obtained. Another longer term positive effect comes directly from the fact that with this training the young people now have prospects for the future which do not include violence or war".

On December 8th, the Under Secretary to the Ministry of Employment and Development, Mary Hillary, attended the event as guest of honour. Mr. Moses Telar, director of Religious Affairs for the government, as well as director for vocational training and development policies, and Monsignor Santo Laku Pio, auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Juba, also demonstrated their

support for the project by attending this event.

At the ceremony, 307 students were awarded their diplomas in the following seven areas of study: mechanical engineering, electricity, construction, computer studies, sewing, first aid and agri-food studies. These qualified students were assisted in their search for employment with the tools they would need in their working lives. For instance, the students who had trained in sewing skills received a sewing machine, the first-aiders a first-aid kit, etc.

Betram, a South Sudanese serving his country

Betram Gordon Kuol has been a member of the SSVP in Juba for almost ten years. He is currently the coordinator for the Africa 2 region (Erytrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, São Tome & Principe).

Alongside his role as international coordinator, Betram Gordon has led the training programme since it began, a job he does simply as a vocation, serving his neighbour, without counting the cost. *"In South Sudan in recent years, the news media have concentrated entirely on political conflicts, with murders, mass population movements, human rights atrocities, corruption, galloping inflation, lack of food security and famine, which is affecting over half the population. If instead of looking at this gloomy picture, you consider the work of the SSVP, you will see children being fed, people in need receiving free medical care, all this leading to improved health for the population, producing a society which is more independent, self-sufficient, stronger and more productive. It is all happening because there are committed, generous-hearted people like you and me who roll up their sleeves, who speak out, raise funds and set up development programmes to improve living conditions for the most deprived people. In this New Year, remember that you all have reasons to stand tall*

and be proud of the important work you are doing, giving hope and saving so many lost lives.

A good and holy year to you all in 2017."

More information about ASASE and the training program : http://www.asase.org/fr/prog_ss_formation.php



Awarding ceremony

Tools for the qualified students



SSVP in South Africa: 160 years of Vincentian service to the people in need

The South African SSVP celebrated its 160 years of existence at a ceremony in Cape Town.

The rapid international growth of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul from its beginnings in Paris in the 19th century certainly owes much to the youthfulness of its founding members who carried the Vincentian inspiration and charism across the oceans.

In this way, the South African branch of the Society was founded by a young Scotsman aged just 20 (like Frédéric Ozanam when he founded the SSVP in Paris in 1833). Born in Edinburgh in 1836, Alexander Wilmot left Scotland in 1853 for Cape Town, at that time where it is still a British colony. Wilmot was a committed Vincentian, thoroughly familiar with the work of Frédéric Ozanam. Wishing to continue his work with the SSVP, which began in the country of his birth, he obtained permission from Msgr. Griffith (First Bishop of Cape Town) to form a Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul at St. Mary's Cathedral on 17 November 1856. From there, the Society's growth followed the path Wilmot himself took in professional terms working for the British government, a second conference was formed at Port Elizabeth, then a third at Grahamstown in 1859. 160 years later, the SSVP in South Africa now has 247 Conferences with over 2500 members and volunteers.

The core of SSVP work in South Africa has always been home visiting and helping the people in need. This help is given in the form of programs directed to vulnerable groups like the children and students in need, elderly people, homeless people, young single mothers, and so on and so forth. In specific terms, these projects are delivered in numerous ways: community shops, soup kitchens, drop-in centers, student grants, etc., and as it is everywhere, the Society



Celebration of the 160th anniversary in Cape Town

in South Africa is financed through donations and fundraising.

Active in supporting people in need, the SSVP in South Africa is also active within the International Structure. It has been a member of the International Executive Committee for 2 years, and has organized two major All-Africa Assemblies, in 1996 and 2015. Representatives from SSVP South Africa is also actively involved in the International General Council (ICG) with 3 South African international coordinators, and one Territorial Vice-President.

The celebrations for this 160th anniversary were held on 3rd to 4th December 2016 in Cape Town. The ICG was represented by Joseph Makwinja, 2nd deputy Vice-President General, who said:

"The past years have been successful years in many ways, and of course

there have been some paths that may have been slightly difficult to travel, yet in spite and despite the odd stumbling blocks along the way, you can pride yourselves that you have been true and faithful to the dreams of our founders, Bl. Frederic Ozanam and his companions. The Society in South Africa continues to grow and to serve the less privileged all over South Africa. Let the Society of St. Vincent de Paul continue to be at the center of provision of service to the poor in South Africa, for men and women, for every individual in need".

He also offered warm thanks to the outgoing National President, Clement Venter, for his work in the SSVP. His successor Peter Keshwar will soon take up his role on National Council.