

[Solidarity Matters 2017 First Quarter]





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Welcome to the first quarter edition of Solidarity Matters for 2017.

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[CEO's Welcome and Report]

We are pleased to announce that this year we join with the Marist Province of Australia's theme of "Awaken" with our annual theme: AWAKEN Marists in Solidarity.

When St Marcellin invited the first two young men to join him and form the Marist Brothers as educators of those without access to schooling in rural France, he set off 200 years of life and movement across 81 countries.

There are over 150 projects in 18 Asia Pacific countries that now have solidarity projects supported by the generous AMS solidarity office donors.

Solidarity at its base level is the choice we make about who we stand with. The Bicentenary of Marists brings us back to the origins of choosing youth projects that empower change in communities; change that is life enhancing and bringing young people closer to the vision of Jesus for a different world marked by the values of the Reign of God. The team and board at Australian Marist Solidarity are very grateful for what you achieved with our partners in the field in 2016.

Among the major projects there are two to highlight this year. In Timor Leste it is hoped to turn the soil for our first Marist school. In Cambodia, graduates of LaValla School for those without access to education because of disabilities, will be moving to a new "Village" complex of simple non-institutionalised housing for secondary and university education. These capital projects need extra effort this year to fund and we encourage you to publicise them in your communities.

The team and board at Australian Marist Solidarity are very grateful for what you achieved with our partners in the field in 2016. The impact has been thousands of young people across Marist centres in Asia Pacific accessing education for the first time while some others learning in new life or vocational skills' programmes or even having their first book to read!

May the Bicentenary Year be one of promise for those we can't see and may never meet but are within our solidarity lens.

Brother Allen Sherry fms

CEO, Australian Marist Solidarity



[Case Study on the Timor-Leste Katilosa Program]

AMS supports a small local Timorese initiative called Katilosa. Katilosa supports children with disabilities and their families through a number of programs. They provide day respite, physiotherapy, skills training and community based rehabilitation where the children live with their family in their home, attend local schools and are supported through weekly visits from physiotherapists and social workers.

It is still common in Timor-Leste for children with disabilities to be hidden by their families away from the wider community because of traditional beliefs. Katilosa was developed to provide the critical support for families of children with disabilities and to improve the views held by the local community about disability.

The KATILOSA project, developed by physiotherapists at the Darasula Rehabilitation Centre provides a range of programs. These include:

- motor skills development
- physiotherapy
- physiotherapy training for parents and guardians of the children
- play groups to provide support networks for the families.

KATILOSA staff also carry out visits to remote families to ensure that those who are unable to travel to Darasula are still able to receive the necessary care and training. In order to do this the KATILOSA continues to source a range of specialised equipment for the children's developmental needs.

Other programs include:

- monitoring of children with disabilities in schools.
- encouraging participation of people with disabilities in local events.
- referral of clients to appropriate specialised care.
- vocational training of people with a disability for independence.

In 2016 the KATILOSA program highlights include:

- Supporting 35 with cerebral palsy (24 under 18 years of age);
- 131 Timorese supported overall (49 under 18 years of age);
- 6 children provided support to access mainstream schooling;
- 34 students being supported in their primary education;
- 18 provided with orthotics;
- 35 provided wheelchairs by referral;
- 15 provided with physiotherapy;
- 7 provided with speech therapy; and
- 28 referrals to other organisations for specialised assistance.

KATILOSA's location, Darasula, is a remote village however, its location enables the staff to service sites that are even more isolated. As the program gathers support from the wider community the number of people with a disability who are seeking support also grows. Keeping up with demand for the services is proving to be difficult. Your support can make all the difference. Please visit [the Katilosa Project](#) to help.



[Mae Sot — Marist Karen Mission]

AMS is working in the Karen refugee camps where the Karen people of Myanmar have long faced persecution by the majority group, the ethnic Burmese.

The Marist Fathers, through the Marist Mission Centre, have been working with Karen refugees for over a decade. AMS's work with this marginalised population is a result of our partnership with Marist Mission Centre as we seek to provide support to four different hostels across four different refugee camps in Northern Thailand. These hostels are home to 156 children and young people who do not have family in the camps.

Mae La refugee camp acts as a functioning village. There are provision stores, schools and medical clinics, and just recently, electricity was provided. However, all is not as it seems. People survive on rations that they collect every day, schools and clinics are run by NGO's, and water is piped from mountain runoff which dries up in the dry season. They have no income so can't afford to buy anything, health issues pose a deadly threat, and (homemade) alcohol abuse, as well as domestic violence, is not uncommon. These people live in limbo, and have done so for many years, and they have no sense of the future, just living day-by-day.

Key Statistics:

- It is estimated that 150,000 Karen people currently live in twelve refugee camps in Thailand on the border of Karen State.
- Mae La refugee camp is home to almost 40,000 Karen men, women and children and is heavily guarded by the Thai army.
- Mae La camp was established in 1984 for just 1,000 people

As a result it is an unplanned sprawling mass of people that runs for kilometers along the side of the highway. The camp itself spreads up the side of a mountain and is located in dense jungle. There is barely a tin roof or cement in sight with most houses being made from bamboo, wood, leaves and bark.



[Marist Moulovibazar opens its doors in Bangladesh]

The Sylhet District of Bangladesh welcomes a new secondary school and girls hostel.

Marist Moulovibazar opened its doors on January 2nd, 2017 and will facilitate secondary education for the children of Moulovibazar and Sreemangal districts, addressing in particular boys and girls from the tea plantation areas. The school will also offer boarding for its students in what has been described as a move to improve accessibility for remote and impoverished students. The living conditions of these communities are remarkably meagre due to the lack of proper facilities, especially water supply and sanitation.

The pre-selection of the first students was undertaken in November and December, 2016 with 73 students coming from the tea plantations and 20 more from the nearby village of Giasnagar. A feature of the school is its ethnic and religious diversity as 38 students are Hindu, 22 Muslim and 30 Christian, whilst the ratio of boys to girls is almost even. Promoting social integration among young boys and girls belonging to different ethnic groups and with different religious backgrounds is fundamental to developing better social understanding, inter-religious dialogue and cooperation among all.

The workers in the Tea Gardens in Moulovibazar are one of the most deprived groups in Bangladesh, working in slave-like conditions and earning approximately 65 US cents a day. As indentured labourers, they struggle to feed their children, let alone send them to school. Without a proper education, these children have little hope of finding alternative employment or breaking out of the poverty cycle.

The Marist Brothers, in collaboration with the Diocese of Sylhet, are building this secondary school offering free education (Grade 6-10) for 200 Tea Garden children. AMS has contributed to an important component of this project, namely a hostel for girls, making it possible for them to live and study in a safe, clean and supportive environment.

We would like to thank all those individuals and schools who have supported this project over the past 18 months as well as Lenity Australia who are providing scholarships for 30 boarding students.



[Reflections of a Volunteer]

New Horizons, Vietnam

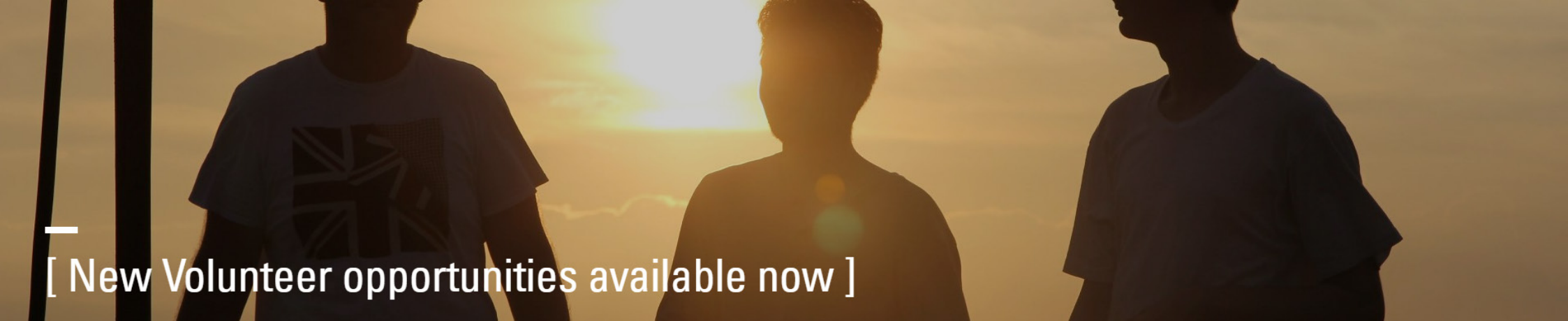
The New Horizons Centre gives young Vietnamese children extra educational assistance by teaching English and Information Technology.

"The experience has been an absolute whirlwind, super busy, but super enjoyable. The children are a delight to teach, enthusiastic and willing to learn. The variety of personalities and abilities ensures variety within the classroom and makes it always entertaining. The New Horizons centre has been amazing, with the nightly classes being fantastic, and the activities outside of it just as good, if not better! The friends we've met have all been unbelievably welcoming and hospitable, taking us for day trips to the local Pagoda's, meals, and even showing us throughout the town. The staff are incredible, and the children even more-so, so far it's been an absolute pleasure, and will no doubt continue to be so."

By: Ben Hawtin (Sydney) and Rosie Campbell (Brisbane)

Marist Volunteers Australia





[New Volunteer opportunities available now]

What are your plans for this year? Have you thought about volunteering overseas in a Marist Project? Marist Volunteers Australia has positions available in 2017 and 2018 for young Marists and experienced teachers in Vietnam, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Thailand and many more. Please visit the [Marist Volunteers Australia website](#) or email Brother Mark Fordyce via maristvolunteersaustralia@marists.org.au for more information.

Contact Us

Our Vision...

is of a world that reflects Marists' desire that vulnerable young people are brought towards the centre from the margins through access to education.

Our Mission...

is to empower young people by enhancing their human dignity and developing their capacity to transform their lives and communities.

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