

MISSION

NEWS



HANDMAIDS OF THE SACRED HEART

December 2020 – 2021

BAMBOO BLOOMING!



*Sr Ana keeps us informed about the progress of their "Bamboo Project" to help the poor in Sukaria, on the island of Borneo, **INDONESIA.***

CONTINUED FORMATION

“We have continued with our **bamboo training project**. We had some theory with Power Point, to clarify the terminology and the techniques. But it was mainly practical work so that the participants could understand better, experiencing how to look after the bamboo plantations.



They needed especially to learn **when and how to prune the bamboo using different techniques and most importantly the right time, when and how, it is most convenient to cut the bamboo.**



A BAMBOO TOWER!

We have built a “bamboo tower” for the **treatment of the bamboo plantations**. The tower is nearly 50m high with a 3x3m base. At the base we have put a cement tank which allows us to recover



the product used in the treatment of the bamboo so that it can be used again! A tower of these proportions allows the treatment of 150 bamboo at the same time! This tower will be in constant use in the future by the participants, for the treatment of their



bamboo and for their businesses. While building this tower the participants learned already some of the construction techniques to be used later in the making of furniture and the building of a house.

MONITORING THE BAMBOO

Some days of this training had to be dedicated to monitoring the plantations to verify the condition of the bamboo planted at the end of 2018. The monitors found that because the dry season had been so long this year, some bamboo were still small and without shoots; but the majority had resisted.



MAKING FURNITURE

To **select and prepare** the bamboo is a most important part of our project. The people needed to learn **what type of bamboo is best suited for each job**. Then they had to know how **to cut it!** They were also trained



to use the tools required for making furniture. All participants were most interested in



this! A few people, who last year had left their piece unfinished, this time were most enthusiastic, producing excellent team work.



BUILDING OUR FIRST HOUSE!

The high point of our bamboo project was **starting to build a house!** This house

was to be built by the people of Sukaria, using the local bamboo! It was finished in the short time of two months! This house shows the people's great achievement in the two years of our bamboo project. Even the young people got involved.

BEYOND SUKARIA!

The new house attracted many people beyond Sukaria. The inhabitants of two villages in Marau have asked for our help! **Joni our formator**, accompanied by a young man who had attended our project, have been visiting them to organise the training.



MEETING GREAT DIFFICULTIES

Last September fires burned in various places of Kalimantan, in our little village of Sukaria and other neighbouring areas. **A huge black cloud of smoke remained for various weeks all over Kalimantan and our village. The people had to watch day and night to prevent the fire from reaching their houses.** Sadly some of our people lost the bamboo they had planted last year. **These forest fires aim to clear the forest to make room for palm oil plantations. Unfortunately these fires are very frequent in this area!**

“CARITAS ALEGRES”



*Sr Elina writes about the little children under her care in our house of **Guayaquil, ECUADOR.***

GREAT POVERTY

“Here in Guayaquil we have a “Centro de Desarrollo Infantil” (a creche), called “**Caritas Alegres**” (Joyful Little Faces). All the children in our Centre come from very poor families. Their parents have no job and consequently they suffer great need in their nourishment, health care and suitable housing. These families live in overcrowded conditions, where there is also much violence.



NOT ENOUGH TO EAT

A hundred of these lovely children, aged 1 to 3 years old come to our Centre from 8 am to

4 pm. Most of them are undernourished. Many have only the food we can give them in the “Comedor” (dining room), of our Centre. It is most impressive to see that **very often these children do not even eat all they all they are given here, but keep some of the food to share with their little brothers and sisters or with their parents.**

PROJECT “RAICES NEGRAS”

In our centre Caritas Alegres we are also running the **Project “Raices Negras.”** (Black Roots). This involves 120 children who have difficulties in the state schools, (which are very bad). Many children attend state schools; but as there are not enough places for all the children, those who are now in our Centre would have been left out in the streets missing one whole year. **Our aim is to help these children to finish their Primary education enabling them to continue their Secondary education.**



“CHILD LABOUR”

This project, “Raices Negras” gets some financial help from the Schools Department which also facilitates some cultural activities like sports and African-Ecuadorian dances, as the majority of these children is black. **With this project we aim also to eradicate, in some way, “child labour”,**

because many children work when they are not at school.

THE DRUG PROBLEM

The drug problem is very serious in our area especially among the adolescents. It is heart-breaking to see so many young people, (some as young as 12), out in the streets. In front of our centre Caritas Alegres, the police are constantly pushing them on, but they soon come back! I could tell you many painful experiences of children being born HIV positive, through the parents fault, and then the treatment is so very expensive!... Then there are **children abandoned by their parents while they are very young, who have a very traumatic growing up. We try to help them, by giving them much love and affection.**

NEED MORE ROOM

With so many children now, we need more room! **As Guayaquil gets so hot, the small space makes it unbearable.** We need to get some fans. The dining room has to be enlarged. We have to buy tables and chairs and to complete the crockery. At the moment we have to keep the children waiting while we wash the used plates!”



FROM EAST TIMOR



Sr Monica thanks us for a donation and tells us about their new project to improve the children's health condition in
EAST TIMOR.

“THANK YOU”

“Sorry for my long silence!! We have received again a precious donation from you, and we would like to express our deepest gratitude to you and all the contributors. **For all our activities here in East Timor we depend so much on such donations that we all thank you with all our hearts.**



CHILDREN UNDERNOURISHED

One important piece of news about our work here is that last July we started “St Raphaela’s Home for Children”. We aim to help the undernourished Children in this new country. According to the information from UN agencies, **the number of children under the age of 5, who are undernourished in East Timor, reaches 50%.**

The main reason for this situation is, of course, the poverty of the East Timorese families; but the mothers’ poor knowledge of nutrition, also plays

an important part. So our project aims to help the mothers. Every week we take in 6 mothers with their children. They are given the necessary information to produce a nutritious meal, and every day both the mothers and their children enjoy the product of their labour! You can imagine how happy they are!!

THE “STOLEN CHILDREN”

The other piece of news is also about the East Timorese children; well they are no longer children; they are all over 30. They are called “stolen children” because they were forcibly removed from their families and taken to Indonesia, during the Indonesian occupation period (1975-1999). In this photo there is one of those thousands of “stolen children”. Her name is Martina, 48 years old. I visited her the other day together with Sr Ines. **The Indonesian military who stole her, changed her name and her Catholic religion to Islam. So it was very difficult for the NGO to find her family in East Timor. But they succeeded thanks to FACEBOOK!”**



"RETURNEES' HARD LIFE



*Sr Maria Chi thanks us for a donation we sent them and describes for us the terrible situation of her people, who are trying to return home, to **VIETNAM.***

"THANK YOU"

"Thank you ever so much for the lovely donation you sent us, and thank you too to the generous people helping us. You are really ANGELS caring for all of us here. Thank you for being God's loving care for these children.

NO WORK. NO SHOOL

We live in Tay Ninh, on the border with Cambodia. Many of our people are returning from Cambodia looking for the possibility of settling in our country. But they find life very hard as they do not possess any documents! **The grown-ups cannot find work! The children cannot be admitted into any school!!!**

TRYING TO HELP

Early, every morning we have a class with 10 children of various ages. They belong to the "Returnees" from Cambodia. Because neither their parents nor they themselves, have official documentation, they cannot join any school. One additional reason is that they have **NO** money! We are trying to help by teaching them basic knowledge.



GREAT DIFFICULTIES

These children have a very hard life. A girl in the class, 11 years old, has to start the day very early by selling lottery tickets... Then around 7 or 8 am she comes to class. When the class finishes at 10 am, she goes out walking the streets to sell the remaining tickets! The girl is beaten in the afternoon if she is unable to

sell all the tickets! **Most of the children come in the morning without breakfast... So we are giving them boiled eggs, milk and some cakes. They are so happy!!**

ADULTS TOO GO HUNGRY

Just this morning after the children were eating biscuits, we gave 5 children, (of one family) one extra package to bring home, as the following day there was no school, Their big sister said, "But Sister we won't eat this". "Why not?" I asked. The girl answered, "My Mum will take it to her work place". "But why", I asked. **"Because my Mum does not have anything to eat", the girl said with a sad face! I was speechless!!! What could I say? Even grown-ups go hungry!!!!**

ON THE PERIPHERY



Our Sisters are working on the “Itinerant Mission” of Las Lomas, from their house in COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA.

Here they give us a brief account of their work with the poor people of this isolated district.

ON THE PERIPHERY

“Las Lomas is a peripheric district on the outskirts of Cochabamba with approximately a 1000 families who came here from rural areas searching for a better quality of life. We, the Handmaids and lay people, form part of the place since we have been working with these families for various years now.

WORKING WITH THE PEOPLE

As part of our mission we have worked with different groups of the population, children, young people, adults... giving special attention to the children who have difficulties at school. We have group



preparation for the Sacraments, especially Holy Communion and Confirmation. We have worked with the St Luke’s Foundation and the local women whom we have trained as leaders. Visiting the families, we promote Health Care and encourage them to attend the Mobile Hospital that visits Las Lomas once a month.

The Saturday Eucharist, which we started only occasionally, has become a central point for the people. Every Saturday now, after the catechesis, we celebrate the Eucharist.

In Holy Week we had a Mission, with the participation of our Novices and some pupils accompanied by Fr Gregorio SJ. We had the Way of the cross through the village.

We celebrated the Passion and Resurrection and the Pascal Vigil with a great fire!

Important last year was the incorporation of new volunteers, especially from the Marists, a great support, given their experience and charism. Improving our infrastructure, we got a marquee which allows us to take more children with special needs.

THE GRADUATION

The most significant event of the year was the graduation of the Mothers who had followed the “Literacy Project”. This was the reward to their commitment and perseverance. The ceremony took place in a state school where they received a **Certificate** with their qualifications. Many people were present including the Community together with Sr Magdalena and the teacher Gabriela, who ran the Project. Afterwards they went to the house of Dña Elsa, one of the Graduates, to celebrate!”





*Wishing you a Very Happy Christmas
and a Blessed New Year*

many thanks

to all who have sent:

DONATIONS

POSTAGE STAMPS

Please continue to support our Missions

Send what you can to Sister Maria

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