 Reading time: 9 min.

Living today don Bosco's mission to the young especially those who are resource-poor in South Asia

The Lord made clear to Don Bosco that he was to direct his mission first and foremost to the young, especially to those who are poorer. This mission to the young, especially the poorer ones became the reason for the existence of the Salesian Congregation.

Like our Father Don Bosco, every Salesian says to God on the day of his religious profession: "I offer myself totally to you. I pledge myself to devote all my strength to those to whom you will send me, especially to young people who are poorer". Every Salesian collaborator is committed to this same mission.

The latest General Chapter of the Congregation made renewed call for absolute priority to be given to the poorest, most abandoned and defenceless.

When I was given the opportunity to submit an article for the Salesian Bulletin, my thoughts immediately went to what I consider to be one of the largest interventions on behalf of the poorer youth in the South Asia Region of the Salesian Congregation, namely, preparing poor young people for employment through short-term skills training. After the 28th General Chapter, the South Asia Region made a choice to help young people remove abject poverty from their families. But before I present that, let me present to you the South Asia Region of the Salesian Congregation.

The South Asia Region comprises all Salesian works in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kuwait and UAE. There are 11 Provinces and 1 Vice Province. With more than 3.000 professed Salesians the South Asia Region accounts for 21.5% of Salesians in the world working in 413 Salesian Religious Houses, accounting for 23.8% of Salesian Houses in the Congregation. The median age of confreres is 45. It is providential that so many Salesians are working in the region that has the largest populations of youth and poor youth in the world.

The Salesian Family in the Region comprises in addition to the Salesians, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary help of Christians (1.789), Association of the Salesian Co-operators (3.652), World Confederation of the Past Pupils (34.091),

Secular Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco (15), Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (915), Association of Mary Help of Christians (905), Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians (748), The Disciples – Don Bosco Secular Institute (317), Sisters of Maria Auxiliatrix (102), and Visitation Sisters of Don Bosco (109).

The works of the Salesians in collaboration with other members of the Salesian Family and other Religious and laity reach out to over 21.170.893 beneficiaries. A variety of works (formal and non-formal technical education, works for youth at risk (YaR), Schools, Higher Education, Parishes, Youth Centres, Oratories Social work etc) are directed to serving the beneficiaries. The other Salesian Family members have independent works that reach out to many more.

The world, under the leadership of the United Nations has set the goal to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere” as the first of its Sustainable development Goals. The Salesian works achieve these goals in manifold ways, but one prominent work among them is short term skill training offered to poor youth who are then helped to get employed and earn a living to be the protagonists who bring their families out of poverty.

The Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) set up Don Bosco Tech (DBTech) as a vehicle to coordinate the efforts of all Salesian Provinces in this area of work. Established in 2006, the DBTech model and its name has been imitated in other parts of the world. In these years the network (DBTech India) has trained over 440.000 young people. The work is done through the various Salesian institutions as well as through a large network of collaborative work with other Diocesan and Religious Congregations and with a large pool of highly motivated lay collaborators who are committed to working for the poorer section of youth.

While the achievements over the years on behalf of the poorest youth, has been great, I would like to point to the achievements of 2022-2023 to appreciate the work of all Salesians and their collaborators to carry on the dream of Don Bosco to dedicate ourselves to young people especially those who are poorer.

I have chosen this work to be presented since it above all achieves the largest and best outcome for the poorest families.

Here we have a network with 26.243 students being trained in one year! Very few

large institutions in the world would have so many students graduating (20.121) in one year. Even if they had, the graduates would rarely be in such numbers from the poorest sections of society.

Of these approximately 18.370 are employed as they finish their skills training (approximately 70% of those trained).

All these students have been given totally free training and job placement without charging fees. This is achieved through the generous contribution of benefactors and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partners. DBTech has over 30 funding partners including Corporates, Foundations and Government.

The Salesian predilection for poorer youth is evidenced in the fact that almost all the trainees come from the “Economically Weaker Sections” of society – 98%.

Even more important to note is that 10.987 (55%) of the already graduated 20.121 students (others being in training, awaiting conclusion of their classes) are coming from families who have an annual income less than Rs.100.000, that is approximately 1.111 Euro per year (calculated at 1 Euro = Rs.90). This is family income less than 100 Euro per month. This would mean families living on less than 3 Euro per day. We are speaking of families and not individuals!

Annual Family Income	*Approximate Daily Income of Families*	*Total Youth Trained*	*% of Youth Trained*
Below 1 Lakh / Below 1.111 Euro	Below 3 Euro	10.987	55%
1-3 Lakh	Below 3-9 Euro	8.144	40%
3-5 Lakh	Below 9-15 Euro	469	2%
5-7 Lakh	Below 15-21 Euro	161	1%
7 Lakh and above	21 Euro and more	360	2%

Grand Total		20.121 (+ 6.302 in class)	

Note: Euro calculated to be 1 = Rs.90

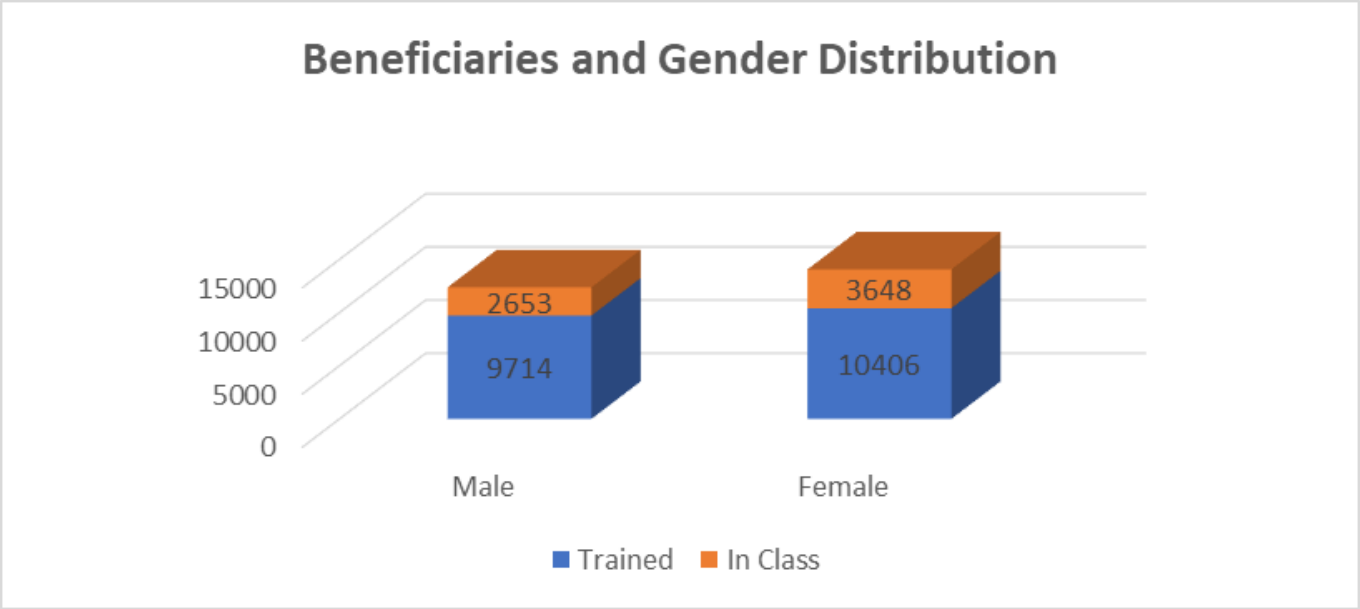
Dopo la formazione gratuita, questi giovani poveri guadagnano oggi in media 10.000 rupie al mese, il che ha reso il loro reddito personale annuo superiore al reddito familiare annuo delle loro famiglie.

After free skill training, these poor youth are today earning an average of Rs.10.000 per month which has made their personal annual income above the annual family income of their own families.

In the context of the need for outcome based transformative interventions, the Salesian Family of South Asia with the primary role played by the young people who get skilled and employed are truly forming “honest citizens”. The young people who have been trained and placed in jobs are today contributing to nation building. The annual income generated by these students employed after free training is approximately Rs. 2.204.400.000 which is equivalent to approximately 24.493.333 Euros annually.

The training duration varies according to sectors. The trainings are provided in various sectors: Agriculture and Allied; Apparel, Made Ups and Home Furnishing; Automotive; Banking and Finance; Beauty & Wellness; Capital Goods; Construction; Electronics & IT Hardware; Food Processing; Furniture & Fittings; Green Jobs; Handicrafts and Carpet; Healthcare; IT-ITES; Logistics; Media and Entertainment; Office Management; Plumbing Industry; Power; Retail; Tourism and Hospitality and, Others.

It is also to be noted that in developing nations where girls and women are the weaker and more defenceless, the services offered by the Salesians are serving the females more. More than 53% of the trainees who completed their course are female.



Le storie dei giovani che hanno trasformato la loro vita cogliendo le opportunità offerte dalle opere salesiane sono molto importanti nella narrazione dell'attenzione salesiana verso i più poveri.

The stories of the youth who have transformed their lives through taking the opportunities provided by the Salesian works stand tall in the narrative of Salesian focus on the poorest.

The Salesians have truly received support from many generous people, foundations, corporations and government to achieve the transformation of so many underprivileged youths to become honest and productive citizens. We are truly grateful to all of them. God has been blessing the Region with growth in Salesian Vocations too.

For more information, one could visit the website of DBTech India at https://dbtech.in.

Such work, as Don Bosco would tell us, is "our greatest satisfaction"! It is addressed to the poorest. It involves largescale collaboration between Religious and Secular bodies. It is a great example of lay collaboration. It is addressed to all youth – 72% of the beneficiary youth belong to Hindu religion which is the largest religion in the South Asia Region.

In the *Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco* we read Don Bosco's words: "Make sure you always stick to the poor children of the people. Do not fail in your prime purpose and let your society always have it in view: do not aspire to greater things. […] If you educate the poor, if you are poor, if you do not make noise, no one will envy you, no one will seek you out, they will leave you alone and you will do good." (MB IX,566).

We also present some young people whose encounter with Don Bosco's charism has changed their lives.

Adna Javaid

Adna Javaid's struggles began at a very young age. She grew up in poverty. She was born in Bemina, a region in the heart of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, India. Adna's father Javaid Ahmad Bhat was a shopkeeper who could hardly support his family. She dropped her studies after completing 12th grade and remained in her home for some years. She wanted to chase her dreams, but could not find a way to fulfil them.

Despite her difficult circumstances, she began writing plays and performing them in small venues in her locality. However, her early efforts were unsuccessful, and she faced rejection after rejection. In 2021, Adna staged her first play, "I Know I've Been a Girl," in her community. The play was poorly received, and Adna lost all of her savings. However, she continued to have faith and slowly built up her future. During the Don Bosco Tech Srinagar mobilization near her locality, Adna saw the Don Bosco Tech team and spoke to them about her problems. The team convinced her to join the training and assured job assistance, and she decided to join the CRM Domestic Voice Domain.



Adna’s breakthrough came in 2021 when she realized that she was closer to her dreams after training at Don Bosco Tech Training Centre Srinagar.
Since then, Adna has become one of the most successful and influential figures in the BPO sector. Despite facing significant obstacles and setbacks, she persevered, continued to work hard, and believed in herself and her vision.
She is now working as a Customer Care Executive Process, at J&K Bank, supported by DigiTech, Call System Pvt. Ltd, with Rs 12,101 CTC monthly remuneration.
Adna is so happy about her life now, and she is also helping many girls to join the job-oriented course at Don Bosco Tech Training Centre, Rajbagh, Srinagar.

Peesara Niharika

Peesara Niharika hails from a rural place located far away from Don Bosco Tech, Karunapuram center. She completed her graduation with the support of her parents, who are daily wage workers. Difficulties and shortcomings were the watchwords in her life from a very young age. At a point in life, she even dropped her studies and supported her parents financially, by working in agri-farms with the villagers. But she longed to pursue higher studies, whenever she watched her school friends go to college, while she was working in the paddy field.

One day, as she was looking for an employment opportunity, Niharika came across the mobilization wing at Karnuapuram, organized by the staff of Don Bosco Tech Centre and made a firm decision to enrol herself in the Skill Training Program. Having an interest in Customer Relationship Management, she got herself enrolled in the CRM Domestic Non-Voice program at Don Bosco Tech, Karunapuram center. She was found to be very active and agile during the training program, trying to efficiently communicate with everyone in her batch. She is multitalented with skills such as dancing, singing, and playing games, and also enthusiastically spreads positivity around her. Through life skill sessions, she could get rid of her timidness and stage fear.



At the time of the interview, she was hired by Ratnadeep, in Hyderabad for the role of Customer Service Representative with a pay scale of INR 14,600/- per month including ESI and PF. Now she has the capacity to lead her family and support her parents who are extremely grateful to Don Bosco Tech Society for the huge transformation in their daughter’s life. Niharika overwhelmingly says that her journey at Don Bosco Tech Karunapuram center will forever remain a happy memory for the rest of her life.

Chanti V.

“The difference between who you are and who you want to be is what you do”.
Chanti is from a low-income family in Vepagunta, Vishkapattanam. After he completed his intermediate, he wanted to go for higher studies but could not afford the fees. Then, he got to know about the Don Bosco Tech training centre, Sabbavaram through his neighbourhood friend and the mobilization activity in his village. He came to know from the counsellors that this institute provides free training with NSDC certifications.
After joining Don Bosco Tech, along with the E-commerce course, Chanti also learned spoken English and computer. The trainers still remember that on his first day at Don Bosco Tech, his poor communication skills and less than minimum knowledge of Computers were vividly noticed by them. There was no proper education system or facilities in his village for him to learn such skills. But his desperation towards learning a new subject and need for a better job convinced the trainers to include him in the E-Commerce Domain.
He managed to get placed in the company, Ecom Express as a delivery boy. After witnessing his talent, the company gave him higher responsibility and now he gets INR 20,000/- per month.



He and his parents were extremely happy about his achievement. He is very grateful to the institute for making him what he is today. Now, he has become an inspiration for young boys in his village who are struggling to get a decent job. He has informed many of them about DB Tech, Sabbavaram, and many have expressed their desire to join the institute.

Klerina N Arengh

Klerina N Arengh from Meghalaya she completed her 10th in the year 2009 as a private candidate. Then she heard about the Don Bosco Tech Society giving free training plus placement out of State. She was very interested and decided to join the training.
She was enrolled under Skill Meghalaya F& B Service Associate Batch-2 in the Don Bosco Tech, Shillong Centre. All her classmates were younger than her so most of them made fun of her and called her mommy, but she just ignored them.
She was very punctual, respectful, and was a very good learner. She learned everything faster than her batch mates. In the whole 2 months of training, she

showed discipline and excellent results. Finally, after the completion of her training, DB Tech offered her a job at JW Marriott Sahar Mumbai, as a Steward with a monthly salary of CTC Rs 15000.
She is very much thankful to DBTech and MSSDS Skill Meghalaya for providing her an opportunity to earn her livelihood in a decent way. Now, with the salary she will be able to support her parents financially.



Fr Biju Michael, SDB
General Councillor for South Asia