

The 8th Annual Report of **Don Bosco Anbu Illam Social Service Society,** **Salem**

We are happy to present this 8th Annual Report of Don Bosco Anbu Illam, Salem, on this auspicious day of 19th July 1997.

The Year 1996-1997 was an excellent year for Anbu Illam, having rendered praiseworthy services for the street and working children of Salem, under the dynamic leadership and direction of Rev.Fr.M.Vincent Xavier, Rev.Bro.Meril Rodrigo and Rev.Bro.Sebastian. We also recall with love and gratitude the pioneering efforts of our former Directors, Rev.Fr.Schlooz, Fr.Edward Xavier and Fr.Lourdunathan, whose hard work and enthusiasm have paved the way for this 8th Anniversary Celebrations. Don Bosco Anbu Illam is marching ahead like a well armed warrior, with target oriented projects for the education and rehabilitation of street and working children and children in difficult circumstances, under the direction of Rev.Fr.M.Vincent Xavier, sdb, the Director, Founder and Forerunner of Anbu Illams and a pioneer in the field of Social work for the unfortunate and working children.

ESTABLISHING STREET CONTACTS :

During the past 12 months, we have contacted 357 children run away from home and found doing odd jobs in bus stands, railway stations, cinema theaters, markets, tea stalls, hotels and in hazardous workshops. They have come out of their homes for want of love and concern from their near and dear ones. They are forced to earn their living doing odd jobs. They, sometimes, fall prey to anti-social elements. The root causes attributed to the problem of vagrancy among these children are poverty, inability to follow school education, ill-treatment from step-mothers and family break-up. We contact these children through our Animators who comb the prominent places in the city, round the clock. They reach out to these children; gradually motivate and bring them to our shelter home. They are given food, clothing, medical care, educational and recreational facilities. They really enjoy staying in our shelter, having good companionship with one another. During the year we have settled home 260 children. Children, numbering 70 and more, stay at our shelter, attending our special school upto 8th standard and the other children, numbering 35, have been admitted to boarding and orphanages attached to schools run by religious and charitable institutions.

Sl.No.	Place	# of Children
01	Kavarapetai, near Chennai	12
02	Tiruvottiyur, Chennai	03
03	Sagayathottam, Arakonam	06
04	Tirupattur, North Arcot District	01
05	Settipatti, Salem	04
06	Kakkavery, Rasipuram	02
07	Rasipuram	02
08	Government High School, Salem	05
	TOTAL :	35

Apart from these children who are away from their homes, we also contact children living in slums, children of pavement dwellers, school dropouts and children working during the day. We have established 10 Centres in the city :

01	Kitchpalayam	06	Old Bus Stand
02	Sanniyasikundu	07	New Bus Stand
03	Kondappanaickenpatty	08	Gandhi Nagar
04	Narayan Nagar	09	Makkan Street
05	Gugai	10	Nehru Nagar

We have obtained special permission from the authorities concerned for conducting non-formal education and daycare centres in Government School premises after the regular school hours, and also in unused noon meal sheds. We have employed 15 teachers, on a part-time basis, to look after these centres. We cherish the welcoming attitude of the parents of these children. Through our 'door to door' visit, they are also motivated to send their wards to our centres.

DURING THE YEAR 1996-1997, WE HAVE CONTACTED 1346 CHILDREN, AS GROUPED BELOW :

Category	Attendance	# of Children
Vagrant street & working Children		080
Orphans		095
Group - A	above 75%	200
Group - B	above 50%	200
Group - C	above 40%	200
Group - D	below 40%	571
	TOTAL	1346

EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION OF STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN BELOW 18 YEARS

1. SHELTER HOME SERVICE

The vagrant and run away children who are doing odd jobs in bus stands, railway stations, market, hotels and in other hazardous workshops are contacted by our animators who are on the streets, round the clock. These children are brought to our shelter home and their problems are recorded. We have identified 357 children of this kind during 1996-97. They come out of their home for want of parental care and problems of poverty, ill-treatment from step-mothers and due to inability to cope up with their study. At our Shelter Home, they are provided with food, clothing and other facilities such as medical, educational and recreational. They are also enrolled into our special school. We have united 260 children with their families during the year. Also, we have admitted 35 of them into boarding and orphanages, attached to schools. Remaining children are taught at our special school.

2. SPECIAL SCHOOL

Process has been initiated for getting recognition and grant-in-aid for our special school upto 8th standard. The regular curricula of the regular school is followed, but with a difference to suit our need and our pedagogical approach. The strength of our special school, classwise, as at the close of the year has been :

Class	# of Children taught
Standard - I	12
Standard - II	13
Standard - III	09
Standard - IV	11
Standard - V	11
Standard - VI	05
Standard - VII	08
Standard - VIII	05

3. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Besides the normal school education at our Special School, Vocational Training in tailoring, book binding and electrical house wiring are also being taught. 15 youth , in two shifts attend the tailoring class; 3 attend the book binding training and 20 attend the electrical house wiring course. Electrical house wiring course is conducted during the evening hours after the regular class hours. We have planned for widening the scope of the functional vocational training programme through improved infrastructural facilities and we are confident of executing this programme during the period 1997-98.

4. TRAINING IN MARTIAL ARTS

Around 25 youth and children about the age of 14 years are being taught Silambam, a well known martial art in Tamil Nadu. The training is being given by a well known artist of the art, in Tamil Nadu. The children have the training twice in a week, early in the morning. This training builds up courage and confidence in the minds of these children. They are interested and are learning it well. Silambam display was held during the 8th Anniversary Celebrations.

REHABILITATION OF STREET YOUTH ABOVE 18 YEARS OF AGE

1. DRIVING LICENCE FOR LIGHT VEHICLES

17 youth have been trained as light vehicle drivers and they have also obtained licence to drive public transport. 10 of these were trained during 1996-97 and 7 among these are also trained to drive autorickshaw. Some of them have hired autorickshaws and are driving these on hire basis and are earning their livelihood. Some others are employed as drivers in private institutions like ARAS, Kalimark Company and in a firm engaged in the distribution of soft drinks.

2 of our youth, in the above group, are married and have settled down to a family life of their own. They also have a good job.

2. HOUSING FOR YOUTH

Through our persuasion and relentless effort, we have succeeded in getting the allotment of 21 housing units of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, for our youth. Our Anbu Illam Youth are getting ready to occupy these houses. In fact, 5 have already been occupied.

3. AUTORICKSHAW LOAN

With the intention of getting our youth to own autorickshaws of their own, we had approached the 'World Servants', a group in Holland. Their contribution of Rs.1,20,000.00 has been deposited with the Federal Bank as a fixed deposit. On this amount, loans equal to the cost price of the vehicle have been drawn and two autorickshaws have been bought and given to two of our youth. The loan is repaid in easy installments at a very nominal interest.

CAMPS FOR THE INMATES

(a) Awareness Outings

Once in every 3 months, the inmates of Don bosco Anbu Illam are taken out for an outing. This year's outings had been arranged on the Yercaud Hills. These outings are aimed at bringing the children together and at highlighting the importance of their childhood and in making them realize and to understand the role of Anbu Illam in this process of self-learning. Through such programmes we have won over the confidence of these children who often shy away from the general public and especially from the educators.

(b) Motivation Camps

A week long motivation camp was conducted on the Yelagiri Hills during January 1997. Rev.Fr.Guezou, a zealous priest and a great lover of youth, had generously sponsored a part of the camp expenses. It was a experience of a totally different kind they had never experienced before - quiet surrounding with eye and mind catching locations of cool and bright hues and shades. In such a surrounding, they had time for recreation, fun, entertainment and hikes. Amidst all these, they were counseled to think differently and in a constructive way; to come out of their rebellious nature and to learn to be friendly in their approach; to believe in people and to believe in themselves and to believe in God. They were taught, through various exercises, to look into the future with courage and hope.

Summer Camp

The Summer Camp for the year 1996-97 was conducted from May 7 to May 15, 1996. Children participated very actively in all the activities and programmes and in the special programmes such as singing, dancing, drawing, dramatics, sports and games. The last day was celebrated with special guests and with eminent personalities from the city. Winners of the various competitions and cultural programmes were given prizes.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS / EVENTS DURING THE YEAR 1996-97

- On June 25, 1997, Mr.R.Mahadevan, Director of Tamil Programme for BBC, London and his team from Doordarshan, Chennai, visited our Centre and recorded the life story of 3 of our inmates. They also interviewed the Director. They were very much taken up with our activities for the children in difficult circumstances.
- One of our inmates, Master K.Vijayakumar, once a street boy, has secured an admission into the CSI Polytechnic, Salem. He had been helped to complete his 8th standard to the 10th standard at St.Joseph's High School, Yercaud.
- On 15th August 1996, we had the Independence Day Celebrations.
- Deepavali too was celebrated in a big way. The children were delighted with the sweets and with the fireworks display to mark the occasion.
- Human Rights Day and Christmas were celebrated on December 22, 1996. The Mayor of Salem, also a Member of the Legislative Assembly, participated in the celebrations.
- Special programmes were organised to create an awareness among the public on the condition and state of life of Street and Working Children as well as on Child Labour.

REHABILITATION CENTRE AND CAMPING SITE AT THE FOOTHILL OF YERCAUD

We have developed a site stretching to nearly 2.5 acres at the foot of the Yercaud Hills. Temporary sheds and other basic facilities, such as a well for water supply, installation of electricity supply and toilets, have been arranged. Coconut saplings and casurina plants have been planted. With the help of our youth we have succeeded in digging a huge well which is the only source of water supply for the entire site. As the site is on the foothills and is subject to frequent soil erosion, a compound wall has been constructed wherever required, the rest of the boundary remaining just fenced. Our children from the shelter come to this site for their weekly bath and for washing their soiled clothes. The site has also drawn the attention of other NGOs working in and around Salem and two of such organisations have conducted their camps at this site. Every effort is being made to take complete possession of the land and at putting it to maximum use throughout the year.

NEW CENTRE IN KRISHNAGIRI

Opening of a New centre in Krishnagiri in Dharmapuri District, near Salem, has been initiated this year. On an experimental basis 150 children have been identified. Of these 50 are rag pickers and children doing odd jobs.

We are Grateful

We express our sincere thanks to our dear benefactors, friends and well wishers, both within the Country and Abroad. We recall with love and gratitude the financial assistance, support and encouragement given to us by Caritas of The Netherlands, MISEREOR, Fr.Karl Oerder, sdb, the Salesian Missionsprokur in Germany, Fr.Sean Mc Ferran of We Care, Fr.Harrie Kanthers and Fr.Rigby.

We also thank the Provincial and the Provincial Council for their support and guidance and for approving the different projects proposed for the development of Anbu Illam. We thank the Bishop of Salem for his love and concern for us and for our works and for recommending our projects for financial assistance. We also recall with love and gratitude the support and assistance rendered to us by the Diocesan Priests of Salem, the Religious Congregations working in and around Salem, particularly the Religious Sisters of the different Congregations serving the cause of the poor and the marginalised in various capacities, through schools and through the hospitals. We are grateful to Mr.Leo Charles, BE, the Managing Director of M/s Seshasayee Paper and boards Ltd., for their support and help.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH HOPE AND COURAGE

Several Projects are pending approval by the different funding agencies. A number of them have replied and have given us the hope of approval and support. With the execution of these projects we will be able to render our inmates greater and effective service so that they can look to their future with hope and courage. During the years ahead we will be giving greater attention to the technical formation and to the education of the street and working children. They must learn a trade and earn their livelihood.

We thank the Lord and the Blessed Mother and our Father and Founder St.John Bosco for all that we have achieved during the year and we invoke their blessing and grace for the year ahead of us. We also look forward to your support and help without which, humanly speaking, we would not achieve anything. We are grateful to all our staff and the animators and guides for their cooperation and for all that they have done for our children through personal sacrifice, commitment and love. God bless them.

Do join hands with us and together let us build a beautiful world for our street and working children.

July 19, 1997

Fr.M.Vincent Xavier, SDB
DIRECTOR