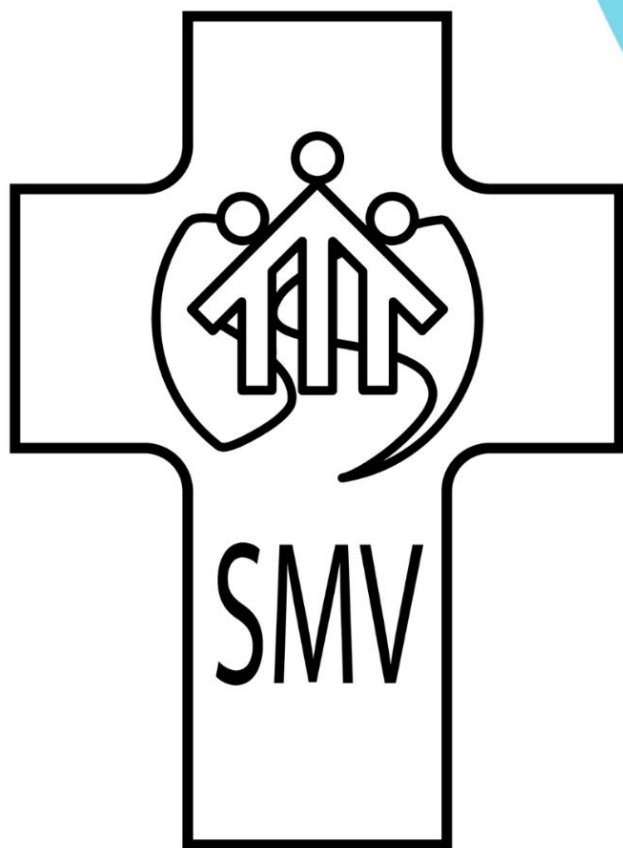


SALESIAN MISSIONARY VOLUNTEERING



2024

March 5 - 9

Università Pontificia Salesiana
(UPS)



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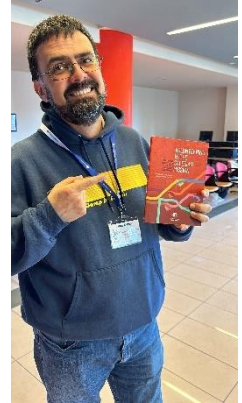
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Salesian Missionary Volunteering (SMV)

It is a service of solidarity, made without cost and freely-given by a young person, sent and welcomed by a community, which is part of the educative and pastoral project of a Salesian presence or promoted by it, with a sufficient continuity of time, motivated by faith, with a missionary style and according to the pedagogy and spirituality of Don Bosco.

(Volunteering in the Salesian Mission, Identity and Orientation of Salesian Missionary Volunteering, Salesian Missions and Youth Ministry Sectors, Rome, 2019)



SMV Advisory Team

Mission: Connect and network with Salesian volunteer organizations to provide support, guidance, formation, and opportunities to network and collaborate. This will hopefully improve the quality of service provided by Salesian volunteer organizations and will support and animate the Salesian Missionary Volunteering that will support the Congregation with quality volunteers with a clear Salesian identity.

Purpose: The role and identity of the Advisory Team will evolve as specific needs change, but what is certain is that the AT wants to be of service to Salesian Mission Volunteering.



Key Objectives:

- Understand and support SMV in the various contexts, provinces, and regions throughout the Salesian world
- Assist Mission Animation and Youth Ministry Delegates in any concerns about the Salesian Missionary Volunteering
- Provide continued professional development
- Facilitate the sharing of resources among SMV programs
- Provide advice, guidance, and support to Provinces that would like to initiate a volunteer program or some form of SMV
- Listen to the needs of those responsible for volunteering and create appropriate responses to those needs
- Develop data that will increase the UpToDate knowledge of the SMV



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MA Delegate, SUO



Adam Rudin
Director of Volunteering, SUE



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YM Delegate, ZMB



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Missions Sector, RMG



Fr. Rafa Bejarano SDB
Youth Ministry Sector, RMG



Schedule of the meeting

		Activity	Topic
05		Check in and welcoming	
	19:30	Dinner, goodnight	
06	08:30	Mass in UPS	Getting to know each other
	09:00	Prayer	
	09:15	Intro - Icebreakers	
	10:30	Coffee Break	
	11:00	Group Work	
	12:30	Lunch	
	14:00	Assembly Feedback	Identity
	14:20	Lectio Divina	
	15:00	Presentation - Vol Origin	
	15:30	Coffee Break	
	16:00	Presentation - Congregation and SMV	
	16:45	Importance of SVM manual	
		16:50	Group discussion
	19:30	Dinner, goodnight	
07	08:30	Mass	Formation
	09:00	Prayer	
	09:15	Importance of formation	
	10:30	Coffee Break	
	11:00	Group Work	
	12:30	Lunch	
	14:00	Intro - Keynote	Laity and Religious
	14:30	Lay and Religious Panel	



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	15:30	Coffee Break	
	16:00	Group Discussion	
	16:45	Assembly Feedback	
	17:00	SMV cross discussion	
	19:30	Dinner (optional)	
08	08:30	Prayer	Accompaniment
	08:45	Sketch - Vol, Coordinator & community	
	10:30	Coffee Break	
	11:00	Topic - Formation and Accompaniment	
	11:45	Presentation of Website	
	12:30	Lunch	
	14:00	Small group discussion	Database and Network
	14:45	Large group discussion	
	15:30	Leaving for Sacro Cuore	
	16:15	Coffee at Sacro Cuore and visit	
	17:00	Mass at Sacro Cuore <i>Fr. Miguel Ángel García Morcuende SDB</i>	
18:30	Dinner in city center		
09	08:30	Prayer	Where to from here? Our future... What have we learned?
	08:45	Final wrap up and evaluation	
	10:30	Coffee Break	
	11:00	Evaluation	
	12:15	Final Mass with blessings of the crosses <i>Fr. Alfred Maravilla SDB</i>	
	13:00	Final lunch	



Meeting Objectives

1. To develop spaces and processes where collaboration and networking can promote and strengthen SMV
2. To develop and deliver SMV formation and professional training opportunities
3. To support accompaniment for different stakeholders

Key Highlights

1. **Exploring Volunteer Identity:**

The initial days of the meeting were dedicated to a profound exploration of the Salesian Missionary Volunteering identity. Drawing from core documents, including the SMV Manual, and insights gathered from extensive research, participants gained invaluable perspectives on the ethos and values that underpin our volunteer initiatives.

2. **Formative Experience:**

Emphasizing the importance of ongoing formation, discussions centered on providing comprehensive support and mentorship for our volunteers throughout their journey. Strategies for nurturing the holistic development of volunteers were explored, ensuring that they feel guided and supported in their service.

3. **Synergetic Partnerships between Laity and Religious:**

A significant aspect of our discussions revolved around the collaboration between laypeople and religious. Recognizing the complementary roles each group plays in advancing the Salesian mission, strategies for fostering strong partnerships and leveraging each other's strengths were explored. This emphasis on collaboration seeks to enhance the effectiveness and impact of our missionary volunteer work.



4. **SMV Cross:**

A poignant moment in the meeting was the presentation of the SMV cross. This emblem symbolizes unity and commitment, encapsulating the shared dedication of our volunteers to the Salesian mission.

5. **Accompaniment:**

The importance of accompaniment, in conjunction with formation, was highlighted throughout the meeting. Participants discussed strategies for providing ongoing support and mentorship to Salesian missionary volunteers, receiving communities and volunteer coordinator's, ensuring they feel guided and supported in their service.

6. **Data and Networking Platform:**

In response to the growing need for streamlined communication and information management, a new initiative was introduced to develop a centralized platform for data collection and networking among Salesian Missionary Volunteering organisations and provinces. This platform will serve as a hub for volunteer coordinators to access resources, share experiences, and communicate with one another and with organizational leadership. By harnessing the power of technology, we aim to enhance collaboration, facilitate mentorship opportunities, and strengthen the sense of community among Salesian volunteers and organisations globally.





06.03.2024 SMV Identity

Lectio Divina (Lk 18, 35-43)



Fr. Rafael Bejarano SDB

As he drew near Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging alms; and when he heard people passing by, he asked what it was. They informed him that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by, and he began to cry out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those in front rebuked him to be quiet, but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him. When he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do to you?" He said, "Lord, let him see!" Jesus said to him, "Regain your sight. Your faith has saved you." And immediately he regained his sight and was still glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw him, praised God.

The blind man sitting by the roadside. "As he drew near Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging alms; and when he heard people passing by, he asked what it was. They told him that Jesus was passing by. In Mark's Gospel, the blind man is called Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46). Being blind, he could not participate in the procession that accompanied Jesus. At that time, there were many blind people in Palestine, for the strong sun beating against the whitewashed stony ground did great harm to unprotected eyes. "Then the blind man cried out, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!" And he invoked Jesus using the title "Son of David." The catechism of that time taught that the messiah would be of David's descent, "son of David," glorious messiah.

The blind man's cry made the people accompanying Jesus uncomfortable. Because of this, "those who went ahead rebuked him to be quiet". They tried to silence his cry, but he cried out much louder: "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Today too, the cry of the poor makes established society

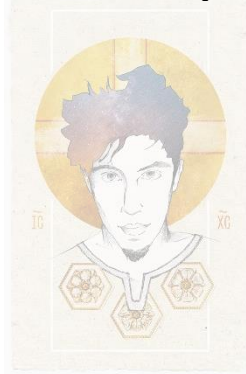


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uncomfortable: young people in conflict with the law, migrants and refugees, AIDS patients, beggars, excluded indigenous peoples - so many! What are the cries I have heard from those around me?

Jesus' reaction is to recognize the person in the blind man's cry. And what does Jesus do? Jesus stopped and ordered him to be brought to him. Those who wanted to silence the cry of the poor man, now, at Jesus' request, are obliged to help the poor man to reach Him. Today also Jesus hears the cry of the poor that sometimes we do not want to hear. When he came near, he asked him: "What do you want me to do to you?" It is not enough to cry out, we must know why we are crying out! He said: "Lord, let him see!". Jesus says, "Regain your sight. Your faith has saved you. And immediately he regained his sight and kept on glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw him, praised God". The blind man had invoked Jesus with ideas that were not entirely correct. But he has more faith in Jesus than in his ideas about Jesus. He knows how to give his life by accepting Jesus without imposing conditions. The healing is the fruit of his faith in Jesus. Healed, he follows Jesus and goes up with him to Jerusalem. In this decision to walk with Jesus is the source of courage and the seed of victory over the cross. For the cross is not an inevitability, nor a demand of God. It is the consequence of Jesus' commitment, in obedience to the Father, to serve his brothers and sisters and not to accept privileges.

1. What is your organization's announcement of hope for volunteers in the face of the cries it hears?
2. What is the attitude towards the other's pain?





SMV Identity - group sharing

SMV emphasizes discovering one's life plan through service, embodying a spirit of solidarity and service, and understanding the pedagogy and spirituality of Don Bosco. It is crucial for volunteers to see themselves as part of the Salesian mission, avoiding a mentality of being a "savior." Challenges include the difficulty of fully meeting all criteria, necessitating individualized guidelines per province.

Key elements of the identity of a Salesian Missionary Volunteer:

- Discovering one's life plan by serving others.
- A spirit of solidarity and service.
- Being a balanced person, understanding both the pedagogy and spirituality of Don Bosco.
- A volunteer who is willing to be part of the Salesian mission, not seeing himself/herself as a "savior".

Some challenges and ideals around the SMV identity are:

- It may be difficult for volunteers to fully meet all the criteria outlined, as they are still growing and developing.
- Each Province should prepare its own guidelines for volunteers based on the overall SMV manual, as the criteria cannot be applied uniformly across all contexts.
- The program should be open to volunteers of all ages, not just young people, as older "senior expert" volunteers can also contribute.

The key is to strike a balance - providing a clear vision and identity for the SMV, while also allowing flexibility for volunteers to grow and for local adaptation. The core elements are a spirit of service, Salesian values, and a willingness to be part of the mission, rather than an external "savior".



The origin of the Salesian Missionary Volunteering

Fr. Rafael Bejarano SDB

The Salesian Missionary Volunteering is in dialogue with world hearing the cries of the poor. Salesians are now in 136 countries, in 92 Provinces, working for 50% with non-Christian and non-Catholic populations, which leads to the risk of losing Salesian identity. Thus, it is essential to maintain our identity and language, as individuals and as a community, keeping in mind what capacities we are sharing. The SMV is grounded in the Gospel in connection with the world. However, the Salesian task is also to dialogue with the world and question what language to use.

When the volunteer comes into contact with Jesus' compassion, it is an act of mercy and a gift. The volunteer stands before acting, going through places and people, and could be a spokesperson for the cry of the voiceless. Article 33 of the Salesian Constitution says that *“we labour in economically depressed areas and for poor youth. We collaborate with them to a sense of moral, professional and social responsibility. In this way we contribute to the development of both people and environment.”* Aligned with the doctrine of the church, which in *Fratelli Tutti*, 118 says that *“the world exists for everyone, because all of us were born with the same dignity. Differences of colour, religion, talent, place of birth or residence, and so many others, cannot be used to justify the privileges of some over the rights of all. As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development”*.

The operational tool with which we work is the Educative and Pastoral Community (EPC): a co-responsible experience, a specific service of animation; EPC is the first responsible of the Salesian mission in the territory. Project mentality guides formation: projecting an attitude of the mind and heart; a process rather than an outcome.



Human Rights Based Approach (See 2009 Conference on Preventive System and Human Rights): it involves integrating the international human rights system's values, principles, and norms and Salesian projects and development processes. If we can't restore dignity to the person concerned, it's better to do nothing, otherwise we don't feed the fake charity.

Integral Human Development - *Laudato si'*, 48 shows us that an ecological deterioration always converts to a social deterioration: *“The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest.”*

Don Bosco invited the young adults who can come and help at the oratory. Mama Margaret is, in a certain way, the first volunteer who shared the co-responsibility with Don Bosco. In 1917, Filippo Rinaldi founded the feminine organization of Volunteers of Don Bosco.





SMV: presentation of doctoral thesis

Juan Carlos Montenegro

To present a comprehensive overview of the pathway of volunteering in the Congregation, highlighting its importance, impact, and the personal and communal benefits it brings. The objective is to engage the audience, share the process and significance of volunteering within the Congregation, and inspired to actively participate in volunteer activities.

Topic - Objective	Notes
Welcome: talk based on sharing and dialogue, “American Style.”	Shared the experience of differences between Europe and America.
Expectations from the audience.	At the end of this sharing, what would you like to obtain?
My volunteer experience and how I got my Doctorate degree.	
Don Bosco: how from the beginning Don Bosco collaborated with volunteers.	1842 first oratory; 80+ children; Don Bosco with Guala and Fr. Cafasso helping. 1844 Don Bosco talks about the confession; if he was confessing who was taking care of the children? 1845 MBO first time we can read the word volunteer.
General Chapters: To review the different General Chapters that talk about the volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GC XXI 1978 – Lay brothers• GC XXII 1984 – Give life to the Volunteer Program• GC XXIII 1991 – Vol as discernment



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Countries to develop the volunteering • GC XXIV 1996 – Laity and SDBs • 2008 – published the 3rd edition of the Volunteer in the Salesian Mission. • CG XXVI – Volunteer as tool of evangelization • CG XXVII – Volunteer as an opportunity to mature. • Frame of Reference • 2019 New Volunteer Manual
Feedback	How do you feel after listening to all this information?
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivations • Pastoral work • Most difficult moments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why? Pg. 184 • Benefits after the vol program
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal research • New life • Volunteers = “Destinatarios”
New Challenges: How about now? Where are we going?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the SMV Advisory Team • The dream is to work together and collaborate.



07.03.2024

Formation of SMV

Ecuador: preparing the volunteers in the last 50 years

Fr. Diego Rodriguez SDB

The Missionary youth Volunteering of the Salesian Family is a project that has been developed in the Salesian Province of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Ecuador (ECU) since 1972, promoted by the SDBs, FMA, the HHSSCC (Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary) and currently the HDS (Daughters of the Divine Saviour).

Young people who attend this national project are the fruits of Youth Ministry processes that take place mainly in the SYM groups in schools, oratories and parishes.

Before the sending, the volunteers spend a mandatory period of time of “pre-volunteering”.

National pre-volunteering

- 15 years old adolescents
Participation in SYM, with meaningful apostolic experiences within their groups (missionary experiences in Holy Week and Easter; animation in holiday oratory).
Invitation to make longer experiences (15-30 days) in another community to learn other ways of work and accompaniment.
- 16 years old adolescents
Short community experiences to learn life and mission with religious communities.
Invitation to make longer experiences (15-30 days) in another community to learn other ways of work and accompaniment.



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- **Pre-volunteering groups start at 17 years old**
Continuing to belong to SYM, formative and apostolic experience with pastoral, psychological and spiritual accompaniment. The national team hands over to the local team, to follow up with the young people within the pre-volunteer group itself. At the same time, the families of the candidates are followed up more closely. After a larger experience in their own community and in another one, the pre-volunteers receive the eligibility to become SMV.
- **Meeting for SMV sending**
The volunteers come under the auspices of the local community. They present medical, psychological, pastoral, spiritual and community reports and permissions from their legal representatives, according to the characteristics of the young people they are placed by the national team in the community.

International pre-volunteering

- **Promotion**
Process open to all members of SYM university association who are in the last year of studies.
- **Registration**
The registration form is filled in and handed in. Follow-up and report.
- **Selection**
SMV national team receives the folders with the candidates' data and recommendations. The candidate makes an interview with the ECU Provincial.
- **Accompaniment**
Invitation to the pre-volunteering groups. Start of formation, designation of the countries to which the volunteers will be sent and dialogue with PDMA of those countries.
- **Formation**
Weekly on-line meeting and community and apostolic experiences to check the adequacy of the preparation. Formation is adapted to the needs of the young candidates.
- **Sending**
Last in-person meeting of pre-volunteering to share experiences, develop outstanding training issues and indicate the final destination of the candidate.



Formation for the Volunteers- *group sharing*

Human Development

- Understanding human development, including physical, psychological, and social aspects.
- Developing self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and social/interpersonal skills.

Educational and Pastoral Tools

- Learning Salesian educational and pastoral methodologies to work effectively with young people.
- Developing skills in areas like teaching, youth ministry, and community animation.

Community Life

- Preparing for living in a Salesian community, including aspects like prayer, meals, and community dynamics.
- Understanding the Salesian religious life and charism, even for non-religious volunteers.

Socio-Political and Cultural Formation

- Gaining awareness of local socio-political contexts and human rights issues.
- Developing cultural sensitivity and the ability to adapt to different cultural norms and practices.

Christian and Salesian Values

- Deepening one's understanding and living out of Christian and Salesian values like service, solidarity, and the preventive system.
- Exploring how these values can be applied in the volunteer context.

This formation should be comprehensive, progressive, and structured - covering both practical skills and deeper personal/spiritual growth. Ongoing accompaniment and dialogue with coordinators and other volunteers are also crucial throughout the experience.



Formation for the Coordinators - *group sharing*

Communication and Networking

- Developing strong communication skills and protocols for interacting with volunteers, sending/receiving communities, and other coordinators.
- Building a network of other SMV coordinators to share best practices and support each other.

Cultural Sensitivity and Accompaniment

- Training on cultural awareness, humility, and the ability to facilitate volunteers' cultural adaptation.
- Developing skills in spiritual and emotional accompaniment of volunteers.

Logistics and Program Management

- Understanding the overall structure, policies, and procedures of the SMV.
- Developing competencies in areas like volunteer recruitment, placement, monitoring, and evaluation.

Collaboration and Leadership

- Training on how to effectively work with both Salesian religious and lay people involved in SMV.
- Building skills in visionary leadership, community engagement, and stakeholder management.

Ongoing Formation and Support

- Receiving continuous training, mentoring, and spiritual accompaniment themselves as coordinators.
- Having dedicated time and resources to focus on the SMV, rather than it being just one of many responsibilities.



Formation for receiving communities - *group sharing*

Understanding Salesian Missionary Volunteering

- Educating the community on the purpose, structure, and expectations of the SMV.
- Ensuring the community understands its role in welcoming and supporting the volunteers.

Developing a Culture of Volunteering

- Cultivating an openness and enthusiasm within the community to host volunteers.
- Encouraging the community to see volunteers as an opportunity for mutual growth and learning.

Preparing the Community

- Providing the community with information about the incoming volunteer(s) - their background, skills, and needs.
- Helping the community plan how they will welcome, orient, and integrate the volunteer(s).

Ongoing Accompaniment

- Designating a community member to be the primary point of contact and support for the volunteer(s).
- Facilitating regular check-ins, feedback, and problem-solving between the community and volunteer(s).

Collaboration and Communication

- Establishing clear communication channels between the welcoming community, sending community, and volunteer coordinator.
- Fostering a spirit of co-responsibility and joint ownership of the volunteer experience.



Lay and religious partnership

Fr. Pavel Ženíšek SDB

Please sit comfortably, close your eyes and relax.

Imagine your Province; imagine your organisation, imagine your position in it, your role. What are your feelings?

Can you identify your key partners? Who are the people you work with the most? What are your feelings?

Are you a Salesian? Are you happy that you can work with lay people? Or do you see it as an unavoidable necessity, because the number of Salesians is decreasing?

Are you a lay woman or man? Are you happy that you can work with Salesians? Or do you see it as an unavoidable necessity, because the Salesians are the founders?

How do you imagine it would look like if you could change it? How would you like it to be?

Just say the word that comes to your mind when I say: “cooperation between Salesians and lay people”.

Collaboration/cooperation SDBs – laity. Is it something new, or when it began?

Don Bosco's vision

When Don Bosco wrote his first Constitutions, he had a section for Salesian religious, but also a section for Salesian collaborators. He took them from the beginning as a firm part of the congregation / society he founded. It was too radical and unthinkable, so the Holy See did not approve the Constitutions. So, DB created a new version of the Constitutions, where he put this part about co-workers in an appendix. They didn't even approve it, he had to throw it away completely. And the third version was approved.

This shows Don Bosco's intention, his meaning: the laity were from the beginning the bearers of the Salesian charisma and sent. At first, they were



not Salesians: there was a charismatic founder (DB was not a Salesian), and then there were various helpers and companions who helped him - some were diocesan priests, but most of them were lay people, such as Mamma Margarita. We know the story when he called her from a tiny village Becchi to Valdocco. The Salesians, like the SDB, like the religious, came about later. The laity belonged to the Salesian work from the very beginning, they were considered equal by Don Bosco, and they coexisted with priests and later religious. Don Bosco knew that he would bring something specific that religious and priests could not bring.

It is therefore a shame when I hear people say: look, it's actually like this. Where are lay people active? In Europe, in the USA, in Latin America, because there are no vocations there (and by that they mean vocations to the SDB only). In our province (Asia, Africa), we have enough vocations (new Salesians) and we don't need lay people. Some go even further and say: that's why they don't have new vocations there, because they started to give too big a role to the laity.

How instrumentalized, how narrow minded, and how unfaithful to the original intention of Don Bosco.

I'm firmly convinced, that we, who are involved in the work of the SMV, can see things differently, and also help to make the cooperation between the SDB and the laity more similar to Don Bosco's original intention, when both are important and have an irreplaceable place in the Salesian work, we have a shared mission.

My personal experience

Many people think that I became Salesian because of my dad. My dad Karel was the first lay employee in the Czech Salesian province. He left his good job as designer and technologist in Skoda factory (heavy industry). It was in the early nineties, a year or two after the communist regime ended – for him and for the SDBs it was something new and risky. My dad was known by every single Salesian and when I entered into aspirantate some 4-5 years later, everyone asked me: *“Aren't you Karel's son? Does he have such*



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an effect on you that you want to be a Salesian?" I struggled with it and tried to explain that I got to know the Salesians much earlier than my father went to work for the Salesians, but it hardly mattered. I joined the Salesians in the shadow of the great Karel - the first employed layman in the province. This situation was difficult for me, but it also brought me many positives. Especially when my dad talked about his work at home and explained how he perceives and experiences it, I could see it from the other side. I remember how he once told me - he had already worked for the Salesian for about 3 years: Vis, the director is very nice, I am grateful to him for accepting me, taking the risk, and offering me a good salary. But he doesn't know that if I had stayed in my previous job, my salary would have been raised several times.

Thanks to my dad I could see things from the other side as well. And I think we all need that - both Salesians, sisters, and lay people: to perceive the reality through the eyes of the other.

Czech experience

I don't want to speak for Petra, who is here for the Czech Republic and has an overview of the current situation of SDB-laity relations in the Czech Republic. From all my experience, I am convinced that volunteering here has greatly helped to enhance a respectful, creative and responsible cooperation between the laity and the Salesians.

SMV in the Czech province "brought up" hundreds of committed people and also new Salesians: currently we have 4 Czech Salesian in theological formation and three of them were volunteers through SADBA (Salesian NGO) and attended one-year formation program called Cagliero, which is now led by Petra. Not only the Salesians but also many of these lay people (past-volunteers) are committed for life. Although neither they are religious nor the official Salesians co-operators.

SMV can do great things... Just one example of many...



Our expectation

We want to celebrate the partnership and look at the reality: where are the beautiful things and where are the challenges.

Shared mission is not an opinion, it is fundamental, constitutive! It belongs to the Salesian charism from the very beginning. Don Bosco wanted his work and his



mission to be carried by both Salesians and lay people. This legacy is still valid, and we are here to develop it further because SMV is a great and unique tool and environment for this.

We are called to do the same what DB and the young collaborators did, what DB and Mamma Margarita did. Work together, pray together, take part in one mission and one charism.

Some dangerous positions for a responsible collaboration

- Salesians think that they need lay people only because Salesians are not enough.
- Lay people think that without Salesians they would always work better and more efficiently.
- Salesians think that lay people are here to work because they get money, but they should not be leaders or in a responsible position.
- Lay people think that Salesians should be always available because they do not have family.
- Salesians are clerical when they want to solve everything from the position of authority of a priest, a Salesian.
- Lay people are clerical when they put a Salesian/Salesians on a pedestal.



Lay and religious collaboration: panel

Objective: Bring to the light the importance of shared mission

Alex Vazquez Del Rio	Spain
Margarita Aguilar	Mexico
Fr. Petelo Vito Pau	Samoa
Fr. Arun Charles	Cambodia
Fr. Lingoane Tlaile	Lesotho

What is your vocational call and where does it come from?

ARUN: I studied in Salesian school in India, looking white dressed Salesians. One priest always friendly spent time with me and his style attracted me. After finishing my universities, I started working but I felt I can do so much more for the people and so started my vocational path.

ALEX: I feel that God called me to accompany young people who want to realize their dreams through my work. Through the Salesian charism and the family spirit in my town in South of Madrid I understood it.

LINGOANE: I don't know it. I came from Lesotho and I belong to a family that is not Catholic practitioner, so a neighbour took care of our Christian formation. The Salesians existed but we didn't know them. I met Salesians by chance and one of them persistently invited to me to join them. When I started this discernment, I met so many other people coming from Salesian environments and I decided to go on to the novitiate.

PETELO: Very much inspired by a priest. Salesians running a minor seminary in Samoa and I saw their life, particularly the presence among young people, very special because in my culture young people have no voice. So, I changed my mind and I join the Salesians. My vocation comes from the Baptismal call to share the Church mission, especially with the youth.

MARGARITA: I am cooker as work. For several years I was lost, I was looking for something without knowing what it was. After my SMV



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experience, I finally found a lot of joy, but I didn't find the way. I give thanks to the Salesians who accompanied me in the SMV.

What are the joys you have doing the ministry?

MARGARITA: A lot of joys, all my life is a joy. Family and to have a friend who is priest is really a gift. Studying pedagogy, I appreciated a lot the presence among young people.

ARUN: Being an Indian missionary in Cambodia, I learned a lot from the young people: their anxiety, problems, dreams...being part of their life. This is a very big joy for me and gives me so many relationships. Here it is like I have 40 children. It is good that they don't feel us as far but really close.

What are the challenges you have in your ministry and how you have overcome them?

ALEX: Living coherently what I lived in my SMV experience and giving answer to the concerns of young people. It demands humbleness because we don't have always answers. Remove prejudices that we have and try to see people as gifts from God.

LINGOANE: I changed place of ministry just this year, so I feel that I have not so much experience. I see myself a little bit frustrated when I see Salesians not living as Don Bosco did.

PETELO: I tried to create communities and better sense of family to overcome challenges.

What are the beautiful things about working with the laity?

PETELO: Very nice to work with lay people who have different perspectives, especially the women who have maternal attitude in a male dominant environment. Different talented people for the good of youth.

LINGOANE: I always worked with young lay people. Local volunteers from families who are close to our community helped me to understand Don Bosco mission with youth. Young people bring a lot of energy and challenge us a lot, especially in those things that we as SDB are not comfortable with. It is nice when they give thanks to God for having met the Salesians.

ARUN: Different perspective, as religious sometimes we have just one point of view. Sensitiveness, sometimes more than priests or religious. When you



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stay with lay people you understand more the practical things of life, especially regarding family management; better understanding of humanity. Also, doing more than it is needed (the Salesians sometimes escape). Lay people work with us, not for us.

What are the beautiful things about working with Salesians?

ALEX: Salesians gave me a lot of opportunities in my life. The openness of the Church that I see in Salesians is great and I feel them as my family. In 2018 I had my volunteering experience in Colombia, and I found a mom, Leyre, and a father, Fr. Rafa, and now the Salesians keep on giving me the opportunity to work in it.

MARGARITA: Meeting the Salesians has changed my life and every day I really enjoy their presence that is sharing the life, not relation between chief and worker, but family.

What are the challenges working with the laity?

PETELO: Many challenges. Different understanding of missions with young people. Often the volunteers are more religious than the Salesians and this pushes our vocation, but is a challenge, too.

LINGOANE: Expectations of lay people sometimes are too high; they don't think to Salesians as humans and so they can scandalize. Not always the intentions of collaboration are purified and clarified. Sometimes volunteers come because they have financial struggles in their family. Another challenge is to take the needs of the lay people too personal.

ARUN: Proficiency because lay people are very professional. In the Salesian formation theoretical studies but nothing about stuff like administration, so sometimes we are not prepared for our tasks. All personal stories of lay people are taken to Salesians priests and they always claim us to be father, so we have to pay a lot of attention.

What are the challenges working with the Salesians?

MARGARITA: The difficulty is to work with Salesians with a different way of thinking and acting.

ALEX: World is changing fast and the challenge to work with Salesians is always renewed and updated. We are called to break structures and



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models because after some time there is the need to change. Sometimes we close the door to people outside the Church or Salesian environment: this is a challenge that needs a new model.

What is your recommendation for Salesians and laity sharing the mission?

ARUN: Have patience and understanding, gratitude and working for one another.

ALEX: Take care of our personality and mental issue, avoiding too much work and burnout.

PETELO: Partnership and cooperation as a must. Don't be afraid, Don Bosco will be always with us.

MARGARITA: Bidirectional dialogue.





Lay and religious partnership - group sharing

The overall learning is that effective collaboration between SDBs and lay people in the SMV requires addressing deep-seated fears, building trust, clarifying roles, and cultivating a shared sense of mission and ownership. Ongoing formation, communication, and a spirit of co-responsibility are essential.

Mutual Fears and Challenges:

- Lay people challenge or disrupt SDB established processes and authority.
- Lay people losing trust, authority, and not being respected by the SDBs.
- Both sides struggle with understanding each other's vocations and motivations.

Need for Collaboration and Shared Ownership:

- There is a need to move beyond a hierarchical dynamic and work as true partners, with shared responsibility and decision-making.
- Collaboration should be built on mutual trust, respect, and a shared focus on serving young people.

Importance of Joint Formation and Communication:

- Providing joint formation opportunities for SDBs and lay people to understand each other's roles and perspectives is crucial.
- Establishing clear communication channels and spaces for dialogue can help address misunderstandings and build a spirit of co-responsibility.

Balancing Roles and Responsibilities:

- Clearly defining the specific roles and responsibilities of SDBs versus lay people, while also allowing for flexibility and shared ownership.
- Ensuring that neither side takes on tasks that are outside their primary vocation and expertise.

Cultivating a Culture of Volunteering:

- Developing a culture of volunteering and openness to the SMV within both the SDB and lay communities.
- Encouraging all involved to see the volunteer experience as an opportunity for mutual growth and learning.



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Accompaniment of SMV

Sketch 1: Volunteer

A volunteer eats dinner standing up around a counter with two SDB priests of his community. They are engrossed in their food as he recounts his day.

STEPHEN: So, I told the kids, “Okay, now you guys can improvise the scene.” And indeed, it was amazing! They were acting like professionals. I was so impressed!!

FATHER 1: Fr. Juan, do you have mass tomorrow at eight?

FR. JUÁN: Mm, no, I think that would be Father Paco.

FATHER 1: Well, he told me that he has a meeting tomorrow at school.

FR. JUÁN: Mm, okay.

FATHER 1: So, can you do it tomorrow?

FR. JUÁN: Can't you?

FATHER 1: Me? No. I'm going to have breakfast with my cousin tomorrow.

FR. JUÁN: Good. I'll do it then.

FATHER 1: Thank you.

STEPHEN: It was awesome!

FATHER 1 AND 2: What's that?

STEPHEN: My theater class.

FATHER 1: O that. Yes Yes. Very good.

FR. JUÁN: Yes, very good.

STEPHEN: Well... I think I'm going to go to sleep.

FATHER 1: Well, rest.

FR. JUÁN: Good night.

STEPHEN: Yes, yes, rest. *Stephen begins to walk out.*

FATHER 1: Oh, Stephen. *Stephen turns back, excitedly.*

STEPHEN: Yes?

FATHER 1: Father Paco told me that he wants you to bring a bag of candy to the children tomorrow. So don't forget.



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STEPHEN: Yes, yes. Father already told me. I won't forget.

FATHER 1: Good. Well, good night.

FR. JUÁN: Yes, good night.

The two priests walk out, leaving Stephen alone onstage. He looks down sadly and begins to exit. He then stops and walks over to the other side till he reaches Fr's door. He softly knocks on it.

FR. PACO: Yes?

STEPHEN: Father Paco? It's me.

FR. PACO: Okay. What do you need?

STEPHEN: Ummm... nothing, Father. I just want to tell you, umm...

FR. PACO: I'm waiting...

STEPHEN: I had my theater class today! The children did very well.

FR. PACO: Okay. Are they doing the Dream at Nine?

STEPHEN: Um, well, no, but they did a scene where--

FR. PACO: You should start that. The children have to hear about the life of Don Bosco.

STEPHEN: Yes, Father.

FR. PACO: Volunteers of the past did that.

STEPHEN: Yes, Father. Well, good night.

FR. PACO: Rest well!

STEPHEN: Same to you. *Stephen begins to leave.*

FR. PACO: Oh, Stephen!

STEPHEN: Yes??

FR. PACO: Don't forget to bring the sweets.

STEPHEN: Yes. Yes father.

FR. PACO: We Fathers cannot eat them. They're going to go to waste if they stay here.

STEPHEN: Yes, yes, Father. I won't forget them.

FR. PACO: Very good. Good night.

STEPHEN: Good night, Father. *Stephen walks sadly back to his room.*



1. What are the main challenges in accompanying volunteers?
2. What do you think could help improve volunteer accompaniment?

Sketch 2: SMV Coordinator

A coordinator sits at his desk, humming cheerfully to himself and shuffling through papers. Suddenly, his phone rings and he answers.

COORDINATOR: Hello, John Taylor here.

MRS. STEELMAN: Hello John Taylor. This is Margaret Steelman.

COORDINATOR: Hey! You must be Becky's mom!

MRS. STEELMAN: Yes, I am her mom. For whatever's left of her!

COORDINATOR: Um... excuse me?

MRS. STEELMAN: Becky just called me this morning and told me that the Sisters who run the Mama Margaret Center happened to forget to store any food in her fridge.

COORDINATOR: Oh, well, I'm sorry to hear that. Becky hadn't mentioned that to--

MRS. STEELMAN: Not only that, but she says she hasn't even gotten her stipend from you yet!

COORDINATOR: Oh, well, that tends to be the community's job to provide the--

MRS. STEELMAN: Not to mention she has food poisoning but apparently their doctors won't accept her insurance!

COORDINATOR: Really? It should be active. Why don't I check the--

MRS. STEELMAN: MY DAUGHTER IS SICK, STARVING, AND PENNILESS!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT, MR. TAYLOR???

COORDINATOR: I... well, I can contact the Sisters and--

MRS. STEELMAN: THEY JUST LEFT FOR A WEEKEND RETREAT!

COORDINATOR: Now, Mrs. Steelman, I understand if you're worried. Why don't I give Becky a call and--



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MRS. STEELMAN: The electricity's out in the community and her phone died.

COORDINATOR: Wow. Well, it sounds like Becky's getting the full mission experience!

MRS. STEELMAN: Was that supposed to be a joke, Mr. Taylor?

COORDINATOR: A badly-timed one it seems.

MRS. STEELMAN: Your organization is buying me a ticket to Libovia.

COORDINATOR: Um, I don't know if that's the best solut--

COORDINATOR: Hello? Hello? *He hangs up the phone and sighs.*

COORDINATOR: ...Why do they call the parents first? Why do they always call the pare...?

FRANCIS (PROVINCIAL SECRETARY): Hello?

COORDINATOR: Hi Francis, how's it going?

FRANCIS: My arthritis is acting up.

COORDINATOR: Ah, I'm sorry to hear that. I'll keep you in my prayers. Say, I was hoping to speak to Father Benjamin if he was free.

FRANCIS: He's out of the office for the day.

COORDINATOR: Really? Well, do you think you could get a hold of him? It's kind of an emergency.

FRANCIS: He's at his godson's confirmation.

COORDINATOR: Confirmation, huh? Guess that's a biggie.

FRANCIS: Yeah. Yeah, I'd say so.

COORDINATOR: Okay, then is the Provincial in? I could use Father Ronald's help with some--

FRANCIS: He's out of the office too.

COORDINATOR: Really? On a Tuesday?

FRANCIS: He's having lunch with some Carmelite Sisters.

COORDINATOR: Any way you could call him for me? I could really use his support on some--

FRANCIS: They're Carmelites, John. Cloistered. This is the first time they've gone out for lunch in six months. You're going to have to wait.



COORDINATOR: Right, yeah, I guess that's... important. Well, if either of them comes back in the office, could you let them know I need their help with something? There's an emergency with a volunteer.

FRANCIS: A volunteer with an emergency? Wow, big surprise. That'll be front page of the next newsletter. I'll let them know you called.

COORDINATOR: Thank you.

COORDINATOR: Okay, well, hopefully it shouldn't take too long for them to come back. It's just confirmation and a lunch with sisters... those things tend to wrap up quickly...

COORDINATOR: Siri, how much are flights to Los Mochis, Libovia?

1. When it comes to the accompaniment of the volunteer coordinator, what are his/her expectations and needs? From whom are the needs/expectations met?
2. Do you perceive different views on this matter if the coordinator is a lay person and if s/he is a Salesian or sister FMA? In what way?

Sketch 3: Receiving community

A priest leads a volunteer on a tour of the Salesian House. The volunteer drags two suitcases behind him and nods to whatever the priest says.

P. LUIS: Well, here we have the laundry. There is a washing machine, a dryer, soap, a faucet for water, anything you need, yes? I explain?

MAREK: Yes!

P. LUIS: Good. So what is this room?

MAREK: Yes.

P. LUIS: "Yes" is this room?

MAREK: No.

P. LUIS: "No" is this room? Or do you mean that this room is not a room?

MAREK: I don't understand.

P. LUIS: Oh my. This is a laundry. Say it, "lau-n-dry."



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MAREK: Lau-n-dry.

P. LUIS: Good. Here you can wash your clothes. "Wash your clothes".

MAREK: Wash your clothes-- oh clothes! Oh this is the laundry room! That's what you mean!

P. LUIS: I don't understand you but well, you seem like you understand now. Son, I'm going to be late. I have a meeting. At seven thirty is Vespers. You can join us if you want. And at eight it's dinner.

P. LUIS: Dinner...

P. LUIS: --at eight. *He shows eight fingers. Marek shows them back.*

MAREK: Eight!?

P. LUIS: Until eight, do me a favor... Don't die.

MAREK: Oh my goodness, my brain hurts so much.

He lays down one of his suitcases and begins pulling out dirty clothes. He continues sorting through them.

MAREK: Jesus, why didn't I pay attention in Spanish class? Couldn't You have told me I'd actually have to use it someday?

Suddenly, he starts getting a call. He pulls out his phone and answers it, continuing to sort through his clothes.

MAREK: Hello? Hey Mom! Yeah, yeah, I'm doing okay. Just arrived at the house.

As he continues this call, a Salesian brother walks in carrying a laundry basket, looking through it. However, once he sees Marek, he stops dead in his tracks.

BROTHER: A gringo? Who brought a gringo to the house?

Marek continues his conversation on the phone. The Salesian slowly walks over to him until he's standing over him. After a moment, Marek turns and gets startled by him.

MAREK: Oh my!

MAREK: Hold on for one second, Mom. Hello! My name is Marek! I am from England.

BROTHER: It shows. What are you doing here?

MAREK: Nice to meet you. What is your name?

BROTHER: Chuy. What do you do at home?



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MAREK: Chuy. Nice to meet you.

BROTHER: Why are you here?

MAREK: Oh thank God you speak English. You don't know how tough these last three–

BROTHER: Who are you?

MAREK: Um, I'm a missionary. I'm going to be staying in the house.

BROTHER: A missionary? For how long? How many times?

MAREK: Uh, um, one year.

BROTHER: One year?!

MAREK: I just met Father Luis and he said–

BROTHER: Nobody told me that. I think you're wrong because that's-- a year?? I'm going looking for Father Luis. Stay here and don't move. Father! Why is there a gringo in the house?!

MAREK: Hey Mom. Sorry, I was just meeting another one of the Salesians here. No, yeah, everyone is being super welcoming. Just one big family.

1. Who and how should they be involved in accompanying the SDB/FMA community that receives the volunteer?
2. What are the biggest difficulties and challenges for the Salesians (SDBS or FMAs) in the community that receives the volunteers?





Accompaniment - *group sharing*

Volunteer Accompaniment:

- Providing strong spiritual and emotional accompaniment for volunteers, including support for their families.
- Encouraging volunteers to be curious, engage in dialogue, and avoid seeing themselves as "saviours".
- Helping volunteers find meaning and purpose in their service, not just completing tasks.
- Preparing volunteers before departure and monitoring them closely during their placement.

Coordinator Accompaniment:

- Ensuring coordinators have adequate funding, workspace, and recognition from their province.
- Training coordinators not just on logistics, but also on cultural sensitivity, spiritual accompaniment, and networking.
- Empowering coordinators to build strong relationships and communication with receiving communities.
- Providing "live coaching" and ongoing support for coordinators.

Community Accompaniment:

- Cultivating a culture of volunteering and openness to hosting volunteers within both sending and receiving communities.
- Establishing clear communication channels and a shared sense of responsibility between sending and receiving communities.
- Designating a community member to be the primary point of contact and support for the volunteer(s).
- Facilitating regular check-ins, feedback, and problem-solving between the community and volunteer(s).



Accompaniment - group sharing

After the volunteer experience - Re-Entry:

- One of the most important parts of the volunteering experience is the return - when the volunteer returns to the reality of their life before the experience.
- Volunteers with experience in the local community can still experience culture shock when they come out of their everyday lives and "bubbles" back home.
- The path of volunteering is described as a "wave of good moments and difficult moments" - the return home can be one of those difficult moments.
- Volunteers need support in managing their emotions and social/emotional skills, such as how to cope with feelings of loneliness after the mission.
- In addition to the volunteer project itself, volunteers must be clear about their personal life project and how the SMV experience fits into that.

The return home is a critical part of the volunteer experience that requires just as much preparation and support as the time abroad. Volunteers may struggle to reintegrate and need help processing the emotional and cultural changes they have undergone. Providing this support is an important part of the SMV's responsibility to its volunteers.

The overarching theme is the need for comprehensive, multi-level accompaniment that addresses the needs of volunteers, coordinators, communities, and the collaboration between Salesians and lay people. Ongoing support, communication, and a focus on personal/spiritual growth are essential.



Listening is Accompaniment

Raymond Callo SDB

Where we stand, so we see. How we see, so we relate.

“Our young people are our burning bush.” (SDB General Chapter, 27)
Hence, we should approach them with reverence because in them we are encountering the presence of God. And through them, we find our way to holiness.

What is it like to be in the situation of a volunteer? A coordinator? A Salesian community? What is it that each one is going through as they interact with each other?

Listening is accompaniment. As a volunteer, this is the greatest gift we can offer the young people we will encounter and accompany.

That we are able to waste time with them. That we are able to say, “wasting time with you is not time wasted”. That your story is important to me. I may not have the answers but I can assure you of one thing. I am ready and willing to listen.

As coordinators, this is the greatest privilege of our office, of our service that we can give to our volunteers, our team members, and to the Salesian communities. It is a privilege because we are the closest person and collaborator to whom the other can entrust his/her story, who is willing to listen to them.

It is a privilege because information is power. By sharing my story with you, I am allowing myself to be vulnerable to you. I am giving you power over me. At times, you will be the first person to whom I will tell my story and to no one else. Hence, it is a privilege.

And it is not something given, it is earned. Mutual trust and confidence have to be present.

As a Salesian community, we have the privilege of being present and available to listen, to accompany. Just like the coordinator, when we have established that relationship with the volunteer, that mutual trust and confidence, then all the rest follows. Our volunteers are young people.



Hence, they are not only partners in the mission, they are also recipients of the mission.

Recall a personal experience in the recent past wherein you felt you were listened to. You felt that what you have to say was taken seriously, that the other person understood what you were talking about, that you were valued and affirmed as a person.

Recall the experience and relive what it is like to be listened to.

In the same manner, recall a personal experience in the recent past wherein someone expressed to you how grateful he/she is that you listened to him/her, that this person felt that what he/she has to say was taken seriously, that you valued and affirmed him/her.

Go back to the experience and relive what it is like to listen to another.

General Chapter 28 talks about the “Sacrament of Presence”; listening is our way of allowing God to be present, of being a Sacrament of Presence. As we listen to another, two things are happening at the same time: we affect others by what we say and what we do not, we are also affected by what others say and not say to us. Hence, we also need to listen to ourselves. How we are affected by what we listened to. Otherwise, we will be reacting to the other person rather than responding. We have to recognize that whenever we are in front of others. We bring the totality of who we are –our past and our present, our experiences, our learnings, our training, our biases, our feelings, etc. All these always play a role in a significant extent to how we relate with others. And how others relate to us. Hence, we need to be accompanied in the process. This is very important especially when we are unaware of our own reactions and responses. It may not be because of the other person but because of where we are coming from. Our assessment of our reactions will depend to the extent we are aware of our own interior dispositions and so we are able to distinguish if it is because of the other person or just about us.



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Hence, we need to recognize what is happening to us as we listen to others and where it is coming from...and to work on it or to seek help from someone. We need to be accompanied either with one or with our peers. What is present to me now? What are my learnings? For us Salesians (volunteer, coordinator, community) Learning by experience is how we are formed in mission. The accompaniment of the volunteer during the volunteer period is the key to making sure that the experience is formative. We will always have positive or negative experiences. But how do all these experiences become formative?

When there is good accompaniment, and when the volunteer feels understood and affirmed, he grows and profits from the experience, even when it is very challenging and demanding. Accompaniment of experience clarifies and reinforces the motivations and the 'right intention,' which is the basic energy behind the Salesian life journey and opens the volunteer to new opportunities for growth and the flowering of his inner potential.





Accompaniment in SMV: “Accompaniment means to share bread with someone”.

Looking to the SMV manual, pp 109 – 118:

- The meaning of accompaniment
- An accompanying environment. Group accompaniment. Personal accompaniment
- Before. During. After
- Operative criteria and standards

At the same time, we need to be aware that self-care is very important. Taking care of myself helps me to be of greater availability for service to the other.

Ongoing formation/continuing education/personal plan of life.

- spiritual accompaniment
- mentoring
- coaching/counseling
- community –support group

How do I attend to myself? How do I take care of myself?

Is there someone who is willing to listen to me? To accompany me?

It is important to have a reference person: a Spiritual Guide/Mentor/Coach.



A common Database for SMV

Adam Rudin

As SMV Advisory Team, we are thinking about a website that could be a common database for all Salesian Missionary Volunteering organizations. The project is in development: we can look to build on what currently exists but we need your input and suggestions. The website is for you, your community, and your volunteers.

The goals of this database are:

- Share SMV programs contact information
- Share/Promote site placement information
- Allow Salesian communities/provinces to request for volunteers
- SMV Advisory Team information
- Resource center (programs, prayers, manuals, etc.) for SMV

Structure:

- Program directory (Search for programs and locate using interactive map)
- Detailed program info
- Placement directory (Search for sites using various parameters, map view)
- Placements – Detailed Pages
- Adding site placements
- Info about SMV Advisory Team

Multi-level site access (SMV sending organizations; receiving communities, basic level)





→ <https://salesiansites.wpengine.com/>



Database - *group sharing and personal evaluation*

Overall, the participants provided positive feedback on the content and user interface of the program directory and placement directory, rating them 4.0 or higher.

Some suggestions for improvements include:

- Adding more information like weather forecasts, reviews/testimonials, and scope of the programs.
- Improving the search and filtering functionality, especially on the program directory page.
- Providing an easy way for users to update their information regularly, with reminders.
- Ensuring all links and information are up-to-date and working properly.
- Considering adding more macro-level information rather than very specific details.
- Providing a way for users to submit questions or feedback if they don't find what they're looking for.



09.03.2024

Commitment from the participants

Commit to the work with each other:

- Recognize and appreciate the presence and contributions of both Salesians and lay people.
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and a sense of shared ownership.
- Avoid a hierarchical dynamic and work as true partners.

Use the Salesian Preventive System holistically:

- Embody the values of the Preventive System in their interactions and approach.
- Ensure the Preventive System guides the overall SMV, not just individual tasks.

Establish trust and open communication:

- Make a commitment to active listening and understanding each other's perspectives.
- Find time and space to build relationships and a bond of trust.
- Engage in honest, direct, and ongoing dialogue.

Recognize limitations and be humble:

- Accept that they don't know everything and don't need to know everything.
- Be open to learning from each other and growing together.
- Approach the work with humility and a spirit of collaboration.

Cultivate a shared Salesian charism and mission:

- Recognize that the Salesian charism belongs to the whole community, not any one group.
- Commit to authentically sharing and living out the Salesian charism together.
- Focus on the shared mission of serving young people, rather than individual agendas.



Feedback on the Overall Meeting

- Participants felt the meeting was very necessary and useful as an "instituting force" for the congregation.
- They noted the lack of representation from Salesian works that receive volunteers, which is a key perspective to include.
- There was a call to better disseminate the information and outcomes from the meeting to all the inspectorates, not just those present.
- Suggestions to continue the collaboration between Youth Ministry and Missions, and to have the Advisory Team accompany the process regularly.
- Proposals to hold online follow-up meetings to keep enriching the practices.
- Interest in exploring how to evangelize through the diversity represented, and how to better welcome that diversity.

The overall feedback indicates the database and website are generally well-received, but there are opportunities to enhance the functionality, content, and user experience based on the participants' suggestions. The meeting itself was seen as valuable, but there is a need to ensure broader engagement and ongoing support.





Distributing of the SMV Crosses

The SMV crosses belong to the Salesian Congregation and are distributed by both the Youth Ministry and Missions Sector.

The crosses are meant as a unification symbol for Salesian Missionary Volunteers only.

Salesian Missionary Volunteering is defined by the Congregation:

*It is a **service of solidarity**, made without cost and **freely-given** by a **young person**, sent and welcomed by a **community**, which is part of the educative and pastoral project of a Salesian presence or promoted by it, with a **sufficient continuity** of time, **motivated by faith**, with a missionary style and according to the pedagogy and spirituality of **Don Bosco**.*

Therefore, the following are guidelines for those who are able to receive the cross:

- Volunteers who have undergone a training and formation process with a central focus on Salesian spirituality and pedagogy
- Volunteers who will live and work within Salesian communities
- Volunteers who commit to an ongoing and continuous period of time
- Volunteers who have given freely of their time without compensation for their service
- Volunteers who are people of faith and are committed to working in the style of Don Bosco





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It is important that the guidelines are followed closely and the SMV crosses are used exclusively for Salesian Missionary Volunteers.

The crosses can be requested by the coordinators of SMV. The request can be made to the Missions and Youth Ministry Sectors through the SMV Advisory Team (salesianvol@sdb.org) indicating the numbers of the requested crosses and details of usage.

The price is 7€ however the cost you will need to pay is 3€ per cross (plus postage) as the remaining amount is subsidised by the Missions and Youth Ministry Sectors.

The crosses will be stored in the office of Missions Sector, in Rome, at the Generalate.





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Meeting attendees

Fr. Alfred Maravilla SDB (RMG, from Philippines) – *General Councillor for the Missions*
Fr. Miguel Ángel García SDB (RMG, from Spain) – *General Councillor for Youth Ministry*
Lauren Hichaaba (AUL – Australia) - *SMV Provincial Coordinator Cagliari Project, PDMA*
Fr. Pavel Ženíšek SDB (RMG, from Czechia) – *SDB Missions Sector*
Fr. Rafael Bejarano SDB (RMG, from Colombia) – *SDB Youth Ministry Sector*
Marco Fulgaro (RMG, from Italy) - *SDB Missions Sector*
Juan Carlos Montenegro (SUO – United States of America) - *PDMA*
Adam Rudin (SUE – United States of America) - *Salesian Lay Missioners Director*
Fr. Cristopher Kunda SDB (ZMB – Zambia) – *Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry*
Fr. Privat Fouda Bieme SDB (ATE – Camerun) - *PDMA, Africa - Madagascar CORAM*
Eva Caballero Segarra (SMX – Spain) – *In charge of volunteering, Bosco Global*
Laura Margarita Aguilar Aguirre (MEG – Mexico) – *SMV Provincial Coordinator*
Fr. Lingoane Alphonsi Tlaile SDB (AFM – Lesotho) - *Lesotho Salesian missions in charge*
Niklas Gregull (GER – Germany) - *Don Bosco Volunteers and International Youth Work coordinator, Don Bosco Youth-Net President*
Petra Klášková (CEP – Czechia) - *SADBA SMV coordinator*
Fr. José Carlos Sobejano García SDB (SSM – Spain)- *PDMA, SMV, Vocational Animation*
Raymond Callo SDB (RMG, from Philippines) - *SDB Formation Sector*
Fr. Sérgio Ramos De Souza SDB (BPA – Brazil) - *Vice-Provincial, Delegate for YM*
Fr. Pavol Nizner SDB (SLK – Slovakia) - *SMV Provincial Coordinator*
Joanna Matuszek (PLE – Poland) - *Volunteer coordinator in Salesian Mission Center*
Fr. Jacek Zdzieborski SDB (PLE – Poland) - *Director of the Mission Office, PDMA*
Flavia Ferreyra (URU – Uruguay) - *SMV Provincial Coordinator, M.A. Commission*
Fr. Bartolomeo Tran Thai Phan SDB (VIE – Vietnam) - *SMV Coordinator*
Anne Nguyen Thai Duy Tran (VIE – Vietnam) - *SMV Provincial chief*

*PDMA=Provincial Delegate
for Missionary Animation

**CORAM=Regional Coordinator
for Missionary Animation



2024 SMV meeting, Rome – Acts of the meeting

- Fr. Diego Rodríguez SDB (ECU – Ecuador) - *SYM, SMV, Vocational Animation delegate*
- Fr. Michael Bansode SDB (INB – India) - *PDMA and SMV Provincial Coordinator*
- Maria Kargulewicz (PLS – Poland)- *Youth for the world SMV coordinator*
- Fr. Wellington Abreu SDB (BMA – Brazil) - *PDMA and SMV Provincial Coordinator*
- Fr. Johnson Paulraj SDB (INM – India) - *Rector, Don Bosco Thalavadi*
- Veronika Ďuricová (SLK – Slovakia) - *Coordinator for volunteer preparation*
- Fr. Henry William Córdova SDB (BOL – Bolivia) - *Delegate for Youth Ministry*
- Fr. Tiago Eliomar Gonçalves SDB (BSP – Brazil) – *PDMA, Vocational Animation, South Cone CORAM*
- Alex Vázquez Del Río (Spain, Madrid) - *Misiones Salesianas, volunteers in charge*
- Leyre Sainz Piñero(Spain, Madrid) - *Misiones Salesianas, volunteering technician*
- Fr. Stefano Yu Minam SDB (KOR – South Korea) - *PDMA*
- Fr. Albert Kabuge SDB (FRB – France) - *PDMA, Provincial Secretary, VIDES advisory commission*
- Fr. Arun Michael Charles SDB (THA - Cambodia) – *PDMA, Delegation Economist, East Asia - Oceania CORAM*
- Fr. Fabio Maistro SDB (INE – Italy) - *PDMA*
- Fr. Richard D'Silva SDB (INB – India) – *Rector, Savedi, Ahmednagar*
- Valentina Barbieri (Italy, Rome) – *VIS, in charge of international volunteering*
- Fr. Vito Pau Petelo SDB (AUL-Samoa) - *Salelologa rector, principal, parish priest*
- Louis Debono (MLT – Malta) - *Educator and volunteer, Friend of Don Bosco*
- Fr. Luca Barone SDB (RMG, from Italy) - *Member of executive committee of VIS*
- Fr. Jozef Kamza SDB (PER – Peru) - *Vice – Provincial, international volunteering*
- Virgina Cerón Martinez (MEM – Mexico) - *PDMA and Social Works*
- Filip Wojciechowski (PLS – Poland) - *Youth for the world SMV manager*
- Valentina Calabrese (ICC – Italy) - *Missionary Animation team, communication in charge*
- Fr. Eric Mairura SDB (RMG, from Kenya) - *SDB Missions Sector*



Working groups

Lasagne

Lauren Hichaaba, Filip Wojciechowski, Fr. Lingoane Tlaile, Br. Raymond Callo, Niklas Gregull, Thai Duy Anne Tran Nguyen, Fr. Thai Bartolomeo Phan Tran, Fr. Michael Bansode

Rigatoni

Adam Rudin, Fr. Johnson Paulraj, Petra Klašková, Maria Kargulewicz, Fr. Stefano Yu Minam, Fr. Arun Michael, Fr. Eric Mairura

Spaghetti

Fr. Chris Kunda, Veronika Ďuricová, Fr. Richard D’Silva, Fr. Petelo Vito Pau, Louis Debono, Joanna Matuszek, Fr. Privat Fouda Bieme

Ravioli

Juan Carlos Montenegro, Fr. José Carlos Sobejano Garcia, Leyre Sainz Piñero, Virginia Cerón, Fr. Diego Rodriguez, Fr. Jozef Kamza

Cannelloni

Fr. Rafael Bejarano, Eva Caballero, Fr. Sergio Ramos, Flavia Ferreyra, Margarita Aguilar, Fr. Henry William, Alex Vázquez

Farfalle- Tortellini

Fr. Pavel Ženíšek, Marco Fulguro, Valentina Calabrese, Valentina Barbieri, Fr. Tiago Eliomar, Fr. Wellington Abreu, Fr. Albert Kabuge, Fr. Pavol Nizner, Fr. Jacek Zdzieborski, Fr. Fabio Maistro, Fr. Luca Barone



