



Vincentian Solidarity Office

June 2007 Bulletin

Comments from the VSO Administrator

Dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

Since I last wrote in March of 2007, the VSO funded 7 more VSF Micro-Project Grant Applications with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF). The VSO awarded VSF micro-project grants to (1) the Region of Cameroon (Province of Paris) to purchase computer equipment for the theology students at the Scholasticate of St. Vincent de Paul in Nkol Afemé; (2) the Province of Central America to restore the Father Antonio Comte Retreat House for the formation of pastoral agents in Alegría, El Salvador; (3) the Vice-Province of SS. Cyril & Methodius to cover the operating costs of hosting weekend groups from several parishes at St. Vincent's House in Storozyniec, Ukraine; (4) the Province of St. Justin de Jacobis to purchase a library and musical instruments for youth formation at Mary Immaculate Parish in Asmara, Eritrea; (5) the Vice-Province of Mozambique to fund the first phase of renovations of a multipurpose hall at the Mission of St. Jerome in Magude; (6) the Region of Rwanda-Burundi (Province of Colombia) to improve the library and internet services at St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Kabgayi, Rwanda; and (7) the International Mission in the Solomon Islands to purchase a photocopier for Holy Name of Mary Seminary in Honiara.

I am happy to report that at the end of the second year of the VSF micro-project grants program, the VSO has awarded a total of 32 micro-project grants to provinces, vice-provinces, and missions in 18 countries in Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Oceania. I am deeply grateful for the generosity of confreres contributing to the VSF that made these micro-project grants possible!

Faternally in St. Vincent,

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

Water Wells in Orissa

India is an emerging industrial power with 1.1 billion residents. It is also a country with expansive socioeconomic problems. Although India has been averaging a 7% growth in its gross domestic product for several years, 300-million of its people live in poverty and 40% of its adult population is illiterate.

To address poverty among the rural poor, the North Indian Province sponsors 21 school hostels in the northeastern Indian states of Orissa and Manipur. The hostels serve 1,900 children ranging in age from 5 to 16. The children are mostly from indigenous tribes living in remote mountain villages that lack schools. The children reside at the hostels for 10 months each year so they may attend primary and secondary schools operated by the North Indian Province or government schools located near the hostels.



The new well at the Joshipur Hostel in Orissa

The school hostels sponsored by the North Indian Province typically have 1 or 2 dormitories, a classroom, kitchen, dining room, toilet-bath block, and a garden. The children at the hostels are provided with the food and care they would normally receive at home. The parents of the children residing at the hostels are very poor and pay only nominal fees for

hostel services. Without the hostels the children would be unable to obtain an education.

The school hostels sponsored by the North Indian Province have conventionally provided their children with potable water by collecting and storing rainwater. In recent years the amount of rainfall declined in areas of Orissa State where 14 of the hostels are located because of the late arrival of the monsoons. The need for safe water for drinking, cooking, and bathing became a growing problem, threatening the health of the children at the hostels. Water shortages were acute during the hottest months from March through May, and often mandated the early closing of hostels. As a consequence the children residing at the 14 hostels were unable to complete their school year.

In response, the North Indian Province decided to construct underground water wells equipped with pumps and aboveground storage tanks at the 14 hostels experiencing water shortages. The province requested the assistance of the VSO in securing funding for the project. The VSO obtained partial funding from the Raskob Foundation in the United States and from Kindermissionswerk in Germany for the construction of the wells. The VSO matched these contributions with monies from the VSF to complete the funding for the wells. The wells now provide the children at the 14 hostels with safe water for the duration of their school year.

A Minibus in Kiev

Since May of 2005 the seminarians of the Vice-Province of SS. Cyril & Methodius have lived in "God's Gift," the central community house in Kiev in the Ukraine. The seminarians study philosophy and theology at Sacred Heart Seminary in the City of Vorzel located 30 kilometers away from God's Gift. The seminarians had been commuting to the seminary for classes by bus and train. The trip to Sacred Heart Seminary required 1 hour and 40 minutes each way--or longer when the buses or trains were late. The extensive commuting time was interfering with the spiritual and community life of the seminarians.

The Vice-Province of SS. Cyril & Methodius requested the help of the VSO to obtain funding to purchase a minibus for its seminarians and their priest directors at God's Gift. The VSO obtained a grant

from the Office to Aid the Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that was matched with monies from the VSF, to purchase a new Volkswagen Kombi minibus for God's Gift.



Priests and seminarians in front of the new minibus

The minibus has greatly reduced the time needed by the seminarians to travel to their classes. The Vincentian community at God's Gift also uses the minibus to carry out charitable projects benefiting the local poor in Kiev.

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Our goal: To assist the poorer provinces, vice-provinces, and missions of the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for their works and needs.

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