

HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RESPONSE UPDATE

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

[OCTOBER 2015]

Who: Canossian Daughters of Charity (*CHARIS Affiliate*)

Grant requested: For the construction and infrastructure cost of the Canossian Vocational Centre in Myanmar.

Amount Granted: SGD 70,000

Who: Project Kyrie (*CHARIS Affiliate*)

Grant requested: For a project to construct five bathrooms and latrines for 30 families in a leprosy village in Chennai, India.

Amount Granted: SGD 22,800

Who: Caritas Jordan

Grant requested: To fund the health assistance program in support of an Emergency Appeal for Syrian and Iraqi Refugees and vulnerable Jordanians.

Amount Granted: SGD 25,000

Who: Caritas Myanmar (KMSS)

Grant requested: In support of an Emergency Appeal to provide access to clean drinking water to 12 villages in Pyay, Myanmar.

Amount Granted: SGD 86,000

[JANUARY 2016]

Who: Caritas SED Galle (Sri Lanka)

Grant requested: For the construction of 30 toilets and 20 Bio-Sand units in Deniyaya, Sri Lanka, Water System at Army Ela Village and the purchase of 30 water tanks.

Amount Granted: SGD 25,854

[MARCH 2016]

Who: Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Myanmar)

Grant requested: For the construction of 80 houses in Kalay, Myanmar for families affected by the flood and landslide caused by Cyclone Komen.

Amount Granted: SGD 32,400

Who: Canossian Daughters of Charity (*CHARIS Affiliate*)

Grant requested: To prevent the spread of malaria and dengue, CHARIS provided 100 pieces of mosquito nets to replace torn nets in the Canossa home and various boarding houses in Myanmar.

Who: acts29 (*CHARIS Affiliate*)

Grant requested: Construction of an evacuation centre for 200 people in Romblon, Philippines.

Amount Granted: SGD 74,300

Who: Caritas Thailand

Grant requested: To provide immediate assistance, psychosocial support and legal services to Rohingya refugees in Thailand.

Amount Granted: SGD 25,263

DISASTER RESPONSE

[OCTOBER 2015]

Who: Caritas Indonesia

Grant requested: For the purchase and distribution of masks to families affected by the Haze crisis in Indonesia.

Amount Granted: SGD 10,000

Who: Caritas Philippines

Grant requested: In support of an Emergency Appeal to fund sanitation & hygiene kits and mosquito nets to support survivors of Typhoon Koppu.

Amount Granted: SGD 50,000

[NOVEMBER 2015]

Who: Caritas Pakistan

Grant requested: In support of an Emergency Appeal to fund aid and relief efforts given to those affected by the earthquake in Pakistan.

Amount Granted: SGD 20,000

[DECEMBER 2015]

Who: Caritas Philippines

Grant requested: In response to a Solidarity Appeal to support families affected by Typhoon Nona.

Amount Granted: SGD 30,000

2016 EVENTS CALENDAR

7 MAY 2016 — 'LIGHT TO THE WORLD' TRAINING

An insight on using the study guide based on the Catholic Social Teaching while on Mission

{ Time } 10am – 12pm

{ Target Audience } CHARIS Affiliates

To register, kindly email Gabriel, gabriel@charis-singapore.org

12 – 18 JUNE 2016 — CHARIS MISSION FRIENDSHIP — SRI LANKA

Our 2nd trip to Sri Lanka, we will be building toilets and Bio-Sand Filtration systems for two villages in Sri Lanka in solidarity with Caritas Galle.

{ Cost } \$920

{ Closing Date } 13 May 2016

For more information or to register, contact: victoria@charis-singapore.org

23 JULY 2016 — 'THEIR FAITH, MY JOURNEY'

Dr. Jolene Jerard, a Catholic and specialist in International Relations will share on her work and service towards people across cultures and religions.

{ Time } 10am – 12pm

To register, kindly email Gabriel, gabriel@charis-singapore.org

21-27 AUGUST 2016 — CHARIS-ACTS29 MISSION FRIENDSHIP — PHILIPPINES

After Haiyan and Melor, Romblon was left devastated. Join us as we help our brothers and sisters to rebuild their homes.

{ Cost } TBC

For more information or to register, contact: victoria@charis-singapore.org

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MYANMAR: LIFE AFTER THE FLOODS

Cyclone Komen ploughed through the western parts of Myanmar on 30th July 2015.

By: Victoria Lim

Photos: Caritas Myanmar (KMSS)

In August 2015, CHARIS responded to the disaster, which resulted in a flood that left 1.6 million displaced and at least 117 people killed by pledging an initial sum of SGD 100,000 for aid and disaster relief supplies to Caritas Myanmar (KMSS). In October 2015 CHARIS granted SGD 86,000 to KMSS for their project to rehabilitate 4 ponds and wells, which had been contaminated by floodwaters and rendered unsuitable for drinking. This also included repairing gravity flow water systems in 7 villages in the Chin State. On a whole, both these projects would benefit at least 6,505 people living in the area.



Enthusiastically putting the finishing touches to a cube well



Local villagers worked with KMSS staff in the blistering heat to construct ponds

In late February 2016, our partner Caritas Myanmar successfully completed 4 ponds, which not only provide a natural embankment for future floods but also a catchment and fresh water source for local villagers. This was a landmark achievement for them as they were faced with a variety of challenges such as language barriers, limited manpower and poor transportation routes.

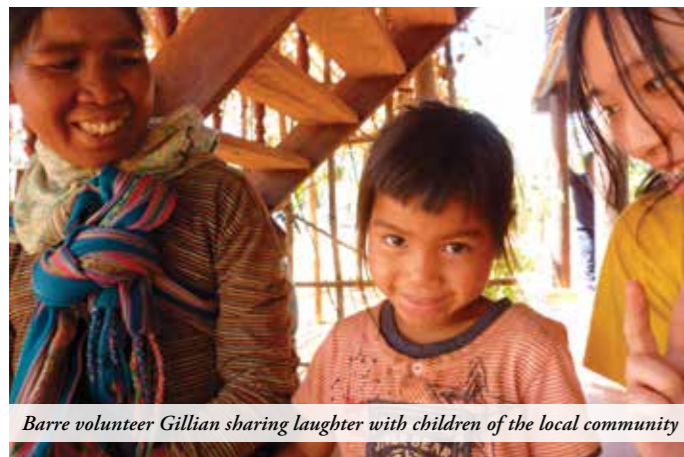
In spite of the challenges, what was most inspiring was that these difficulties were overcome by hardworking KMSS project staff who encouraged and mobilised the local villagers to take ownership

and contribute to the planning and construction phase of the project.

This encouraging update challenges us to ponder on what it means to have faith and hope in the Lord in the midst of seemingly unsurmountable struggles. Perhaps it also demands us to have an attitude of joy and hope during this season of Easter. Are we too living a risen life, risen from our sins and shortcomings and trusting in God?

We also ask for your continued prayers as our partner continues its good work building the gravity flow water system in the Chin state of Myanmar.

CHARIS
Caritas Humanitarian Aid & Relief Initiatives, Singapore



Barre volunteer Gillian sharing laughter with children of the local community

SOWING SEEDS IN KONTUM

Barré continues to sow seeds of love.

By: Jeremy Khoo and Victoria Lim

Photo Credits: Barré Group

In the parable of the sower, a sower went out to sow his seeds. Some seed fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on... some seed fell into good soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.

Last year, CHARIS assisted Barré in building its capacity by recruiting new mission leaders to lead the group on missions to Kontum, Vietnam.

Like the seeds that fell into good soil, these CHARIS volunteers who responded with a generous heart, have continued to yield a great harvest by their perseverance and God's grace as they continue Barré's mission in 2016.

Barré partners with Kontum Missionary and Friendship (KMF), a charity that supports young adults and children of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands in South Vietnam, through the provision of basic and supplementary language education.

Barré also took on a hygiene project with KMF and are hoping to continue this programme by providing detergent for laundry and soap for showers for orphans in the leper village of Kontum.

Providing educational needs to the ethnic minorities will continue to be the heart and soul of Barré's mission. Continuing that passion, trained phase 1 teachers would now teach new native teachers recruited for phase 2. By 2018, Barré is hoping to launch its phase 3 programme, where teachers from phase 1 & 2 would be sent back to their remote mountainous villages to teach the hundreds of children Vietnamese and English.

For more information on Barré and their causes, visit their website www.barregroup.org. To enquire on Barré's education mission trips to Kontum, contact Simon at missions@barregroup.org.

LEARNING FORWARD

Volunteers of Project Micah return to the beautiful land of Myanmar once more to spread joy for purpose.

By: Bernadette Png

Photo credits: Project Micah

There is a Tibetan proverb, "A child without education is like a bird without wings". Project Micah strongly believes that every child should have the opportunity to learn and be empowered, paving the way for new opportunities.

Before the trip, from 27 Feb – 07 Mar, 2016, preparation for the trip involved bake sales and programme planning for five orphanages for over 200 children in the Shan state of Southern Myanmar.

"It was great how each person had a different talent to share. God truly brought us together for this purpose in this trip," says Catherine, one of its core team members.

A total of 27 volunteers poured their hearts into helping the children gain new learning experiences. The children learnt correct brushing techniques with new toothbrushes. The education team challenged the children with tangram puzzles and Sudoku. When the children were learning songs such as "Let There Be Peace" and "Give Thanks", their melodic voices touched many.

"When we work, we are serious. And when we play, there is a lot of laughter and fun", quips Sansan, one of the volunteers in her thirties.

Project Micah provided essential renovations of changing rooms for St Francis Xavier orphanage, kitchen improvements for St Agnes orphanage and a kindergarten was set up at JB Gobbato orphanage for sustainable income. For the first time, the girls of St Anne's orphanage learnt baking as a life skill.

The group plans to reach out to more orphanages, particularly in the poorer ones in Pekon Township. They hope to empower the older youths in these orphanages to facilitate in future activities. Project Micah hopes to inspire the future of Myanmar to "act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly", just as how the prophet Micah has inspired them.



Children of the orphanage meticulously piecing together a tangram puzzle

THE WORLD CRIES OUT

Board members of CHARIS and its affiliates meet for the Affiliate Board Connect 2016, reflecting on how the world cries out.

Article and photo by: Damien Teo

Over 40 participants of various Catholic groups and organisations in Singapore which are involved in overseas humanitarian work gathered for the Affiliates Board Connect (ABC) 2016, a biennial event organised by CHARIS to foster closer ties between its affiliates.

This year's ABC, themed, "The World Cries Out - Achieving Sustainable Development", was held at the Catholic Centre on 23 January 2016. It featured a special look into Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Laudato Si* — a subject which proved to be of meaningful and relevant for many participants.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN MISSION?

Jesus, The Trinity and mission.

By: Anna Low

Photo by: Gabriel Lee

"Understanding our Christian faith is important, especially when doing mission work", "By learning about our faith, it would enable us to evangelize, which is the bringing and sharing of faith with others", Fr. Gerard said to 40 participants who attended a series of talks organised by CHARIS on 20th and 27th February 2016.

Participants interviewed said that faith formation and a desire for a deeper understanding of the Christian faith were the main reasons for attending these talks. They spoke about the need



CHARIS affiliate representatives from Loveworks, Focolare, Fr Damien Society, Barre and acts29 sharing about Laudato Si

In the encyclical, the Pope writes that he would like to "enter into dialogue with all people about our common home". ABC 2016 was a continuation of that dialogue with the guest speaker, Prof Michael Quah, a professor at National University of Singapore's Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, who presented the science behind Laudato Si.

Closer to home than we think

"Did you know that if everyone were to live like a Singaporean, we would require 4.1 Earths?" Prof Quah remarked at the start of his talk.

to develop their own faith so that they can impart the faith and perform their duties better in their mission work.

In the first talk, Fr. Gerard gave an insight of who Jesus is for historians and Catholics. He also delved on how the participants in wanting to serve Christ, can consider various ways to engage in the different communities encountered through mission work.

These included open dialogue with the local community, through inculturation, which fuses Catholic teachings with local culture. He noted that humanitarian aid during a disaster could be a waypoint to show the mercy of God to others.

In the second talk, Fr. Gerard traced the roots and the evolution of our faith in One God and that of the holy Trinity. He explained that for Christians, the experiences of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are inseparable and their functions are distinct but not separate in the mission of God.

He highlighted that there is a harmful, throwaway culture in today's society, even right here in Singapore, and stresses that Pope Francis' encyclical is really a call to action.

Prof Quah's talk affirmed the Pope's writings with graphs and facts to reflect how the world truly cries out, citing evidence to show how these issues are also present in Southeast Asia and the region.

"When the planet deteriorates, it is always the poor who pays first," Prof Quah cautioned.

Participants then broke into groups to share about their missionary work and to discuss how the Pope's call to action can be applied to their mission.

Edwin Sim, a CHARIS board member concluded that "The most important goal we hope to achieve is to be able to harness all the different talents in our affiliates. If we can help pull our talents and resources together, I'm sure we can do even more for the many communities we are currently serving".



Fr. Gerard Louis urging participants to deepen their knowledge of the faith before going on mission

In linking with Trinity and that of mission, Fr Gerard says that the three different roles, functions or missions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equal. In God's sending forth the Son and Holy Spirit, the Father is no greater than the other two. He said that in the same way, "all different missions serve the greater mission of God and should not compete with one another."

After the two talks, Ligna Ku from acts29 said that "These sessions will help me build my faith," "It will help me in my daily life as well as spread the faith while doing mission work," she added.