



Vincentian Solidarity Office

VSO Pilot Training for Vincentian Development Work
BY Fr. Gregory J. Semeniuk, C.M., December 16, 2021

Introduction

The VSO Pilot Training for Vincentian Development work helped confreres gain capacities for collaboration with the VSO. From Sept. 30 – Nov. 30, the VSO presented its pilot VSO Training to eight confreres from the two provinces of India and its Regions in northeast India and Tanzania. The purpose of a pilot program is to test assumptions about teaching method, learning objectives, and required assignments or outputs. The participants had been involved in some form of development work; nevertheless, it was the first time for everyone involved to learn how to collaborate in project based fundraising. Hence, we did not deal with other aspects of development, such as, soliciting funding from private donors. Topics covered project design, development of a budget and funding plan, implementation, and reporting. The VSO led the participants through ten interactive sessions, with two outputs of a written VSO Application and Project Concept. The latter is a document that briefly elaborates the project; it is useful for engaging stakeholders and donors.

Evaluation of Program by Participants

In our evaluation after the completion of the VSO training, participants were asked to rank learning of the 10 objectives. The composite response of all the objectives were as follows, 77% definitely attained; 23% said somewhat; and 0% stated not at all. The response of somewhat may be attributed to the fact that two confreres were new to collaboration with the VSO and project management. Despite the challenges of the material, beginners with no experience gained skills to present a VSO Application and Concept Paper of their project. Also, experienced project managers learned how to better collaborate with the VSO. Further, the survey revealed two topics that require more attention: (a) role of provincial project manager; and (b) identifying the different sources of local contribution. The participants were satisfied with the number of sessions, schedule, and content. The method of instruction was beneficial to all the participants. Slides were used to present the topic, review of previous week, and focus group discussions. All participants were able to ask questions and share comments about the topics. The presentation of their projects to the group helped to develop the project Concept Papers and VSO Applications.

Summary and Invitation

In short, the VSO successfully assisted the participants and identified an effective means of improving collaboration with our local project managers. Additionally, the VSO also was able to refine our instruction and identify gaps in the instruction. The Office is currently translating the slides into French and Spanish. Our hope is to find French and Spanish speaking collaborators to work with the VSO. If you are a bilingual confrere, with knowledge of English and French or English and Spanish, we encourage you to contact the VSO so that we may offer the training in two more languages. Finally, Visitors and confreres with interest in future VSO Training may contact the VSO.

Photos of Participants and VSO Presenters



Lauren Lynch, VSO Trainer



Fr. Gregory Semeniuk, C.M.
VSO Executive Director



Fr. Babu Sebastian, C.M.
(North India)



Fr. Sebastian Vettickal, C.M.
(Tanzania)



Fr. Shalby Thelliankal, C.M.
(South India)



Fr. Shyamal Das, C.M. (North
India)



Fr. Cino Thonakkara, C.M.,
(Tanzania)



Fr. Stephan Antony M, C.M.,
(South India)



Fr. Thomas Zou, C.M. (Region
of Northeast India)

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The participants comments are found below:

“Project management is new to me; however, I was able to write a VSO Application.”

Fr. Shyamal Das, C.M.– North India Province

“I learned three things: (1) how to develop projects; (2) the process for developing projects and identifying a problem; and (3) understood the stages of project management and how each of the activities are connected.”

Fr. Shalby Thelliankal, C.M.– South Indian Province

“This was the first VSO application that I ever presented. I am confident about the basic items for preparing a project.”

Fr. Thomas Zou, C.M. – Region of Northeast India