

The Don Bosco Anbu Illam Social Service Society

5A, Bretts Road, Salem 636 007, Tamil Nadu

NINTH ANNUAL (1997 - 98) REPORT

We are pleased to present this 9th Annual Report of our Society to all our well-wishers, benefactors and to the general public, acknowledging their profound contribution and support for our growth and service. During the last 9 years we have been able to do commendable service for the vagrant, neglected street and working children in and around Salem. We recall with gratitude and sincere thanks the pioneering work of our predecessors Fr. Francis Schlooz of happy memory, Br. Meril, Fr. Edward Xavier and Fr. Lourdunathan.

The 8th Anniversary celebrations were held on 19th July 1997. The celebrations had been solemnised by the Most Rev. Joseph Antony Irudayaraj DD, SDB, Bishop of Dharmapuri. On that day his grace, the Bishop blessed the Rehabilitation Centre at Kondapanaickanpatty near the foothill of Yercaud. It was dedicated to Our Lady, Mary Help of Christians.

The Year 1997 - 98 was focussed on the street and working children who are with their parents.

Shelter Home Service:

Our initial concern for the street and working children starts with providing shelter home for them, as they do not have a place to stay. During this period we have contacted 205 street boys of whom 40 had already been at the shelter home at the beginning of the year. They were doing odd jobs in the bus stands, junctions, restaurants, teashops, workshops, silver polishing units, etc. They have run away from home on various grounds - broken family, loss of parents due to death, forced into work, lures of city life, above all lack of parental love and care. We have settled home 70 of them and 25 others have left on their own. 40 more have been sent to Don Bosco Home, a home away from home, in Kavarapettai near Chennai, for learning a trade like tailoring, plumbing, carpentry, automobile mechanism, electrical wiring and welding. The rest of the boys, numbering 70, stayed at the shelter home attending regular educational programmes at the special school in the shelter home.

The following table shows the number of boys admitted into formal schools during the current academic year that began in June 1998.

S. No.	Name of the School in which admitted	Class in which enrolled	Number admitted
01	Arunachalam Municipal School, Salem 7	6 th , 7 th and 8 th	2+1+2 = 5
02	MGR Primary School, Salem 7	4 th and 5 th	5+1 = 6
03	CSI Hr. Sec. School, Salem 1	8 th	6
04	Don Bosco School, Sagayathottam, Arakonam	6 th and 8 th	4+1 = 5
05	Our Lady's Centre, Tiruvottiyur, Chennai	5 th	2
06	St. Mary's Middle School, Kakavery	6 th	2
07	Don Bosco Anbu Illam, Kavarapettai	1 st to 5 th	6
TOTAL			32

Day Care Service for the Children in Difficult Circumstances:

Day care service is offered to the children who do not attend schools, to dropout children and to those children engaged in odd jobs, living at home with parents. Six centres have been established in the city within the reach of the children from the slums. About 80% of those attending these centres are from socially and economically backward communities. These children are in the age group of 5 and 14 years. Both boys and girls attend these centres. The girls out-number the boys. This is mainly because the girls are asked to remain at home and to look after the little ones and at the same time to do the routine household works. These children are invited to join our centres and they are prepared for enrollment in the formal schools in the coming academic year. They have been taught to read, write and to keep themselves and their surrounding clean and hygienic. Motivational and Awareness programmes are regularly conducted in these centres thus preparing these children for school enrollment.

The following table shows the number of children enrolled in the centres last year:

S. No.	Name of the Centre	No. of Children
01	Selathanpatti	59
02	Narayan Nagar	65
03	Kichipalayam	45
04	Nehru Nagar	32
05	Makkan Street	27
06	Sanniyasikundu	09
TOTAL		237

Dropout Prevention and Child Labour Elimination Programmes:

Regular evening classes are conducted in 8 places in the city to help the school going poor and needy children to continue their schooling. Children working during the day also attend these centres. The working children who are attending these centres are gradually withdrawn from child labour and enrolled in schools. The vagrant attitude of the children is gradually elucidated.

The Table given below shows the number of children attending each centre:

S. No.	Name of the Centre	No. of Children
01	Kichipalayam	150
02	Narayan Nagar	162
03	Gandhi Nagar	097
04	Makkan Street	080
05	Sathya Nagar	070
06	Old Bus Stand	054
07	Sanniyasikundu	055
08	Vellakuttai Eri	033
TOTAL		701

School Enrollment:

Those children not attending schools but continuing to attend our centres are prepared and motivated to join the regular schools in the coming academic year. The children withdrawn from child labour and attending these centres are also motivated and encouraged to join schools located in their neighbourhood.

The following table shows the number of children enrolled in schools during this academic year:

S. No.	Name of the Centre which the children attended last year	Name of the School in which enrolled	Class in which enrolled	No. of Children
01	Kichipalayam	Municipal Primary School, Salem 17	2 nd	3
		London Mission School	1 st & 5 th	17+6 = 23
02	Nehru Nagar	Panchayat Union School, Mugampadi	1 st & 3 rd	3+1 = 4
		Municipal Hr. Sec. School	6 th	1
		Veeralakshmi Girls Hr. Sec. School	6 th	1
03	Narayan Nagar	Municipal Middle School	1 st	7
		London Mission School	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th & 5 th	10+2+4+3+4 = 23
04	Selathanpatti	Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Sivadhapuram	1 st , 2 nd , 6 th & 7 th	2+3+5+1 = 12
		Sacred Heart High School, Rasipuram	1 st , 6 th	2+1 = 3
		St. Nicholas Middle School, R.C. Chettipatti	2 nd & 3 rd	1+1 = 2
05	Makkan Street	Arunachalam Municipal School	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , 6 th & 8 th	4+3+1+1+3+1 = 13
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN ADMITTED TO SCHOOLS DURING JUNE AND JULY 1998				92

Motivation Camps and Awareness Outings:

Motivation Camps for the boys at the Shelter Home:

A weeklong motivation camp was conducted in April 1998 for the boys staying at the shelter home. The boys were taken to the Yelagiri Hills, a hill station about 150 km from Salem. During the camp the boys were counseled to think better of their future. They had enough time for fun and entertainment, hiking and trekking. They were motivated to join their parents. They had campfire, video shows that inspired them to think positively. The camp also helped us to understand every boy and to draw up his profile for follow up.

The elder boys aged above 18 years also had two days motivation camp at Kotagiri. 20 boys attended this camp. The counseling sessions helped them look back into their past and to plan for their future course of action and the strategies to be used.

Awareness outings for the boys at the Shelter Home:

Boys of the shelter home had a one day outing to Yercaud, a nearby hill resort, to relax and to reflect on their activities. It was during the month of December. The Salesian Brothers, on training at the Salesian Formation House, staged awareness skits and plays.

The boys were also taken to the Juvenile Home at Panchapalli on a day's visit. Our boys entertained the inmates of the juvenile home with singing and dancing. They also shared their lunch with them.

Summer Camp:

Every Year the summer camp is conducted during the month of May for the boys at the shelter home as well as for the children attending our reach out centres in the City.

This year the summer camp began on May 1 inaugurated by Dr. G. Soodamani, Mayor of Salem Corporation. In his inaugural address the Mayor appreciated the activities of the Anbu Illam Society. He accepted our request for allotting the vacant site near the new bus stand to operate an extension centre so that entrants to the city could be reached out before they fall prey to human brokers and anti social elements.

Summer camp was conducted in all the centres. On the days of the camp there was a variety entertainment and also other motivation programmes. The programmes included morals and values through stories, social awareness songs, street plays and skits highlighting certain social evils. Competitions in different fields such as singing, dancing, acting, drawing, sports events and games were held and winners were duly rewarded. The camp concluded on 13th May with a grand celebration held at the camping site at Don Bosco Rehabilitation Centre near the foothill of the Yercaud hills. VIPs present on the occasion were Mr. A. Nedunchezian, Chairman, District Panchayat Committee, Mr. Adhinarayanan, ANS Kumbakonam Jewelers, Mrs. Ruby Thiyagarajan, Secretary, Salem YWCA and Mr. Bhaskaran, Advocate. Prizes were distributed to the winners of the different competitions. The children who attended the camp were taken on a day's picnic to Mettur Dam, 50 km away from Salem.

Awareness programme for Parents:

The different centres under the auspices of the Anbu Illam conduct, periodically, awareness programmes for the parents of the children attending the centres. These programmes are to motivate them to send their children to school and to discourage child labour. Street plays and skits highlighting the importance of education and health are enacted on these occasions.

Public Awareness Programmes:

Child Labour Workshop, Rally, Human Chain and Conference:

A District level network of NGOs involved in the elimination of child labour has been formed and Don Bosco Anbu Illam plays a vital role in this unit. The network has been named as NGO Forum for Elimination of Child Labour. The Forum has unanimously elected the Director, Don Bosco Anbu Illam Social Service Society, as the President. The Forum has been active since October 1997. It organised a two day workshop on child labour on 9th and 10th October 1997. The UNICEF office, Chennai assisted the Forum for conduct of this workshop. On 22nd November a rally of 3000 working children was organised in the city. The District Collector, the Mayor and other Government Officials took part in the workshop, rally and conference. The Forum is heading for another advocacy and campaigning programme on child labour in the months ahead.

Rehabilitation Schemes for Street Youth:

Driving Licence:

During the last one year 5 of the senior boys have been trained in driving light vehicles. They have got the driving licence issued by the Transport Authority. So far 21 of the elder boys have got driving licence during the last 3 years.

Housing Allotment:

Through our strong persuasion we have managed to get 6 more housing units allotted to our youth by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. Totally the Board has allotted 27 houses for the youth of Anbu Illam. We record herein our gratitude to the authorities of TNSCB for their kind consideration of our proposals for allotment of houses for our youth.

Free Distribution of Notebooks and Stationery:

Notebooks and stationery articles were distributed in every one of our reach out centres in the month of July with the assistance of the educational institutions in the city. Every centre was assigned to the nearby private schools run by religious and individuals. Schools concerned met the needs of the centre entrusted to them. It was an occasion of sharing among the children who have and the children who do not have. We are grateful to the heads of these Institutions for their cooperation and support.

Proposed Transit School:

Following the successful implementation of Transit Schools by the NGOs in Chennai for the elimination of child labour, a similar programme has been proposed to be conducted in 10 selected centres in the city. The main activity of the transit schools is to identify the working children in the slums and to withdraw them gradually from child labour. The children identified as working children or as children not attending any school will be taught 5 hours a day so as to enable them to enroll in schools in the coming year. It will be an orientation cum motivation programme for the children in slums. A proposal has been sent to Child Relief and You (CRY) for assistance. The programme is a part of the community development activities carried out by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board in coordination with NGOs.

Introduction of 'CLE' Method of Instruction:

The Rotary International has come forward to introduce an innovative method of teaching in our centres. The method is designed to teach children the method of 'quick learning'. This is exclusively designed to teach the street children all over the world. The term 'CLE' is the acronym of Concentrated Language Encounter. Already the Rotary International has organised two weeks of training programme for the teachers. It will be executed in our centres during this year.

Certificate for Best Social Work:

The Salem Corporation has recognised our work for the street and working children in Salem. A certificate to this effect was given to Fr. M. Vincent Xavier SDB, Director, Don Bosco Anbu Illam, on the Republic Day Celebration held on 26th January 1998.

Human Rights Day and Christmas Day Celebration:

Human Rights Day was observed on December 22nd. A rally was organised and 400 street and working children took part in the rally. The Commissioner of Salem Corporation flagged off the rally after a small function. On this occasion he has assured his support for our activities. The children raised slogans and carried placards highlighting the Rights of Children. On the same day Christmas was celebrated with the blessing of the Christmas Crib by the Vicar General of the Diocese. Cultural Programmes were held in the evening. This was presided by Mrs. Kannagi, IAS, Director of Social Defence. She also distributed identity cards for the staff.

Our Homage to Fr. Schlooz:

19th March is a day which the inmates of Don Bosco Anbu Illam, Salem, will ever remember in their annals. For on that day Fr. Francis Schlooz SDB the founder and pioneer of the Salem Anbu Illam unit and a veteran missionary passed away in Chennai. With love and gratitude we pay our homage to his departed soul. May the Lord grant him eternal rest.

Our Thanks:

We express our love and gratitude to all agencies and individual benefactors – MISEREOR, Caritas Netherlands, Kindermissionswerk, Fr. McFerran SDB, Fr. Rigby, Fr. Karl Oerder, Fr. Harrie Kanters and other generous benefactors and well-wishers abroad, for their thoughtfulness and generosity towards us.

We thank the Bishop of Salem, our Provincial and his Council, Fr. James Theophilus, Provincial Delegate, Trichy, the Principals and Headmasters/Headmistresses of the different schools in the city, the Rotarians Mr. Leo Charles, Mr. Anil and other well-wishers in Salem city for their voluntary support, encouragement and contribution.

Our special thanks to the Daily Thanthi, Malai Malar, The Hindu, Dinamani, the Indian Express, Dinakaran, Malai Murasu and Dinamalar and other media personnel for the publicity given to our programmes and for the awareness they have generated through the print media.

Fr. I. Lourdu Jeyaraj SDB
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Fr. M. Vincent Xavier SDB
DIRECTOR

September 20, 1998