Content

Message from the South Asia Regional Director .................................................. 03

Brainstorming Workshop: JRS AFG Impact Study .............................................. 05

Dupree Library - New learning platform for street children .............................. 07

Beautician Course for Chin refugee women ..................................................... 09

Communication, Leadership, and Folk Arts training ......................................... 11

70th Chin National Day ...................................................................................... 13

Empowered to live with hope and dignity .......................................................... 15

“I like to be a teacher, and love to teach English” ............................................. 17

Publisher : Stan Fernandes SJ
Editor : Jovin George
Designer : Nazi Sadiqi

Jesuit Refugee Service South Asia
C/O Indian Social Institute
10 Institutional Area, Lodhi Road
New Delhi - 110003
India
There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why? And, there are those who dream of the way things could be, and ask why not? – quote attributed to Robert Kennedy

Aloysius Fonseca, a stalwart of the Bombay Jesuit Province, was one who dared to dream and follow his dream with courage and dedication. After pioneering work in his own Province and in North India, he volunteered to join a team of four Jesuits to visit Afghanistan in August 2003, in order to explore the possibilities of reaching out in service. Aloysius stayed back to learn the local language and draw up plans to the launch the Afghan mission.

The news of his sudden passing away on February 8, 2004, came as a rude shock to everyone who knew him. At his funeral service at the British Cemetery in Kabul, Oscar Rozario bid him a fond adieu, recalling how Aloysius lived to bring alive the Impossible Dream, blazing new trails and pouring out his life in loving service of those on the margins:

And the world will be better for this, that one man scorned and covered with scars, still strove with his last ounce of courage, to reach the unreachable star.
Fourteen years on, Aloysius Fonseca continues to inspire our Afghan mission of building capacity through education, with a focus on the most vulnerable and where the need is greatest, as a means to build peace and foster the development of more resilient and cohesive communities. At this point, we are undertaking an impact assessment; to pause, step back, and look at the journey covered. Equally important, we would like to look forward together in order to better understand the challenges that lie ahead. We also see this as an invaluable contribution to documenting our shared mission journey, and piecing together a comprehensive picture of how various interventions have contributed to achieve our vision, goals and priorities over the years. Looking forward to the journey that lies ahead, as companions in shared mission, we welcome your ideas and suggestions to enrich, carry forward and strengthen our Afghan mission and outreach, to bring many more war-affected and forcibly displaced people, especially children and youth, opportunities and hope for better tomorrows and a more sustainable future.
A brainstorming workshop on the JRS Afghanistan Impact Study was conducted on February 12, 2018. The agenda was to bring together a group of JRS AFG project/partner NGO staff and Jesuits serving/who have served in Afghanistan to share ideas and discuss how various project interventions have helped to achieve the JRS goals and priorities over the last 12 years. Fr. Paul Dsouza, Head of the Department, Dalit Studies, Indian Social Institute, conducted the brainstorming workshop. Four major themes were taken up for reflection and discussion: Mapping goals and Interventions of JRS; Impact of Interventions; SWOT Analysis; and Data, Sources of Information and Methodology. During the first and second sessions, the participants broke up into groups and drew up lists of the JRS goals, interventions and their impact on the local community.
“Initially we were involved with small programmes – eight day programmes.... six weeks programmes, ...but then because of the effectiveness of the programmes we went on. We were growing more and the demand kept increasing everywhere.”

– Jerome Sequeira SJ

“We always work in line with the government strategies... in order to take the programmes forward in a sustainable manner, initiatives which will have a long term impact.”

– Stan Fernandes SJ

“JRS intervened in not just teaching English, but for a complete transformation of the students”

– Prem Kumar SJ

Eighteen participants attended the workshop and it was a refreshing journey for all the participants who some time or in some way have been/are connected with the JRS interventions in Afghanistan.

Here’s what some of the participants shared:

For me one important thing is that there is no distance between the lower and the higher management in JRS as compared to the other organizations... I can easily connect with the Country Director, I can share everything that I want.

- Sayed Rafi Latifi
In the crazy world today, students are trained to study hard, to make their lives better. Most education systems, however, do not allow them to experience how to be happy and how to love the nature and fellows human beings.

According to the 2015 UNESCO GEM report, 264 million children are out of school. Today, there are more than 60,000 street kids in Kabul who struggle for their mere survival and most cannot access schooling. These kids are busy with cleaning cars, polishing shoes, selling toys, and dozens of other jobs. Their wages are not enough to support their family or to be able to afford a formal schooling. Understanding this, a group of youth came together in Kabul to build a library, which they named Dupree Library.

The Dupree Library has been set up in honor of Professor Louis Dupree, an American archaeologist, anthropologist, and scholar of Afghan culture and history. He was the husband of Nancy Hatch Dupree, who was the board director of the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University (ACKU) in Afghanistan. They worked together for 15 years in Kabul, collecting as many works written about Afghanistan as they could. Nancy’s work primarily focused on the history of modern Afghanistan.
Building a Library for Grandmother of Afghanistan

and hence she was fondly called the “grandmother of Afghanistan”, having spent most of her life here in Afghanistan. All are welcome to use the library’s facilities, but the focus is on kids who do not have access to education and the street kids who lack everything, including education, happiness and love. Over a couple of weeks, the library team put the bookshelves together and bought second hand furniture for the library. Working from dawn to dusk, besides their daily activities, the team set up the bookshelves and carried the furniture and the books to the library, where they plan to plant happiness for destitute kids who do not have access to education. The library’s activities will include teaching and building children’s capacity through literacy courses, so as to improve their social understanding and social interaction. Children can also learn to practice non-violence through workshops, and educational programs on peacemaking. Reading circles will be organized to promote the culture of reading and writing, and a story telling club to promote knowledge of culture and history.

-Nehmatulla Ahangosh
On January 29, 2018, JRS started a Beautician Course, a new skills training initiative at the JRS Chin Center, Chanakya Place. Only twelve trainees could be enrolled for the first batch, though many more applied. After the 3-month basic course, the trainees will be provided advance-level training for another 3 months. JRS launched this new training initiative after the JRS team learned from a needs assessment and home visits that the refugee women were keen on a Beautician Course. They all felt that it would help them become more self-reliant. Many have plans to work from home or open their own salons after completing the course.

Mimi, a student of the course, completed her advanced tailoring training in 2017 at the JRS centre. She loves learning new skills and is grateful to JRS for the opportunity to continue her passion for gaining knowledge, as a refugee living in Delhi.

The Course trainer is 22-year old Aduhi, a Chin refugee herself. One of her ambitions in life is to become a professional beautician and to pass on her skills to the Chin community. In this way, she wants to make a difference in the lives of the women she teaches, making them confident and motivating them pursue their dreams. Mary, a 34-year-old trainee, explains that the Beautician Course provides plenty of room for creativity and experimentation, which will help her improve her skills, which she would like to pass on to her daughter.
For a hardworking girl like me, this Course will help me build a steady clientele among my community members by helping them enhance their physical appearance which in turn will improve their self-esteem.

21-year old Nuam, Beautician Course trainee
An innovative life skills training was organized for the 23 young female students from the Mullaikudi Life Skills Center at Shakthi Folk Arts Centre, Kattumadam, Dindigul. Mayra and Jaume, two enthusiastic Spanish theatre professionals, who have set up Clown Science Dreams, conducted the training. The activity-based training helped the participants hone their skills in concentration, observation, fast thinking, improvisation, decision making, communication, team-building, self-awareness, trust-building, responsible leadership, self-confidence, conflict resolution etc. The focus was not only skills development, but also to foster and promote a positive attitude among the trainees. The Shakthi Folk Arts Center also provided intensive training sessions in a variety of folk dances like Kummi, Oyil and Parai in order to promote the fading culture and traditions. The workshop included a therapeutic course, *Healing the Inner Child*, facilitated by Fr Bernard and Bro Lawrence to help the trainees understand various stages of their development since their childhood. The well-designed exercises revived and rekindled their old memories of childhood experiences. These sessions provided a free sharing platform to express their hurt feelings and experiences that were suppressed inside, and enabled them to heal and reconcile with their past and with their inner selves. This therapeutic session gave the trainees the skills to handle their emotions, and to overcome depression and to build resilience.
Students participating in games during the workshop

“The activity based games and exercises helped me to be brisk and have healthy atmosphere and I am aware about the happenings around me.”

- Kiruthiga, Student
Life Skill Training Center
Chin National Day is celebrated every year after five thousand Chin leaders resolved to abolish the feudal system on February 20, 1948, in Pha Lang town; and adopted a democratic system of government in Chin State, Myanmar. To commemorate this historical event, the Chin community all over the world celebrates this historic day with great fervor and enthusiasm. The Chin refugees in New Delhi organised a half day program which included cultural performances and motivational speeches by their leaders, who support the efforts for Chin refugee resettlement abroad through UNHCR in New Delhi. The program began with a prayer invoking the Almighty’s blessing on everyone present. The Chins dressed in their traditional ethnic attire. As they day progressed, each ethnic group performed their traditional songs and graceful dances, which fascinated the audience - a mix of locals and Chin refugees.
Steffi Ebnett, JRS Urban Refugee Project Director, and Dominik, a Czech Republic intern with JRS, attended and enjoyed the program. The highlight was a solo by 6-year old Rebecca, who sang in the most melodious voice bringing the audience to tears.

Morning Born, JRS field coordinator, says he is proud to be Chin and nostalgically recalls his early days in his Chin State, in Myanmar.

“It was really an enriching experience to learn about Chin community and their culture.”

-Dominik, a Czech Republic intern
Thinusha was just a little baby in 1990, when her parents were forced to leave Vavuniya, because of the raging civil war in Sri Lanka, and seek protection in Tamil Nadu, India. Initially, her family was sheltered in the refugee camp in Mandapam, but it was soon moved to another camp in Tirunelveli District. Since her early childhood, she used to stammer and was bullied by her peers. Eventually, she dropped out of school when she was in Class IX. In 2005, a JRS field worker met Thinusha and counselled her. From him she learned about the life skills training programme in Mullaikudi. That encounter gave her a sense of direction and purpose. The Mullaikudi training centre was a home away from home for Thinusha, who was away from her parents for the first time. The six-month training helped her unpack her talents and potential. She acquired basic skills in tailoring and knitting. Having successfully graduated, Thinusha decided to improve her tailoring skills. She worked as an assistant to a tailor in Sankarankoil. This experience helped her realize the dream of becoming an entrepreneur herself. Drawing motivation from her training and experience over the years, she started a tailoring centre of her own at a rented room in Sankarankoil. She has trained four young women so far, and is currently training two more. She gives them a monthly stipend. As a thriving entrepreneur,
Empowered to live with hope and dignity: Ms Thinusha’s Story

She has plans to buy an embroidery machine and provide training-cum employment to some more girls. Ms Thinusha, now 28, is a self-reliant young woman, who supports the education of her siblings.

“I never thought that I would ever have a decent life. I learnt how to be confident and hopeful in life.”

-Ms Thinusha
I am an Afghan girl, who was born in Shaikh-e-Meran village. My village has cold winters and very dry land, with mountainous, high hills and a deep valley. I am a student of JRS. JRS came to our village in 2012. They brought us a fantastic opportunity to do English language courses. Many girls studied English with JRS for about two or three years. Now they are very successful persons, because of the hard-working JRS teachers.

After my studies, I started teaching English in one of the JRS courses. It is very good for me. I like to be an English teacher. Because of JRS, I can teach English to others. It shows that I have improved a lot. Before, I did not even know what the English alphabet is, how to speak, how to write or how to read something written in English. Now I can read, write and speak, and I understand that English is a very important language that I should learn well to achieve my goals. I hope that JRS will continue their programs in Ashterlay district, because we need their programs in this remote district, and all the students want to improve their skills. Particularly the girls feel that the JRS Centre offers them a big opportunity and a safe place, for training them. So please continue the program in our little village. At the end, I would like to say thank you to JRS and the generous donors.

-written by Mohsina Akhlaqi
ACCESS plus teacher
Thank you

JRS South Asia

C/O Indian Social Institute
10 Institutional Area,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi
PIN- 110003, India

www.jrssa.org