



# MUSEI IN MISSIONE

Conference of Salesian Missionary Museums



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CONFERENCE OF SALESIAN  
MISSIONARY MUSEUMS

COLLE DON BOSCO

18 TO 22 JANUARY 2024



**Musei in Missione**  
Musei Missionari Salesiani  
Colle Don Bosco  
18 - 22 January 2024





“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”  
*(especially the worst parts of it).*

- George Santayana

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## DEDICATION



This book is lovingly dedicated to Fr John Med, SDB (1916 – 2011)

Czech by birth, Indian by choice

missionary in India from age 18

77 of his 95 years in the service of his people

in various capacities in various parts of the country

My novice master

*George Menamparampil, SDB*





## PRESENTATION

**Fr Alfred Maravilla, SDB**

General Councillor for the Missions

On October 1, 2021, during my visit to the Don Bosco Ethnological Missionary Museum at Colle Don Bosco, I officially launched the survey of Salesian Missionary Museums organized by the Missions Sector. On that occasion I tasked Fr. George Menampampil to coordinate a survey with the aim of drawing a clear picture of the types of existing missionary museums in order to encourage exchanges and possibly develop guidelines to retain their identity and purpose.

The very first congregation-level conference of Salesian Missionary Museums held at the birthplace of our founder – Colle Don Bosco – from 18 to 22 January 2024 is the result of this tedious work of Fr. George Menampampil.

The conference enabled representatives of Salesian Museums to learn from each other as each of them had the opportunity to present their institution, their collections, their activities, their programmes and policies and especially what was special and even unique about them.

An informal network had already been formed and had been functioning smoothly in preparation for this conference. As a consequence of this conference, there is now a formal Network of



Salesian Missionary Museums. They laid out their plans and desires and took the initial steps towards building and strengthening this network – REPASA – (REd del PAtrrimonio SAlesiano).

After the Conference, an *Advisory Team for Salesian Missionary Museums* has been activated. It is composed of four lay people and one member of the Sector who is the reference person at the Generalate. The group meets bimonthly online, always alternating meetings between its members and with other lay people who animate or are responsible for the museums in the provinces.

A museum is a non-profit institution serving society, which researches, collects, preserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible artefacts. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums encourage diversity and sustainability. Specifically, The Salesian Missionary Museums focuses on the original culture of indigenous peoples and encourage intercultural awareness in young people, helping them to grow in mutual respect and discovery of the other. Salesian history museums are integral part of this group because they bear witness to the missionary endeavour of the congregation and keep alive the missionary spirit – which impelled Salesian missionaries to reach out to indigenous peoples – as an essential element of Don Bosco's charism.

On the eve of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Salesian Missionary expedition (November 11, 2025), I have the great pleasure of placing in your hands this little book as a memory and a challenge to forge ahead the work of Salesian Missionary Museums as an important expression of our missionary commitment.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Fr M C George Menampampil, SDB**

Sede Centrale

Salesians of Don Bosco, Rome

Fr Alfred Maravilla, SDB, general councillor for the Missions, bestowed on me a great honour by making me the first coordinator of Salesian missionary museums. He asked me to prepare the first ever congregation-level meeting of their directors. This conference took place towards the fag end of my eight-year stint (2016 – 2024) at the Generalate of the Salesians of Don Bosco. As a matter of fact, by the time of the conference, I was officially not even a member of the team of the Missions Sector.

Most directors of museums were thrilled with the initiative of the conference and were eager to help me. I am particularly grateful to Nataly Orbe Ortiz of Ecuador, Marcos de Lima Moreira and Dirceu Mauricio van Lonkhuijzen of Brazil and Mariano García Borreguero of Spain, who guided me every step of the way.

I am grateful to Missioni Don Bosco who sponsored the entire conference at Colle Don Bosco and even a part of the tickets of the non-European participants, under the Solidarity Fund of the Rector Major.



We recognize the immense contribution Don Bosco and the Salesian Congregation have made to humankind over a period of two centuries; a significant gift to the Church, to peoples, nations and countries over all the continents on the globe. We study history today to learn lessons from it to design a better future. Museums, historical institutes, archives, biographies and chronicles are the guardians of our heritage; they promote research, reflection and discussion that lead to better decisions for our way forward. A coordinated work among all these is highly desirable.

The histories of some of our museums in Poland and Latin America make us recognise the immense gifts we received from those that went before us. We inherited a few museums or collections from Congregations and other organizations that had greatly impacted the culture and life of peoples for centuries before us. We took on the responsibilities to care for these treasures and memories. We guaranty that what we inherited will be better 'processed' and preserved for generations to come. We shall ensure, too, that our own collections and documentation of the heritage of Don Bosco and the Salesian Congregation will be such that they will continue to enrich the lives of millions long after we are gone.

We understand the great contribution of our museums to education, particularly of the young. "We evangelize by educating and educate by evangelizing." We believe that it is not necessarily what a Salesian does that makes him a missionary but, rather, why he does it and how he does it; so too, what makes a museum missionary is, rather than the nature of its collection, our motives for running the museum and how we run it.

May the network we have formed during this international conference of Salesian Missionary Museums and the continuous interaction among them result in a greater appreciation of the incredible heritage of Don Bosco and the Salesian Congregation.

As decided by Fr Alfred Maravilla, I have passed on to Fr Reginaldo Cordeiro the heritage of coordinating the keepers of the memories of Salesian heritage around the globe. I wish him all success.





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# PART I

# CHAPTER 1

## SALESIAN MISSIONARY MUSEUM IDENTITY AND MISSION



**Fr Alfred Maravilla, SDB**  
General Councillor for the Missions

**I**n the framework of the definition proposed by the International Council of Museums (ICOM<sup>1</sup>), a Salesian missionary museum “is a permanent, non-profit institution that safeguards the material and immaterial heritage of anthropological, charismatic, historical and cultural value” of the different communities where the Salesian family carries out its work. Its mission “is to acquire, conserve, order, document, research, disseminate and exhibit its collections in an educational, didactic, technical-scientific and aesthetic way, in order to make visitors participate in the values of cultural diversity and fraternity from an approach of respect for human rights, creating an active awareness of their importance”.

Today “the missions” cannot be understood only in geographical terms, as a physical movement towards “mission lands”, as in the past, but in sociological and cultural terms, and also in terms of a presence on the digital continent<sup>2</sup>, wherever there is a need to proclaim the Gospel.

For this reason, the Salesian missionary museum:

- provides an accessible space for all people to see and acknowledge their own stories and contributions, through accurate, fraternal and respectful representation of cultures, which encourages their participation;
- actively promotes the development and reflection on the ways of life, history, culture and traditions of different communities, strengthening their sense of cultural identity and belonging;
- fosters the exchange of knowledge and wisdom of peoples, which leads to a greater awareness and appreciation of the “other”,

1 <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>

2 The Salesian Missionary Vocation, ACG 437 (2022), p.51.

which becomes the basis of an intercultural mentality. It is an educational and cultural space where activities are organised to make communities aware of the values that interculturality entails;

- actively encourages, especially among young people, the values of respect and care for creation inherited from the ancestral knowledge of communities. Pope Francis, sensitive to this reality as he has well demonstrated, denounces that young people themselves are asking for a radical change and “wonder how we can pretend to build a better future without thinking about the environmental crisis and the suffering of the excluded; as educators and pastors we cannot be indifferent to this reality. And we must make it operational.”<sup>3</sup>
- There must be an underlying concern that through the Salesian missionary museum we help people, especially young people, to awaken an interest in the person of Jesus Christ and his Gospel. This attention to the initial proclamation is a *conditio sine qua non* of a Salesian Missionary Museum.
- The Salesian Missionary Museum belongs to the province and is governed by the Salesian Constitutions and Regulations, the decisions of its Provincial Chapters. It is guided by the Salesian Superiors, the Salesian General Chapters and animated by Salesian values. It lives the Salesian spirituality and the Preventive System of education of Don Bosco. The Provinces have the ultimate responsibility to provide the necessary resources

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<sup>3</sup> ACCOMPANYING THE YOUNG TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. “The Rector Major’s guidelines for the salesian Congregation after general chapter 28”, ACG443.

(human, technical, material, economic) and training to carry out the above, according to the needs of each institution<sup>4</sup>.

## The Management of a Salesian Missionary Museum:

The manager of a Salesian cultural institution such as the Salesian missionary museums must be a technical director supervised by the Salesian Rector of the work, both of whom know and understand the reality of the institution.

The principles of personal conduct and the principles of Don Bosco's preventive system, as well as those proposed by international organisations such as ICOM<sup>5</sup>, will govern their work.

## Internal regulations of a Salesian missionary museum:

- **Knowledge of relevant legislation.** Anyone running a Salesian missionary museum must be aware of national and local laws and the details of their application. He/she should avoid situations where his/her actions could be interpreted as reprehensible behaviour.
- **Professional Responsibility.** All persons who run a Salesian missionary museum have an obligation to follow the policies and procedures of the institution that employs them. However, they may object to practices that they deem detrimental to a museum or the profession, or contrary to professional ethics.

4 "Museums are responsible for the tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage. Governing bodies and those concerned with the strategic direction and oversight of museums have a primary responsibility to protect and promote this heritage as well as the human, physical and financial resources made available for that purpose." ICOM Code of ETHICS for Museums, 2017, article 1.

5 ICOM Code of ETHICS for Museums, 2017.

- **Professional conduct.** Loyalty to colleagues and to the museum in which they work is an important professional obligation. It is based on respect for the fundamental ethical principles applicable to the profession as a whole. Anyone running a Salesian missionary museum complies with the provisions of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and is aware of any other codes or policies relating to museum work.
- **Academic and scientific responsibilities.** Anyone running a Salesian missionary museum promotes research on the collections, as well as their protection and the use of information related to them. They, therefore, avoid any activity or circumstance that could lead to the loss of academic and scientific data.
- **Illicit trafficking.** No person running a Salesian missionary museum shall ever contribute, directly or indirectly, to illicit trafficking or trade in natural or cultural property.
- **Confidentiality.** All directors of a Salesian missionary museum protect confidential information obtained in the course of their duties. In addition, information concerning objects brought to museums for identification is confidential and is not published or communicated to any institution or person without the specific authorisation of their owners.
- **Security of museums and collections.** Museum personnel will observe the strictest confidentiality with respect to information concerning the security of museums or private collections and premises visited in the course of their duties.

- **Exception to the obligation of confidentiality.** Confidentiality is subordinate to the legal obligation to assist the police or other competent authorities in carrying out investigations into property that may have been stolen, acquired or transferred unlawfully.
- **Professional Relationships.** Anyone running a Salesian missionary museum encourages working relationships with a wide range of people, both inside and outside the museum. They provide all such persons with effective and high quality professional services.
- **Professional consultation.** Where a museum does not have sufficient means to ensure effective decision-making, its staff have a professional obligation to consult with colleagues within or outside the institution.
- **Conflicts of interest.** Gifts, favours, loans or other personal advantages. Museum employees do not accept gifts, favours, loans or other personal advantages that may be offered to them because of their duties. In some cases, gifts may be offered and accepted as a professional courtesy, but such exchanges are made solely on behalf of the institution concerned.
- **Outside employment or business interests.** No one who directs a Salesian missionary museum may hold other paid employment or accept outside commissions that are or may appear to be incompatible with the interests of the museum.

- **Trade in cultural or natural heritage property.** No person directing a Salesian missionary museum may engage directly or indirectly in the trade (buying or selling for profit) of cultural and natural heritage property.
- **Private collections.** Anyone running a Salesian missionary museum must not compete with their museum, either for the acquisition of objects or for any personal collecting activity. For any private collection, an agreement is made between the professionals concerned and the governing bodies of the museums and scrupulously respected.
- **Other conflicts of interest.** In the event of any other conflict of interest between an individual and a museum, the interests of the museum prevail.

### **Duties of the director of a Salesian missionary museum:**

Without prejudice to the powers of the governing and advisory bodies of a collegiate nature that may exist in each Museum, the functions of the Director are:

- To exercise executive management, coordinate and supervise all museum activities;
- To convene the Board of Governors in accordance with the needs of the institution;
- To draw up an annual operational work plan in accordance with the objectives of a Salesian museum;
- To direct and coordinate the work involved in the administrative and technical processing of collections;

- To organise and manage the provision of museum services;
- To adopt the necessary measures for the security of the cultural heritage held in the Museum;
- To draw up and propose to the competent body the annual plan of activities relating to the basic areas of the institution;
- To draw up and present the Annual Activities Report to various bodies;
- To supervise the development and management of a programme for exhibition and education;
- To ensure the preservation, conservation and growth of the collection with appropriate use and care of the facilities, as well as to promote activities of a scientific, research and exhibition nature;
- To recruit, retain and provide support for professional staff and assume responsibility for recruitment, appraisal and monitoring of staff;
- To prepare an annual operating budget, as well as capital and project budgets, and to control and distribute funds in a prudent and responsible manner;
- To keep the responsible members abreast of trends at national and regional museums and developments affecting the museum;
- To support and motivate board members and work with them to build greater capacities;
- To oversee and actively participate in development programmes and fundraising for the museum;

- To maintain the highest ethical and legal standards in all professional actions of the staff, as well as in the corporate and institutional actions of the museum;
- To work with the board, staff and community to develop and implement a strategic plan for the museum;
- To be the primary spokesperson for the museum;
- To promote staff education and training through agreements, in-house training courses, etc.
- To oversee the set-up of exhibitions and their duration.

## **ETHICAL PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THE OPERATION OF SALESIAN MUSEUMS**

With regard to the functions performed:

- Safeguard the entire legacy of material and immaterial cultures collected by Salesian museological institutions;
- Plan, organise and administer its activities according to Don Bosco's system of Preventive Education adapted to museology;
- Promote studies and research on the collection under its care, informing other sectors of its discoveries, without selfishness, accepting that all knowledge produced by Salesian cultural institutions must be used in favour of science and citizenship;
- Provide guidance, consultancy and advisory services in their area of expertise, whenever the situation requires it, with love, respect and humility;

- Carry out all activities related to the running of the museum, prioritising the educational and cultural nature established by the museum's mission, as regulated by its Master Plan;
- Contribute to the conservation, preservation and dissemination of the collection even if it does not belong to their area of activity;
- Know the Museum's bylaws and statutes, in all their different aspects, in order to meet the needs of the institution;
- Inform the competent bodies about any irregular movement of the museum's cultural assets, inside or outside the institution;
- Participate in seminars, colloquia, competitions, exhibitions of a national or international nature, and other activities of a museological nature, as well as being represented at them, as determined by their superiors;
- Adhere respectfully to timetables and justify any inability to fulfil them.

With regard to inter-personal relations:

- Considering the hierarchical system established by the organisational chart, contribute to the prospects of building a project that makes the museum more open and humane with greater incentives for community participation, as proposed by Don Bosco's preventive system of education;
- Understanding the country's social, ethnic and cultural diversity, seek to democratise access to cultural goods through relationships with others; democratise ways of stimulating and encouraging the dynamic production of cultural goods

representative of different social and ethnic groups from different regions and localities in the country;

- Try to solve the problems of everyday life and the issues imposed by the job with *amorevolezza*, a method considered to be one of the most effective in encouraging personal growth;
- Promote mutual appreciation and self-esteem in everyday life;
- Joy, responsibility and respect shall always guide the fulfilment of duties in any sector, from the cleaning department to the board of directors.

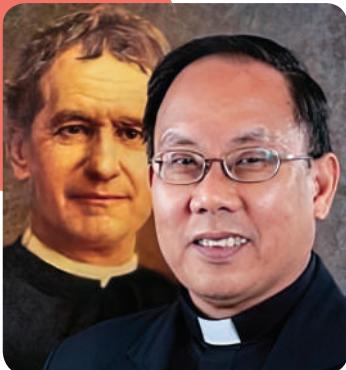
### **Duties of a Salesian missionary museum:**

- To keep an updated register and inventory of its collections, in accordance with the rules to be established by regulations;
- To draw up and submit statistics and informative data on its activities, visitors and provision of services, in the manner to be determined by regulations.
- To disseminate the cultural values of the assets under its guardianship;
- To guarantee the security and conservation of its collections;
- Each museum to have its own statutes;
- To decentralise services such as training;
- To have a Museological Plan for the museum;
- A seal of quality, based on guidelines pre-established by institutional committees, in order to be more competitive

and to have the possibility to join official bodies (ICOM, church museums, ibermuseums);

- To seek forms of self-financing, through strategies based on joining forces and improving financial management following criteria of efficiency and effectiveness;
- To design and implement a joint document of common good practices (Code of Ethics) and scientifically promote public studies.





## FR ALFRED MARAVILLA

**General Councillor for the  
Missions**

Born in the Philippines on 31 July 1962, Fr. Alfred became a Salesian in the Philippines North (FIN) Province. He was sent as a missionary to Papua New Guinea in 1985. This later became the Vice-Province of Papua New Guinea-Solomon Islands (PGS). He earned licentiates in Missiology and Dogmatic Theology and a Doctorate in Fundamental Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. For seven years he served as a member of the Missions Sector at the generalate. On January 24, 2017 he was appointed the Superior of the PGS Vice-Province. In 2020 he was elected the General Councillor for the Missions. He is fluent in English, Italian, French, Spanish, Tagalog and Pidgin.



## **FR REGINALDO LIMA CORDEIRO**

**Coordinator of Salesian  
Missionary Museums  
Missions Sector – Sede  
Centrale, Rome**

Reginaldo Lima Cordeiro is from the Salesian Missionary Province of the Brazilian Amazon, Manaus, Brazil.

As a Salesian, he served as the Provincial Delegate for Missionary Animation and Youth Ministry, director of schools, Rector of the formation house, Promoter of reflections on the theology of the original peoples of Brazil and Latin America.

Academically he is a graduate in Philosophy from the Don Bosco Catholic University (UCDB) of Campo Grande, Brazil. He did his theological studies at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS), Rome and Licentiate in Missiology from the Urbanian University in Rome.

He is currently a member of the Mission Sector at the Salesian Headquarters of Don Bosco in Rome and leads the various training programmes for missionaries. He was nominated the coordinator of Salesian missionary museums, successor to Fr George Menampampil.

# CHAPTER 2

## MUSEUMS AND INDIGENOUS NATIONALITIES



Nataly del Pilar Orbe Ortiz

 In August 24, 2022, on the occasion of the 26th General Conference of the ICOM (International Council of Museums) celebrated in Prague, the Extraordinary General Meeting of the ICOM approved a new definition of the concept of 'museum'. The vote was the culmination of an 18-month participatory process in which hundreds of museum professionals from 126 National Committees around the world took part. Here is the new text:

"A museum is a non-profit-making institution, permanent and at the service of society, which investigates, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits material and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums promote diversity and sustainability. With the participation of communities, museums operate and communicate ethically and professionally, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and the exchange of knowledge."

This new definition is in line with the main points in our document on the identity of our museums, recognizing the importance of inclusion, community participation and sustainability. This new concept leads us to think about the importance of the museum for groups such as indigenous people, refugees, Afro-descendants, among others, highlighting the aspects of inclusion, transparency and participation.

Ethnographic museums have been dedicated to the collection, conservation, research, interpretation and exhibition of objects and artefacts related to cultures, ethnicities or, as we call them, nationalities. Ethnographic museums often focus on the material culture of specific groups, such as indigenous peoples, rural communities or ethnic minorities.

They play an important role in the preservation and promotion of cultures. They help conserve cultural objects and artefacts, ensuring that they are not lost. They also help to promote understanding of and respect for different nationalities by providing visitors with an insight into the daily life, beliefs and traditions of other groups.

It is not only ethnographic museums that promote the development of indigenous ethnic groups or afro-descendants. There are also art museums, where works of renowned indigenous painters such as Marcela Burneo, Eduardo Kingman and Oswaldo Guayasamín are exhibited. There are other artists on the lookout for opportunities to make their art known, such as Luis Alberto Ugsha, a magnificent painter of tigua art, or Siul, an artist of the Secoya nationality who has portrayed indigenous leaders, especially Amazonian leaders.

One of the first crucial objectives of the museum is the preservation and exhibition of material culture, that is to say, objects that may carry the history of a people, a custom or a tradition. Behind each of the pieces in a museum there is a history, a human being who captured an element of his reality in that object. What the museum does is to highlight it. By highlighting something, we protect its message, its elaboration, its use and its ancestral practice that goes on through the ages. That helps us to know and understand its environment and, above all, it leads us to respect it. It is often useful even for the future of an ethnic group because it helps the very community to recognise its own self and to realise its evolution.

Precisely this last element brings us to identity and recognition, because museums offer space for indigenous and Afro-descendant communities to see and recognise their own history and contributions.

The museum actively collaborates with them in what we have called the preservation, exhibition and interpretation of their cultural heritage. That implies the inclusion of indigenous voices in the curatorship, respecting cultural protocols and encouraging community participation in the museum's narrative.

Here I would like to tell you a little about the Abya-Yala Cultural Centre, which is also a centre for documentation through its publishing house and bookshop. It is a space for conservation through its magnificent and unique library with its books, and promotes their diffusion through the museum. Here we find its history and we find the name of the Salesian Father Juan Bottasso who, after his studies of Theology, travelled to Sucúa in the Province of Morona Santiago where the Shuar lived. He began to study their language, customs, traditions and way of life. He then started this great cultural adventure that began with the edition and publishing of the 'Shuar World'.

Of course, Father Juan did not work alone on this project. He was assisted by young people who acted as intermediaries between him and their parents, grandparents, grandmothers and other elders of their community. The initiative arose from the need to deepen the knowledge of the Shuar culture, a strong culture with its own rules and laws. The result was 'Shuar World', a collection of almost 100 booklets that narrated the history and culture of this nationality.

When Father Juan left the Oriente and went to the Sierra, he encountered indigenous peoples with other ways of life, customs and traditions that were totally different. This raised many questions for him, many of which he could not answer because he was completely unfamiliar with these peoples.



It was then that he began to broaden his objective, first to Ecuador and then to the continent. Thus was born 'Abya-Yala', a cultural centre that is not limited to a single group or ethnicity, but encompasses several indigenous cultures. The aim of Abya-Yala is to make the values of these cultures known and to strengthen the sense of identity and cultural pride among indigenous people.

This has allowed the museum to be a place of encounter among cultures by displaying their artefacts, their objects, their works of art; exhibiting their culture, customs and traditions; thus fostering understanding and appreciation, promoting interaction and dialogue, understanding and respect between indigenous communities and society in general. The museum is eminently an educational space that contributes to cultural awareness and the promotion of mutual respect.

This is really an opportunity and a challenge because it allows us to discuss what museums face in representing indigenous cultures accurately and respectfully; to explore opportunities that enhance collaboration between nationalities and museums. This can only be achieved through shared programmes or thematic exhibitions that address social issues. They allow us to open up channels of community communication that strengthen relationships and foster more effective collaboration.

One of them is the Sustainable Development impact which refers precisely to the positive or negative consequences resulting in the long term from actions, policies or projects. They need to be implemented with the aim of achieving a balance between economic, social and environmental aspects.

Thus, for example, a positive impact would imply improvements in the quality of life of the communities, the conservation of the environment and the promotion of social equity. To highlight this, we have a permanent exhibition in our museum on the damage that has been caused and continues to be caused to indigenous communities by rubber plantations, logging, oil companies and everything related to illegal mining. They pollute the water, soil and air, which harms not only the indigenous peoples but also the settlers themselves who depend directly on these resources for their livelihood.

A Biodiversity Institute in Quito works with indigenous social organisations to prevent them losing their ancestral territories. We collaborate with them as a cultural centre through an ancestral bibliography. This bibliography tells us how indigenous peoples take care of and make use of their resources. That helps avoid conflicts in the different reserves, which could lead to violence and displacement.

All these activities contribute to the maturity of public opinion: the activities of a cultural centre that collects and documents through the publishing house; and the activities of a museum that conserves, interprets and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage. A mature public moves from the imagination of the indigenous as a folkloric element to a knowledge of their social realities. It does not idealise them; it does not reduce them to an object of study as if it were just a chapter of biology, as flora and fauna are studied. They are peoples who are at the root of the nation, they have a lot to say. The museum gives them the space to express themselves.

This gives rise to many challenges. The world is changing, indigenous people are changing, and their position within society is changing very

rapidly and radically. Indigenous youth are much more interested in modernisation, globalisation and access to new technologies such as the internet. This leads them to seek new horizons, often leaving their territory and migrating to big cities in search of economic opportunities. In the process, they forget their roots, the values of their cultures.

There is a danger that, in this transitional phase, a link in the chain goes missing, a channel of transmission is lost, the continuity is gone. Once a gap is created, it is difficult to bridge it. This is because young people lose the fundamental meanings behind their customs, traditions and ultimately their identity. Once the values, the interpretations and the meanings are gone, the rest are mere empty vessels, beautiful to look at on the outside but void of true culture. This is the challenge we face as a museum. Despite the distances, we implement educational programmes that seek to connect with indigenous youth and help them understand and appreciate their culture.

*For more examples of what a museum or a cultural centre could contribute to the promotion of indigenous cultures, read this article in conjunction with the article on the Abya-Yala Museum – PART II, Chapter 02.*





## **NATALY DEL PILAR ORBE ORTIZ**

**Universidad Politécnica Salesiana  
Museo Abya – Yala**

I am 54 years old. I live in Quito, Ecuador. I am a Social Communicator with a major in Education and Culture, Masters in Museology and Museum Management and Ethnographic Museum Restorer.

I published in the Catalogue of the Museo Amazónico an article on the Preventive System of Don Bosco applicable in museums. I did the entire cataloguing of 4563 pieces of the Abya - Yala Museum, both physical and digital. That implied a little more than 15,000 high resolution photographs. I elaborated the Museological and museographic plan of the Abya - Yala Museum.

I have collaborated in the construction of several museums in the Ecuadorian Amazon. I did an internship at the Museo Vicente Rassetto sdb in Peru. I have made several permanent and temporary exhibitions in the museums of my district as well as in Guayaquil and Cuenca.

I have participated in several national and international conferences on museology, education, social networks. So too, I have participated in several national projects and the formation of Museum Networks in Quito.

Currently I am the director of the Abya-Yala Museum, a member of the Network of Museums of Ecuador, an active part of the Quito Museum System and a member of the main board of the International Council of Museums – Ecuador.

# CHAPTER 3

## MUSEUM MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

“NEW MUSEOLOGY” AND THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED TO MUSEUM INSTITUTIONS IN AN INTERCONNECTED SOCIETY



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alesian museums were born at different moments, contexts and geographical regions. However, faced with the question of museum management in contemporary times, various connections and dialogues have started among them. All institutions, without exception, are immersed in the current historical moment, which is characterised by the dizzying development of technological progress and increasingly interconnected societies.

Starting from this historical context, we focus here on the museological currents that renewed traditional museology: the “new museology” and “critical museology”. After describing them, we refer to the challenges that are emerging today and reflect on the importance of the use of the latest technologies in museums in their internal management, exhibition and interpretation of artefacts and cultural articles.

Given the breadth of the subject matter and the fact that these are complex themes to deal with, the approach will be to provide context, tools and instruments. With this study criterion, the main objective is for each manager and director to reflect on his or her own cultural institution in the present and the future. The final intention is to plan and build on the basis of each reality and context.

## **The museum in the contemporary world: a fundamental cultural institution in society**

The history of museums, including the museums of the Salesian Congregation, as in the case of social and cultural history, is not exclusively integrated and composed in a world that runs parallel to the general study of human societies. It is recalled here briefly so as to allude to the historical context.

The identity crisis suffered in the middle of the last century forced museums worldwide to revise and redefine themselves. It is no coincidence that the *International Council of Museums* (ICOM) was founded precisely at this time (1946-1947)<sup>1</sup>.

## Running a museum: the importance of a common language

In view of the nature of the subject matter, it is imperative to start with the latest ICOM definition of “museum” (Prague, 24 August 2022).

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution at the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. Involving communities, museums operate and communicate ethically and professionally, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing<sup>2</sup>.

Because a common language is considered crucially important, we refer to the official reference tools for museum professionals worldwide developed by the *International Committee for Museology* (ICOFOM) for the basic study of museology.

They published two books jointly with the UNESCO: *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook* (2004)<sup>3</sup> and *Running a Museum: A*

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1 “History of ICOM”, ICOM. <https://icom.museum/en/about-us/history-of-icom/>

2 “Museum Definition”, ICOM. <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>

3 Patrick J. Boylan (ed.), *Running a museum: a practical handbook*. París: UNESCO, 2004. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141067>

*Trainer's Manual* (2006)<sup>4</sup>. They are reference manuals for professionals in the field of museum management. They are compendiums that synthesise decades of systematic research from the epistemological point of view as well as from museum epistemology itself.

We take into account the difference between museology<sup>5</sup> (the science that deals with museums, their history, their influence on society, conservation and cataloguing techniques) and museography<sup>6</sup> (the set of techniques and practices related to the functioning of a museum). We refer in particular to some of the most relevant institutions in the field.

A large percentage of Salesian museums today are mainly characterised by ethnographic collections. It is appropriate, therefore, to mention the existence of the *International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography* (ICME) of ICOM (1946). In the official letter presenting itself, it describes itself as an international committee that "is devoted to ethnographic museums and collections from local, national and international cultures. The committee is concerned with the challenges facing ethnographic<sup>7</sup> museums and collections in a changing world"<sup>8</sup>. Recent publications focus on critical studies on the

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4 Patrick J. Boylan and Vicky Woollard (ed.), *The Trainer's manual; for use with Running a museum: a practical handbook*. París: UNESCO, 2006.  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000147869>

5 André Desvallées and François Mairesse (ed.), *Key Concepts of Museology*. ICOM. Armand Colin, 2010, 53-56.  
<https://www.icom-italia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ICOMItalia.KeyconceptsofMuseology.Pubblicazioni.2010.pdf>

6 Idem 52-53.

7 Ethnographic collections refer to all kinds of museums on ethnography, art, folklore, history and natural history.

8 "International Committee for Museums and Collections and Ethnography", ICOM. <https://icom.museum/en/committee/international-committee-for-museums-and-collections-of-ethnography/>

work and role of ethnographic museums today, as well as on ethics and management in the exhibition of cultural artefacts.

## **Contemporary ethnographic museums: the presentation and interpretation of cultures and communities other than one's own**

The contemporary ethnographic museum, like the vast majority of the museums of the Salesian Congregation, presents artefacts from diverse communities in its collections. These institutions, characterised by their history, collections and holdings, must keep in mind the functions and values of museums at the international level. They seek to promote dialogue and intercultural understanding in an era of strongly divisive views on migration. Ideologies are marked at times, by mistrust, prejudice, vast chasms of misunderstandings, as well as the quick tendency to label “the other”.

The main challenge for museology in this context is to consider museum spaces as inclusive and transformative places that transmit knowledge, that is, to raise community voices and visibilities that build new perspectives. On the other hand, one of the main objectives within the current mission of museum institutions is to make visible a part of history that has been forgotten. When creating museographic and museological discourses, the relations between image and text are fundamental. It is important to bear in mind the content, but not only; equally important are: from where it is written and from where it is seen. We remember, too, its relationship to power and other strong influences when dealing with issues. These could sometimes be social and political and, therefore, delicate. The presentation and

interpretation of cultures and communities that are not one's own is, indeed a complex task.

On October 2019 Pope Francis, while inaugurating the halls of the *Anima Mundi Museum*<sup>9</sup>, wrote: "Whoever enters here should feel that in this house there is a place for him too, for his people, his tradition, his culture"<sup>10</sup>. He argued that one of the objectives of the new museum was the creation of a place "without boundaries".

### **The “new museology” and “critical museology”**

When transferring this complex argument to each of the museums of the Salesian Congregation, it is necessary to bear in mind the current progress in the field of cultural institutions, given that Salesian museums are also part of this reality.

As far as new trends in museology are concerned, the experience of the visitor to museums has been changing at a dizzying pace since the second half of the 20th century and up to the present day. The general contemporary situation is gradually adapting to the times, where radical changes in societies are much faster than the institutions themselves. In the general history of museums it is argued that

the museum selects, exhibits and the spectator contemplates, creating a model of fruition based on observation, which is validated under illustrated parameters, and which has

<sup>9</sup> This exhibition is the product of the project initiated by Pope Pius XI with the Esposizione Universale Missionaria (1925) in the Vatican and the subsequent creation of the Museo Missionario Etnologico (1926), the current *Anima Mundi* (2019).

<sup>10</sup> Paolo Ondarza, "La periferia al centro", Vatican News, 2021.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/it/vaticano/news/2021-12/museo-etnologico-segreti-musei-vaticani-anima-mundi.html>

practically lasted down to the present day. Nevertheless, from the 20th century onwards, both the space and the role assigned to visitors began to be redefined. On the other hand, the work of art, especially in the avant-garde period, shunned the traditional contemplative model and opted for active participation<sup>11</sup>.

The interest in focusing attention on the active participation of the visitor was initiated in the 20th century and persists today as the backbone of the currents that renewed traditional museology. What is known as “*new museology*” is a current that began in the middle of the 20th century. It conceived the museum as for the whole of society. It insisted on stimulating, strengthening and promoting the social function of cultural institutions<sup>12</sup>. However, at the end of the 1970s, the approaches and positions defended by the new museology were questioned under the name of another current: “*critical museology*”<sup>13</sup> (1979).

In promoting the new museology, new approaches to interacting with the public were introduced with the aim of contributing to development and innovation. In this sense, collections and museum practices are used to reflect, understand and transform society. Consequently, the trends and challenges faced by institutions always have a definite objective: to play an important role in social change. Social issues, campaigns and activism make an impact and this

11 Victoria Quirosa García, “El espectador y la obra de arte: monólogos y diálogos en la museología del siglo XXI”, *Eikón Imago*, n. 8, 2019, 357-370.

12 Luis Alonso Fernández and Isabel García Fernández, *Nueva museología: planteamientos y retos para el futuro*. Madrid: Alianza 2012.

13 Jesús Pedro Lorente, “Nuevas tendencias en teoría museológica: a vueltas con la museología crítica”, *Museos.es*, 2006, n.2, 24-33. Jesús Pedro Lorente, *Refleccions on Critical Museology: inside and outside museums*. London and New York: Routledge, 2022.

spills over into the virtual world on digital platforms, too, and creates a context. In this way, a gradual but constant transformative shift is created in an increasingly interconnected society where the museum must find its place.

In this situation, the union of culture and digital practices is decisive. This context poses new challenges as cultural institutions, which change slowly but steadily, enter a complex and fast-paced world characterised by mobility and global networks. The flow of information generates new levels of interconnectivity and interaction<sup>14</sup>. Globally, however, museums are progressively upgrading to accurately reflect the current state of digital technology. They now provide more direct engagement with their visitors. They can opt for a more collaborative, inclusive and socially responsible role. Thus, recent studies point to an important new role of museums. They need to transform their environments into spaces of encounter and experience, using alternative ways of learning and not remain frozen along traditional lines<sup>15</sup>.

## **The latest technologies used by museums to enrich the visitor experience: new methods of learning and interpretation of collections**

Initially, at the beginning of the 20th century, new technologies were used in museums<sup>16</sup> mainly to optimise internal management: a

14 "Tendencias y desafíos actuales en museos", 25 June 2023, EVE Museos. <https://evelmuseografia.com/2023/06/21/tendencias-y-desafios-actuales-en-museos/>

15 Irene Camps-Ortueta, Luis Deltell-Escola, María Francisca Blasco López, *New Technology in Museums: AR and VR video games are coming*, *Communication & Society*, n. 34 (2), 193-210, 2021. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.34.2.193-210>. "Nueva Museología y Experiencias en línea", 28 February 2023, EVE Museos. <https://evelmuseografia.com/2023/02/28/nueva-museologia-y-experiencias-en-linea/>

16 M. L. Anderson, *Museums of the future. The impact of technology in museum practices*. *Daedalus* (1999), n. 128, 129-162.

section that is not public, but vital in museums<sup>17</sup>. In fact, since one of the main missions is to preserve heritage, technology was applied to the development of digital databases<sup>18</sup>. Gradually, it began touching the exhibition of objects in the collection and focused on improving the visitor's experience. The key to tackling this issue was the study of the visitor's profile. In general terms, it was found that they are fundamentally looking for a new experience while gaining new knowledge and broadening their horizons. This can be achieved through innovative approaches and the use of technology to develop participatory content.

The latest technologies expand the content of the exhibition and provide us various tools and resources that facilitate participation and individual interaction by visitors. Some of them are: the use of audiovisual media, i.e., video projections on screens or walls; guided presentation with audio guides or video projections that accompany visitors, as an alternative to guided tours in several languages<sup>19</sup>; QR codes to delve deeper into specific objects or make itineraries in the collection; mobile applications that can be used on the devices themselves; interactive augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) experiences; as well as interactive navigation tables with additional information or multimedia content that are usually distinguished by "button clicks" or interfaces.

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17 One of the first areas where technology was applied was in the creation of digital databases to facilitate the management, collection and storage of information.

18 From these registers, reports can be generated on the movement of artefacts (in and out of the museum), the number of exhibitions and the restoration procedures. It also facilitates the collection of visitor data and statistics.

19 "Creación de Apps Móviles para Museos", April 6th 2022, EVE Museos <https://evemuseografia.com/2022/04/06/creacion-de-apps-moviles-para-museos/>

In recent years, immersive audiovisual spaces, virtual exhibitions, virtualisation of collections and the provision of digital communication with an identity of its own are in vogue. The potential of virtual environments and immersive technologies has led to their use beyond the museum: in educational and artistic spheres.

These projects, which are very costly and require a great deal of technical effort in terms of design, innovation and research, nevertheless have a single objective, which is to optimise the experience of the contemporary visitor. Increasingly, studies are emerging on these issues critically addressing the question<sup>20</sup>.

Technology must be understood as a tool to encourage visitor participation. De facto, the latest studies delve into the potential of technologies to connect the museum directly with the visitor<sup>21</sup>, highlighting digital innovation, virtual environments and social networks. These help to attract new visitors while stabilising the regular clientele.

## **Beyond the physical space of the museum: boundless confines and virtual community**

In recent decades, considerable transformations have taken place that directly transcend and influence cultural organisations worldwide. Digital information and communication technologies are key

20 Mariapina Trungio, Maria della Lucia, Salvatore Campana and Adele Magnelli, "Innovating the culture heritage museum service model through virtual reality and augmented reality: the effects on the overall visitor experience and satisfaction", *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 2022, 17:1, 1-19. DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2020.1850742

21 Camilla Marini and Deborah Agostino, "Humanized museums? How digital technologies become relational tools", *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 2022, 37:6, 596-615, DOI: 10.1080/09647775.2021.1969677

resources in fulfilling the museum's role in society. The pandemic of covid-19 strengthened the dependence on digital tools, becoming the only means to reach the visiting public during lockdowns.

Likewise, within the new framework of museology, constant demands and challenges were generated, which have led to a search for other methods of learning and interpreting objects in museum collections. In this context, technological innovations play a key role<sup>22</sup> since they allow museums to free themselves from their physical walls. They can now explore new horizons to create spaces for common access to information, reaching new frontiers and opening up to the digital world. Studies show that, taking into account the evolution and development of modern social needs<sup>23</sup>, the known and traditional way of displaying goods is not conducive to cultural heritage in the long term.

The survival of museums and institutions of cultural heritage in the post-modern era depends on several factors. One of them is to find alternative ways to provide opportunities for connection, participation and continuous learning for visitors who may never set foot within the physical walls of the institution<sup>24</sup>.

To increase the visibility and accessibility of the museum and to foster an appropriate connection with the visitor, the focus is on creating experiences that develop worlds without boundaries and

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22 "Impacto de las Nuevas Tecnologías en Museos", November 24th 2021, EVE Museos <https://evemuseografia.com/2021/11/24/impacto-de-las-nuevas-tecnologias-en-museos/>

23 Liu Han and Yang Cui, "The application of virtual reality technology in museum exhibition. Take the Han Dynasty Haihunhou Ruins Museum in Nanchang an example", *3rd International Conference on Energy Resources and Sustainable Development*, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202123604045>

24 "Nueva Museología y Experiencias en línea", February 28th 2023, EVE Museos <https://evemuseografia.com/2023/02/28/nueva-museologia-y-experiencias-en-linea/>

that encourage different connections and interpretations online. However, pro-technological innovative actions in the museum sector have an intrinsic duality that fluctuates between advantages and disadvantages. One of the areas of greatest concern to experts in recent years is that the public will put the virtual experience before the face-to-face one.

At a time of dizzying changes and technological advances, new currents in museology advocate the importance of focusing on the virtual community with the same rigour as on the visiting community at the physical venue. Museums need to offer them other opportunities for participation and introduce non-conventional modes of learning.

Today's society considers, broadly speaking, that what is not on the Internet does not exist. If in the past museums could survive by focusing their activity exclusively on visitor service in the physical space, contemporary museums are beginning to consider the virtual public or the digital visitor with the same breadth. The Internet can be a channel for the distribution of products and services or a vital means of communication and promotion: it makes it possible to offer virtual tours and provide access to various educational resources. It is also a means of promoting the museum's mission and events, encouraging public attendance and participation in the activities on offer<sup>25</sup>.

## Conclusions

Cultural history studies vestiges of the past, tries to recover objects and complex intrinsic relationships, as all artefacts carry practices that

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<sup>25</sup>Image (instagram, Flickr), podcast (soundcloud, iTunes), microblogs (Twitter), blogs, social networks (Facebook, Google Plus), video (YouTube, Vimeo), etc.

generate experiences, and these affect the feelings and affections of communities.

Broadly speaking, the ways of presenting cultural heritage in Salesian museums today are still largely through the creation of permanent and temporary exhibitions. However, in recent decades, challenged by a changing society where rapid transformations have taken place, the sector has been trying to find its own place by gradually introducing changes in its institutions. In this sense, museums can fulfil a social and cultural mission efficiently with the use of technological innovations. Their application is proposed in three aspects: technological innovation in management, the visitor experience (physical and digital) and the internal organisation<sup>26</sup>. However, the introduction of more modern technologies to minimise the consumption of non-renewable resources requires significant investments that few Salesian museums can afford.



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<sup>26</sup> Eva Vicente, Carmen Camarero and María José Garrido, "Insights into Innovation in European Museums", *Public Management Review*, 2012, 14:5, 649-679. DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2011.6425666



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Of Spanish origin, specifically from Madrid. She is an art historian from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid with training in art criticism and conservation of historical-artistic heritage. She has specialised in contemporary art history, visual culture, management and cultural production at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Universidad Autónoma and Museo Reina Sofía. She is currently in her final year of her PhD in visual, performative and media arts (XXXVI cycle) at the Dipartimento delle Arti dell'Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna.

She has worked as a conservation assistant in museums and collaborated in the organisation of collections, inventory and cataloguing.

In recent years she has published in scientific journals on contemporary art and on the historical-artistic heritage of the Salesian Congregation.

She has professional and voluntary experience in the educational, social and cultural fields in Spain, Scotland, England and Italy (where she has been living since 2018).

She is currently General Coordinator of the Museo Casa Don Bosco in Valdocco-Turin (2023).

# CHAPTER 4

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND ADVANTAGES OF APPS IN MUSEUMS



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**D**igital technology continues to evolve, transforming museums because they have to find new ways to bridge the gap with their audiences. They need to engage, understand,



Casa Don Bosco, Valdocco, Turin, Italy (Google)

communicate, participate and disseminate their knowledge. We live in times of knowledge accessibility (Riches, 2016). Modern museums seek to create more dialogue, interaction and participation, something that is already part of their vision and mission. New technologies in museums allow visitors to choose what, how and when they want to access information, according to their own preferences and levels of knowledge.

When applied correctly, digital technologies can offer enormous potential for educating the public, especially the museum visitors of the future, people who know nothing but a digital world (Network of European Museum Organization, NEMO, 2013).



Museo Weilbauer. Centro Cultural, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador

Beyond this profoundly important aspect of participation, the element of inclusion that these solutions can bring is very significant for museums. Technology enables the inclusion of previously marginalised groups, building stronger and more sustainable communities (European Union, 2017). Digital technology's efforts to mediate the relationship between the public and the collections and content of many museums are still at an embryonic stage. There are no long-term conclusions about their effectiveness, although some authors are already analysing these attempts. Technology alone is not a magic solution to wipe out all failings of museums in this respect. It is necessary to find the most appropriate ways to take advantage of new possibilities and to use them to improve the daily service of the museum to its public.

Around the 2000s, digital technologies were everywhere, influencing everything from business strategies to human relationships. This new

environment changed the way people view, look for and process information. Museums must adjust their work to the changing consumer behaviour as the use of digital devices and platforms increases intensively (Chappuis, Gaffey and Parvizi, 2011). For present and future visitors to remain connected to museums and the knowledge they offer, it is essential that museums keep up with the evolution of their visitors and the societies in which they find themselves. The challenge for museums today is to "... understand their audiences, their preferences and responses to technology-mediated experiences".



Abya-Yala. Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, Quito, Ecuador

The technological transition from traditional methods to digital tools can generate enormous advantages for museums and their visitors, but also enormous challenges. New technologies must be seen and valued as possible solutions to reach the public effectively, allowing all kinds of people, regardless of their background and intellectual level, to visit the museum and learn through its contents. "User needs and digital technologies are reshaping our understanding of museum

collections and the relationship between museums and the public" (Cameron, 2010).

There is no doubt that virtual museums offer significant advantages over traditional museums: ease of access for the visitor, multiple interpretations of collections, improved organisation and unification of collections, more comfortable and attractive access to the museum, ease of presenting contemporary works that combine materials and techniques.



Virtual Museum. The Pathenon Museum. Canadá-Ecuador

Along with these, we should also highlight the digital museums that have adopted the potential of this medium and which are made up of works produced exclusively with this medium. These museums introduce us to new artistic manifestations, digital art, which uses information and communication technologies to produce works of great visual and intellectual power, and which also often encourage the participation of the spectator. These manifestations are characterised by the loss of the materiality of works; they are images that are created

on a magnetic support, with the help of the binary codes that support digital language, without resorting to conventional materials and techniques.

The above appreciations, taken from Eve Museografía (2019), objectively illustrate the vertiginous development and practical usefulness of new technologies applied to museums.

## Apps in the museum

Discovery exhibitions. The collections are arranged in an unconventional way and have no texts or labels. The public is encouraged to explore and make their own connections and discoveries through brochures, apps for mobile phones or tablets, and audio guides.

Apps are used to research current exhibitions, plan a visit, browse or search thousands of artworks in a collection, take multimedia tours or learn about artists and art terminology. They can also be used to take photos and share them with friends.

Its usefulness is complemented by being able to view photos and descriptions of key works of art, audios describing the works, create your own museum tours, browse the history of universal art, discover museums in Augmented Reality and get maps to visit the museum's surroundings.

Finally, and without being exhaustive, content can be shared through social networks and by email of high-resolution images of works of art, thematic visits and educational courses.

IOS-Android devices are generally used, and the most popular Apps in several museums are: MoMA App, Art Lab iPad App, AB Ex NY App,

Louvre Lens, Dinosaurs App, Magic Tate Ball, Muybridgizer and Pocket Art gallery among many others.



App of Altamira Museum, Spain

## Case Studies

### Shades Tours, Vienna, Austria



With the firm purpose of removing the stigmas surrounding the reality of homeless people, Shades Tours has been created, an Austrian company that offers tours guided by none other than the very citizens who live on the streets of Vienna. In addition to discovering the most interesting places in the city through these peculiar walks, tourists will be able to explore a world completely different from the one they are used to, as they will tour the city from the perspective of a person who actually lives there 24 hours a day. This ends up generating an emotional bond of gratitude that, in addition to enriching the tourist in terms of appreciation and general culture, also gives the guide the confidence and enthusiasm to excel.

### **Street musicians in 1,416 cities**



With 3,610 subscribed street artists and a presence in more than 1,416 cities, the Street Musicians project is an application that helps you discover the local talents that occupy the streets of your city. It offers also an alternative way to tip them in a completely digital way.

## The Skateroom 5 Continents



The Skateroom is a company founded in 2011, which collaborates with artists and art foundations around the world to produce amazing skateboard artwork. This social enterprise donates 25% of its profits from each artwork sold. After nearly a decade of operation, it could commit close to \$1 million to 37 skateboarding projects dedicated to empowering at-risk youth around the world.

## Faber Guide, European Creative Culture

It is an online platform created in 2016 with the aim of promoting the flourishing and development of creative culture in Europe. It seeks to become a meeting point where tourists from all over the world can get to know the work of emerging and established European artisans. Through this application, one can discover and contact hundreds of artisans organised in different categories, such as location and artistic technique. Meanwhile, artisans can take advantage of this space not only to share their most recent work, but also to promote their creative services, such as the creation of custom-made pieces or paintings.



### Wonder Museum, Tokyo, Japan



Rolling through the streets of Tokyo you could come across the Museum of Wonders, a small travelling museum that allows people to enjoy art in an informal, open-air way. The philosophy of this noble project is to recognise and celebrate the diversity that exists among the people who make up society. In this travelling museum, we find works created mostly by disabled artists. The purpose of all this is to



offer these creative people the possibility to be active, to present their work and to meet potential clients.



The International Council of Museums ICOM, founded in 1946, is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the improvement and promotion of the world's museums and the museum profession, as well as the preservation of cultural heritage.

ICOM has some 49,000 members in 142 countries and territories. Its official languages are English, French and Spanish, and it is based in Paris, France.

ICOM maintains formal relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

ICOM sets professional and ethical standards for museum activities, promotes capacity building, fosters knowledge and increases public awareness through global networks and cooperative programmes.

To celebrate International Museum Day on 18 May 2024, ICOM proposed to the world's museums the theme: "Museums for Education and Research".

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He is the current Secretary of the International Council of Museums ICOM Ecuador, (2022-2025), Visiting Professor at the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana and Technical Museological Advisor at the Museo Antropológico y de arte Contemporáneo MAAC.

Professionally, he worked at the Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial as Director and Academic Coordinator of the Restoration and Museology Career and as Principal Professor of Museology and Art and Coordinator of Culture and Heritage.

He has been an official of the Museums of the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana and Director of the National Museum of Colonial Art.

He has several publications at national and international levels.

He has made study and observation tours to the main and most famous Museums and Cultural Centres of the world located in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Middle East, Pacific Islands and Oceania.



# CHAPTER 5

## FINANCES OF A SALESIAN MUSEUM



Mariano García Borreguero

**T**he cultural institutions most damaged by the Covid-19 crisis were those supported by private funds.

The field of culture in Spain employs 695,000 people according to the latest data shared by the Ministry of Culture and Sports (2022). As has happened in many other sectors, cultural activity since 2020 has been deeply marked by the pandemic. It highlighted the financial fragility of museums of all types throughout the world.

The impact has been such that some institutions considered selling parts of their assets to pay the salaries of their employees, and these were not only small entities. The most shocking case was that of the Metropolitan Museum of Art that announced losses of around 150 million dollars. This is an example of how a situation can push museums to the limit.

### **How to prevent this situation?**

A survey carried out by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) revealed that the institutions most damaged by the Covid-19 crisis are those supported by private funds, whose income comes from private contributions and ticket sales. Institutions that depend primarily on public funds were more stable.

This disastrous scenario has caused financial administrators to become more concerned about the sustainability of their institutions and has forced the sector to reinvent itself and develop new financing strategies.

The strongest refuge was the internet. Many museums accelerated their digital offerings and even the most cautious invested a great deal of effort and resources to alleviate the effects of the totally unexpected disaster.

The great State museums, Museo del Prado, Reina Sofía, Thyssen, but also the more modest ones, Lázaro Galdiano, Cerralbo, F. Juan March... resorted to all kinds of value additions to gain the loyalty of their regular visitors and reach new audiences. These museums that have financial support from the State had fewer difficulties than those that were privately managed. Nevertheless, they resorted to strategies never seen before: the Prado Museum became the first European museum with its own store on Amazon (June 2020); Around the same time, it became the first Spanish museum to participate live in Tik Tok Museum Week (along with institutions such as the Grand Palais or the Uffizi, demonstrating that "together we are stronger").

## Is there a miracle recipe?

It seems not. Each institution has to make its own strategy for its financing. Its plan will depend on the country, management model, marketing strategy, audience, collection. It will vary as per its possibilities and always without putting its Mission at risk. Close attention to ethics is also necessary. We believe that self-financing can be achieved in a creative way, without violating the basic aspects of the museum.

Although the balance sometimes seems difficult, we have some proposals that we hope will be useful.

## TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF FINANCING MUSEUMS

Tickets, publications, gift and souvenir shop, lending library, traveling exhibitions with educational programs; advertisements and publicity materials; cultural festivals/museum evenings, and ethnic food.

- Transfer of images for publication and research

- Fees for participation in conferences, presentations, conferences, symposiums or work groups
- Loans of materials for temporary exhibitions
- The sale of tickets associated with the museum's cultural and educational programming, fundamentally linked to conferences, concerts and other performing arts
- Income derived from the store and the restaurant service, including cafeteria and restaurant
- The granting of licenses for the use of the museum's own images
- Parking service
- Rental of unique spaces for holding events
- “Loans” of works of art
- Applications uploaded to the market places of iTunes and Google Play
- Advertising campaigns (posters, postcards...)

## ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC RESOURCES

### 1. OWN MERCHANDISING

Salesian Museums could become spaces for cultural/commercial exchange between producers in Salesian communities/cooperatives and the general public, friends of the museum, companies... to promote global culture and support the social- and solidarity-economy.

### **Some positive aspects:**

It would help the development of Salesian communities and cooperatives on the ground; its promotion and knowledge build people's loyalty to our work, and it has a direct impact on the work.

Linked to the targets for the Care of our Common Home and the Sustainable Development Goals, it will make it possible to promote the ethical and responsible consumption of sustainable products.

In a world in which ecological advertising or green marketing is increasingly relevant and people want to contribute to improving their environment, social appreciation of the exclusivity and differentiation of artisanal products has grown exponentially.

## **2. PUBLIC or PRIVATE CALLS**

To know the funds available through calls, especially public ones, we need to understand very well the cultural environment in which we operate, have clarity about the cultural actors with whom we need to work, cultural institutions and the call system.

### **a. What is a call or competitive fund?**

It is a mechanism that a State or any organization uses to allocate resources, according to its policies and programmes.

Its main features are:

- It delivers financial or material resources through calls.
- It is widely disseminated as a work tool among development institutions, both in the public and private non-profit sectors, and internationally.
- It works through the presentation of projects.

- It acts through a public knowledge system.
- It is the most equitable way to allocate resources, which are generally scarce in comparison to the demand for them.

A call is a competitive process. It is essential to present projects that are very professionally scripted, with perfect coherence among their parts and attaching all the documents requested.

Our projects applications highlight our quality, innovation and creativity, taking into account that the projects they fund are selected by expert juries and that there are several other projects that are competing for the limited funds available.

### **b. Some recommendations**

Each call has its own orientations and requirements related to the objectives pursued by the institution that grants it. We need to consider carefully to whom to present our projects from the institutional point of view.

Pay attention to even the smallest detail; technical aspects are often little appreciated but they are really important.

Write with dignity and valuing artistic/craft creation.

## **3. AGREEMENTS WITH COMPANIES**

Below, we present the main elements to consider when developing a fundraising strategy with companies:

### **a. Know what motivates companies to support cultural initiatives.**

When approaching companies to request donations, it is essential to know what motivates them to support cultural projects. Our strategy

for approaching them depends on it. Each company has its own policy in this regard, so this is something we need to find out in each case. However, here are two of the more frequent reasons for such donations:

**• Corporate social responsibility**

In recent decades, the evolution of the roles that companies play in society has produced corporate social responsibility. As per this concept, the company is not only a profit-generating entity; it also has a responsibility towards the quality of life of its workers and to the society and environment in which it is inserted.

More and more companies have assumed this commitment. We see it in the growth of resources they allocate to initiatives for the common good.

**• Financing as a means of communication between the company and its public**

There is a marked tendency to invest in cultural initiatives as a marketing tool. The aim is to promote its image as a company committed to initiatives for the common good. This has resulted in permanent policies and budgets for this purpose.

At this level, it is imperative to consider the ethics of donations. Ethics serve as a self-regulating element of resource management, both for those who make contributions and for those who receive them. This ethical dimension is necessary to maintain the autonomy and quality of cultural activity.

## **b. Communication and social marketing strategy of our museum**

The possibilities of obtaining resources are closely related to the strength of our organization's social positioning. If the organization is recognized by the community for its contribution, and for the professionalism and quality of its work, it will have a better chance of attracting resources.

This can be achieved through what we do with the public. Our communication strategy needs to have two arms. We communicate such that we create the habit in the public of attending the activities of our organization, bringing artistic and cultural events closer to people who have less access to them or do not have any access to them at all.

The second arm of our communication strategy aims at institutions or people who are potential resource providers. These include foundation directors, company executives, international organizations and public authorities linked to the environment in which our organization operates. The objective is to make them know the mission and activities of our organization. We create a bond with them (virtuous circle).

## **c. Establish relationships of mutual cooperation**

It is important to keep in mind always that behind a company's support for a cultural project there is a relationship of mutual benefits. On the one hand, the company provides the resources to carry out the project and, on the other, it is an opportunity for it to exercise its social commitment or strengthen its corporate image.

When we carry out agreements with companies, we try to ensure that it becomes a permanent/continuous support. For this, all our operations as managers of a cultural organization need to be professional.

<https://misionessalesianas.org/empresas/>

**Recommendation:** There is an important movement in the cultural sector known as impact investment. What is impact investment? It is investment aimed at transforming social challenges. It is defined as an investment made with the intention of making a positive social and environmental impact while generating financial returns. This type of investment is considered one of the most advanced types of investment, since it seeks to generate economic and social or environmental returns simultaneously. One of its pillars is additionality, which is providing a solution to a neglected challenge (fundamentally neglected in the public sphere).

#### **4. INDIVIDUAL DONORS**

The first step to develop this type of donations is to carry out massive campaigns aimed at attracting as many individual donors as possible. Social marketing is of paramount importance for creating the most effective message to have the expected results.

There are different types of donors. Some are sporadic, making small contributions to collections that take place on the street or in public spaces. There are others who commit to making a monthly, semi-annual or annual contribution: Patrons, Sponsors and Collaborators of the museum, Ambassadors of the institution...

##### **a. Main motivations to donate**

Unlike companies, individual donors make contributions to initiatives for the common good because they identify themselves with the organization's cause; to feel part of a group that works for the common good; to support an organization to which they are related;

for emotional reasons. We need to take these into account while designing the message to be transmitted.

The compensation offered to this type of donor at the time of making the contribution is of secondary importance. However, the delivery of certain benefits or the carrying out of activities we had promised in our communication nourishes the bond between the organization and the donor.

Donors committed to our organization are interested in knowing what activities we carry out, who our directors are, and how we spend the money they contributed. This is why sending newsletters, reports or electronic messages with information on our activities is very effective.

#### **- Tax relief**

In Spain, tax deductions are possible for donations to recognized NGOs. The benefits may range from 40% to 80% of the Personal Income Tax (IRPF). From the first €250 that is donated, €200 is deductible (update effective from January 1, 2024).

<https://misionessalesianas.org/desgravacion-donaciones-renta/>

#### **b. Partner recruitment**

One way to manage resources with individual donors is by winning partners for our organization. For this we can carry out public campaigns, send letters of invitation, deliver information leaflets, hold talks or seminars where members are invited to register,... The recruitment of donor members aims at maintaining current members over time and attracting new partners.

The above implies defining strategies and it costs time, work and resources for our organization. Strengthening the relationship with old members requires a different strategy than attracting new members and in both cases the work of earning their loyalty is essential.

### **c. Community involvement**

We take as an example the activity of cultural clubs, especially in the American hemisphere. The classic definition of them is as gatherings for entertainment where artists and organizers, cultural promoters and the general public can enjoy music, poetry, theatre, dance, juggling and other artistic expressions.

The clubs promote the community's interest in its own culture, provide spaces where people can display their art, their expressions and promote respect for their identity and for their ancestors.

The clubs are based on solidarity and love of nature with ourselves as part of it. The clubs work in a very familiar way. It is art by the people and for the people, including artists who feel the same passion for art and culture. Those who help the formation of these clubs and those who assist them are there because they want to be there.

## **5. DIGITAL MARKETING**

The objective of marketing by museums is to help connect these institutions with the various audiences that visit them. To do this, they use a series of techniques that facilitate their access to opportunities that meet expectations, or generate needs and interests that, perhaps, these audiences did not have before. The fear of some museums is that the misuse of these marketing techniques will interfere with or

compromise the mission of the museums. We need a balance between the mission of the museum and the objectives of the public.

The museum must satisfy the needs of its audiences, whether physically or digitally, welcoming visits in person or any type of experience. To do this, the museum creates a value proposition tailored to it.

Brands are successful if they understand what they offer and know who they offer it to, highlighting their virtues in comparison to those of their competitors. There is value addition (we understand the brand of a museum not merely as a logo, but as an idea or image of something with which a visitor feels identified. It is a set of material and immaterial qualities that generate value and influence the public. The brand of a museum faithfully transmits the essence of what "it is". It is the basis of its reputation and helps to differentiate itself from the competition. But the objective is not for the museum's brand to be recognized *per se*. The objective is for the museum's brand to conquer the mind of the visitor through the multiple experiences that it provides). Successful marketing communicates the benefits from the museum and highlights what makes it unique and special compared to other institutions.

### **Museums must adapt to their audiences without giving up their mission.**

The audiences of a museum are heterogeneous in terms of origin, cultural formation or background. They bring together audiences interested in art, culture and local history, tourists, families looking for recreation, schools and cultural centres, researchers and historians... Each segment of visitors has interests of its own and consumes different media and leisure. Each message we communicate has to

be appropriate to the medium used and the preferences of its target audience. Digital media allow us to personalize the message based on the audience. We need to do that not only at a socio-demographic level, but also at the level of interests, age, zip code, device through which they connect or operating system of their mobile device. It is not only about being on the medium (channel) that the public consumes, but also about being relevant and contextual to their needs.

But from what channels or supports can museums connect with their audience? Here are a few of the main ones:

- Social networks: X (former Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, WhatsApp, Telegram, Twitch,...
- Audiovisual streaming platforms: YouTube, Vimeo...
- Podcasts: Ivoox, Spotify, iTunes
- Exterior: Canopies, banners, buses, tarps, multimedia digital signage
- Museum's newsletter
- Museum's website
- Metaverse: Digital advertising in its different formats: SEM/SEO (Search Engine Marketing/Optimization – set of strategies in search engines to improve the accessibility of our digital channels, integrating online advertising ads with organic positioning), display, online advertising networks, programmatic or branded content

### **What should be the order in establishing a Marketing Plan?**

First, define the mission (identity), vision (purpose) and values (basic and ethical beliefs) of the museum.

Once these elements are in place, we use them to plan, implement and manage our public image.

Once we have that image, we would have to create a museum identity manual with all the elements that constitute our identity. This helps build how our brand is perceived by the public. This manual includes the visual image, logo, slogan / motto / strapline (phrase that identifies and transmits the values that a brand offers through its products or services; it is a phrase that conveys the qualities of a brand), fonts, colours, definition of collaboration, sponsors, behaviour of our staff, tone of voice...

Once this document is created, training is essential not only for the marketing and communication team, but also for all the rest of the museum staff so that our identity, our brand is communicated through every single activity that we carry out: formation, websites, social networks, press releases, exhibitions, cultural mediation... Being aligned on all these criteria is essential to avoid gaps, incoherence and inconsistencies. The image, the message, the content, our behaviour, our tone and our activities have to be consistent with our brand.

The digital marketing strategy of a museum aims to generate a virtuous circle that draws our social network visitors to visit also our website. This is essential for genuine engagement (a person's commitment to a brand). It encourages participation and strengthens the sense of belonging to the museum.

Museums do not compete with each other for visitors, they compete for people's leisure time. Leisure time is increasingly scarce. Each individual or family decides whether to go to a museum, relax listening to music, take a walk in the park or zoo, watch TV, attend the theatre or surf the Internet. It is necessary to understand the choices people have for their "leisure time" (Our competitors are other educational and recreational institutions, such as theatres, cinemas, amusement parks

....). We compete by offering an attractive value proposition appropriate to their tastes and needs.

### **Is it enough to have a good digital marketing strategy?**

The answer is 'No'. To compete successfully for that leisure time, we need to know our potential users as thoroughly as possible, and we need to provide significant experiences of value to the visitor. We move from passive museums to active, activated and activating museums. Managing the visitor experience gives us an advantage in an increasingly competitive environment. The visitor's experience decides their satisfaction (they see an exhibition, receive a series of inputs and information; they enjoy the exhibition, but also the temperature of the room, the services of the bathroom, cloakroom or cafeteria ...). A visit generates memories that may be positive, negative or neutral and they will be transformed into emotion. Museums could generate positive experiences not only while the visitor is in the museum, but also in the pre-visit and post-visit phases. All of them establish a positive emotion that is likely to become a positive memory resulting in a desire for a repeat visit. Museums also enhance learning.

Adoption of digital marketing by museums will improve the relationship between them and their audiences. Digital marketing makes museums more universal in a global and digitalized world. It facilitates access to diverse audiences, regardless of where they are located or the opening hours of the institution. This is a true paradigm shift, since the museum will be open 24/7. It can be adapted to the needs of the public thanks to the personalization of its contents based on their tastes and needs. This individualization of content for each user will be possible through effective data management and the adoption



of artificial intelligence. We need to create new digital narratives and not merely translate the physical experience to the digital world.

Digital marketing maximizes the dissemination and durability of these spaces as places of meeting, dialogue and preservation of culture. Digital marketing disseminates knowledge of a museum's collections and enables access to them without having to physically travel there.

Museums facilitate and promote access to information, becoming agents of change in the bargain. They need to adapt. The time needed for this adaptation will neither be short nor static; on the contrary, it will be continuous and constant so that museums are not left behind in the evolution of society. Those institutions that do not know how to adapt to new forms of communication will be ignored, left behind, die and be forgotten. A part of this inevitable adaptation is the adoption of the digital ecosystem at a cultural, technological and social level. This ecosystem will make it easier for museums to amplify their message and be more participatory with their communities, no matter where the different audiences are on the planet.

## WRITING OF CULTURAL PROJECTS

Learn the technical language of project development and management. A project is the realization of an idea. A project is the development of an intervention, action or process that leads to results more or less anticipated in the design stages.

The result of a project can be a plan, a programme or an action depending on the environment and the scope of its content. A project is something that needs to be done, that is, a challenge that focuses our attention on achieving something, integrating various elements for a permanent solution.

Design and project work are instruments that we use to develop ideas and translate them into actions. The function of the project is to achieve results, not merely to undertake activities. A project is a collective and shared tool; we need to know how to use it for the proper development of our actions, without it becoming an end in itself.

A project is therefore the realization of an idea, a decision. Particularly in the cultural field, we call it cultural policy, understanding this as the set of values, ideas, orientations and directives that an organization wants to develop. To do this, it is necessary to translate the wishes and ideas into concrete actions, which are structured in such a way that they achieve the stated purpose with maximum efficiency.

What is the relationship between what needs to be done, what I want to do and the impact of my intervention? This question is fundamental when preparing a project. Before we embark on a path, we permanently relate wanting, doing, and impact of our project on people and the environment. A project will always have an impact on the environment. It is important to anticipate that impact and think about the consequences, not in a restrictive sense, but to see how our ideas are planned, with sustainability in view.

A project is a process of reflection, a permanent relationship between theory and practice; it is an action of foresight and anticipation, a formalized result of our ideas, an instrument for negotiation, participation and co-management; it is a tool to organize management; it is an instrument of teamwork.

A project has a temporal dimension, a requirement, an end, a goal, a target. It is fundamental to avoid making the project an end in itself.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DESIGN OF CULTURAL PROJECTS

### **- Allow decision making.**

A project is not a pretty, dazzling and overwhelming document. A written project proposal is useful for those who may finance it and for those who receive the funds. It is a clear and concise text that guides the team in its daily tasks, serves as a useful tool, reflects the reality of the work to be carried out and presents all the necessary elements for the different managers. It is not a beautiful document written with a view to charm the potential donor and that is then kept in the back of the drawer because it has already fulfilled its function, leaving the team to work "in their own way", with no reference to a document that has "served its purpose".

### **- Have a global perspective.**

Although the intervention is only on a specific aspect limited in time, space or cultural sector, the project must have a broader perspective, taking into consideration the broad context of which it is a part. A project, no matter how small, must be well located in relation to its macro-environment.

### **- Be coherent through all parts of the proposal.**

A project is not a simple sum of different parts. It is a coherent whole in which each chapter is a development of the common central idea. It would not be correct or helpful to have each member of the team write a part and then someone is in charge of putting everything together.

**- Be the result of a previous process and the origin of a later one.**

Perhaps it is not a sine qua non condition, but a good project knows how to collect ideas, initiatives and actions of the past and the present. It is presented as a continuation of what has been going on. It may maintain them or break with them; in any case it takes them into account and values them. Similarly, a good project thinks about its own continuity reflected on from the beginning and forming part of it. It is not enough to start thinking of its continuity after the success of the project. It may be too late if the issue has not been worked on before.

**- Have a long-term perspective.**

In the cultural sector we often work with habits, needs and programmes that require prolonged action over time. A project should have this vision beyond the immediate effects into a more or less distant future.

**- Have a defined duration or life cycle within the framework of the permanent organization or institution.**

A project has a beginning and an end even if it is an ongoing process. In some cases, it is very clear (a festival, exhibition, cycle, party...); sometimes we must limit the project in a general calendar. The project of a local cultural centre or a museum begins on January 1 and ends on December 31; that of a theatre is structured by seasons and that of a Music School by school years.

**- Be realistic and consistent with the context.**

It is almost an axiom, but a project cannot be separated from its immediate context. It must be coupled to it; it is born from it and represents an organized response to its reality. Knowing in depth

the most notable elements of this environment is essential when designing any intervention.

**- Have a strong component of originality and renewal.**

**Be creative, innovative.** A project must be justified by its interest, need, response to specific demands and must know how to renew itself at every opportunity. We should not rule out that a project may come to an end, either because it has definitively achieved all its objectives or because it does not seem to be feasible to achieve them in the way they were proposed.

**- Be open to participation by others.**

A project must facilitate the involvement of other agents even at the design phase itself. Broaden the debate, accept other points of view and share out tasks. Ensure that it is relatively easy to share methodology, terminology, schemes...

**- Know the ideological assumptions that guide us.**

It is essential to know the ideology of the institution that owns the project. This ideology is in the same line of work and values, regardless of the ideas of the people who wrote it. The more they coincide, the more effective the approach and development of the project will be.

**- Establish a project timeline.**

The design of the project is a sum of ideas and actions that require a schedule to organize the discussions, facilitate decision-making and its execution and establish deadlines for the different phases to reach completion without rushing.

### **- The project makes management more professional.**

The project helps to have common work tools, share terminologies, create methods, establish procedures, define standards, be rigorous with quality, and entirely professional.

## **FUNDAMENTAL PHASES**

### **Design and formulation**

Before writing a document or filling out a form, we need to understand and describe the main characteristics, objectives and definitions of the project. This is what we will call project design (a process of exploration and diagnosis of the reality resulting in a definition of our objectives and our interventions; we analyse and describe the context; we explore and study the dynamics of the territory, the sectoral characteristics and the recipients/public before we define the scope and objectives of our project - and the strategy to achieve them).

From this we move on to a second step, where we define the realization of the contents in clear and precise terms based on a structure or scheme. This we will call project formulation (it is the specific planning of the initiative that we will carry out, resulting in a project outline).

### **Goals:**

#### **a) General objective:**

This defines what we intend to achieve through the project and its expected results. This has to be defined such as to be verifiable by evidence.

Its main features are:

- Answers the question: what do you want to achieve?
- It is the broad frame of reference within which all the other elements of the project are structured (specific objectives, activities and resources).
- It is the great goal that we aim at and that will be seen as achieved by the end of the project.
- It is expressed in broad terms and with verbs in the infinitive (create, develop, know, disseminate, satisfy, etc.).
- It is recommended to develop only a single general objective per project.

### **b) Specific objectives:**

These flow directly from the general objective. They are the main lines of action that will achieve it. For this reason, they must be in total coherence with it.

Its main features are:

- They answer the question: how is the general objective intended to be achieved?
- They are more specific than the general objective.
- Its performance must be measurable and verifiable.
- Activities emerge from them.

These points are essential for its correct formulation. They are taken into consideration when evaluating a project.

In a simplified synthesis of the above, there is the SMART test for verifying objectives:

SMART test
<b>SPECIFIC</b>
<b>MEASURABLE</b>
<b>ACHIEVABLE</b>
<b>RELEVANT</b>
<b>TIME BOUND</b>

### **Results:**

These are what the project guarantees as a consequence of its activities. The project wants to achieve them by carrying out the proposed activities. If there are no results, the project was not successful; define them well.

### **Indicators:**

Indicators are the data or other evidence that prove that we have achieved our objectives. We can define indicators that will prove our progress at every stage of our implementation and finally when the project is completed.

Indicators are:

- Set at the time of designing and formulating the project;
- Linked to the specific objectives that we set for ourselves;
- Known by the entire work team;
- Verifiable through data or evidence as defined in the design;

- Observable through its evolution over time;
- Comparable to indicators of other projects.

To define indicators, we take into account the following.

### **Indicator characteristics:**

Validity	The indicator must refer to what we are really trying to achieve.
Reliability	Measurements or collection of data under the same circumstances in the same populations and at the same time, produce the same results. As for qualitative indicators expressed verbally, these oral expressions will preserve the meaning of what was originally declared, not distort it.
Specificity	It should reflect only changes in elements decided on at the start, and not in others.
Sensitivity	We must be able to record changes, no matter how slight they may be.
Representativeness	It covers all the issues and individuals that are expected to be covered.
Clarity	It should be simple and easy to interpret, not ambiguous.
Accessibility	The collected data must be easily available.
Utility	The indicator must be useful as a “marker” of progress towards our objectives or the achievement of intermediate or final results.

Ethics	Both the collection of information and its processing and dissemination will protect people's rights to privacy. They have the right to choose whether or not to give the information (informed consent).
Synergy	The indicator may specify or refer to more than one variable at the same time.
Cost	The cost of collecting and processing data is reasonable and within the available budget and the expected utility.
Replicability	It is not unique to one project, instead, can be useful for other projects in other locations.

Characteristics of good indicators according to David Roselló

<i>Linked to the specific objectives and contents of the project.</i>	The indicators depend on the objectives either in direct relationship (each objective corresponds to its evaluation indicators), or in a general relationship (the set of objectives corresponds to the set of indicators), as the case may be.
<i>Set right at the start of preparing the project; they are indicators of progress or indicators of completion.</i>	Indicators help us carry out the evaluation and not the other way around – after the evaluation, define the indicators that suit us best. This would obviously show our success but is of no value at all.
<i>Objective and neutral, not 'interpretable'.</i>	The entire team must have the same notion of what they want to measure, without subsequent interpretations that simply justify an objective that has not been achieved.
<i>Measurable in a simple way.</i>	Anyone should be able to check the indicator easily.

<i>Reliable.</i>	Measured several times with the same conditions, they should give the same results.
<i>Sensitive to small variations in context.</i>	Advances in the habits of people in the field of culture are small. The indicator must be able to detect these possible variations.
<i>Enduring over time.</i>	We should be able to remeasure and compare the results of the evaluation over time to observe their evolution.
<i>Comparable with those of other projects.</i>	The indicators should have a universal character that allows one project to be compared with another (making allowances for differences in their contexts).
<i>Verifiable by third parties.</i>	The indicators must be, when obtained and recorded, verifiable by agents external to the project who can testify their authenticity.
<i>Accessible according to our resources.</i>	Measurement of some indicators is conceptually very simple but may be extremely expensive or complex. It could be impossible to carry them out with our limited resources.

In order to use the information collected, we need to define for each objective:

Indicator Target	Indicator	Desired goal	check	Indicator result
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It is important to define for each project a limited number of indicators that allow monitoring of the most important objectives of the project.

We can then decide what information and data we need to collect to verify the success of the project in the medium and long term.

### **Activities:**

They are the set of operations and tasks we decide to carry out to achieve the desired objectives. They constitute the most concrete part of the project proposal. Answer the question: What do we need to do to achieve our goals?

The activities arise directly from the specific objectives. The description includes a schedule and a budget.

### **Schedule of activities.**

Every project has a number of activities and a time within which each of them must be carried out. The schedule answers the question: when will the project activities be carried out? We order the activities chronologically within the duration of the entire project.

Because the activities are related to each other, failure to meet the defined times for the execution of one of them could negatively affect the achievement of the objectives. We make a realistic estimate of the time we require for each task. We define clearly the stages of compliance and distribute the tasks among those responsible.

We make a table of the schedule. In its first column we write the activity to be carried out. In the others we indicate the days, weeks, months or years during which that activity is to be done. The final column names the person responsible for the activity.

## Gantt chart

It is a tool that organizes all the activities in a single table. It gives us an overview of the project's activities in all its stages. It defines the deadline for each activity, establishes a schedule and facilitates continuous evaluation, allowing us to identify on time any delay or lack of coordination. It favours team coordination and communication.

Activity	Result	Responsible	Schedule
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## Resources:

Resources are all the various types of means that we use to achieve our objectives. We define in detail the resources we need, what we already have and what we lack.

Estimating and describing resources answers the question: what resources and in what quantity of each of them does the project require? Think of the human, material or technical and economic resources.

### a. The human team, the people

We need a team of capable people. This factor is decisive for the success or failure of a project. The members of the team need to have specific competencies and abilities.

### b. Material resources

Material or technical resources are all those machines, tools or objects of any kind, necessary for the performance of our activities. List the tools in a table linking each activity to the tools needed to carry out that activity.

### **c. Financial resources**

Listing our needs for human and material resources facilitates making an estimate of the money we will need to carry out the project. There are different criteria to determine the items of a budget. From the planning point of view our estimate is to be guided by our activities and our lines of action. The application forms for competitive funds often ask us to separate our needs under three categories: personnel expenses / salaries / honorariums, operating expenses (materials and/or services) and investment expenses (assets).

The budget has the following characteristics:

- It must be consistent with the activities to be carried out and with the objectives.
- Be realistic. One must avoid, on the one hand, preparing a budget with too high expenses or, on the contrary, with very low expenses that ultimately will not allow the activities to be carried out properly.

The preparation of a good budget takes time. Some items need to be supported by quotes/offers for fees, materials, goods and services. This is obligatory in many competitive funds. A budget must take into account the price, quality, availability and conditions for payment.

#### **Two ways to define the budget:**

1. According to the main lines of action of our project, defining for each activity the expenses in personnel or fees, operation and investment.
2. Distribute the total expenses for the entire project among: personnel /fees, operating expenses (materials and/or services) and investment expenses (assets).

In the case of Culture Funds, operating expenses and dissemination expenses must be entered separately.

It is convenient to show graphically the flow of resources over the duration of the project. The cash flow shows two elements:

**Income.** When, how and how much money is to enter our account. This prevents situations such as having to stop an activity because there is no money available. Prepare a table that displays:

- Grants/Donations/Awards. They may be from the municipality, a competitive fund or a company.
- Own income. This is the income produced by the organization itself through membership fees, entrance fees, commercial activities, etc.
- Include an annex of in-kind donations – books and materials or services such as free designing/printing of posters, volunteer work, and others.

**Bills.** Clarify how the money is going to be spent over the duration of the project. The budget is taken as its basis and we project the way expenses will be effected. They could be divided into: fees, operation and investment.

### **Preparing the project and the proposal has a double purpose:**

On the one hand, every cultural action requires adequate planning to guarantee its success. Without a written plan, we would make errors that, finally, affect the expected result. On the other hand, this document is an instrument of communication. It facilitates implementation and systematizes what has been done (what is not documented is not seen).

We write and organize our ideas for others to read and evaluate. It is like a letter in which we clearly state – and with the greatest possible coherence – the characteristics of the initiative in question. Write down the criteria that the reader/evaluator needs to be able to decide on the allocation of resources. Touch on their areas of interest, the type of beneficiaries...

## **IMPLEMENTATION/EXECUTION**

In this phase, everything planned and defined in the development of the project is put into practice. We stick to the objectives and goals we set. The project we prepared becomes a navigation chart that we consult continuously.

We can divide the realization of an event/project into three stages: Pre-implementation, implementation and post-implementation.

### **a. Pre-implementation**

In this stage, we prepare to carry out the activity according to the strategy and plan that we decided on. We take adequate time for this, taking into account the time and place where the activity will take place. Make provision for unforeseen events and the time to collect the materials needed.

Make field visits to know the venue and observe the variables to be considered in the design, assembly and execution of the activity. Technical visits by the team would facilitate the exchange of opinions and their personal appreciation of the activity.

Take into consideration the technical sheets of the participating groups which specify, among others, their requirements for sound, lighting, energy, transportation and space. If there is no technical description,

verify the time needed for the actual activity through a rehearsal on site or simply by testing the equipment with the groups.

### **b. Implementation**

Implementation is the realization of the project. The actions needed in this phase are already specified in detail. We do what we had decided we would do.

### **c. Post-implementation**

Post-implementation is everything that is implied by a good completion of the activity. We end the activity and implementation and evaluate our work and its final result. This involves determining the degree to which the objectives have been achieved, the process gone through to reach there and the final atmosphere and circumstances.

## **Assessment**

This is a fundamental element, unfortunately often neglected. Assessment is done through all phases of the project. To start with, we evaluate the relevance of the objectives and central characteristics of the project; in preparation, we define how we are going to evaluate its implementation, and in execution, we monitor compliance with the proposal; finally, we make a general evaluation of the entire project.

Through an evaluation we check and verify whether or not we achieved our objectives, how our activities have been carried out and what the impact of our intervention has been.

Every cultural project has an impact on its recipients and on the environment. We analyse: how have we fulfilled our purposes? How have we developed the various phases of the project? What have been

the main difficulties and successes of our project? What are the main consequences of the project for the cultural environment? Although evaluation constitutes a specific phase of the project, it ought to be done transversally throughout the entire cycle.

## WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation is a continuous process in a project. It constitutes a space for analysis and reflection of the objectives that we have committed to and the implementation of the project activities that have or have not led us to meet our objectives. The analysis must be based on information and data collected in all phases of the project to assess its compliance and impact.

### **Evaluation has four fundamental elements:**

- We analyse the development of the objectives and activities that we committed to while planning the project. All activities to fulfil the objectives are included here. Hence, we look not only at the activities carried out, but also the project schedule and the materials and financial resources managed and used.
- We generate information on each stage of the project. We extract information such as: compliance of activities with the project schedule, budget adjustments and cash flow, team performance and others. We study this information about each phase of the project and not only at the end.
- We assess compliance. We assess how the project was developed; were the objectives met? Were the activities carried out in the planned time? Within the team, were the functions and responsibilities fulfilled? Were the necessary sponsorships

managed? Did recipients respond to the call as we expected? Was project info disseminated according to the plan?

- We make recommendations. All the information we collect and the assessment we make are valuable only if they generate recommendations for future decision making about matters such as: improving the dissemination plan, redefining the recipients, adjusting the budget; or developing a future project.

### **The evaluation process serves mainly for:**

- Decision making, making changes in the objectives, processes, activities, human team, definition of resources and others. This could regarding our project, its future versions or new projects that we want to undertake as an organization.
- Evaluating our work team, observing the successes and failures, making necessary changes.
- Projecting long-term work, with adequate information for designing an expansion of our project or developing a new one.

## **TYPES OF EVALUATION**

### **Types of evaluation:**

- **Results:** measures the achieving of the project objectives – effectiveness; compares the results proposed at the beginning of the project with the actual results arrived at.
- **Process:** analyses the operation of the various stages of the project cycle, compliance with the schedule, the budget, the roles of the work team, the dissemination plan and other components; measures the efficiency of the process.

- **Impact:** studies the changes in the environment, the beneficiaries and our organization. This allows us to project the consequences of the project in the long term.

Evaluation is to be carried out continuously, during the implementation of the project and when it ends. Through this continuous evaluation, problems can be detected and nipped in the bud. We hold regular team meetings to detect obstacles, non-compliance, or changes we need to make.

The final evaluation helps us detect to what extent the objectives have been achieved and whether the various phases of the project (design, execution and resource management) have functioned adequately. We write a Final Report, showing the results of the project and making them known to the environment – beneficiaries, donors and future sponsors – in an educational, clear and strategic way.

The Final Report acts as a letter of introduction for our organization. This can be presented in various formats such as: written document, video, infographics, diptychs or others.

Depending on the dimensions of the project, the investment made or the project proposal, you may do an impact evaluation. This is carried out some time after the end of the project and measures the results of our intervention in a qualitative way, providing elements and data regarding the real impact of our project on the beneficiaries and the environment.

Evaluation could have two parts: a quantitative one and a qualitative one. A combination of the two gives a better understanding of the various aspects of the project.

The quantitative evaluation will be everything that can be measured and includes all types of figures: number of attendees, media that covered the project, costs managed with third parties, number of local artists in the project, etc.

Qualitative evaluation covers the perception of a certain topic by humans. We collect opinions and perceptions of recipients/beneficiaries, expert evaluators, the media, and others.

### **Here are some criteria for a good evaluation:**

**Effectiveness:** to what extent has the project achieved its objectives?

**Efficiency:** What quantity of resources (human and material) have been consumed in the implementing this project? In how much time?

**Impact:** What are the consequences for the cultural environment - environment and beneficiaries - in the medium term and in the long term?

**Sustainability:** What is the future scope of the project and how can it maintain and improve it in the future, considering the internal management capabilities and the impact on the environment?

We could use several techniques or tools to collect information and data in the various phases of the project.

A simple tool for our evaluation process – especially used in self-assessment – is the SWOT. It asks for a listing of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in carrying out a project. This SWOT analysis could be a group activity at the end of the project. Invite participation also of beneficiaries and sponsors.

Here are some ways to collect valid information, data and the opinions of stakeholders:

- **Records:** existing data or statistics of the environment on which the project wanted to act (you will have used this data when writing the justification of the project).
- **Mediations:** stubs of tickets sold, vouchers or income and expense receipts, attendance register.
- **Surveys or Questionnaires:** they ask for the opinions of stakeholders of the project. A sample of the public is selected; they respond, and we obtain qualitative and quantitative information from their responses.
- **Interviews:** the opinion of stakeholders is known directly and extensively.

### **Finally:**

The final product of the evaluation process will be a Final Report or Memoir, which:

- Shows our good results;
- Develops a process of internal self-criticism and continuous improvement;
- Compares projects or makes our experience known to others;
- Generates new project ideas;
- Allows us to consult our project in the future, as a permanent means of learning.

Evaluation is not an end in itself but a tool that supports the proper functioning of our institution.

## Proposed Project Matrix Table

Goals	Results	Activities	Indicators	Verification source	Base line	Scope	Resources	Assessment
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Cultural organizations and those who direct them need to grasp economic dynamics and their complexity, the environment in which they operate and the relevance of their objectives. This is key, not only to make appropriate decisions in terms of marketing but also for resource mobilization and its management.

## ANNEX

### CÁCERES DECLARATION

The Ministers of Culture of the European Union adopted a declaration at an informal meeting held in Cáceres within the framework of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

*Culture is what gives meaning to life. Culture is expanding the real through the dreamed. Culture is turning the banal into essential, the ephemeral into eternal. Culture is making the small gigantic, the perishable infinite. Culture is rights, culture is freedom. Culture is progress and above all democracy.*

### Preamble

While the echoes of war in the heart of Europe resonate and hurt us, the Ministers of Culture gathered here want to affirm our public commitment to culture. Because culture is both reason and heart, it is past, present and future. Because culture is the cornerstone of the European project. Therefore, we unequivocally condemn Russia's unjustified aggression against Ukraine, its people and its cultural identity.

Thus, meeting in Cáceres, on September 25 and 26, 2023, at the Informal Culture Meeting, all Ministers of Culture adopted this Declaration in favour of culture to place it at the highest political level and from now on consider it as an essential public good.

### **Because life without culture is mere survival**

From this World Heritage city, we are committed to working to ensure that culture is a crucial element of policies in favour of peaceful, just, and egalitarian societies. Because culture plays an essential role in the construction of democratic societies and in the personal development of citizens: culture is essential to achieve healthier, fairer, more critical, free, tolerant, integrative and egalitarian societies. That is why we commit, without anticipating the upcoming post-2030 debates, to work so that culture is recognized in itself as a new sustainable development goal.

And we want to quote the words of Federico García Lorca, spoken at the opening of a library in his hometown, Fuente Vaqueros, in 1931, in which he spoke of books as “horizons, stairs to climb to the summit of the spirit and the heart.” Like Lorca, we recognize the role of culture in building wiser, freer and happier people, and we commit to working for them. Because we want food for the body and the spirit, we want bread and we want books, we want well-being, social justice and equal opportunities. And we want, we demand, and we commit to working to achieve these objectives, to build cultured societies, because these will always be freer and better.

When it seems that the pandemic caused by Covid-19 is beginning to be a thing of the past, we want to remember and be grateful for the way in which culture proved essential in those hard days. *Culture is life,*

*health, integration, resistance and hope. Culture unites us, links us, integrates us. Culture recognizes us, shelters us, welcomes us. Culture opens doors, breaks barriers, heals wounds and offers paths to better lives and societies. Culture and life are never separated, but are part of a whole.*

Because culture is a source of well-being and wealth. Culture is part of the shared European identity and also of the identity of each of the countries we represent. Culture is essential, because it is at the heart of our history and because it paves the way for the future. Culture saves us and separates us from hatred, intolerance and barbarism. The commitment to culture, to the freedom of creators, to their rights, to their working conditions, to the commitment to participation and access, must always be part of the objectives of all public powers. Because culture defines us and is the path to more free, tolerant, sustainable, generous and happy societies.

## **FOR ALL OF THIS, FROM CÁCERES WE AFFIRM:**

*Culture is the heart of democracy.*

*Culture is tolerance, respect and human rights.*

*Culture is freedom of creation and thought.*

*Culture is pluralism, diversity and richness.*

*Culture is peace.*

*Culture is identity.*

*Culture is equality.*

*Culture is universal access and inclusion.*

*Culture is participation of citizens in cultural life.*

*Culture is health, physical and mental well-being.*

*Culture is sustainability and a path to a world for future generations.*

*Culture is a key element in the fight against climate change.*

*Culture is an essential element of economic development.*

*Culture is dignified lives for cultural workers.*

*Culture is heritage, history and memory, because there are the seeds for the future.*

*Culture is, ultimately, a right of citizenship that public powers and each individual have the obligation to safeguard. That is why we sign this commitment today, so that culture is from now on considered an essential public good and a global public good at the highest political level.*

<https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/es/noticias/declaracion-caceres/>

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- Governance and financing of museums: comparative analysis of the existing modalities in the United States of America and in state-owned Spanish museums:

<https://revistasonline.inap.es/index.php/GAPP/article/view/11161/12651>

- Digital marketing strategies in Spanish museums:

<https://roderic.uv.es/items/19d1f17a-2c36-4f21-825c-ad18e1c01f33>

- Guide for the management of cultural projects:

<https://www.cultura.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/guia-para-la-gestion-de-proyectos-culturales.pdf>

- Roselló Cerezuela, David. Design and evaluation of cultural projects.

From idea to action. Ed. Ariel-Patrimonio, 2º edición - 2019.



## MARIANO GARCÍA BORREGUERO

**Misiones Salesianas, Madrid  
Direction and coordination of  
cultural institutions**

Born in Madrid, Spain.

He holds a degree in Art History from the Complutense University of Madrid.

With a strong educational vocation, he was originally going to dedicate himself to teaching, but he has been serving in the cultural field since 2010, when he started working as a cultural mediator in private institutions.

In 2012 he began his work at the Salesian Missions Museum as head of travelling exhibitions. After different stages in the same institution, today he performs the functions of coordination in the Museum. Since January 2024, he has been a member of the Advisory Team of the Salesian Missionary Museums of the Salesian Congregation.

# CHAPTER 6

## THE WAY FORWARD THROUGH REPASA

### RETE DEL PATRIMONIO SALESIANO NETWORK OF SALESIAN HERITAGE



Conference Participants

**T**he heritage preserved by the Salesian Congregation extends to the different corners of the planet, but there is a great lack of knowledge about the sites and goods that are safeguarded.

In view of the need to enhance and organise Salesian museums that dialogue on the missions, we propose the creation of a network that not only allows us to maintain permanent contact and exchange, but also to set our quality standards and position us at the level of international norms.

Before talking about a network, we must first start with the definition of a **Salesian Missionary Museum**.

At the first meeting of museums, held at Colle Don Bosco from 18 to 22 January 2024, based on the new definition of a museum approved on 24 August 2022 during the ICOM General Conference in Prague<sup>1</sup>, the participants agreed on a concept that identifies a Salesian Missionary Museum:

*“It is a permanent, non-profit institution, which safeguards the tangible and intangible heritage of anthropological, charismatic, historical and cultural value of the different communities where the Salesian family carries out its work. Its mission is to acquire, conserve, order, document, research, disseminate and exhibit its collections in an educational, didactic, technical-scientific and aesthetic way, in order to involve the visiting public in the values of cultural diversity and fraternity from an approach of respect for human rights, creating an active awareness of their importance.”*

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<sup>1</sup> “A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing”.



Today, “missions” cannot be understood only in terms of geography and of moving to “mission lands”, as in former times, but in terms of sociology, culture and of presence on the digital continent<sup>2</sup> and wherever there is a need to proclaim the Gospel.

For this reason:

The Salesian Missionary Museum (SMM) belongs to the Province. It is governed by the Salesian Constitutions and Regulations, and the decisions of its Provincial Chapters. It is guided by the superiors and the General Chapters and is animated by Salesian values, Salesian spirituality and the Preventive System of education of Don Bosco. The Province has the ultimate responsibility for providing the necessary resources (**human, technical, material, economic**) and training, according to the needs of each institution<sup>3</sup>.

- An SMM provides an accessible space for all people to see and acknowledge their own stories and contributions, through accurate, fraternal and respectful representation of cultures that encourages their participation.
- It actively promotes development and reflection on the ways of life, history, culture and traditions of different communities, strengthening their sense of cultural identity and belonging.
- It fosters the exchange of knowledge and wisdom of peoples, which leads to a greater awareness and appreciation of the “other”, which becomes the basis of an intercultural mentality.

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<sup>2</sup> The Salesian Missionary Vocation, ACG 437 (2022), p.51.

<sup>3</sup> “Museums are responsible for the tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage. Governing bodies and those concerned with the strategic direction and oversight of museums have a primary responsibility to protect and promote this heritage as well as the human, physical and financial resources made available for that purpose.” ICOM Code of ETHICS for Museums, 2017, article 1.

It is an educational and cultural space, where activities are organised to make communities aware of the values that interculturality entails.

- It actively encourages the values of respect and care for creation inherited from the ancestral knowledge of communities, especially among young people. Pope Francis, sensitive to this reality as he has well demonstrated, denounces that young people themselves are asking for a radical change and “wonder how we can pretend to build a better future without thinking about the environmental crisis and the suffering of the excluded; as educators and pastors we cannot be indifferent to this reality. And we must make it operational.”<sup>4</sup>
- It awakens in the population, especially in young people, interest in the person of Jesus Christ and his Gospel through the scripts, exhibits and activities of the SMM.

## REPASA – SALESIAN HERITAGE NETWORK

Creating a Network is not done through a series of dispersed actions. There is a need to unite, to generate exchanges, joint and fraternal actions that allow us to safeguard, value, professionalize and disseminate Salesian values through its historical-cultural heritage, while optimizing resources to overcome the obstacles that we face as individual institutions.

The context of globalisation in our society forces us to rethink the organisation, maintenance and regulation of the work carried out by all of us who manage the Salesian cultural heritage on a daily basis,

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<sup>4</sup> 8.ACCOMPANYING THE YOUNG TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. “The Rector Major,s guidelines for the salesian Congregation after general chapter 28”, ACG433.

understanding and highlighting its value, as stated in the Charter of Brussels (2009):

*“From the perspective of ceasing to perceive Cultural Heritage as a burden and starting to perceive it with its essential and intrinsic value, it is necessary to implement a strategy of socialisation of the values of cultural heritage, starting from the early stages of education to ensure the necessary knowledge and universal accessibility to the goods and services that make up the cultural sector”<sup>5</sup>.*

In short, we form a SALESIAN HERITAGE NETWORK that will allow us to work in synergy towards a professional management for the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of our museums, libraries and archives.

The central idea is kept in mind that it will be a network of solidarity, in which each of the members, together with the professionals committed to the work, will be able to nourish and contribute variety and richness to the improvement of the conditions of all the SMM, without neglecting their specific social and political environments.

Membership in the Network will be decided by each institution and its provincial superiors, joining or leaving as they wish. It should be noted that those who decide to become involved in REPASA commit themselves to participate, following agreed parameters and guidelines, in order to give uniformity to our museums under a seal of quality that will allow us to be competitive under the guidelines of international organisations.

In its more structural and organisational aspect, the Network is supervised/organised/guided by a Coordinator in the Missions Sector,

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<sup>5</sup> Brussels charter on the role of cultural heritage in the economy, and for the creation of a european network for its recognition and dissemination.

and a group of professionals (volunteers) from the Salesian Missionary Museums of Don Bosco who will seek to give shape to this organisation.

## Benefits of networking

- The Network will strengthen not only each museum but also the Salesian Congregation as a whole, allowing us to understand the importance of the history and heritage that is preserved.
- We must be aware that heritage, tangible and intangible, is part of the identity and history of the community, allowing us to understand the present and project it into the future.
- REPASA offers us various opportunities to improve the functioning and impact of Salesian cultural institutions, favouring exchanges at different levels:
  - **Patrimonial:** obtaining information on various objects and their history, promoting both the cataloguing and inventorying of goods, their history, as well as the management of loans and travelling exhibitions.
  - **In relation to practices:** it will allow us to share proposals, activities, educational and cultural initiatives that are carried out in each institution in order to inspire actions in other spaces.
  - **In terms of documentation:** through the Network it will be possible to share primary and secondary sources of information, promoting new lines of research.
  - **From the training point of view:** it will favour the exchange of knowledge in aspects related to conservation, registration and inventory, cataloguing, presentation of samples, etc.

- **Dissemination:** promotion of events, activities and important anniversaries of the members of REPASA through the communication channels of each museum (social networks, etc.); among others, the use of social networks of each museum to promote awareness of the events, activities and important anniversaries of the members of REPASA.
- **Marketing:** development and implementation of strategies that increase the visibility of the participating museums and with it the linking/engagement of the public.

## General Objective

Creating a SALESIAN HERITAGE NETWORK will allow us to work in synergy towards a professional management for greater efficiency, efficacy and economy of our museums, libraries and archives, enhancing the value of the heritage of the Salesian Congregation. To this end, we will establish areas of work that offer services to the museums in the network and serve to improve the quality and standards of our museums with a view to recognition by international organisations.

## Specific Objectives

REPASA will seek to offer a series of services aimed at conserving, strengthening and consolidating Salesian museums, archives, libraries and interpretation centres.

In order to understand what each of the above objectives entails, the following section develops basic aspects:

***SO 1: To get to know the reality of the Salesian Missionary Museums in the different countries where the Congregation carries out its work.***

Expanding research on SMM. We are aware of the existence of a large number of heritage sites around the world, but at present we do not know exactly what they are, nor how they work; we need to generate a register in which they are detailed: MUSEUMS

- Name
- Province it depends on
- Location
- Cadastral data
- Email
- Director or person in charge
- Contact details
- Type of collection held
- Website
- Social networks
- Basic historical data

***SO 2. Motivate the Provinces that have tangible and intangible heritage to join REPASA.***

To encourage Provinces, it is essential to highlight the benefits offered in terms of raising awareness of the importance of Salesian cultural heritage, collaborative networking, technical training, recognition and visibility, fostering a sense of belonging and establishing incentives.

The value of these assets not only in preserving history and identity, but also as tools for the education, inspiration and empowerment of the Salesian community and society at large needs to be highlighted.

By providing technical support, recognition and a sense of ownership, Provinces are encouraged to actively participate in the guardianship of the Salesian legacy, promoting greater collaboration and preservation for future generations.

***SO 3. Contribute globally to have a greater impact on our local audiences.***

First of all, we need to identify the specific needs of the audiences that frequent Salesian museums, doing a visitor survey and producing a SWOT analysis, carrying out surveys and/or analysis of demographic and socio-economic data. After collecting this data, it will be possible to develop a programme or activities adapted to local characteristics and requirements, ensuring that they are aligned with the global values and objectives of the Salesian Missionary Museum Network.

Another important point is to establish partnerships and collaborations with local and global organisations that share similar objectives, which will allow the impact of the actions carried out to be broadened. These alliances can be carried out with public and private organisations, socially responsible companies, in line with the values of Salesian institutions, and with the use of technology and digital platforms to spread the message and the actions carried out locally, thus reaching a global audience.

***SE 4. Establish quality standards that position us at the level of international regulations.***

For a museum to be competitive, it must be up to the task and offer displays and resources that encourage the public to visit it.

In this sense, REPASA will seek to encourage/promote a normative framework for the management of Salesian heritage by establishing a common professional and quality standard.

A museum with these characteristics should aim to professionalise its staff and ensure that its collections are safeguarded, conserved, inventoried, catalogued and researched according to national and international standards and Salesian criteria. To this end, it will be necessary to draw up the Museum Network Statutes that set out the necessary parameters for the protection, conservation and dissemination of the collections, which must be respected by each of the members who wish to belong to the Network.

Furthermore, REPASA seeks to train and encourage the member museums of the Network to generate the necessary museological documents, endorsed by international standards proposed by organisations such as ICOM.

In this respect we are talking about building:

- A *Museological Plan*, for which a process of training and creation of a model in accordance with the identity of the Network will be necessary, which can be adapted to the particularities of each institution;
- A *Code of Ethics*, in order to protect the heritage we have;
- A document that establishes *criteria for expungement and loan* of pieces in order to prevent collections from being dismembered through application of individual criteria;
- *Inventorying and cataloguing* objects. We are aware that not all museums have such documentation, so we will seek to encourage its development, understanding it as a fundamental

instrument for the knowledge of the material available and the implementation of joint actions among the SMM;

- A protocol for the *rescue of collections*, common to all members, which sets out measures to be taken into account when a collection is in an emergency situation (closure, abandonment, armed conflict, etc.);
- Create a *database* so that Salesian museums can access the collections of other institutions, which will enable the generation of joint and collaborative actions.

#### ***SO 5. To generate training programmes for museum workers and their museum work.***

Taking into account that REPASA seeks to position itself professionally and with international quality standards, it is necessary to think about the training of people and collaborators of the Salesian Cultural Institutions.

This could be done through courses, seminars, workshops, talks and meetings in which experiences are shared and replicated at a global level.

The topics that these proposals will address will depend on the needs of the Network: development of basic museological documentation for each institution, for example museological plan, inventory or cataloguing. They may be the demands emanating from the SMM themselves: conservation, management of collections, heritage education, etc.

It should be emphasised that it is proposed that these instances be endorsed by competent bodies in the area that can provide the

participants with certificates for the knowledge/skills they have acquired.

### ***SO 6. Formulate and develop joint educational-pedagogical projects.***

In view of the different audiences and realities that our museums reach, we believe that education is of the utmost importance, which is why we propose sharing, formulating and developing educational-pedagogical programmes that take into account Salesian values (solidarity, encounter, dialogue, respect, tolerance, accompaniment, etc.).

The creation of joint educational-pedagogical programmes at REPASA represents a fundamental tool for:

- Fulfilling the educational and cultural mission of Salesian museums;
- Strengthening their impact on the community;
- Contributing to social and cultural development.

This initiative makes the most of the resources and capacities of each museum, generating a dynamic, inclusive and sustainable teaching-learning space for the benefit of all.

To achieve this, we propose the development of activities that involve visitors in an interactive way, promoting experiential learning and creating online educational resources (didactic material, educational videos, activities) to reach a wider audience.

***SO 7. To foster communication channels among REPASA member museums by generating appropriate dissemination and marketing strategies.***

Bearing in mind that communication is the basis of any organisation, it is necessary to establish effective communication platforms, creating, for example, email groups, online forums, WhatsApp groups or social networks exclusively for members of the Network, where they can share information, experiences, obstacles, proposals and relevant resources such as materials, research, but also training activities, congresses, competitions, sources of funding, etc.

Another important point is the development of collaborative work and the promotion of exchange among museum institutions, seeking to encourage the holding of events, workshops or conferences where common challenges, best practices and opportunities for collaboration can be discussed, but also allow us to be present at, for example, the anniversaries of the member heritage sites, important dates for the Congregation (such as the birth and demise of our founder Don Bosco), international events and dates where the work of museums is recognised, etc.

In this way, the activities will not only strengthen the links among the members of the Network, but will also broaden the scope of the activities and initiatives carried out by the museums.

As far as dissemination and marketing strategies are concerned, the first step will be to identify the museums' target audience and then adapt the materials produced to the particularities of each institution. We must also explore the various communication channels, such as Instagram, X, Facebook, YouTube..., bearing in mind that a large part

of our public uses these tools to keep up to date on a daily basis, besides the use of the press and local media to reach a more diversified audience.

We will seek to have a communication team that will develop activities for promotion and dissemination both internally and externally, while providing material that can be shared by all REPASA members.

***SO 8. To contribute to the educational, missionary and evangelising mission of Don Bosco through the development of proposals aimed at missionary memories.***

REPASA is a constantly growing project, with museums in different countries around the world. The museums work together to share resources, experiences and good practices, with a positive impact on society by promoting culture, education and Salesian values. The Network complements school education, offering a comprehensive educational experience. Young people will learn in an experiential and meaningful way, developing skills such as creativity, criticality and communication.

To carry this out, it is proposed to develop educational programmes, collaboration and exchange of exhibitions, design pedagogical resources aligned with Salesian missionary animation, forming a network that fosters creativity, innovation and collaboration, which will be key to the success of these initiatives.

The Network will be a meeting place with the Salesian Mission, transmitting Christian values, guiding the awareness and activities of the participants, exposing the presence and evolution of the Salesian work among indigenous communities throughout history, all from a human rights approach.

It will also develop programmes that address issues related to the life and teachings of Don Bosco.

***SO 9. Establish joint strategies and lines of financing so that all institutions can develop their activities and implement sustainable financing models in a particular way.***

In terms of obtaining funds and financing to develop REPASA's actions, we must consider some fundamental points of this objective. Firstly, it is necessary to carry out a detailed analysis of the financial needs of each of the participating institutions in order to understand their real situation.

We know that financing a Salesian Museum Network at the international level can be a challenge, but there are various strategies and sources of funding available to sustain the Network's operations and projects.

One strategy is to seek sponsorship and establish partnerships with local and international companies that share the values and objectives of the network.

In parallel, the creation of individual and philanthropic giving programmes, both locally and internationally, including online fundraising campaigns (crowdfunding), may be a viable alternative.

Special online events, subject to an entry fee, and the production of sponsored content, such as YouTube videos, also present opportunities.

Other options would be to monetise participation in workshops, papers, conferences, symposia or working groups by Salesian museum professionals, including the production of specialised publications, articles, journals or the assignment of rights and licences for the use of images from the collections in publications and research.

Diversifying funding sources and adapting strategies according to the specific needs of the Salesian Museum Network is fundamental. In addition, income generation through advertising and marketing (digital marketing / e-commerce), as well as partnerships with Salesian and external educational institutions, and the search for funding among the different proposals of the Congregation, can be considered.

Transparency in financial management and effective communication with sponsors and donors (patrons, friends of the museums, cultural clubs, etc.) are key elements in building long-term sustainable relationships.

Apply for different external funding calls (Ibermuseos, for example) to promote the joint sustainability of the entities belonging to the Network. Joint proposals that benefit all participants, funding through international organisations or sponsors, and public funding projects are also options to explore.

Creating a management group, with the purpose of lobbying and providing support to benefit and strengthen museums, can be a complementary initiative to ensure the success of the funding strategies adopted.

Use digital technologies to generate spaces for cultural/commercial exchange between producers of Salesian cooperatives with museums, companies and the general public, to promote global culture and support the social and solidarity economy.

***SO 10. Design a programme to evaluate the impact and sustainability of the network.***

It is essential to design a systematic and objective process that will allow us to determine the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the

Network's programmes and projects. This process must be carried out on a continuous and permanent basis. Evaluations will allow us to measure success, improve management and strengthen the sustainability of programmes or projects, which will help to strengthen REPASA.

Create a programme whose objective is to evaluate the impact and maintenance of the Network of Missionary Museums on an ongoing basis, providing data and ideas that can influence future actions in some way, thus guaranteeing the future and success of the Network. In this sense, we will use the following elements as a form of evaluation for the programme:

- **Impact Indicators:**

We Will identify key performance indicators and measure the impact, positive and negative, caused by the creation of the Network, evaluating situations such as increased collaboration between institutions, number of events held, community participation, etc.

- **Data Collection:**

Development of a system to collect relevant data, including among other relevant actions: satisfaction surveys, event participation analysis, community feedback.

- **Analysis of Data:**

To maintain our work efficiency, regular analysis of the data collected is necessary to assess the performance of the Network against established indicators, identifying areas of success and opportunities for improvement.

▪ **Evaluation of Sustainability:**

Conduct an assessment of the financial sustainability of the Network, analysing current and potential funding sources, operational costs and revenue generation opportunities.

▪ **Reports and Communication:**

Communication reports will be premised on informing on a regular basis on the impact and sustainability of the Network, communicating the results to stakeholders, including participating museums, funders and partners.

▪ **Review and Adjustment:**

For the good management of the programme, a review will be done, whenever necessary, taking into account the results of the evaluation and changes in the external context, always aiming at its effectiveness.

▪ **Responsibilities:**

It will be the responsibility of the commission (management) of the Network of Missionary Museums to oversee and implement the programme, coordinate data collection and analysis, and make recommendations for improvements. Each member institution of the Network will be responsible for contributing relevant data and actively participating in the evaluation process.

As benefits to our Missionary Museum Network, we expect:

- Better understanding of the impact of the Network on the community and the area of operation;
- Identification of areas of success and opportunities for improvement;

- Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the Network;
- Informed decision-making for the future development of the network.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS / FINAL REFLECTIONS OF THE GROUP / CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

The First Meeting of Salesian Museums was the occasion for a profound reflection on the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Salesian Congregation. We recognised the importance of museums as centres of heritage conservation, highlighting their role in the preservation of Salesian history, culture and spirituality. From the outset, as precursors of the Network, we had a group sensitive to the issue of heritage, which raised the question: What does the sphere of Salesian heritage encompass?

Right from the start, the relevance of considering both tangible and intangible heritage was emphasised, highlighting the importance of preserving physical objects along with values, traditions and customs. It is essential to highlight the immaterial aspects of our heritage, such as spirituality and the preventive system, the legacy and foundation of our founder Don Bosco, which must be passed on to future generations.

There is also the need to ensure the preservation and dissemination of material goods, from museums to buildings and places of memory, promoting that no aspect of heritage is left unattended, including the conservation of sacred and historical places, even if they are not directly linked to the provinces, such as the Casa di Mamma Margherita. How could the Network integrate these institutions?

Looking at some of the Salesian works in various European countries, we appreciate the historical and cultural richness of these places, many

of which have become true centres of religiosity and national heritage. We believe that collaboration between the different sectors and the inclusion of Salesian historic houses in the Network are essential steps to ensure the preservation and enhancement of this legacy. We take as an example the sites mentioned below by Father Tadek:

- The Benedictine monastery, which was active from 1121 to 1802, and the Baroque church of St. James in Ensdorf, where the Salesians have been present since 1920;
- The 8th century Benedictine abbey and the Basilica of St. Benedict (Wallfahrtskirche) in Benediktbeuren, which was entrusted to the Salesians in 1930;
- The Polish Salesian Mother House in Oświęcim (Auschwitz), which includes the Marian shrine of Mary Help of Christians;
- The Dominican convent, which was in operation between 1663 and 1846, then became a Christian-Orthodox women's monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God between 1901 and 1915, and was finally entrusted to the Salesians in 1919 for various educational and scholastic works. The associated church is in the Baroque-Mannerist style and dates from 1759, together with the minor basilica and the Marian shrine in Różanystok.
- The Cistercian abbey in Łąd in the Warta, established around 1175 and active until 1819, passed into the hands of the Salesians in 1921. Its parish church is known as the jewel of Polish Baroque, built between the 17th and 18th centuries.
- The abbey of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine (Lateran Canons), which operated from 1155 to 1819, with its Romanesque church of the Mother of God between 1129 and 1156, which

became a minor basilica. Subsequently, the site housed a monastery of Norbertine nuns between 1819 and 1902, and then was designated as a Salesian novitiate from 1923. It also includes a Marian shrine in Czerwińsk, located by the Vistula River.

- The Franciscan convent, which was reformed between 1651 and 1864, with its baroque church in Lutomiersk, where the Salesians have been working since 1925.

Finally, it is important to touch on the organisation that REPASA will have. We need to prioritise this point, setting goals and deadlines according to the objectives of the document. Some questions arise in this regard: will all institutions interact with each other, or will specific networks be generated for each type of institution? For example, will there be a network of Salesian museums, a network of archives and a network of libraries, or is the idea that all of these will interact among them?

While there are still many questions to be answered, it is important to remember that REPASA is a birthing project. As we move forward, questions will be clarified and solutions to problems will be found. The important thing is that all Salesian Missionary Museums are committed to the project and that we are willing to work together to achieve our common goals.

All Salesian Missionary Museums have the mission to preserve and spread the Salesian charism through the different collections; we see it as a gift to the Church and to the world. It is an invitation to museums to live with joy, hope and love, to build a better world for the generations to come and to transmit this charism to our audiences.

# PART III

## SOME SALESIAN MISSIONARY MUSEUMS



# CHAPTER 1

## SALESIAN POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY ABYA-YALA MUSEUM



**Nataly del Pilar Orbe Ortiz**



**A**bya-Yala Museum is a cultural institution managed by the Salesian Polytechnic University of Quito, Ecuador.

The collection of objects of the Shuar nationality was started by Mons. Cándido Rada, a Chilean Salesian bishop, in 1954. Shortly after he settled in Quito, he had the vision of creating a museum with the aim of maintaining the identity of the Shuar people, which was threatened by logging, oil companies and westernisation itself.

Fr Siro Pellizzaro was charged with travelling around the Shuar area, looking for suitable objects and taking them to Quito. There, they were displayed in the Salesian Institute, today the Salesian Polytechnic University. According to the demands of the religious community, the enormous glass urns were relocated three times, until it became necessary to assign the museum a definitive location. In 1988, the first centenary of the arrival of Salesians in Ecuador, Fr Juan Bottasso began the construction of the Abya-Yala building, adjacent to the Salesian Institute. The museum was inaugurated on 12 October 1992 with the name Museo Amazónico (Amazon Museum) because its collections pertained to the material culture and archaeology of the Ecuadorian Amazon.

The museum was run by the Centro Cultural Abya-Yala until 2003, when it was taken over by the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana and it remains so until the present day.





In 2005, three rooms were inaugurated on the 4th floor of the building, which were used for the exhibition of archaeological pieces donated by Fr Jacinto Vaca; these archaeological pieces belong to the Northern Highlands and the Ecuadorian Coast.



In 2013 the authorities of the Salesian Polytechnic University decided to make a museographic and museological change by moving the ethnographic and archaeological pieces to the ground floor of the building. Since September

13<sup>th</sup> 2013 the museum is called Museo Abya - Yala.

We have a collection of works by the painter Marcela Burneo, who donated them to Fr Francisco Sánchez when he was the Salesian Provincial.

As you can see, the Abya-Yala Museum was born in Salesian hands and has remained so up to the present day. Naturally, along the way there have been other people, too, committed to the evolution of the museum. Most significant among them all is the intervention of various communities of different nationalities who have collaborated in the elaboration of scripts and translations.

We have sought out the grandfathers and grandmothers, working with the elders through young people who served as interpreters. I can say that it was there, among them, that I started learning restoration. Only by working with the people of the community could I learn to handle



the Chambira, the Wasake, the Pambil; to choose seeds; to see how a man makes a canoe or how to work in wood.

There I learned that it is important to place three stones on the hearth because they represent the family, the father, the mother and the children, and that the hot pot symbolises the warmth of the home and for that reason it was forbidden to turn the hearth off.



Learning the details of each piece has led me to love the culture and to value the work of a craftswoman, to respect her customs and traditions. I think this is Initial Proclamation that has been done in a spectacular way through love. As Fr Juan Bottasso used to say, we used to give what they did not ask for. It was necessary to get to know them and enter their culture, just as Fr Silvio Broseghini did. His first encounter with the Shuar was to go to the carpentry workshop and be with the children and young people. He fell in love with the serene atmosphere that they preserved with joy and humour despite all the problems they faced.

Fr Luis Bolla, known as Yánkuam which means the Light of Dawn, decided to go and live among the Achuar people. With a missionary aim rather than a colonising one, he wanted to learn and nourish himself with their culture, their language and their identity. "They are the noblest people I have ever met", was one of Father Yánkuam's more frequently used phrases. It reflected all the love and affection he felt for the people with whom he shared 41 years of his life. Abya-Yala



collected the 14 volumes of his Diary, which allows us to understand and know the evolution of these Amazonian peoples.

I cannot forget Fr Siro Pellizzaro. To Fr Siro Pellizzaro we owe the Shuar myths, the Chicham dictionary and the most recent book published by this Abya-Yala publishing house: Nampet. This book presents 1,573 transcriptions of Nampet texts. These texts, together with other sung genres, such as the Ánent, the Ujaj, the songs of the Uwishin, formed part of the traditional Shuar poetic-programmatic universe.



Pellizzaro brought them together in this volume to rescue them from oblivion. Siro Pellizzaro's legacy is enormous, and his contributions are fundamental to indigenous languages, anthropology and history. The museum's

social channels have used it to disseminate the customs, traditions and legends of this people, especially on our Spotify channel.

Although we have already spoken a little about Fr Juan Bottasso, I would like to emphasise that this Salesian priest worked with passion; that he knew how to see, feel, love and listen to reality; that he dialogued with and understood the millenary peoples; that he led an active and creative life; that he had unlimited confidence in science as a starting point for understanding and solving problems; and that, thanks to his confidence in people, he generated projects that changed histories and lives.



It is really an understatement to say that Salesians have given and continue to give their lives in Ecuador for evangelisation. They do so not only with the community but also through other channels of education such as the Salesian Polytechnic University, the Don Bosco and Abya-Yala Audiovisual libraries and schools. The Museum is of special importance. They have seen it as an environment rich in historical, cultural and scientific resources that can be used to advance knowledge in various disciplines. Collaboration between researchers and museums is essential to preserve and understand our cultural and natural heritage and its conservation. The Abya-Yala Museum has become a benchmark for ethnographic museums in Ecuador, because it offers researchers the opportunity to study human cultures and societies through its artefacts and exhibits; its publishing house and library, including research on customs, traditions, rituals and ways of life of different ethnic groups; but, above all, these services are free and open to the public, accessible and inclusive, and it fosters diversity and sustainability.



Going a little further into the Abya - Yala museum we can say that its objectives are:

1. To present in a didactic way the material culture of the ethnic groups that inhabit the Amazon such as: Shuar, Achuar, Cofán, Kichwa, Huao, Siona-Secoya, Zápara, detailing their housing, hunting, fishing, myths, customs and ideologies.



2. To raise awareness of the human-environmental problems of the Amazon; creating awareness and thus forming an opinion in favour of the Amazonian indigenous peoples in order to avoid in the short and long term the irreversible deterioration of their habitat, to which their very existence is linked.
3. To provide information on the risks and challenges native communities currently face: colonisation, habitat degradation, environmental destruction, agro-industries and oil exploitation.
4. To exhibit samples of the archaeology of the East, the Coast and the Northern highlands of Ecuador.

The purpose of the museum is to collaborate in the care of the cultural wealth of the country, especially as regards the Material Culture of the Ecuadorian Amazon and its archaeology.

## **Organisation of the Museum**

The museum has two collections, an archaeological one with pieces from the East, the Coast and the Northern Highlands of Ecuador, and an ethnographic one with samples of the Material Culture of the Indigenous People of the Ecuadorian Amazon.

## **Halls or Areas of the Museum**

I would like to take you on one of our virtual tours.

The Museum has two areas, an archaeological one where you can observe vestiges of South East Ecuador. Just recently, a few days ago, it was reported that ruins have been uncovered of a culture of more or less one hundred thousand people. This has aroused the interest of



archaeologists, anthropologists and multidisciplinary teams who are beginning to undertake new investigations.

You visit the cultures of the Coast with unique pieces such as the Venus of Valdivia, bottles, seals, utilitarian pieces. The display on the northern highlands benefitted from a donation of the Salesian, Fr Jacinto Vaca, consisting of compoteras, pots, pots with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms. They enable us to see the way of life and thought of that time – we are talking about the formative period, and regions of Ecuador.

An ethnographic area with three rooms where the material culture of seven nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon is preserved: Achuar, Cofán, Siona, Secoya, Huao, Kichwa, Zápara and the largest collection of the Shuar nationality.



It recreates jungle environments with displays of food, clothing, body ornaments and kitchen objects, hunting and defence weapons. One of the most captivating pieces is in honour of the goddess of the thousand faces. She represents the Quichua principles: 'Ama Llulla, Ama Shua and Ama killa' which means 'don't lie, don't steal and don't be lazy'. Contemplate the deities, the Tsansas, and the shrunk human heads of an indigenous person and of a colonist. It is at present forbidden to exhibit human remains, but the 7 Shuar federations and the ministry of culture and patrimony have asked us to exhibit the two human heads with the respect that they deserve.



The visit to the Abya-Yala Museum is not an ordinary visit. While on the tour the visitor listens to the voices, ceremonial chants and musical rhythms of the different nationalities. The user can feel the touch, dance the rhythms. It is a

tour where the guides interact with the visitor and the collection in a circular and informal way. The tours are adapted to the user, whether it is a child, a student, an adult or a foreigner. A visitor does not have one guide, but several, which makes the visit more refreshing.

In order to achieve all this, the museum's staff is always rooted in the Salesian values of faith, love, reason, joy, closeness and holistic education. In this way, we work with students from different universities and, of course, from our own university, whom we call interns or trainees.

## Activities at the Museum

The museum carries out a variety of activities with the aim of preserving, exhibiting and sharing knowledge about objects, artefacts, works of art and cultural or natural phenomena. Some of the main activities carried out by the museum include:

**Collection:** The Abya-Yala Museum has a complete catalogue both physically and digitally of its almost ten thousand pieces. Important for the museum is the creation and management of collections which are essential tasks for a museum.

**Exhibition:** The exhibition of collections in the museum is naturally one of the most visible functions. Permanent and temporary exhibitions are designed and presented, which may include art, natural history, science, technology, anthropology, among other subjects.

In terms of **conservation, research and publications:** We have already spoken extensively on this subject, since being part of a university also allows us to interact with teachers, students who do monographic works, theses and articles on the museum's themes. These have allowed us to preserve and disseminate culture.

**Education:** This is where we really excel as we consider the educational role to be crucial. We offer educational programmes for schools, guided tours, lectures, workshops and interactive activities to help visitors understand and appreciate the exhibits.

## Other Abya-Yala activities

Recognising the **multiplicity of voices:** The museum does not present a single version of history or traditions; instead, it gives voice to differing perspectives of indigenous communities. This is achieved through:

- **Exhibits:** Exhibits feature cultural artefacts, photographs, videos and audio recordings representing the diverse traditions and worldviews of indigenous peoples.
- **Testimonials:** Visitors can hear testimonies from members of indigenous communities who share their stories, traditions and beliefs.
- **Events:** The museum organises lecture events where members of indigenous communities share their knowledge and experiences with the public.



**Emphasising the importance of oral tradition:** The Abya-Yala Museum recognises that oral tradition is a valid and valuable way of transmitting knowledge and culture. The museum's exhibitions and programmes highlight the importance of oral storytelling, music and dance in the preservation of indigenous culture. It can even be said that this is being achieved not only in some events with the communities but also with our university community through the ASU dance, theatre and music groups.

**Promoting intercultural dialogue:** The museum, but especially the lecturers of the degree courses such as anthropology, intercultural communication or the master's degree in Cultural Management, promote intercultural dialogue between indigenous peoples and society in general. This is achieved through:

- **Educational programmes:** We offer educational programmes for students of all ages that teach the history, culture and traditions of indigenous peoples.
- **Research:** The University, through the academy, publishing house, bookstore and museum, supports research on indigenous cultures and disseminates the results of this research to the public.

**Respecting diversity:** The museum is aware of the sensitivity of some issues related to indigenous cultures. Therefore, it works closely with indigenous communities to ensure that the museum's exhibitions and programmes are respectful and appropriate. A year ago, for example, we had the opportunity to share with the Kichwa communities of Cotopaxi where they showed the Art of Tigua, paintings made by the

community members themselves that depict the landscapes of the Ecuadorian Andes, indigenous traditions and customs.

The Salesian Polytechnic University, through the Abya Yala Museum, strives to be a space for intercultural dialogue where the richness and diversity of Ecuador's indigenous cultures, especially those of the Amazon, can be appreciated. By recognising the importance of oral tradition and promoting respect for diversity, the museum helps to preserve and strengthen the cultural memory of indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, the Salesian Polytechnic University and Editorial Universitaria Abya Yala/UPS maintain an academic space where a Publications project is implemented with two fundamental pillars: indexed journals and referred books. The biannual production of UPS journals complies with Open Journal System (OJS), registration processes that guarantee compliance with international scientific processes; this involves the flow of articles between the head of each journal who receives the material, sends it to blind peers knowledgeable in the field so that they can evaluate it, then centralise it in the Abya Yala/UPS coordination, edit, layout and print it, and finally upload it to the OJS for the user to see it.

Periodical indexed journals for inter-university researchers and research groups in the following areas:

- Alteridad: Journal of Education
- Sophia: Journal of Philosophy of Education
- Universitas: Journal of Social and Human Sciences
- La Granja: Journal of Life Sciences

- Ingenius: Journal of Science and Technology
- Retos: Journal of Management Sciences and Economics

**Peer-reviewed books** by full-time teaching staff:

Once the two arbitrations and the Career Resolution required by the higher education authorities have been fulfilled, the publishing house begins the task of editing, layout, cover design, proofs of the text and cover for final revision, printing of the book, delivery of the copyright, and the respective presentation of the work in the corresponding Career.

Both the production of periodicals and reference books testify to the commitment of the Research Groups and Academic Units of the UPS to the dissemination of knowledge. This experience allows us not only to score in institutional accreditation, but also to consolidate a research culture of high academic quality at the service of Ecuadorian society.

On the other hand, Abya-Yala was a pioneer in publishing small print runs at low cost, with digital printing systems. This initiative opened a door for independent authors, especially indigenous authors. Today, Abya-Yala offers editorial services - proofreading and copy-editing, layout and design, and printing – to institutions and authors who want to publish their texts, whether academic or literary.

- As for the question of whether we go to other institutions, of course we do, the Abya-Yala Museum goes with fairs to the general public. We have projects such as 'The Museum Visits Your Home' and 'The Museum Visits Your School/College'. We work with other universities in temporary exhibitions and theatrical tours in relation to the collections.



- In terms of how we promote knowledge, we can say that the Museo Abya-Yala promotes knowledge and appreciation of indigenous cultures through various strategies that include exhibitions, educational programmes, research and public events. Among the most noteworthy actions are:

- **Exhibitions:**

- **Diversity of Voices:** Exhibitions feature cultural objects, photographs, videos and audio recordings that represent the diverse traditions and cosmovisions of indigenous peoples.
- **Testimonies:** Visitors can hear testimonies from members of indigenous communities who share their stories, traditions and beliefs.
- **Interactive displays:** Interactive elements are included that allow visitors to experience indigenous culture up close, such as musical instruments, textiles and traditional games.

- **Educational programmes:**

- **Workshops and talks:** Workshops and talks are organised with experts in indigenous cultures to deepen their knowledge and traditions.
- **Guided tours:** Guided tours of the exhibitions are offered with specialised guides who provide contextualised information and answer visitors' questions.
- **Programmes for schools:** Specific programmes are designed for schools with playful and educational activities



that introduce children and young people to indigenous culture.

■ **Research:**

- **Research support:** The museum supports researchers studying indigenous cultures by providing access to materials and collaborating on projects.
- **Academic events:** Congresses, seminars and colloquia are organised to encourage the exchange of knowledge between researchers and indigenous communities.

■ **Public events:**

- **Cultural celebrations:** Events are organised that celebrate the traditions and festivities of indigenous peoples, such as music, dance and food festivals.
- **Craft fairs:** Fairs are held where indigenous artisans can sell their products and share their techniques with the public.
- **Cine-forums:** Films and documentaries are shown on topics related to indigenous cultures and discussions are organised afterwards to encourage reflection and dialogue.

■ **Collaboration with indigenous communities:**

- **Intercultural dialogue:** The museum maintains an ongoing dialogue with indigenous communities to ensure that exhibitions, programmes and events are respectful and appropriate.
- **Active participation:** Members of indigenous communities are invited to participate in the design and development of museum activities.



- **Knowledge sharing:** Knowledge exchange between the museum and indigenous communities is promoted to mutually enrich understanding of indigenous culture.

The Abya-Yala Museum, through these strategies, seeks to create a meeting place where the richness and diversity of Ecuador's indigenous cultures, especially those of the Amazon, can be appreciated. It is a space for learning, dialogue and reflection that contributes to the preservation and strengthening of the cultural memory of indigenous peoples.

**Special events:** The Abya-Yala Museum organises special events such as conferences, presentations, theme nights, film screenings and participatory activities to attract different audiences and generate interest in its collections. We often work together with other museums thanks to the networks of ICOM Ec. del Sistema de Museos Quito or the Red Nacional de Museos del Ecuador del Ministerio de cultura.

I consider this sector to be extremely rich because it contributes significantly to the preservation, promotion and dissemination of cultural and natural heritage.

For example, we have a project called 'Discover the Amazon' where we work with 13 museums in Quito, Coca, Macas, Puyo Baeza. We show the Amazon from different points of view. This project has several components: the museum fair, the on-site and virtual routes for students, where we receive between 3000 and 3500 students in a week; and the academic component, where a congress or seminar is held around a theme about the Amazon, with the participation of experts, teachers, special guests and others. All of this is with the aim



of promoting, disseminating and exchanging knowledge, but above all, citizen participation.

In Quito we work with the different networks already mentioned. We coordinate together in events such as May Museum Month, Culture Day, All Souls' Day, December holidays, among others, that allow the community to participate actively. With that intention, we organise events for local audiences: for example, the night at the museum and fairs. In the last fair we had the participation of about 25 museums in Quito and it was also held in Guayaquil for the first time last year. Our museum was able to participate in the two fairs which were full of culture, traditional music and conferences. I believe that May in our country, especially Quito, is a party-month and totally free of charge.

**Museum Publicity:** It is well known that museums always lack economic resources. However, we use all the social networks free of charge, and the media such as the radio and digital press. It is difficult to reach the mass media such as television, but when the offer is large, especially when we work in a network, the media do listen to us.

To conclude, I would like to say that, working in a museum and above all in a Salesian museum has given me a wide range of experiences and opportunities such as the one I am living at the moment. I have been able to contribute to the development of various personal and professional values. Working in a Salesian Museum goes beyond the traditional functions of a museum because it connects with the particular mission and values of the Salesian Congregation, focusing on education, evangelisation and service to young people and the wider community.





## NATALY DEL PILAR ORBE ORTIZ

Universidad Politécnica Salesiana  
Museo Abya – Yala

I am 54 years old. I live in Quito, Ecuador. I am a Social Communicator with a major in Education and Culture, Masters in Museology and Museum Management and Ethnographic Museum Restorer.

I published in the Catalogue of the Museo Amazónico an article on the Preventive System of Don Bosco applicable in museums. I did the entire cataloguing of 4563 pieces of the Abya - Yala Museum, both physical and digital. That implied a little more than 15,000 high resolution photographs. I elaborated the Museological and museographic plan of the Abya - Yala Museum.

I have collaborated in the construction of several museums in the Ecuadorian Amazon. I did an internship at the Museo Vicente Rassetto sdb in Peru. I have made several permanent and temporary exhibitions in the museums of my district as well as in Guayaquil and Cuenca.

I have participated in several national and international conferences on museology, education, social networks. So too, I have participated in several national projects and the formation of Museum Networks in Quito.

Currently I am the director of the Abya-Yala Museum, a member of the Network of Museums of Ecuador, an active part of the Quito Museum System and a member of the main board of the International Council of Museums – Ecuador.



# CHAPTER 2

## **CASA DON BOSCO** **BIRTHPLACE OF SALESIAN CHARISM** **VALDOCCO-TURIN (ITALY)**



**Ana MARTÍN GARCÍA**

General Coordinator | Museo Casa Don Bosco  
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**T**he Casa Don Bosco Museum is located inside the town of Valdocco, in the mother house of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Turin. The museum is part of a historical, artistic and spiritual itinerary that is composed and understood only within the architectural complex in which it is located, together with the Chapel of the Resurrection (Pinardi Chapel), the Church of St. Francis de Sales, the Basilica of Maria Ausiliatrice, the Museo della Tipografia (2013) and the Museo Etnografico Missioni Don Bosco (2019).

The museum has a total area of 4,000 square metres between the underground spaces, the ground floor, the first floor and the second floor. The museum project (inaugurated in October 2020) aims to revalue the original environments and spaces of the entire architectural structure of the Camerette of Don Bosco and the Pinardi house, which until now housed the offices of the Administration of the Circoscrizione speciale Piemonte-Val d'Aosta (ICP).



We need a philological re-reading and interpretation of the spaces and the execution of the architectural restoration project of the building. We can then appreciate in the current museum the origins, history and evolution of the Pinardi House in relation to the beginnings of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, the foundation of the Salesian Congregation and the life of St. Giovanni Bosco. Since the opening of the Camerette and up to the present day, the space has been a decisive

point of pilgrimage for the entire Salesian Family worldwide.

## HISTORY AND ORIGIN: CAMARETTE OF DON BOSCO

The rooms of the Camerette, which are a testimony and memory of the life and holiness of Don Bosco, were preserved with affection and devotion from the beginning. These spaces were inhabited by Don Bosco's first two successors,



Don Michele Rua and Don Paolo Albera, while they were used as a place of visits and pilgrimage. The first documentary references to this fact are found in the *Bollettino Salesiano* (1905) where, on several occasions, reference is made to the rooms which, although inhabited by the Rector Major of the Congregation, were called Camerette di don Bosco from the beginning.

On the occasion of the beatification of Don Bosco (1929) and in view of the increase in the number of visitors, the house was restored, the original rooms were preserved, a simple route for pilgrims was planned and a museum installation consisting of objects and writings was inaugurated under the rectorship of Don Filippo Rinaldi.

The first comprehensive restoration of the exhibition space increased the collection (1973-1977). Objects from the history of the first Salesian communities were added, meticulous inventories were made and the books and objects displayed in the showcases were catalogued (1975).

On the occasion of the centenary of the death of Don Bosco (1988), the collection was reorganised and an interactive educational museography was adopted in order to make the experience more participative (1987). This initiative was developed and adapted to the times on the occasion of the Jubilee (2000). The collection was then reorganised once again and interventions made in the spaces. This created a new museography that gave great prominence to projections and touch screens where themes were made available for virtual visits in various languages.

The Camerette was closed for its last restoration (4 December 2018) and opened as Museo Casa Don Bosco after the global pandemic of Covid-19 (4 October 2020).

## COLLECTIONS AND SOURCES

A museum is the result of the integration and sum of many elements: the architectural structure of the buildings, its origin and history, the staff who work in it but, above all, it is the product of the characteristics of its collections and holdings, which have multiple origins. In this particular case, the collections of the Casa Don Bosco Museum reflect the history and development of the Congregation in Valdocco. History and its vicissitudes have made decisive contributions to the growth of the collections that make up the current museum.



The collections, although mainly composed of relics, include exceptional examples of paintings, sculptures, decorative arts and works on paper. A total of 875 objects (2023) are on display in the current permanent exhibition.



A division of its collections (2023) was established and is being respected. The work of cataloguing, research, documentation and management is being carried out on an ongoing basis. This area focuses

mainly on the preparation of technical files in order to update the documentation on the objects and to open up new lines of research on the items themselves and their authors.

At the origin of the collection are the items kept in the Camerette that belonged directly to Don Bosco. This first collection also includes assets related to his successors and the first Salesian communities that lived in the Valdocco area. In addition to this central collection, there is also the collection of the treasury of the Basilica of Maria Ausiliatrice, consisting of relics, artefacts, paintings, gold and silverware, furniture, liturgical vestments and fabrics.

The collection of the Centro Salesiano di Documentazione Storica e Popolare Mariana (1978-2010) is divided into the collection of the Museo Mariano and the collection of the donation of the brothers, Giuseppe and Ottavio Gallo sdb.

The collection, which has been directly held by the Museo Casa Don Bosco since its official opening (October 2020), distinguishes the objects according to the legal ownership of each of them.

The works that make up the current collection, apart from the other collections referred to above, which are respected as such, are donations or deposits as long-term loans. Since the opening of the museum, works have passed through the permanent exhibition halls with temporary entries and were then returned to their original location. Of the works given as donations and deposits on loan, the most important are the works on display in the rooms dedicated to Salesian sanctity.

The registration and inventory of the museum's collection is constantly under review and is carried out through the procedures for admission (to the permanent collection, on loan or on deposit) and the movement of works, both external (on loan and on deposit) and internal.

At the same time, work is being carried out to organise and optimise the storage and safety of works, and to review and organise the documentary and photographic archives. An external company is taking care of the restoration of the assets.

## **HALLS AND THE PRESENT EXHIBITION ROUTE (2020-)**

The museum illustrates the many aspects of the Salesian charism through culture, art, history and the development of Valdocco's urban planning in the city of Turin. The museographic discourse of the Casa Don Bosco Museum is divided among several floors.



The spaces on the underground level, which are visible to the public for the first time (2020), connect with the origins of the Oratory: the old corridors, the canteen, the kitchen and the large dining room where

stage performances took place. Some of the spaces present movable goods from different collections: an exclusively Marian section, one dedicated to popular devotion; donations and liturgical objects that form a part of the treasury of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

On the ground floor is the reception and entrance to the museum. On the first floor, through models, planimetries and historical photographs, the urban development of the so-called Cittadella di Valdocco is presented. There is also a space dedicated to pictorial works directly related to the iconography of Don Bosco. Other works belonged to the iconographic corpus of the churches built in the early years of the Congregation from the mid-19th century onwards. On the same floor there is a space dedicated to Youth Ministry, to Don Bosco the writer and publisher, and to his first collaborators: Giovanni Borel, Giuseppe Cafasso, Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, Giulio Barberis, Paolo Albera, Michele Rua and Giovanni Cagliero.

On the second floor are the spaces that form the central nucleus of the entire museum, the so-called Camerette, the rooms where Don Bosco lived. The room has been philologically restored following the photograph dated 1861. The chapel is located on the same floor.

On display in the permanent collection are various pieces of furniture and liturgical vestments, a space dedicated to the beatification and canonisation of Don Bosco and some of the venerable, blessed and saints who lived in Valdocco, such as Mamma Margherita, Domenico Savio, Luigi Variara, Andrea Beltrami, Giuseppe Allamano, Luigi Orione, Leonardo Murialdo, Filippo Rinaldi, Luigi Guanella, Luigi Versiglia and Callisto Caravario.

One of the spaces is dedicated to the history of the Salesian missions, while other areas are dedicated to the Salesian family and its holiness.

## **PERSONNEL OF THE MUSEUM**

The museum is configured as a private, non-profit Third Sector entity and with an internal regulation officially established according to the legislation D.Lgs. 117/2017. Since April 2023 the development of the museum and its workers is internally supervised by the board of directors of an Association composed of a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and several councillors according to the Italian legislation on the matter. The museum is managed in practice by a general co-ordinator, responsible for the conservation and management of the historical and artistic heritage, and a visitor co-ordinator, responsible for the pastoral and educational aspects.

The volunteers, in permanent training, are present in the daily life of the museum in the direct relationship with visitors and with the people in charge of each sector: from the welcome at the ticket office, to the guided visits of groups and the animation of pastoral and educational activities. The group of people who work in the museum on a daily basis collaborate directly with the workers of the hospitality sector in Valdocco and several Salesians from the Maria Ausiliatrice community.

## TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Since the opening of the museum, a number of temporary exhibitions have been held to coincide with events related to the Salesian Congregation. The museum has also supported the production of new site-specific works that have become part of the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions.

## ARCHIVE OF DOCUMENTS

The last reorganisation (between July and September 2023) of all the documentation deposited in the facilities and which make up the current documentary archive of the museum has differentiated between the historical archive and the current archive.

The historical archive is the part prior to the creation and opening of the museum (4 October 2020). The reorganisation of all the documentation has been carried out with due respect for the internal collection: Sourced from Camerette of don Bosco; sourced from Centro Salesiano di Documentazione; sourced from Presepi and sourced from Museo Casa Don Bosco.

In the same way, the current archive is made up of all the documentation from the opening of the museum (October 2020) to the present day.

## PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

The museum is open to all visitors without distinction, with the aim of being a place or meeting point between the pastoral, spiritual and cultural dimensions together with the binomial between faith and culture.

Among the public activities, an important section is dedicated to guided tours, which are run, according to availability, by a group of volunteers. These guided tours are adapted to the characteristics of the visitors, and the coordinators are in charge of scheduling and carrying out specific and ongoing training sessions with the museum volunteers in order to deepen their knowledge of the technical aspects of the museum and specifically of the Salesian charism.



A total of 24,224 visitors were registered in 2022 and 28,356 in 2023.

Educational activities and programmes are available for groups, schools and parishes. For external participation and visibility, the museum staff respond to calls for papers with different contributions on the occasion of congresses in order to take an active part in study seminars and scientific conferences. In the same way, it collaborates with other institutions to consolidate connections with the neighbourhood, the city, the region and at the international level, being part of a network of museums.

## FINANCES OF THE MUSEUM

Admission to the museum is free with the possibility of making donations.





## ANA MARTÍN GARCÍA

General Coordinator | *Museo Casa  
Don Bosco | Valdocco*

Of Spanish origin, specifically from Madrid. She is an art historian from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid with training in art criticism and conservation of historical-artistic heritage. She has specialised in contemporary art history, visual culture, management and cultural production at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Universidad Autónoma and Museo Reina Sofía. She is currently in her final year of her PhD in visual, performative and media arts (XXXVI cycle) at the Dipartimento delle Arti dell'Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna.

She has worked as a conservation assistant in museums and collaborated in the organisation of collections, inventory and cataloguing.

In recent years she has published in scientific journals on contemporary art and on the historical-artistic heritage of the Salesian Congregation.

She has professional and voluntary experience in the educational, social and cultural fields in Spain, Scotland, England and Italy (where she has been living since 2018).

She is currently General Coordinator of the Museo Casa Don Bosco in Valdocco-Turin (2023).



# CHAPTER 3

## ETHNOLOGICAL MISSIONARY MUSEUM COLLE DON BOSCO



Overview of the Colle Don Bosco complex (Museum is at bottom right)

**Letizia Pecetto – Curator**

**T**he Ethnological Missionary Museum (MEM), is part of the itinerary that covers the entire Colle Don Bosco complex, and has been in its present location since 1 February 1988, the day of its inauguration.

It is dedicated to Cardinal Giovanni Cagliero, a Castelnovese, put in charge by Don Bosco of the first Salesian missionary expedition, and the first Cardinal of the Congregation.

Don Pietro Ricaldone, Don

Bosco's IV Successor from 1932 to 1951, is considered the official founder. He wanted to create at Don Bosco's birthplace, a permanent museum, transferring to the Hill (today Colle Don Bosco), in the 1940s, the objects received from the Salesian Missions around the world. He wanted, through this, to show the universality of John Bosco's dream and his educational and missionary project.



Missionary exhibition in Torino Valdocco 1926

The Museum is labelled:

- “ethnological” because through the objects in the collection from non-European continents, it tells the story of the life, culture and traditions of different ethnic peoples;
- “missionary” because it bears witness to the work of Salesian Missionaries since the first expedition to Patagonia in 1875.

It is structurally made up of two environments (which we will go into later in more detail):

- A: the exhibition part, open to the public during regular visiting hours;
- B: the storage area, accessible only to the staff in charge or to those who make a specific request for authorisation (for research and study purposes) to the Museum Director, always and in every case accompanied by the staff in charge.

## HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM AND COLLECTION

MEM has its origins in the Vatican Missionary Exhibition of 1925, when Pope Pius XI urged the participation of Religious Institutes in collecting material from mission lands. The Salesian contribution was much appreciated, so much so that the *Osservatore Romano* of 31 August 1925 published a long article on the collection from the Salesian missions in America. The following is a short paragraph of what was written: '*What precious material these Salesians have sent! All the Indian tribes are represented from every point of view, in their habits and customs, in their various ornaments; and the many beautiful statues depict the types of the different tribes.*' (Extract from BS - Year XLIX - Num. XI)



Missionary exhibition in Torino Valdocco 1926

Once the Jubilee was over, in 1926, the objects collected by the Salesian missionaries were transferred to Valdocco, Turin, for setting up a Salesian Missionary Exhibition. It was inaugurated on 16th May and was intended to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the First Salesian Missionary Expedition of 1875. The

Salesian Bulletin of that year reports: *'In Turin, in this month dedicated to Mary Help of Christians, the Salesian Missionary Exhibition will be inaugurated, and the 10th International Salesian Congress will take place to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the First Expedition of Salesian Missionaries (11 November 1875). The twofold initiative, which is taking place under the best auspices, aims to double ever better the spiritual and material support to those who work in the Salesian Missions today – for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls'* (BS - Year L - Num. V). (BS - anno L - Num. V).

Another paragraph on the above-mentioned exhibition deserves further attention: *'It is conceived and desired by Reverend Don Rinaldi and set up by a team of volunteers under the direction of the Most Reverend Don Ricaldone, assisted in particular by the indefatigable Don Molfino. It occupies the entire ground- and first-floor of a large part of a new imposing building that combines elegant lines with a*



First Missionary Museum at Colle 1940 (bottom left)

*sense of severe majesty, built to the design of the Salesian architect, Eng. Valotti. Once the Exhibition is closed, it will be completed with two long wings that must reach the building in the first courtyard of the Oratory and will be used to house new classrooms and refectories*

for pupils. Between rooms and halls, the Exhibition occupies more than twenty departments' (BS - Year L - Num. VII).

After the Turin exhibition closed on 6 October 1926, the objects were stored in a museum-depot in Valdocco.

They were transported from there to Colle Don Bosco during the Second World War to avoid the risk of damage from bombing. Here they were set up in three large sheds with a total area of about 1,300 square metres.

A proposal was made for an exhibition, in a "reduced version" of what had already been used for previous large missionary exhibitions. This layout of the missionary exhibition at Colle Don Bosco remained virtually unchanged until 1984, when the pavilions were emptied and cleaned up, to make way for a new building, which was to house the museum and its storage area.

In 1988, at the first centenary of Don Bosco's death, the exhibition was rearranged in the current premises, meant to be a museum and inaugurated on 1 February of that year. In January 2000, on the occasion of the Great Jubilee, the current layout was opened to the public, enriched later in 2016 with new multimedia content.

The collection consists of around 10,000 objects of various types: artefacts of daily and ritual use, body ornaments, clothing, musical instruments, masks, devotional objects, etc. – in short, everything that



MEM entrance today

might have been of interest to the missionaries in the lands where they worked.

About 4,000 pieces of the total collection come from the American continent and belong to various indigenous groups in Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. In particular, the material collected among the Bororo Indians of the Mato Grosso in Brazil represents the numerically richest collection (about 600 pieces), making it the second richest in the world, after the one in the Museum of Campo Grande (Brazil). It has plumaria art objects of extraordinary beauty, such as pariko, ear and lip pendants, hair ornaments, etc.

Numerically they are followed by the collections from Rio Negro (Brazil), with unique objects such as the baciorà masks made of beaten bark and the vegetable fibre boxes used by various clans to hold their ornaments and from Gran Chaco in Paraguay. Equally special are the objects from the Shuar (Ecuador) and Yanomami (Venezuela), the latter related to the osteophagic rites performed during funeral ceremonies.

The African collection tells the relatively recent history of the Salesian missions on that continent. Apart from some objects already present in the 1925 and 1926 exhibitions, the others testify to the history of the revival of the missions since the 1980s through 'Project Africa'.



Don Bosco MEM entrance first floor

Asia, represented by China, Japan, South-East Asia and India, consists (when compared to the other continents) of many devotional objects, belonging to different religions and philosophies, used in prayer rituals and meditation but also auspicious articles related to them. Family altars, sutras, stelae, amulets, dolls or miniature bows and arrows are some examples, together with deities, immortal figures and mythological creatures depicted in paintings, chromolithographs, lacquered or engraved panels.



Latin America showcases  
(Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego in particular)

The hundred or so pieces from Oceania tell the story of the life of this distant continent and its inhabitants mainly from the Kimberley region (Australia) and the States of Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

## GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The MEM has basically two objectives towards the visitor: to make known and be understood. These are considered extremely important for the cultural enrichment of everyone who visits the museum.

To make known that Don Bosco's dream (to take care of young people so as to make them "good Christians and upright citizens") was, and still is, targeted above all towards young people all over the world. Everyone, without distinction, must be reached by the message of the Love that God has for the whole of humanity. It is important to know that his dream continues to be realised everyday thanks to the

commitment of so many Salesian missionaries who offer their lives to the service of this continuity.

**To make known**, through the objects on display, the life of other peoples who inhabit the earth, with their cultures, traditions, customs and habits. Some of them have now disappeared, others live in the midst of many difficulties, and it is therefore important to speak of their lives through the objects that represent them.

## MEM – THE DISPLAY PART

### LAYOUT AND TOUR ROUTE

As mentioned in the introduction, the MEM is structurally divided into two spaces on two different floors.

The exhibition part, located on the first floor (with access from the ground floor via an entrance/exit staircase), presents the route open to visitors according to a pre-established weekly schedule. This space is made up of 41 showcases and follows a single direction, creating a kind of loop through the four non-European continents. The current layout dates back to 2000, after careful cataloguing and selection of objects by a team of experts.

The route also follows a chronological criterion.

The exhibition opens with a showcase dedicated to Patagonia, the first missionary land in 1875, followed by Tierra del Fuego with the Ona, Alakaluf and Yamana peoples,



Display windows – Africa

followed by Paraguay, Bolivia in the Gran Chaco area, and Ecuador with the Shuar people. Brazil presents the Bororo, Xavante and Carajà ethnic groups and the Tukano, Desana and Mapù peoples of the Rio Negro (Amazon). The showcases of the Yanomami of Venezuela conclude the American exhibition.

The layout of the African section has been divided into six thematic areas: everyday utensils, ornamental objects, distinguishing marks, music, masks and tourist artefacts. Apart from two of them, dedicated solely to Kenya, the other showcases present a mix of provenances, with objects of more recent date than the other continents, because they are linked to a mission history related to the 1980s, when the then Rector Major Fr Egidio Viganò launched the 'Project Africa'.



Display windows – Asia and Oceania

China is the first nation to open the exhibition dedicated to Asia – ceramics, lacquers, paintings of Taoist immortals, personal objects of women and men of Confucian ideology. Japan follows with three showcases on popular Shintoism and religious traditions in the family sphere. South East Asia presents objects of various types from Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar. The showcases of India speak of daily life presenting utensils, textiles, Hindu deities and references to other religions present in this great country.

Oceania concludes MEM's permanent display with only two showcases, highlighting everyday life and environment through domestic

utensils as well as hunting and fishing tools. There is no lack of ornaments, clothing and musical instruments characterising festivals and ceremonial rites.

- Of the 41 showcases that make up the permanent exhibition of the museum, displaying just over a thousand objects, two are dedicated to temporary exhibitions and conclude the tour. The latter are on an annual basis:
- Christmas: Nativity scenes from around the world;
- Easter: the Cross of Jesus in the handicrafts of mission countries;
- local representations of the Virgin Mary and St John Bosco;
- Others are simply thematic in nature, but free of time limits;
- footwear, headgear, prayer tools, containers, the female figure in various ethnic groups, the cult of the dead.

This is followed by various anniversaries in the Salesian world:

- centenaries of missionary activity in various Provinces;
- birth/death anniversaries of the Major Rectors, etc.

In this way, the public is also given the opportunity to see the objects that are kept in the depository.

A group of three showcases form the area dedicated to both local and non-European fauna. On display are stuffed animals belonging to



Pariko, Bororo – Brazil

different categories: birds, reptiles, insects, arachnids, lepidoptera, mammals, etc.

## ACTIVITIES AT MEM

The museum offers curious visitors various possibilities to learn and enrich their cultural background. Usually, the nature of the visit is agreed on with the group leader. Several factors determine the choice: time available, topic to be covered, age and needs of the users, etc...



Baciòra Mask, Rio Negro – Brazil

The main proposals are:

- guided tour;
- simple introduction followed by an independent visit;
- visit or introduction with projection of a missionary video;
- educational courses on global themes (e.g., children's rights, emigration, exploitation of child labour, etc.), useful for getting to know the different regions and realities where the Salesians of Don Bosco work on a daily basis.
- ethnological educational tours, to learn about various aspects of the cultures represented in the museum (e.g. ornaments, initiation rites, games, music, the man-nature relationship, dwellings, food)
- visiting the museum by playing a sort of treasure hunt to find an object on display and discover all its characteristics to share with the other members of the group. This activity is also exploited during summer by the various summer programmes.

In all cases, reference is always made to the two main aspects that characterise the Museum: the ethnological and the missionary.

It is also possible to visit the Museum independently, without any kind of explanation. The visitor has the help of captions, which describe the characteristics of the exhibits. In addition, for those who are more interested, there is the possibility of deepening the explanations through the eleven thematic tours spread over the seven multimedia totems.

## **COLLABORATION**

The MEM is an institution alive through many collaborations with museums, universities, scholars, researchers, PhD students and anthropologists.

On more than one occasion, loan requests have come from other museums for the mounting of temporary exhibitions. Loans of objects are always wonderful opportunities for encounters, not only between collections but also between the people who care for them. Through comparison and exchange of knowledge, an important cultural, professional and human growth takes place. We cannot also forget that the exhibition of an object at another museum guarantees, for the person who lends the work, considerable visibility within the cultural heritage, both nationally and internationally. Among the various opportunities for collaboration, it is important to mention the one in 2019 at



Basket, Yanomami – Venezuela

the Vatican Museums, on the occasion of the Synod for the Amazonian region called by the Holy Father. In the ethnographic section 'Anima Mundi', an exhibition was set up dedicated to the peoples of Amazonia and the missionaries who gave their lives for them. Together with the Museum of the Missionaries of the Consolata in Turin, and other museums in the country, MEM contributed with a temporary loan of 65 objects from Rio Negro, Ecuador and Venezuela, representing the Tukano, Shuar and Yanomami peoples. Also presented at the exhibition was the missionary call of the Salesian Family, as witnessed by Fr Luigi Bolla SDB and Blessed Sr. Maria Troncatti, FMA.

Over the years, there have been a few occasions when MEM has made permanent loans, authorised by the Rector Major at the time.

The first was in 2002 as a part of the campaign to return some objects to the "Father Rodolfo Lunkenbein Cultural Centre", located in the Bororo indigenous community of Meruri (Mato Grosso - Brazil). The aim of this restitution was to re-equip the Cultural Centre in the Bororo village, which was built with Salesian funding to revitalise their culture and is run by the Bororo themselves.

The other took place in September 2019, at the request of the Mission Office at Valdocco, Turin, and with the approval of the Congregation's Superiors. Around 150 objects belonging to the MEM collection were definitively taken to set up the small Ethnographic Don Bosco Missions



Deangle Mask – Ivory Coast

Museum (MEMDB) in Valdocco, certainly a significant place, from where a large number of Salesians left for the missions.

Another very interesting type of collaboration is the meeting/ accompanying of experts in the field. On many occasions, we have received requests for a visit to the collection from anthropologists, PhD students, researchers, scholars, restorers, etc. It is very satisfying to accompany such professionals and to see on their faces expressions of astonishment and wonder as they discover how precious the entire collection is. Everyone compliments the beauty and cultural value of the objects, but also their excellent state of preservation. It is a heritage that is in no way inferior to those of other museums and one that absolutely must be preserved.

Museums in general, besides being a source of cultural enrichment in themselves, are clearly a place where a profession is being practised.

For this reason, the MEM has agreed to collaborate with universities and institutes of higher education, for limited periods of time, welcoming students in the tourism sector or university trainees related to anthropological subjects.



Sanza – Democratic Republic of Congo

## PROMOTION OF THE MUSEUM

Giving greater visibility to the MEM is important for making its cultural value and the internationality of Don Bosco better known. In an increasingly “online” world, the use of internet channels is preferred, to signal its existence and the activities carried out, hoping to attract

the curiosity of the public. Leaning therefore on local, regional and national digital circuits certainly makes it easier to reach many more users.

The MEM is present on the Internet through its website [www.colledonbosco.org](http://www.colledonbosco.org). Through it one can get into direct contact with the staff in charge, which is useful for obtaining all the information needed for a visit (opening hours, educational programmes and activities, guided tours, etc.).

MEM "social" is on Facebook @MuseoMissionarioColleDonBosco to share the activities carried out in the Museum but also propagate news from the Salesian missionary world.

Efforts are made to maintain contacts with schools of all levels, parishes, summer programmes and cultural or recreational centres for elderly people with different pathologies. In line with the theme of inclusion, small steps are being taken to collaborate with an association in the area, which deals with elderly people with cognitive difficulties (Alzheimer's disease, senile dementia...). We need further work to extend the possibilities for people with motor, visual and hearing disabilities.

Another opportunity for visibility is to participate in online initiatives through the virtual loan of objects. In 2022, MEM took part in a temporary online exhibition that was linked to an exhibition, which was also temporary, but physically set up in the San Domenico



Necklace, Rendille – Kenya

Museums in Forlì, on the figure of 'Mary Magdalene' in art. We had a similar collaboration on brochures with the Musei Reali in Turin and the temporary exhibition on Africa set up by them.

For about a year now, initiatives have been underway to achieve a common goal, which is to create a network of ethnographic museums. At present, MEM is a member of 3 of these initiatives:

- at the regional level: Network of Ethnographic Museums with non-European collections in Piedmont;
- at the national level: Network of Museums and Heritage from the World (MUPAM);
- at the Salesian Congregation level: Musei in Missione (MIM), network of Salesian Missionary Museums.

MEM is a member of the Abbonamento Musei Torino Piemonte circuit, the Association of Italian Ecclesiastical Museums (AMEI) and the International Council of Museums Italia (ICOM).



Woman's bed and accessories – China

## RISTRUCTURING

Since its inauguration on 1 February 1988, the MEM, while retaining its original structure, underwent a total refurbishment of the display shelves in January 2000. Apart from a few minor changes, the layout has remained substantially unchanged to this day.

A generous intervention by “Missioni Don Bosco” in 2016 allowed for a renovation of the museum route as enjoyed to this day.

The interventions made were as follows:

- creation of a single entrance and exit area;
- a TV at the beginning of the route, which continuously plays a video;
- placement of seven multimedia touch screen stations with eleven thematic routes;
- projection of photographs from the missions;
- timeline depicting some of the many Salesian missionaries;
- creation of the fauna zone;
- Changing the layout to a chronological sense, referring to the times of arrival of the missionaries on the different continents; then moving the Oceania objects to the end of the route;
- application of adhesive labels bearing the name of the nation, ethnic group or generic continent, on each display case (in addition to the “Missioni Don Bosco” logo);
- creation of the definitive new MEM logo and reinstatement of the term “Ethnological” previously removed;
- creation of the new website;
- creation of a small pocket folder with a map of the MEM and contact information;
- placement of a new statue of Don Bosco at the start of the trail.



Infernal Judge - China

## ECONOMIC RESOURCES

The museum does not charge an entrance fee for the visit, guide service and activities. The educational tours are also free of charge. However, visitors are given the opportunity to make a free offering, or to take home a souvenir of their visit. A number of gadgets have been created and made available to visitors: "Don Bosco in the world" t-shirt and sweatshirt, missionary cross and rosary, hat and purse with the MEM or Colle Don Bosco logo. The proceeds from the sales of these are donated to Salesian missionary works.

## MEM – THE CONSERVATION SECTION

This is the 'hidden' area of the museum, the one that is not open to the public, but which houses most of the collection as well as the archive, the filing cabinets and the staff office.

The work in the depository, even though it is done 'behind the scenes', is particularly important, because it is dedicated to the preservation of the entire collection. Moreover, it is a continuous work, because museum collections, of whatever type, consist first and foremost of material objects. A large part of the daily activities in a museum is devoted to their preservation, security, usability and transmission to the future.

In this space, all the remaining objects (about 8,500), not chosen for the exhibition at the MEM of Colle Don Bosco, are kept. They are organised in 17 chests of drawers, 4 small



Hina Matsuri Doll - Japan

cabinets with shelves, 14 large cabinets with shelves on one side and a perforated wall for hanging objects on the other and 20 track cabinets.



Cradle – Oceania

The activities in the depot concern not only the preservation and care of the collection, but also its cataloguing and the management of the archives. All the steps of these two tasks are listed in detail below.

## CONSERVATION AND CARE OF THE COLLECTION

- periodic checks on the state of preservation of the objects; particular attention should be paid to those that are more easily deteriorated or already damaged (wood, leather, feathers, vegetable fibre, textiles, etc.);
- constant cleaning of the environment;
- changing the natural camphor in cupboards and drawers every six months; fumigation treatment; both are useful to preserve objects from insect infestation;
- where necessary, minor restoration and cleaning work;
- creation of customised ad hoc supports for each individual object. This makes it possible to tidy up the space in each cupboard and drawer, and facilitates any eventual movement of the object, without it coming into direct contact with the epidermis;
- monitoring the temperature and humidity of the environment, trying to keep the values constant.

## CATALOGUING

The entire MEM collection is catalogued in two versions: paper and digital.

### - Paper-based catalogue

It consists of a card corresponding to each individual object, which is assigned an alphanumeric code MCDB 0000 (Museo Colle Don Bosco), in progressive order. In the card, in addition to the code or inventory number, the following characteristics relating to the object itself are indicated: date of compilation, location in the archives, object name, institution, correspondence with similar objects, material of construction, maximum dimensions, provenance, donor and date of acquisition (if known), location on display, photograph, state of conservation and any cleaning and/or restoration work.

In the archive, the original cataloguing sheets are kept, compiled by the Salesians who took care of MEM over the years.

Subsequently, from 1997 to 2000, a team made up of three anthropologists and other collaborators was charged with redoing the entire filing, integrating, where possible, with additional information obtained from research carried out in collaboration with both Italian and foreign missionaries and scholars. With this new cataloguing, a photographic campaign was also carried out, with copies in slide format. The same procedure is adopted for newly acquired objects.



Tapa in beaten bark – Oceania

### - Digital catalogue

In order to allow greater flexibility and communicability of the information on the objects, it was decided to proceed to the

computerisation of the records. Thanks to an agreement with the Piedmont Region in 2001, it was possible to adopt a cataloguing software (Guarini Patrimonio Culturale), compatible with the national directives of the Central Catalogue Institute.

In 2019, this software was replaced by Mèmora, the new web platform for cataloguing and enhancing cultural heritage in the Piedmont region. It is an innovative tool offered by the Piedmont Region for the description of cultural heritage, the collection of digital objects. It is free for use on the web.

It is subdivided into two parts: Mèmora 'backend' holds the cataloguing, in digital format, of all the 10,000 cards, relating to the entire collection; Mèmora 'front end' is the showcase that makes visible the cultural heritage (historical and artistic, photographic, archival, naturalistic, etc.) of Piedmont's museums, cultural institutes and historical archives. It facilitates, through thematic in-depth studies, the reading of the heritage by a wide public and not only by specialists, and enables sharing of resources.

## **MEM STAFF**

From January 2021, following a reorganisation of the Bernardi Semeria Institute staff, the complete management of the MEM has been entrusted to a single person. She reports to the Rector of Colle Don Bosco, who holds the responsibility also for the museum, which is part of the entire complex.

The museum curator has the task of carrying out all the tasks described in the previous paragraphs, both for the exhibition part and for the storage and conservation of the objects.

Many Salesians and lay people had their turn through the years in caring for this large collection in every aspect of its management. Those who currently look after it have the precious task of preserving an enormous cultural heritage and telling the visiting public about it, aware that all this exists thanks to a dream made 200 years ago by a 9-year-old boy who, trusting in God and Mary Help of Christians, was not afraid to broaden his horizons to the ends of the earth.

## **CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES**

As mentioned at the beginning, the MEM continues to offer activities and programmes for all audiences and is open to all needs. This is because, despite the difficulties (including economic ones for families and institutions), it is important to give everyone the opportunity to get to know the cultural and spiritual wealth that this place offers.

MEM welcomes visitors with joy, trying to establish the typical Salesian "family" atmosphere, in the hope that they will feel attracted by the missionary charism that runs through these exhibition spaces.

The commitment is to create further initiatives and captivating projects, integrated into what the entire Colle Don Bosco complex proposes, always widening the possibilities towards new acquaintances and collaborations.

All this is in the hope of an ever-increasing growth of a public eager to get to know Don Bosco, the places and the people he reached, thanks to the commitment and work of so many Salesian Missionaries who work tirelessly so that his dream may continue to be realised.

January 2024



## **LETIZIA PECKETTO**

**Curator MEM Colle DB**

I am 41 years old. I was born in Turin and live in Castelnuovo Don Bosco. I was a Salesian pupil at the Colle Professional Training Centre (CFP 1996-99). Then two years at the Paravia Professional Institute in Turin, obtaining a Diploma in Graphic Industry Technician in June 2001. I started my career on 17 July 2001.

Since 3 years now, I have been the sole person in charge of MEM, taking care of everything (museum: opening to the public, guided tours, educational and thematic tours, etc.); the conservation part (storage: cataloguing, preservation and care of the collection, preparation and setting up of temporary exhibitions, organisation of object loans from the bureaucratic part to the packing for safe transport of the objects, etc.).

This work has showered me with the knowledge of new peoples and ethnic groups, to the great missionary reality of the Salesians, widening my mind to broader horizons. I have several passions, I would like to mention two in particular: music (I play the piano); liturgical animation in the Basilica of Don Bosco; direction of the Choir; India, which I have discovered in recent years through my travels to get to know the places where the Salesians work.





# CHAPTER 4

## DON BOSCO CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURES (DBCIC)

Mawlai, Shillong, India



**Fr. (Dr) Denis Lalfela SDB**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**D**on Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures with its anthropological and cultural Museum has become a landmark for visitors to Northeast India, particularly to Shillong. The Museum provides an overview of the whole of Northeast India under one roof. It takes several hours to see all the galleries with ease. A seven-floor construction, the DBCIC building represents the eight States of North-East India. It rises over Shillong's skyline like a flame with a message that, if cultures are understood well, they can light up and brighten up our efforts to build a peaceful, developed and progressive society. It is true as well that no person comes out from DBCIC without being enlightened concerning the cultures of this enchanting corner of India.

The initiative of setting up DBCIC has its roots in the love DON BOSCO [1815-1888] had for peoples' cultures. The foundation stone of DBCIC was laid in July 1994. Rev. Fr. Sebastian Karotemprel, SDB, was entrusted with the task of completing the project. Through his initiative and hard work, he was able to bring this dream to realization. By October 2000 the construction work was over. The setting up of the galleries and other interior works, which had started by then, were completed by the middle of 2004. This part of the work in DBCIC owes a great debt of gratitude to Dr. S. R. Sarkar, the retired curator of the Indian Museum at Kolkata. Being an anthropologist himself, with his vast experience at that famous museum, Dr. Sarkar made a very systematic collection of cultural artifacts from all corners of North-East India. In the course of ten years, a huge collection of artifacts was made. Most of these are on display in the galleries, while others are kept in the reserve gallery. DBCIC can boast of being one of the biggest museums in the country.



It is definitely a very unique museum, one that provides an experience of the cultures of the entire North-East India 'under one roof'.

DBCIC is run by the Society of Don Bosco (also known as Salesians of Don Bosco), a religious congregation of the Catholic Church, founded in Northern Italy. Salesians first came to North-East India in 1922 and they displayed great love for the diverse cultures of the peoples they encountered. They documented many tribal customs and practices in their monographs. DBCIC is a manifestation of the Church's love for the cultures of all communities, small and big, and Don Bosco's desire to preserve and promote whatever is good and beautiful in them.

DBCIC visualizes a healthy and productive communion of peoples for a Culture of Peace, Harmony and Development for North-East India, affirming and strengthening the identity of each community, especially the small and marginalized ones, and promoting regional and national integration.

DBCIC is committed to realizing the above-mentioned vision through research on issues related to peoples and their cultures and through involvement in areas "close to where problems are located", through culture-related programmes that foster education to culture-appreciation.

The Museum, DBCIC, has other dimensions, too. Let us just mention them right at the start. They are:

- Study and research on cultures and related themes through Workshops, Courses, Seminars, Symposia;
- Publications on the cultures of North-East India;
- Developing the concept of Museum in Education;

- Ph.D. Scholarship Awards;
- Library (in partnership with the adjoining Sacred Heart College);
- Data Bank;
- Language Institute;
- Preparation of Documentaries on Dances, Festivals, Historical Aspects, Places of Interest from the point of view of Indigenous Cultures.

Northeast India comprises the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. They form part of the East Himalayan region which includes Sikkim and the Darjeeling Hills of West Bengal.

The location of the region is of geopolitical strategic importance as it has international borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Nepal. The area is characterised by its rich bio-diversity, heavy precipitation and high seismicity. It is endowed with forest wealth and is ideally suited to produce a whole range of plantation crops and spices, fruits and vegetables, flowers and herbs – a paradise of natural beauty, serenity and exotic flora and fauna. The eight States are members of the Northeast Council, established on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1972 and within the Jurisdiction of the Guwahati High Court.

The region has a high concentration of tribal population. The States of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland are mostly inhabited by a number of native tribes. Each tribe has its own distinct tradition, art, culture, dance, music and lifestyles. The numerous fairs and festivals celebrated by these communities and their friendly nature are irresistible attractions for visitors.

The Northeast is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions in India. Each tribe of the eight States has its own culture and tradition. Assam occupies the lush lowlands of the Brahmaputra Valley and is the most densely populated. Arunachal Pradesh is spread over the densely forested and sparsely populated foothills of the Himalayas and is a major tourist attraction because of its Buddhist influence. Meghalaya, with its lakes and pine clad hills, is famous as the雨iest region of the world. Nagaland has a rich history of the role it played in World War II, which attracts tourists. Manipur is known as the 'Land of Jewels'. Mizoram and Tripura make up a fascinating area of green valleys and lush hills with a variety of flora and fauna. Sikkim is rich in biodiversity, including those of alpine and subtropical climates, and it hosts Kangchenjunga, the highest peak in India and third highest on Earth.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF NORTHEAST INDIA

According to the 1971 census there are about 220 languages spoken in these states, belonging mainly to three language families, namely Indo-Aryan, Sino-Tibetan and Austric. The Indo-Aryan is represented mainly by Asamiya and Bangla; Austro-Asiatic is represented mainly by Khasi; and the Sino-Tibetan family of languages is represented by the Tibeto-Burman and the Siamese-Chinese sub families. The Tea-Tribes have their own languages, too. There are also a few Thai languages like Khamyang, Khamti, Aiton, Phakyal and Turung. It is worth mentioning here that Ahom, a language belonging to the Thai group, has over the years merged with Asamiya.



There is a hypothesis that the Tibeto-Burman tribes came through Burma and entered the hills and valleys of Northeastern India in about 1000 B.C. They gradually encroached upon the Austric settlers who had been in these parts since 2000 B.C. or even 2500 B.C. The new arrivals forced most of them to take refuge in the mountainous area. That was how the Khasis settled in their mountainous homes high on the hills of Meghalaya.

The maximum concentration of the Tibeto-Burman speakers is found in the Northeastern part of the country in comparison to any other part of the country.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS OF NORTHEAST INDIA

Northeast India is home to a large number of tribes and sub-tribes. They have a vigorous craft tradition, and every tribe excels in craftsmanship. This excellence manifests itself in their various products. The main arts and crafts of each State of Northeast India are given below:

### **Arunachal Pradesh**

The ambit of Arunachal Pradesh's crafts includes carpet making, masks, painted vessels in wood, bamboo- and cane-crafts, weaving, woodcarvings, jewellery and other miscellaneous crafts. They include handmade pottery, brass cutting, silver works, etc. Arunachalis also make numerous articles with goat hair, ivory, boar's tusks, beads of agate, and other stones, as well as of brass and glass.

### **Assam**

Assam is predominantly agricultural, and her people have excelled in a rich variety of arts and crafts. The panorama encompasses handloom

weaving, cane- and bamboo-works, sitalpith, brass and bell-metal works, ivory, wood-work, sholapith, pottery and fibre craft. Handloom weaving comprises the culture of endi, muga and mulberry silk. Muga and Assam's silk garments are unique in the world. Assam is culturally rich in the area of dance, song and music. BIHU is the most popular festival of Assam.

### **Manipur**

Manipur has contributed to the richness and variety of Indian culture with its peculiar blend of tribal traditions and Vaishnavism. Of the numerous colourful crafts of Manipur, special mention may be made of their textiles, strong bell-metal bowls, cane and bamboo, and mats made of spongy reeds. Manipur is also well known for its gold- and gold-plated jewellery – earrings, necklaces, armlets and bracelets. Beautiful dolls and toys of straw and clay are also made in Manipur. It is also known world-wide that the game of Polo originated here. Manipur boasts also of its unique classical dance.

### **Meghalaya**

Meghalaya is famous for a wide variety of arts and crafts. Cane and bamboo hold the prime place. Artistic textile weaving and woodcarving are practised in Garo hills. Weaving of Endi silk is very famous. Carpet weaving, ornaments and musical instruments are other specialities. But the unique craft of this State is its Pineapple fibre products. Fibre from the leaves of pineapple plants is utilized for making various types of nets, bags and purses. Meghalaya is very rich in the area of dance and music. The different types of dances are Nohkjat, Mastieh, Shad wait, Shadlynti, etc.

## **Mizoram**

There are a number of craftsmen and skilled artisans among the Mizos. Their significant crafts include weaving, bamboo- and cane-craft, pipes, jewellery and musical instruments. Weaving is an integral part of Mizo culture. The bamboo dance draws the attention of large numbers of tourists.

## **Nagaland**

Nagaland is an important part of the colourful culture of India. The arts and crafts of Nagaland include weaving, basketry, woodwork, jewellery-making, etc. The Naga people prepare various products using shells and beads, flowers and birds' feathers. Weaving and pot making are exclusively a woman's crafts. Nagas make earthen pots by hand without the use of a wheel. The Naga people also prepare woodcarvings generally associated with religious beliefs and practices, apart from preparing objects for daily use like utensils, etc.

## **Tripura**

Tripura has a large population of tribals, thus has a tradition of different kinds of crafts. Handloom is the most important craft of the State. The main feature of Tripura handloom is the vertical and horizontal stripes with embroidery in different colours scattered over the cloth. It is followed by cane- and bamboo-craft. Popular handicraft items are bamboo screens, lamp stands, tablemats, sitalpati, woodcarving, silver ornaments and other products. Simplicity is the hallmark of the brass and bell metal articles produced in Tripura.

## Sikkim

A part of the Eastern Himalaya, Sikkim is notable for its biodiversity including that of alpine and subtropical climates. Sikkim's capital and largest city is Gangtok. Almost 35% of the state consists of the Khangchendzonga National Park. Long a sovereign political entity, Sikkim became a protectorate of India in 1950 and an Indian State in 1975. Its small size notwithstanding, Sikkim is of great political and strategic importance for India because it is on the international borders with three countries.

## **DON BOSCO CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURES (DBCIC)**

Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures, set up in 1994, is one of the biggest anthropological museums in Asia. It is situated in Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, in Northeast India. Study, promotion and development of indigenous cultures constitute its focus. It captures and depicts the culture and heritage of Northeast India. DBCIC presents the essence of her cultures, through its galleries and artifacts, showcasing the dances, festivals, arts, people, lifestyles, values and places of the Northeast.

In spite of a strong enculturation and dominant influence by western culture, DBCIC helps people of the Northeast to keep to their own old, treasured cultures and tradition through its exhibitions, studies, research and publications.

Teaching and learning with the help of visual media increases the learning capability and inquisitiveness of the learner. Even more so, field experiences increase the learning curve tremendously. DBCIC wants and tries to impart education by giving the visitor real, live

experiences of Northeast India through the integration of technology into its galleries. DBCIC terms this a 'Museum Concept in Education'.

**Vision:** To introduce and enhance the concept of education through anthropological museums and knowledge-sharing through the use of integrated technologies and multimedia systems.

***Organizational Goals:***

- Preservation of cultural artifacts of Northeast India
- Promotion of culture and cultural values in the 8 States of the Northeast
- Research and documentation
- Developing a Museum Concept in Education
- Knowledge sharing
- Regional and national integration through inter-cultural Exchange

***Main activities of DBCIC:***

- Tour of DBCIC Museum and its Galleries
- Screening videos of cultural dances, festivals and other items
- Research on Indigenous Culture and Culture Related Issues of Northeast India
- Publications on Indigenous Culture and Art forms
- Developing a Museum Concept in Education
- Organizing Cultural Exchange Programmes
- Animation Programmes through Courses, Seminars and Symposia for Students, Teachers, Community Organizations, NGOs and Church Leaders.

## DBCIC'S MUSEUM AND ITS GALLERIES:

### ENTRANCE

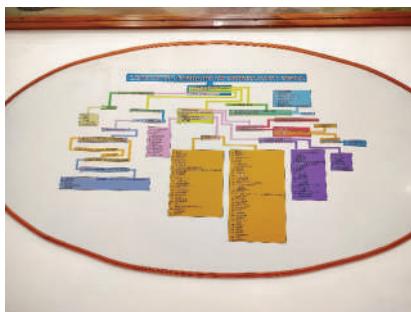
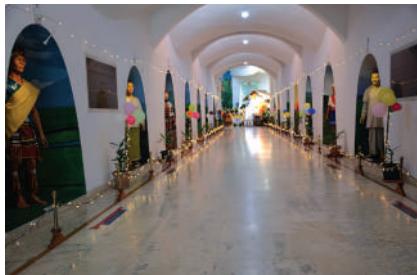
The DBCIC entrance is a tunnel-like structure which leads into the main building at the ground floor level. The entrance of this hall is structured in the form of the façade of a Naga house. The main door contains carvings of various aspects of Northeastern cultures. Over the door is a Khasi shield and a pair of Khasi swords representing the undaunted spirit of Khasi warriors.



DBCIC is an ideal place for education to culture appreciation. Students from near and far come here to enrich themselves with knowledge and experience of the basic ingredients of human life.

### Alcoves Gallery

Each alcove is a welcoming corner. There are altogether 22 alcoves wherein colourfully dressed representatives various tribes welcome you and make you feel at home. Explanation on each of them under various aspects is available on the touch screen at the end of the gallery. The beautiful painting of a multicultural dance around a fire is there to warm you up, in case you feel cold at this high altitude of Shillong (1225 m). Close by are charts showing the linguistic families of the World, of Asia, of India and of North-East India.



## Community Information Gallery

This gallery provides a beautiful overview of all the tribes, sub-tribes and sub-sub-tribes of the whole of North-East India. It is a dip into the whole region at one-go.





## Our Neighbours Gallery

It showcases the countries around the North-East of India: Nepal, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. It is a small but beautiful "jewel" among the other galleries. The touch screen in it provides basic information on each country.



## Photo Gallery

It houses a large number of rare photographs: the black and white photos, going back over 50-60 years, are of village life in North-East India. Colour photos are of more recent origin.



## Space Gallery

The Centre has set up a regional facility for advanced research in Atmospheric and Space Science. This helps to understand and quantify the processes leading to Regional Weather and Climate Variability,



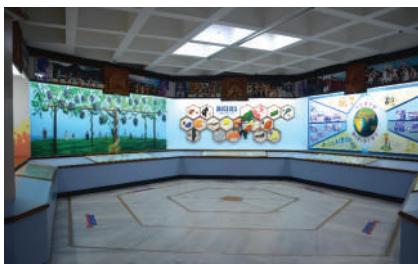
to improve Weather Forecasting in the region, to support Disaster Risk Reduction activities, to provide Weather Advisory Service and to promote Space Science Research.



### Mission and Culture Gallery

It will require at least a few hours to read through this. That “We love all cultures” is expressed by a crown of dancers and ornamental figures at the top rim of the gallery.

Any encounter with cultures should result in mutual services. These services are shown below the top rim, all around the gallery at your eye-level.



In the Meghalaya gallery you will find a replica of the first wooden Catholic church that was destroyed by fire in 1936. In the place of the original church at Laitumkhra, Shillong, there stands today the beautiful Cathedral of the archdiocese.



## Introductory and Pre-History Gallery

This gallery provides the visitor a clear picture of the tribal world of this enchanting corner of India along with its geo-political importance in South-East Asia.

The origin of the Universe and of Man is shrouded in mystery. There have been efforts to unravel it. Creation and evolution are the two important answers. While the Creationists say that God is the author of the universe and of the origin of man, evolutionists hold that the universe evolved gradually from simple to complex, from one-cell amoeba to man. Today, many scholars are of the opinion that Creation and Evolution are not contradictory concepts. Evolution requires a moving force, which the creationists would call the "Divine Intervention". The Prehistory gallery tries to explain the history of Man's gradual evolution as expounded by Physical Anthropologists.



## Land and People Gallery

This gallery provides a beautiful overview of the places and peoples of the Northeast. 32 large size photographs in colour, 26 in black and white and 18 life size fiberglass figures and 60 busts result in an exciting presentation.



### Fishing, Hunting and Gathering Gallery

The Variety of baskets used in fishing, implements used in hunting and containers used while harvesting are, indeed, astonishing. They give the visitor a glimpse into the creativity and genius of the peoples of the Northeast.



### Agriculture Gallery

Three types of agricultural practices are shown in this Gallery by means of exceedingly beautiful dioramas. The dioramas depict wet cultivation, jhum (or slash and burn or shifting) cultivation, and terrace cultivation. A 255-year old mighty tree in the middle of this Gallery is a graphic demonstration that if slash and burn cultivation would disappear from the area, Northeast would be dotted with huge trees like it.



### **Traditional Technology Gallery**

The peoples of the Northeast are industrious in their village surroundings. The dioramas showing pottery, wine making, basket making, black smithy, gold smithy, weaving, wood carving, leather works and cane making provide a quick tour of the Northeast with appropriate explanations.



### **Basketry Gallery**

A wonderful diorama showcasing four different tribes (Assamese, Karbi, Khasi and Naga) engaged in the same occupation of basket making. The realistic village setup takes the visitor to the remotest corners of the Northeast. The innermost section displays articles which people use in their homes. A feeling that one has visited many houses in the Northeast accompanies the visitor as he/she moves into the next Gallery.



## Musical Instruments Gallery

Here the eyes can feast on traditional musical instruments. Once digitized with the help of touch screens, this excellent collection of musical instruments will mesmerize all visitors, especially music lovers.



## Weapons Gallery

Weapons too are part of culture. Traditional weapons may not be used now-a-days. But the gallery preserves them so that one can enter the



past and experience how people struggled to protect themselves and their dear ones.

### **Costumes & Ornaments Gallery**

This is another feast to the eyes. The display of traditional ornaments, shawls and colourful tribal costumes literally takes the visitor to the remotest villages of the Northeast. The gallery has life size fiberglass figures of men and women of several tribes in their traditional dress: Nishi, Tangsa, Nocte, Apatani, Adi, Mizo, Manipuri, Mao, Angami, Khasi, Pnar, Garo, Karbi, Tiwa, Dimasa and Mising. They are there as if to invite the visitors to their respective villages.



### **Don Bosco and Culture Gallery**

This gallery provides a mini world tour of Don Bosco's contribution to education and culture in all five continents. Today, Don Bosco's (1815 – 1888) contribution is present in 134 countries in all the five continents.





## Housing Pattern and natural Resources Gallery

Housing pattern reveals the socio-economic situation of peoples. The gallery provides insights into this particular aspect and guides the visitor through the whole of Northeast India. The mini landscape of the various States of the Northeast is also a mini tour of the entire region in a few minutes. The visitor-friendly doors are an added attraction. This gallery also exhibits some of the natural resources of the region.



## Art Gallery

This is another special attraction in DBCIC. The very entrance to it is different from those of the other galleries. It displays all the eight States by means of their ancient artifacts and paintings. Well-designed and carefully arranged, this Art Gallery is a place wherein the visitor is given a taste of how creative the indigenous peoples are.





## Snack Bar

A place where you can relax for some time and munch on snacks that are packaged or ready to eat. Enjoy your coffee while you delight in a beautiful view of skies and clouds.



## Media and Culture Gallery

Culture is alive. It moves forward. It calls for modern means of presentation. The media and Culture Gallery situated in the topmost floor of DBCIC is a welcome place to relax, to watch a dance, enjoy a cultural celebration or see the life of someone or other who gave his/her life for the promotion of the cultures of peoples. Echoless and soundproof, quiet and free from any disturbance, the Media Gallery is where one can choose a dancer or a festival of one's liking. The gallery has a seating capacity of 150 persons at a time. Programmes that create osmosis of cultures leading to a Culture of Peace, Harmony and Collaboration will be held in this Gallery.





## Mini Museum

The Mini Museum welcomes children. It is a place for children below 5 years to play under the supervision of their parents / guardians.



## Sky Walk

The roof of the Museum which is called 'The Skywalk' offers the best possibility of admiring the Queen city of Shillong with a 360 degree view of it.



## Waiting Lounge / Lobby

After a long visit to the entire museum, there is a place where you may sit and relax for a while. The members of your group may want to share their impressions or emotions, discuss issues aroused by what they saw and experienced, or simply sit and let it all sink in. It is also a place for elderly people to rest their legs after their long walk through all the



galleries and up the stairs. They may watch an audiovisual show on the plasma panel.



### **Souvenir Shop / Publications**

Here there are various products of the Handloom and Handicrafts of North-East India, and books published by DBCIC, which visitors may take home as souvenirs of their visit.



### **Log Drum and Artefacts donated by the Gandhi Family**





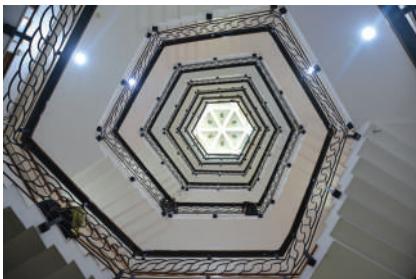
## Staff Room

It is a place where meetings and other conferences are held. It accommodates a dozen or more people, and has all the equipment needed for presentations and lectures.



## Staircases

A set of staircases which has seven steps on each floor.



DBCIC has its own seven-floored Building. The space available for its displays consists of the floor area of 56,000 sq. ft. and the wall area of 15,154 sq. ft.

Northeast India is home to 11% of India's Indigenous / Tribal population estimated at 10.45 million. The indigenous population has its own rich heritage of a diversified nature. The unique nature of indigenous folk

culture with its varied traditions, values, lifestyles, dresses, music and dances, artifacts, celebrations, etc., enriches the societies of this great world through their unity in diversity.

Whether it be due to the sheer lack of our own efforts or the unwillingness of Government or of NGO's, there is no doubt that the vast resources and rich cultural knowledge of Northeast India are not projected in ways that capture the attention of the majority communities within the country and abroad. Nevertheless, indigenous folk culture, dresses, methods of cultivation, traditional technologies applied in day-to-day life, indigenous means of transportation, indigenous musical instruments, etc., still play a vital role in the life of various ethnic groups.

The feeling is growing of the need to preserve and present many of the out-of-use, out-of-reach, indigenous cultural systems. We face the scenario of a fast-changing lifestyle, a population explosion, an upgradation of living standards, growing industrialization and, the latest, a globalisation and liberalisation. The young generation needs to confront this. They could realize, understand, study and research the cultural systems of their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents and confront them with the realities of their life today. The results would benefit humankind as a whole. They could be the seeds of unity and integration among various ethnic groups.

The result of this is the concept of 'Museum', which basically aims at acquiring, conserving and exhibiting elements of cultural heritage for visual attraction, enjoyment and reflection. Educational systems or policies were not compulsorily linked with museums. In the past the responsibility of museums was limited to the display of different arts, objects of archaeological, ethnographical, scientific and technological

value, almost exclusively for their viewing. In the modern concept, the responsibilities of museums have greatly widened towards visitors of all walks of life, particularly children and school students.

History projected India as a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious society accommodating all, and not wiping out any faith but harmonising all faiths. The historical traditions of each race, of each community, of each tribe, were preserved and taught to their members. It was this attitude of acknowledging every path, rejecting none, trying to find something of value in each tribe and each community that has been the tradition, which governed the history of our country. It is an attitude born of spiritual perception and intellectual generosity. Whenever we surrendered these principles and resorted to rigid, fanatical attitudes, our country suffered and declined.

National integration, besides harmonious socio-cultural and ethno-religious approaches, may also be strengthened through tourism. Its basic element of movement improves communication between different civilizations. Tourism is more than the seeing of sights; it provokes a change of one's attitudes and one's life itself, a change that could go deep and remain permanent.

National integration is a psychological and educational process involving the development of a feeling of unity, solidarity and cohesion in the hearts of people, a sense of common citizenship and a feeling of loyalty to the nation. The youth of the community in particular will have to be put in the vanguard of such efforts.

A museum is the only place where the past cultures of indigenous peoples are preserved for observation, analysis and understanding. Certain cultural systems of each and every ethnic group serve as

binding factors within communities and maintain harmony among all sections of people.

The role of a museum basically lies in provoking the inquisitiveness of the student to know their past and their present so as to assess the merits and demerits of various things. Basic approaches like educational exposure to museums and heritage sites, observance of a museum day, quiz competitions, mobile exhibitions, etc., are important requirements, which are normally missing in our present educational system.

India is rich in diverse ethnic cultures. National integration remains a distant dream notwithstanding the fact that we boast of a civilization that is about 5000 years old. Some of the divisive factors may be inherent in the history, geography and culture of our country, but there are also forces that accentuate these divisions.

Religious fundamentalism is one such force; linguistic diversities constitute another. There are people who hold a view of religion that is exclusivist, that does not tolerate faiths different from theirs. Despite a shared culture of so many years, linguistic diversities have often generated tensions and conflicts amongst different communities, thus threatening the fabric of national unity. The age-old caste system has also contributed to weaken the bond of unity among different sections of society.

All the above forces and factors do pose a serious challenge to India's unity and integrity and therefore, conscious efforts will have to be made by all concerned to preserve the same.

Appropriate education is the most important means of bringing about national integration. The promotion of national integration requires

a reorientation and reorganization of education. Education should foster national feeling, a sense of belonging. A sense of Indianness should be inculcated through proper teaching of history, focusing on the richness of our composite culture. A common platform is needed to interact with each other, know each other's customs and lifestyle, work together in community welfare programmes. Social scientists, intellectuals and religious leaders need to share this common platform to dialogue, to share and exchange views and thus promote conceptual and methodological understanding of cultural change among all the tribes of Northeast India.

## PLANS FOR DBCIC

We intend to strengthen our museum. We shall share the knowledge of indigenous cultures and values through a radical modernization of DBCIC.

- We shall install multipurpose multimedia, systems of wireless networking applications, etc., for educational advancement.
- Develop a Museum Concept in Education among students and teachers by involving school authorities through visits and motivational programmes.
- Bring groups of students from the outlying schools of Shillong and Guwahati and different parts of North-East India and enter into interactive sessions after their visit of the galleries.
- Welcome students from schools elsewhere in the Northeast and enter into interactive sessions after their visit of the galleries. Arouse in children interest in cultural values through computer games and quiz programmes.

- Preserve and promote indigenous cultures and values of the people of Northeast India through a collection of cultural artifacts and preserve them in de-humidified reserve collection areas of the museum. Send out a collection team from time to time, after having made prior arrangements in the various villages through our Don Bosco educational institutions as well as the diocesan infrastructure in the remote areas.
- Continue research into cultures and culture-related themes by encouraging prospective students of NEHU [Northeastern Hill University] and other universities of the region as well as of the country.
- Document research works in Northeast India on indigenous cultures and initiate a digital portal on the Northeast.
- Screen DBCIC documentaries on cultural dances and festivals for groups of students who visit the Don Bosco Museum and engage them in interactive exercises with the help of the booklets we have prepared.
- Animate through courses, seminars and symposia for students, teachers, community organizations, NGOs and Church leaders.
- Publish on indigenous culture and art forms.

### **Dialogue of cultures for National Integration**

- Organize cultural exchange programmes with the help of artists (preparation of artifacts, paintings, ceramics); conduct music and dance programmes.
- Produce a mixture of audio-visual programmes of different tribes in the same album.

- Disseminate audio and video programmes highlighting the significance and advantages of national integration.
- Motivate the visitors to appreciate the cultural riches of the different tribes of the Northeast.
- Organize training programmes to promote dialogue for groups and the general public.
- Promote the museum as a permanent institution at the service of society and its development, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment aiming at arriving at national integration.

**Specific Objective I:** Strengthening of DBCIC to act as an advanced centre for learning, research and dissemination of culture through sharing knowledge with the people in Northeast India

**Specific Objective II:** Conservation and promotion of indigenous cultures and values of the people of Northeast India

**Specific Objective III:** Dialogue of cultures for national integration

Emphasis has been given for inclusion of the following target groups of Northeast India in particular and of other states of India and abroad in general:

- **Children**
- **Students**
- **Teachers / Educationists**
- **Anthropologists / Archaeologists / Research Workers**
- **Musicians / Singers / Painters / Artists of various fields**

- **Tourists**
- **General Public**

### **DBCIC Museum is to be equipped with:**

- Multimedia, wireless networking system (WiFi technology), touch screen computers, Dumb Terminals, laptops / palmtops;
- Easy access to information on indigenous cultures and values of the people of Northeast India in various local languages;
- Easy access to information about the museum and indigenous culture and values of the people of Northeast India through a website;
- Teaching and learning indigenous culture and values, making the process more effective through interactive and innovative games and tutorials;
- Students and research scholars explore the civilization of our ancestors through various areas like archaeology, anthropology, history, and cultural elements such as dances, music, musical instruments, agricultural system, housing system, etc.;
- A well-developed system for popularizing the rich cultural heritage of Northeast India at national and international level.
- Developing a platform to promote interaction among intellectuals, social scientists, historians, etc., for a dialogue on cultural change.
- The extent of mutual cooperation and help among various ethnic groups will improve and thereby reduce incidences of inter-ethnic tension.

- The museum will act as a secondary educational institute to provide education relevant to indigenous cultural system, etc.
- As automation improves, the museum will follow suit. It will attract more visitors to the museum and they will learn a lot through automated processes. It will attract more foreign tourists.
- Various indigenous groups become conscious of their own culture of the past and the present and act for conservation and popularization among themselves and with other groups.
- This will create scope for more employment opportunities. It will be a source of income and stainability.

### **Incorporate multimedia within each gallery and artifact**

- Software information in particular galleries
- Hardware system in specific galleries
- Installation of multimedia into each gallery and artifact
- Networking of entire museum by using wireless networking system (WiFi technology).
- Kiosks, dumb terminals, laptops, or palmtops in each gallery
- Requirements gathering for different galleries
- Audio production for each gallery
- Graphics production for galleries
- Video production for each gallery
- Content writing for galleries
- Editing and reviewing for all galleries

- Testing for different galleries
- Create a digital library that archives any digital information pertaining to galleries or artifacts.

### **Content development in additional local languages**

- Content preparation
- Script in local languages
- Data entry
- Proof reading/editing

### **Audio production in additional local languages**

- Audio recording in local languages
- Professional voice
- Recording in the studio

### **Graphics production in additional local languages**

- Graphics integration and refinement
- Promote and publish information about the museum to the outside world using a website.

### **Capacity Development Programme for Staff**

- Conduct training on the use of multimedia in galleries and artifacts of the museum.
- Collection of cultural artifacts and preserving them in de-humidified Reserve Collection Areas of the Museum
- Continuing research into cultures and culture-related themes by encouraging prospective students of NEHU [Northeastern

Hill University] and other Universities of the Region as well as of the country.

- Documenting research works in Northeast India on indigenous cultures and initiating a digital portal on the Northeast.
- Undertaking research and publications on issues relevant to national integration
- Organizing a national youth festival

### **Organize training programmes to promote dialogue for relevant groups**

- a. By conducting short courses for taxi drivers, children who work in shops, tourist guides, etc., in order to inculcate in them respect for everyone and the habit of good manners in their behaviour.
- b. By organizing courses, seminars, symposia for teachers, professors, journalists, media personnel, writers, singers, artists, etc., on themes that will help national integration.

Educating the public through various activities and forms is regarded as one of the primary functions of a museum. The visitors not only look at objects and admire and enjoy them, but also learn from them and pass their new knowledge to the next generation. In a museum we get to admire and study most rare artifacts, most beautiful art pieces and most ancient antiques.

Rarity is not the only consideration, however; their workmanship, historical association, connection with some important discoveries, links to the development of human culture, etc., are also taken into account.

## MEANING OF MUSEUM EDUCATION

A Museum is not an educational institution in the formal sense of the word. Museum education is education in its broader sense. Eilean Hooper Green Hill (1988) considers a museum in the context of education, as an institution that can offer an educational experience across a wide range of variables and in relation to a wide range of institutions and organizations.

The meaning of museum education is that museums provide a learning situation in which the visitors experience learning. A learning situation is a condition or environment in which all the elements necessary for promoting learning are present. A learning experience is a mental or physical reaction made through seeing, hearing or doing the things to be learnt and through which one gains meanings and understanding of the materials to be learnt.

Learning in museums generally involves a visitor or a group of visitors paying attention to an object, a display, label, person, element or some mental construct of these. Museum learning has long been examined in relation to the attracting power and loading power of exhibits in museums. The information thus collected by visitors is stored in their brain and remains there over a period.

The information a visitor receives during a museum visit tends to bear a 'contextual map'. The museum visit represents a collection of experiences rather than a single unitary phenomenon. ***Any information obtained during the museum visit is likely to include social related, attitude related, cognitive related and sensory related association.*** These associations will become embedded in the memory all together, with the result that any one facet of these experiences can facilitate the recall of the entire experience.

Thus, museums are a source of intellectual stimulation and entertainment. Exhibition halls, properly arranged secondary collections, labels, guided tours, traveling exhibitions, school class visits, loan services to schools, training courses to teachers, illustrated lectures, motion pictures, film trips and publications, etc., are other means which constitute the educational activities of a museum.

## **EXHIBITION, THE VITAL PART**

The vital parts of any museum are the objects themselves, which are real, and capable if correctly interpreted, of conveying information in an accurate manner. Here lies the skill of a curator, i.e., exhibiting the objects in such a way that the visitors are automatically drawn towards them.

The museum belongs to all, from retired old persons to nursery children, from a sophisticated film actress to a housewife, from the richest to the poorest, the illiterates or semi-literates, the physically challenged and minority groups. All are welcome to the museum exhibition which provides indirect instruction in a discreet manner. Exhibition is the only language through which a museum can communicate. In order to make a direct impact on the masses, the exhibition has to be meaningful.

## **EDUCATION THROUGH OBJECTS**

Museum objects are important parts of the cultural and natural heritage of a country. They are important objects of research by various branches of technical, social and natural sciences. Objects can make a unique contribution to our understanding of the life and work of individuals and societies. In short, it can tell us more about

ourselves. Hence, we collect objects as illustrative examples of societies and individuals. Learning directly from objects provides a first-hand experience to learners.

### **Sensory exploration is one way to begin working with objects.**

The foremost function of a modern museum is, therefore, to utilise the objects of the past as tools to generate knowledge and thereby enlighten the minds of the public. The museums of modern times act as an academy and a school for people, both at one and the same time. Hence, the educational work of a museum today directly involves research scholars and educationists on the transmitting end and people in general at the receiving end. Museum professionals and educationists, who are responsible for educational activities, should use their knowledge in the framework of educational programmes and present them to people for their understanding, debate and adaptation.

Of course, research scholars, museum educationists and the public have to be directly involved with the museum materials. Thus, the museum collections are the central point around which all interest and activities of specialists, educationists and the public revolve.

## **MUSEUMS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION**

Learning situations provided by museums are quite different from those provided by formal educational institutions such as schools.

- a) Museums provide free choice learning situations devoid of verbal instructions, assessment and other types of controls that exist in schools.

- b) Learning in museums is a spontaneous process, a personal experience, not imposed on the visitor.
- c) Museums provide open communication of ideas, concepts and information involving exploration and discovery.
- d) Classrooms in schools are home to the 3R's: reading, writing and arithmetic, whereas museums are home to 3A's: the authentic, the aesthetic and the accessible. The Authenticity, as revealed by the real objects and phenomena exhibited in museums, communicates with a powerful clarity to visitors. Museums are compelling Aesthetic environments: they engage the senses, stimulate, inspire and sometimes even overwhelm. A museum makes the whole world, the past, the present and the imagined, Accessible to the visitor.

Comparison of learning in schools and museums			
No.	Subject	School	Museum
1	Free choice	No	Yes
2	Instruction based on	Text	Object
3	Senses most used	Oral	Visual
4	Syllabus-Oriented	Yes	No
5	Formal assessment	Yes	No
6	Times Schedule	Yes	No
7	Learning	Linear Non-Spontaneous	Multi-Faceted Spontaneous

## MUSEUMS TO SCHOOLS

The potential of museums as institutions that could implement and supplement school education has been realized all over the world.

Programmes for school children have always been among the most frequent educational offerings of museums. The frequent visits of young pupils to museums not only supplement their classroom teachings, but also create a love of beauty in many forms; which, if properly absorbed in this formative stage of the mind, will lead to wider understanding and sometimes create specialized interests for the future.

Museums could contribute to school education in many ways, the most important being visual communication through objects and materials. ***Educational experiences obtainable in museums by school children may fall into two categories – experiences directly relevant to the school curriculum and experiences that provide a broader perspective for improving the general knowledge of students in different areas of humanities and sciences.*** To achieve these objectives of museum education relevant to schoolchildren, museum authorities should make conscious efforts to provide the required mediums of communication.

## EDUCATION THROUGH PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH

Through publications a museum can transmit its research to scholars and the general public. These publications could be of three types:

- The outcome of serious research and published in the form of journals, catalogues, brochures, monographs or books.
- Publications in the form of reports, guidebooks, introductory leaflets, etc., to familiarize people with the museum and its activities.

- Special publications on the occasion of a new gallery, a special exhibition or an anniversary, to popularize the museum within the community.

Other publications in general are as follows:

**News Bulletin:** It keeps the public informed about the activities of the museum. It covers subjects like current activities, announcement of important acquisitions, notices of special exhibitions, lectures, concerts, etc.

**Handbook:** It gives a brief outline of the museum, deals with galleries, special collection or a homogeneous group of objects in detail.

**Picture-Books:** These are collections of photographs of the masterpieces in a museum with brief descriptions of them on a colourful background. Similarly, folders, leaflets, guide maps, broad sheets, posters, picture post-cards and transparencies are various other publications brought out by museums to acquaint the people with their special activities.

**Basic Science Articles:** Popular basic science articles for school education should be published. The education in a museum should be based on research, which applies specially to museum exhibits. The publication should have social communication and educational values.

Apart from providing the fundamentals of knowledge in specific fields, the museum preserves and provides the basic material for research in practically all the academic disciplines like art, archaeology, anthropology, science, dance, music, technology, etc.

Museums are the best centres for bringing out research works of repute, since curators have direct access to the original source material.

## SAVE OUR HERITAGE

We have inherited numerous cultural properties in the form of manuscripts, paintings, textiles, coins, arms and armour, leather goods etc., which are prone to deterioration. Museums, as custodians of this cultural heritage, provide the right answer to the demands of education and culture. Many artistic creations have already been destroyed by the ravages of nature, human vandalism, fire and war. What remains have to be preserved at all costs, so that future generations may have access to the ancient archaeological and ethnological works; it is the responsibility of the present generation to provide for their preservation and take care of the objects it has inherited from the past.

## PUBLICITY AS A MEDIA OF EDUCATION

Publicity has a tremendous effect on our day-to-day life. It is through planned publicity that the museum can reach the masses. The Social Media like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Website, YouTube, Instagram, etc., are very powerful media.

Advertisement through the radio, small television features and frequent articles on museum news in the periodicals constantly remind people of the existence of a museum in their city to which they owe at least one visit.

## MULTIMEDIA IN MUSEUMS

The integration of sound and image data into a museum's databases offers a new opportunity for recording information in depth about works in its collections and interpreting their significance. New interactive

multimedia interpretive tools also provide ways of communicating the rich context and meaning embodied by museum artifacts.

## The Potential for Multimedia in Museums

The documentation of museum collections has traditionally focused on the creation of comprehensive databases of structured text records, each detailing the salient characteristics of a particular object, specimen or work of art. These were designed mainly for the purposes of managing collections.

The ability to capture and store information in formats other than structured text provides new opportunities for the documentation and interpretation. New kinds of information can be recorded, stored and communicated. Multimedia databases, defined as databases which store two or more different types of information, enable the recording of structured text, unstructured text, still images, moving images and sound. All these data types can be integrated to form a comprehensive archive, which offers a more robust picture of the context and meaning embodied in artifacts.

Initial efforts to exploit the interpretive potential of multimedia in museums focused on the creation of single-purpose interpretive or educational projects. These may have taken the form of an in-gallery kiosk (offering the visitor orientation to an institution or exhibition) or a publication (distributed on a Pen drive). The models for these projects came from the world of publications, and their goals reflected those of gallery guides or exhibition catalogues. These first forays into interpretive multimedia exploited its interactive potential to offer a personal view of often complex and “multi-layered” subjects.

These prototypes and first-generation systems produced, almost as a by-product, collections of digital data in forms other than text. The potential to re-use multimedia content (such as digital images) created for one purpose in another project, however, has prompted the consideration of institutional multimedia databases. These storehouses of text, structured text, sound, and still and moving images form an impressive information resource. The construction of institutional multimedia archives has begun to play a significant role in the documentation strategies of many museums.

## Multimedia is Multifaceted

By surrounding objects with a gloss that includes description, representation, interpretation, derivation and appreciation, we can document and communicate the cultural significance of artifacts. Meaning is preserved as well as physical form.

As libraries are being digitalised and teaching takes place on networks rather than in classrooms, learning moves from being directed to being exploratory. Museum multimedia databases, which offer quality content, and depth of meaning, are prime resources for research. By making collections available in digital form, both in-house and through communications networks, museums have a tremendous opportunity to meet their educational mandate.

Multimedia archives provide the raw materials for the creation of new intellectual property. Portions of such a database can form the core of multimedia products, which structure the vast amount of information available on a subject, offering layers of interpretation and meaning.

Linked together over networks, museum multimedia databases become a valuable cultural resource. The continent of multimedia information is right now being formed in networked information space. Explorers are identifying the natural features of this new landscape. We are learning to tell the mountains from the rivers, the fixed points from the pathways. What is missing are maps. These maps may become the knowledge of the future. Those who offer meaning through structuring and interpreting complex information will provide the subject-oriented specialized guides to these new spaces.

## Using Multimedia in Museums

### **Multimedia in Museums:**

Visiting a museum is a “multimedia” experience. Since the first written explanatory label was placed in an exhibition gallery, visitors have gathered information both by looking at things and by reading about them. As multimedia is simply a combination of two or more different media. Computerized multimedia systems form part of a long tradition of interpretive and explanatory technologies and techniques that grew from slide shows, text panels, and dioramas.

Multimedia makes use of computers to store, combine, retrieve, and present information from a variety of media, and enables user-defined interactive navigation through these sources. A multimedia database can be searched quickly and effectively. The results of the search are displayed locally or communicated over a network to a user at a remote location.

## Characteristics

Interactive multimedia enables communication between the multimedia system and its user; the user controls the sequence and presentation of information. This contrasts with a film, for instance, which is linear and meant to be seen by a passive viewer from start to finish.

*Interactive media requires input from its “audience”. The user must make choices, ask questions or define search criteria to activate the system, and retrieve information from it. Multimedia is not by definition interactive; it can be presented as a linear performance like a slide show with additional effects. So, too, interactive media is not necessarily multimedia; it can be based on a single media such as text. Encyclopaedias were never intended to be read from the beginning to the end and some new books are constructed as interactive media, where the information presented depends on the readers’ choice. Fully integrating multimedia into museum operations requires extending the definition of audience to include museum visitors, researchers, and staff, whether in the museum or working remotely locally, nationally, or globally.*

### ***Navigation***

Navigation refers to the ways and means through which a user encounters the information he seeks in a multimedia program. Interactivity results when a user is permitted to choose his own route. Some systems are constructed hierarchically; choices are made from menus until the “bottom” of the system has been reached. Others are constructed following hypertext principles: pieces of information

are linked together in a web, and users may browse in the system by activating the links, which may be identified in various ways. Hypertextual navigation best exploits the computer's flexibility in handling large amounts of data and cross-references.

Multimedia systems often combine these two organizing principles. A hierarchy may be necessary for the user to choose a subject; the hypertext structure without any hierarchical structure can impair the user's ability to navigate.

### ***Multimedia and Visitors***

Multimedia installations in museum galleries can range from a single interactive video-kiosk in a special exhibition to a totally integrated exhibition and information environment supported by technology. When multimedia is featured in an exhibition design or interpretive plan, its target audience can be defined as the visitors to that exhibition.

Exhibitions often include supplementary interpretive material to provide information about objects, works of art, or artifacts that is not apparent from their visual appearance. This contextual information enables visitors to understand and appreciate more fully what they are seeing. Multimedia interpretive systems can provide a broader range of information about the themes of an exhibition, and thus enhance visitors' experience.

Within the traditional gallery environment, an object can be exhibited only in a limited context, such as its provenance, or chronological sequence. Multimedia databases provide the possibility to position a particular work on more than one continuum, enabling comparison, interpretation, and recontextualization.

Limited gallery space often means that museums can exhibit only a small portion of their collections. Multimedia databases make it possible to introduce comparable works, which might not otherwise be seen. Interactive image manipulation capabilities can make it possible for a visitor to compare and contrast objects, and to examine works in detail. Though these functionalities are particularly useful to the specialist researcher even the ordinary visitor's engagement with the material increases when interactive multimedia are introduced.

Multimedia kiosks can also be used to provide visitors with general information about the museum, its building, and the subjects it interprets. It may be possible, for example, to print out a floor plan, identifying the location of a particular work. General systems may also include a game or quiz to test visitor knowledge. They provide a place for visitors to comment on their museum experiences.

### ***Narrative Communication***

Similar to advanced computer games or even virtual reality, these systems emphasize the experiential nature of visiting museums. This type of interpretation is not yet common in museums, and it has been criticized for diverting the attention of visitors from original artifacts.

Another means of encouraging involvement in the museum experience is to invite the visitor to use multimedia to play an active role in the exhibition. This may be done by providing the visitor with an identity card, to be used to activate information kiosks in the exhibition. If the card is coded with the visitor's name, it suggests that the computer is conversing with this individual visitor. The identification of the visitor of the exhibition can also be used to provide him/her with further information, such as lists of relevant literature and a summary of the kiosks the visitor actually used during the visit.

## **Digital Catalogues**

Interactive multimedia is excellent as an enhanced exhibition catalogue. A database can be constructed containing a complete catalogue with basic documentation and images of all objects in the exhibition. Basic information can be combined with background details about maker, genres, subjects, provenance, and techniques. Visitor exploration can focus on any of these categories, and a floor plan printed with specific objects marked so that the visitor can plan a tour in the gallery.

A nontraditional catalogue may tell different stories about the same object. For example, an ethnographic object brought into a European museum at the beginning of the century can be interpreted by a missionary, a businessman, a tourist, and a curator from the object's island of origin. These different points of view illustrate ethical and political issues embodied in artifacts.

## **Distribution**

Outside the museum walls, multimedia is ideal for distribution to a broad range of museum communities (or markets): professional, educational, and consumer. Many museums have already produced digital catalogues (Videography), and the production of educational material and entertaining publications is growing.

The media used for physical storage depends on the intended use of the system, the target group, and the method of distribution. Not many years ago, the only electronic media for storing images and film on a large scale were analogue videodiscs, which had to be externally linked to databases and programs stored on a computer. With the advent of digital video compression techniques today it is possible to integrate video, graphics, audio, databases, and programs in an all-digital form.

Digital media file formats are not standardized, however, and range from a computer's local hard disk to a variety of formats like Pendrives, Dvd's, etc.

The question of data exchange between museums and the possibilities of joint productions with material from several museums are aspects that require consideration. The media used is not in itself so important, apart from problems with standards, which make it difficult for a producer to choose acceptable and "long-lived" media. The rapid development of new physical media and especially the growth of Internet – which resulted in a growing number of museum services on the World Wide Web – emphasizes that more attention should be paid to issues such as user interface, system construction, navigation, and content rather than to technical issues.

### ***Multimedia as Interpreter***

It is evident that technology should not be introduced for its own sake but only when it helps to fulfil a clearly defined purpose.

Multimedia is a phenomenon with many variations. Some systems deal with a single topic on a very detailed level, while others are content to address a broad range of topics in less detail. The success of a multimedia system depends on the user-friendliness of the content as well as the user interface. Both must be tailored to the needs of the user.

Most exhibition systems will be designed more simply than a system distributed to the educational world, where it can be expected that users will spend some time to learn the "language" of the system. Yet there will be no final key to designing user interfaces, as it must be

expected that multimedia literacy will grow following the increased use of multimedia in all areas of human activity. Given the speed of current technical development, only one thing is sure: we have seen only the tip of the possibilities multimedia will provide in various situations; much experimentation is still needed before deciding how it can best be used in museum work.

### ***Multimedia in Exhibitions***

Museums collect and preserve original artifacts (works of art, objects of material culture) and disseminate knowledge about them to the public, mainly by mounting exhibitions. Typically, exhibitions are interpretations of collections or parts thereof. They relate a number of original artifacts or art works with various types of documentation (informational labels, captions, maps, dioramas, etc.). This is done within a spatial organization scheme, in order to provide visitors with a fruitful and pleasing learning experience.

The functions of a museum exhibition can be categorized as:

- Social, providing a powerful focus for the construction of social identity for its public;
- Affective, creating a concrete visual experience that gives aesthetic pleasure, and which leads to emotional and motivational rewards;
- Cognitive, providing an environment for self-education, an opportunity for visitors to teach themselves through exposure to the exhibitions.



## **Visitor Learning Support**

Multimedia, especially interactive multimedia and hypermedia, present considerable advantages to an exhibition as a learning-support technology:

- It can deliver a wide variety of heterogeneous information related to the exhibitions, including photographic images, drawings and plans, architectural models, simulations, video clips, music, narrated commentary, textual information (labels, captions, even essays) and database records.
- It may provide visitors with a mechanism to view only such information that is appropriate to their interests and background, thus catering to different visitor profiles.

The appropriateness and success of multimedia in an exhibition depends on an understanding of its potential advantages and shortcomings, as is the case with traditional visitor support systems (handouts, informational captions, audio playback units, projection systems, feedback-response devices, etc.). In fact, the conception and design of multimedia applications for exhibitions can be seen from two complementary viewpoints: the contextual viewpoint of the museum exhibition as a whole, and the structural viewpoint of the multimedia application as an object in itself. The former provides a functional context for the latter.

## **Multimedia as Visitor Guide**

Multimedia technology can complement the function of human guides, audio support, and loop antenna systems in providing learning support to visitors in an exhibition. Applications function as visitor

guides installed at the entrance of a gallery (accessible after the visit as well).

In order to enhance the visitors' experience, these applications can provide:

- Interesting and lucidly scripted essays on selected themes, supplemented by relevant and good-quality audiovisual material that improves the understanding of the exhibits themselves.
- A straightforward method of interaction allowing visitors easy access to interesting information that relates to the context of the immediate (physical) exhibition.
- A carefully selected set of alternative points of view on the exhibition for different segments of the public, possibly personified by appropriate characters, and matched to different levels of background and interests.
- Personalized exhibition plans, which may be printed, suggesting an itinerary through galleries of interest for specific visitors and allowing visitors to know where they are at each point.
- Printed summaries of selected information, including illustrated pages of information to be consulted during a visit.

### ***Multimedia as Study Collection***

People not only “wanted to see more specimens, but apparently they understood more, learned more and enjoyed it more when there was more to see”. In fact, significant applications of multimedia technology aim to provide visitors with access to material not on display. These applications are a cross between a virtual study collection and an illustrated catalogue of the collection, albeit with more powerful information-retrieval capabilities and, possibly, better quality images.

## ***Multimedia as Explainer***

Traditional museum exhibitions are often criticized for not providing visitors with background information and thus preventing them from enriching their understanding of the exhibits. Good museums (traditional and otherwise) attempt to mitigate this problem by publishing educational material and exhibition guides, and by organizing lectures coordinated with their exhibition programme. Multimedia technology, in its role as explainer, has to compete with these complementary forms of interpretation. It may do so most effectively by providing:

- A clear storyline and definition of subject matter, appropriate and necessary to illustrate an essential point about the content of the exhibition;
- An easy-to-use user interface, which does not interfere between visitors and the content of the application and allows visitors to navigate simply and efficiently between different parts of the application;
- An appropriate approach suited to different types of visitors, making it easy to retrieve (directly or indirectly) information relevant to their particular background and interests;
- A good and quiet setting, near but not necessarily next to the relevant exhibits, which will stimulate visitors to think about the content rather than the technology;
- Depending on the nature of the application, offer facilities for annotating and printing appropriate information;
- Good quality textual, visual, and audio content.

### ***Multimedia as Emotive Trigger***

Advances in computer graphics, immersive environments, and virtual reality technology provide the tools for the construction of highly affective sensory experiences. These experiences, which may involve a high degree of interaction, could function as triggers to heighten visitors' interest and involvement in the message of an exhibition.

### ***Multimedia as Examiner***

Museum educators have traditionally used question sheets, quizzes, and revision summaries as well as pre- and post-exhibition questioning (e.g., of the form "What are the similarities between these two artifacts?") to engage visitors' attention. Given its history in computer-based training and other educational applications, multimedia appears well placed to provide a useful and rich way of enhancing the visitors' learning potential, especially after the visit, through the use of similar devices.

### ***Multimedia in Existing Exhibitions***

The introduction of multimedia applications to an existing exhibition is a pragmatic issue for many museums. This process, however, should be part of a comprehensive approach to exhibition updating, and should address demonstrable shortcomings of the exhibition; it should not be the result of mere availability of resources or technological fads.

### ***Multimedia in Education***

Learning takes place at different levels and in different modes. At its most basic, multimedia can help a user recognize words, terms, and their contextual meaning. Multimedia applications can be designed to support different learning methods and styles. Simple vocabulary-

trainers for foreign words or technical terms are the multimedia equivalent of multiple-choice tests for the learning and testing of contextual meaning. They present, identify, and reinforce information. At the next level, visual perception begins to play a role. Shapes and colours, graphic elements, and movement through space and/or time present information in many different ways. The user is empowered to choose a route through the material or ask questions about the content of still pictures or a sequence of moving images. Multimedia computing still offers many unexploited possibilities for this kind of learning, especially in art history.

Interactive learning can also be achieved via role-playing and situational games or communication with other users. For example, multiple users govern a simulated medieval town or discuss a picture with a gallery visitor in another location via the Internet. Multimedia computing can also be used to pursue the didactic aim of furthering creativity: finding a suitable description of an art object, manipulating scanned pictures, rearranging the pictures in a digital exhibition, or simply grouping colours and shapes. All these exercise visual learning and perception.

Brainstorming is one method of gathering spontaneous ideas from a group of users about a topic or question. This method, which is often used during guided tours, can also be used in multimedia computing by means of an interactive exchange of ideas with other users or adding a comment to an existing on-line discussion list.

The synectical method tries to make strange things familiar and familiar things strange. The synectical theory or system of problem-statement and problem-solution is based on creative thinking that



involves free use of metaphor and analogy in informal interchange. Well-known pictures or objects can thus be made to seem out of the ordinary or put into a totally different context in order to attract the audience's attention to specific stylistic or social sets of rules. Other examples of this method are programmed conflict situations, mistakes, or provocative questions.

Trial-and-error navigational exploration in multimedia applications facilitates discovery and learning. Users can move freely within a programme, make inquiries and comments, or give answers to questions without fear of failure.

### ***Multi-Sensory Learning***

One important principle of didactics is the use of several different channels of sensory information at the same time. It is possible to retain about three times as much information with multi-sensory input as with just one channel. **It is thought that the retention rate after hearing something is on average around 20%, after seeing around 30%, after hearing and seeing together 50%, and after hearing, seeing and touching around 70%.** The retention rate, of course, also depends on factors such as motivation, sensitivity, and presentation. An important element in the use of multimedia computing, especially for a younger audience, is 'action'. New information is acquired more quickly and easily if linked to something exciting or attractive. Even changing the character of familiar information has an attracting effect.

Addressing users by name or encouraging and applauding them have a motivating effect, resulting in an interplay of incentive and reward. The same holds true for multimedia applications that directly respond to users entering information.

The display of results or grading in competitions may be an incentive to users by awakening ambition. Some programs give a scoreboard of the last or the best competitors. In others a voice says, "well done" and gives a personal comment. Other applications are meant to make people curious, offering an amusing response when the mouse is clicked, or an on-screen feature touched. People are likely to look further for hidden responses in this type of program.

### ***Users' Choices***

Multimedia computing has a decisive didactical advantage in comparison with films or slide shows. Users influence the working of a program and may even communicate with other users. They can choose from a menu or a shortcut, repeat or prolong an ongoing process. They may even be able to connect pieces of information together and present it to other users. Intelligent interactive programs take note of the users' responses, adjust to their success in learning or to their mistakes, and prepare the subsequent learning units accordingly.

Multimedia educational experiences in the museum setting can range from one user working with a multimedia display to several users, each working on an individual system but linked by a network to each other and/or to a teacher; the systems could even be located in different museums throughout the world. Using a communication program, a dialogue between two people from different cultures could develop.

### ***Audience and Goals***

The target audience for the multimedia application needs to be defined at the outset of the project. A profile of the audience should be developed, considering such factors as age, education, interests, and computer literacy. The individual steps for learning, the volume

of information, and its complexity must be adapted to each user or group of users. If a user group consists of people who are intimidated by computers, a program without too much interactivity may be best. An essential aspect of didactics is to adjust to the learning rhythm of users and to offer them a slower or quicker-paced path through the material.

Developing effective multimedia teaching applications requires active and intelligent collaboration between museum educators and multimedia specialists. Only the continuous exchange of ideas and experiences can ensure progress in this interdisciplinary field.

### **Multimedia in Research**

Multimedia modelling of research processes is used in a variety of disciplines in science, including medicine, biology, engineering, and surface examination. It is possible to envision a suite of multimedia applications for museums that take advantage of this capacity to structure and deliver complex information. These include providing access to full documentation, comparison of objects, restoration and conservation, transport-related topics, and reconstruction.

### ***Access to Full Documentation***

For good management and care of collections it is necessary to have a full overview of the content of a collection and its condition. Such a complete overview is not necessary for building multimedia systems for exhibitions and/or educational purposes. For these applications a selection of material is needed. Researchers and managers of collections, however, need to have access to all data, or at least to a nearly comprehensive selection of the information recorded. Researchers rely more on the accuracy and quality of data.

### ***Restoration and Conservation***

Digital imaging is very relevant for conservation purposes, as it enables the detailed analysis of the physical characteristics and composition of a work of art or an artifact. Imaging is used as a means of documenting results, and recording the methods and techniques used. Some systems need not only to do imaging, but also to produce derived graphic representations of objects. Under-drawing research also relies heavily upon computers and computer-related technology. By documenting the under-drawing, and especially when combining it with analyses of paint samples, valuable information is put together that helps both the restorer and the researcher.

### ***CONCLUSION***

Coordination between the museum, educational institutions and NGO's is the need of the hour. It is a fact that education is the most potent instrument for human development, on which depends the level of all-round national development. It is also agreed by all countries and international organizations that people of all age groups and intellectual background can meet this gap in the field of communication through the effective use of museums and their collections by arranging thematic exhibitions. This requires linking up these institutions with various educational efforts, planning and development programmes operating in the country.

This would need adequate resources of space and manpower, which would be available if those in authority have a keen interest in the development of museum educational programmes. This is yet to be achieved in a country like India. The actions proposed here are a strategic response to the needs of society and is based on the

evidence available from various sources. The museum has to serve as an instrument for education and cultural development for all, from the illiterate masses to the enlightened class.

We need to develop a museum philosophy and museum ethics and, side by side with them, an educational policy, through which we create an awareness and sensitivity that will draw ever more people to museums. In a developing country like ours, the educational activities in a museum are a new weapon, a new tool to be exploited for the all-round growth and understanding of our people. The museum provides a quick, effective and economical way of building a nation, through the knowledge and appreciation of its background, resources, history, culture, crafts and arts. If museums are to continue and progress, they cannot avoid serving this cause of education, and if education is to be effective, it dare not neglect the museums.





## **FR. (DR) DENIS LALFELA SDB**

**Director**

Fr. (Dr.) Denis Lalfela is a Salesian of Don Bosco. He completed his Licentiate (Post Graduate) in Systematic Theology at the Pontifical University, Rome, Italy, in 2009. He also holds a Master's degree in Political Science. He obtained a PhD in Systematic Theology from the Pontifical Salesian University, Rome, Italy, in 2017. He is currently Professor of Systematic Theology at Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong. He is also the Director of Integrated Training of Laity and Religious (ITLR), a one-year Diploma Course in Theology.





# CHAPTER 5

## DON BOSCO MUSEUM OF CULTURES



**Dirceu Mauricio van Lonkhuijzen**

**T**he museum is currently recognized for its cultural mission. In addition to its functions of preserving, conserving, researching and exhibiting, it also presents itself as a fertile field for educational practices.

The commitment to place itself at the service of a society in constant transformation guides the work it carries out. It raises awareness among individuals about their cultural heritage and encourages a constant dialogue with different audiences. It attracts them to knowledge through recreational activities and the application of conservation and preservation techniques for its collections.

Furthermore, it is responsible for disseminating heritage and cultural references. It uses its collections to support teaching, research and extension at the Dom Bosco Catholic University, fulfilling the objectives peculiar to university museums.

The museum has a rich collection that includes:

- Taxidermy
- Minerals
- Fossils
- Insects
- Objects from Prehistory (Stone Age)
- Museum Memorabilia
- Culture of Kalapalo People (Xingu)
- Culture of Mato Grosso do Sul
- Culture of Iny Karajá People

- Culture of Boe Bororo People
- Culture of Xavante People
- Culture of the Peoples of the Upper Rio Negro

## HISTORY

The Dom Bosco Culture Museum (MCDB/UCDB) was designed by the religious of the Salesian Mission of Mato Grosso (MSMT). It was officially opened in 1951 on the premises of Colégio Dom Bosco, in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul. It was called the Dom Bosco Regional Museum at the time. Several Salesian priests worked to build and maintain the Museum, in particular, Fr. Antônio Colbachini, Félix Zavattaro, Fr. Cesar Albisetti, Fr. Angelo Venturelli and Fr. João Falco – responsible for obtaining the majority of the institution's collection.



Throughout the 20th century, the Museum expanded its collections and resized its activities. In 1976 it was transferred to Rua Barão do Rio Branco, where it ended up becoming known as the Museu do Índio. In 1997 it became linked to the Dom Bosco Catholic University (UCDB), effectively becoming a privileged space for academic activity. At the turn of the millennium, the need was felt to redefine its objectives and promote adjustments in its physical space for the democratization of culture. This was made possible through a partnership between the



Salesian Mission of Mato Grosso, the Italian Procura of Missioni Don Bosco (based in Turin, Italy) and the Government of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul. Currently the Dom Bosco Cultures Museum is located in the Parque das Nações Indígenas, at the top of Avenida Afonso Pena, in Campo Grande.

## MISSION

The Dom Bosco Museum of Cultures is currently recognized for its cultural mission of placing itself at the service of a society in constant transformation.

It focuses its work on raising awareness among individuals about their cultural heritage. The museum encourages a constant dialogue with different audiences, attracting them towards knowledge. This is achieved through exhibitions, recreational activities and the application of technology for collection, conservation and preservation.



## HUMAN SCIENCES EXHIBITION (Long Term)

## MEMORIES OF THE DOM BOSCO MUSEUM

On June 18, 1894, the first Salesian missionaries arrived in Cuiabá. Their first objective, at the request of the local government, was to cool down the bloody conflicts between the Bororo and the colonizers of Mato Grosso. Starting from this contact and through the commitment of Salesian missionaries over the decades, the Dom Bosco Museum

was born on October 27, 1951. The space recalls the Dom Bosco Museum of Rua Barão do Rio Branco, alive in the collective memory of southern Mato Grosso.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

We have a collection of the remnants of the material culture of prehistoric people from the archaic and formative periods. The approximately 215 objects on display that make up the collection were gathered through field research in Brazil and/or donated to MCDB. An audiovisual projection presents images of archaeological remains such as landscapes, engravings and cave paintings.



## PEOPLE OF MATO GROSSO DO SUL

The State of Mato Grosso do Sul today has an indigenous population estimated at 63 thousand people, including the Atikum Umã, Kaiowá and Guarani, the Terena, the Kadiwéu, the Guató and the Ofaié. The Kaiowá and Guarani (40 thousand) and the Terena (23 thousand) have the largest populations. The Terena, Kadiweu, Guarani and Kaiowá, Kiniquináu, Guató, Ofaié and Atikum Umã have their culture represented by objects and utensils of daily use. The form of the exhibition is a metaphor for the dimensions of the lives of these people.



## BOE PEOPLE - BORORO | ALBISSETTI & VENTURELLI COLLECTION

The first indigenous people with whom the Salesians maintained contact were the Boe-Bororo. They are a people who have always attracted the attention of scholars and lay people, due to the beauty of their feather artifacts and the complexity of their funeral rites. The museum space celebrates birth and mourns death. Between Life and Death are enunciated some everyday scenes, placing these objects in dialogue with the cosmological structure of the people.

## XAVANTE PEOPLE | GIACCARIA & HEIDE COLLECTION

The original Xavante village, always built close to a stream or small river, is shaped like a horseshoe, with its opening facing the river. At one end of the village is the Casa dos Adolescentes, home of the adolescents. In the middle there is a large square, a meeting place for men. The major decisions of the "Council of Elders" are also made there. The exhibition space is filled with objects representing everyday life and sacred moments that permeate the routine of these people.

## INY PEOPLE - KARAJÁ | FALCO & VENTURELLI COLLECTION

The name of these people in their own language is Iny, that is, "we". The Karajá have the Araguaia River as an axis of mythological and social reference. Each village decides on a specific area for fishing, hunting and ritual practices, internally demarcating cultural spaces known to the entire group. With the arrival of the rains, they moved to villages built in large ravines, safe from rising waters. The Karajá established a



great social division between twins, and defined the social roles of men and women as narrated in their myths.

## PEOPLE OF THE UAUPÉS RIVER | BRUZZI & BEKSTA COLLECTION

The people of the Eastern Tukano and Maku linguistic families coexist more intensely in the region between the Tiquié and Papuri rivers and the Middle Uaupés. In this area, they developed a complementary strategy, since they traditionally occupy different spaces and adopt specific practices for environmental management. The Tukano, Desana, Tariana, Pira-Tapuia, Tuiuca, Paracabâ, Taiwano, Wanana are some of the peoples characterized by their culture. Their villages are aesthetically arranged along the Uaupés River. This is replicated in the exhibition space. Where the river ends life ends, and it is imprisoned in the "Garments of Tears" within the sacred circle.



## PEOPLE OF XINGU

The people of the Xingu are represented in the exhibition by totems that symbolize Kuarup, a funeral rite that honours ancestors. Their narrative refers to the longing for Mavutsinim, a deity worshiped by the ethnicities of that location, to bring the dead back to life. This ritual is

still practised by the 16 indigenous communities that inhabit the Xingu River region, in the north of Mato Grosso.

## NATURAL HISTORY EXHIBITION

### MINERALS

Attractive due to the beauty of their colour, shine and shape, minerals have a special place in our lives. No civilization can do without minerals, especially when it concerns the quality of life. Basic needs for human survival are met by the use of these resources. The collection of minerals is quite diverse and contains rarities such as cornetite (phosphate) and eudialite (silicate), of great scientific interest. The collection has around 780 samples of which 74 are in a temporary exhibition.

### PALAEONTOLOGY (FOSSILS)

Palaeontology studies the remains of organisms or evidence of their activities preserved in rocks after their death. It is based on two main sciences: biology and geology. Although many fossils perfectly represent a particular animal or plant, it is important to highlight that some cases are parts that left a perfect impression in the rock. The exhibition presents 75 fossils distributed among invertebrates, vertebrates, plants, ichnofossils and palynomorphs.

### INVERTEBRATES (SHELLS/INSECTS)

This temporary exhibition seeks to encourage a continuous and insightful interaction between the observer and the observed, between art and science, and leads to reordering concepts and questioning the nature of things. Lucretius, philosopher of Antiquity, in his poem *De*



*rerum natura* (On the nature of things), leads us to think of stability and balance not as primary forms that precede the foundation of the nature of things, but as solidary effects of a universal movement that encompasses instability and imbalance in equal measure. It is less concerned with the transmission of scientific concepts than with the contemplation of objects and the history of scientific development.

## VERTEBRATES (TAXIDERMIZED)

We can divide vertebrates into: non-amniotic (fish and amphibians); amniotic that include Sauropsida (turtles, lizards, snakes and birds); and the Synapsida (mammals). Currently, 56,000 species of vertebrate animals are known to be living in almost all habitats on the planet, demonstrating diversity and fantastic behavioural complexity. Despite morphological variability, vertebrates have characteristics that emphasize the role of natural selection as a mechanism for evolution.





## DIRCEU VAN LONKHUIJZEN

**Coordinator of Don Bosco Museum of  
Cultures – MCDB/UCDB**

I'm 50 years old. I was born in Curitiba - PR Brazil, but lived and grew up in São Paulo - SP and then moved to Campo Grande - MS in 1998.

I was a Salesian student studying for a Licentiate and Bachelor's Degree in Geography at the Dom Bosco Catholic University - UCDB (2003), where I also obtained a Technical Degree in Museology (2005). I later joined the Postgraduate Programme in Science Teaching at the Institute of Physics of the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul - UFMS, in the line of research in Environmental Education, obtaining a Master's degree in Environmental Education and am currently finishing my PhD in this Postgraduate Programme.

I began my career as a teacher in 2001, and in 2005 as a museology technician, responsible for the archaeology sector of the former Dom Bosco Museum. In 2013 I took over the general coordination of the museum and today I am solely responsible for the MCDB/UCDB, looking after the sectors (administrative, museological/conservation and cultural-educational).

I am married and the father of two girls, I love my family, I love dogs and cats and I am passionate about the Corinthians sports club.



# CHAPTER 6

## MAGGIORINO BORGATELLO INFUSED WITH SALESIAN CHARISM



Elizabeth Vivanco



**A**t the end of 2014, the Salesian Museum “Maggiorino Borgatello” was hit by a surprise. Trip Advisor, the international travel organiser, gave it a singular recognition, the “TRAVELLERS’ CHOICE” award. It was chosen by visitors themselves as one of the most interesting destinations in the world and, of course, within Southern Patagonia. To arrive at this decision, they had collected the opinion and sincere comments of 150 million travellers. This recognition, as the accompanying letter said, was a great honour to the institution. The award came as a surprise, but it was not strange as it reflected the numerous written and oral testimonies in the museum’s visitors’ book – children, young people and adults alike – over the years.

But how was our museum formed and what does it contain to keep it so interesting over the years?

## **The missionary dream of Don Bosco**

Having built up the Salesian Congregation in Europe during the second half of the 19th century, with foundations in Italy, France and Spain, Don Bosco thought it opportune to extend his work to mission lands, where the Gospel had not yet reached. None of the places suggested at that time responded to his desire until in one of his prophetic dreams he was presented with a horrifying scene – a fierce fight among men dressed in furs. As he gazed in horror at this scene in the distance, he saw a group of his Salesians courageously heading towards the warriors. Don Bosco feared for their lives, and he signalled to them with his gestures not to go closer to this imminent danger. To his surprise he observed that as they approached, the battlefield was transformed and became a peaceful atmosphere of serene coexistence. What he saw was Patagonia, a distant, little-explored land in the south of South



America, inhabited by indigenous peoples who were at that time suffering a violent invasion of their lands and culture.

Don Bosco had found the land chosen by God for his children, and it was there that he directed his missionary initiatives.

Stimulated by this divine message, Don Bosco promptly arranged the first expedition to Argentina. The authorities of that nation had formally requested Don Bosco for Salesians. Their main destination was to be the unknown Patagonia, which, precisely at the end of the 19th century, was being occupied by colonists, often using great violence and did so with the approval of sovereign nations.



The arrival of Salesians – priests, coadjutors and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians – meant undertaking intense work and great sacrifices as prophesied in the dream. They laboured in defence of and for the evangelisation of the native peoples of Patagonia who had lived in those lands for thousands of years.

In 1875, when Don Bosco launched the first Salesian expedition to America, he left them the legacy of keeping alive and present the principles of the “oratory”, the first and most important Salesian work inspired by God. There, young people were introduced to “religion”. They were initiated into the practice of good habits based on the

sacraments. They received education, through which they acquired knowledge, skills and culture by developing their “reason”. They enjoyed “recreation” which, through games and other activities, practised the sharing of love called “amorevolezza”.

## **Mons. Fagnano and the first Salesian mission in Patagonia**

Bishop Fagnano, the undisputed leader of the first missionary expedition of the Salesians to southern Patagonia, made these programmatic orientations his own, immersed in each of the activities he undertook and transmitted them to his collaborators. He himself synthesised the essence of the Salesian charism: “We evangelise by educating and we educate by evangelising”. The work of the first Salesian missionaries transcends to the present day in three ways: religious action, cultural transmission and recreational expansion.

These values were like leaven that totally infused the Salesians. They extended their work not only to evangelisation and formal education, but also to the knowledge of the then unexplored territories. They contributed to science by means of climatological records, studied the fauna and flora of these territories, and built numerous churches and schools with solid materials such as bricks. Above all, they preserved the material and immaterial culture of these territories that distinguished the native peoples. They mitigated the colonisation that consisted in an inexhaustible search for riches, violently occupying the lands of the original population. Faced with this burning reality, the Salesians created missions that provided shelter, food, security and education for children. They imparted new skills to adults for their integration into the newly established and inevitable reality.

## Foundation and Development of the Museum

The Salesian Museum “Maggiorino Borgatello” in Punta Arenas was founded in 1893, just six years after the arrival of the Salesians in Punta Arenas in July 1887. Its founder left us the following dedication on the cover of the first visitors' book of the museum, dated December 1895: “The Museum, whose collections are entrusted to the charge of the Salesian priest Fr Maggiorino Borgatello, was inaugurated in 1893 in perennial memory of the Silver Jubilee of the first Mass celebrated that year by Monsignor José Fagnano, Apostolic Prefect, Founder and Superior General of the Salesian Missions of Southern Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego and Falkland Islands”.

Fr Borgatello created the museum in homage to Monsignor Fagnano, not merely as a gesture of admiration. It was to preserve a heritage through a collection of objects that over time have become a unique patrimony for posterity. Finally, it was also to bear witness to the many initiatives undertaken by so many hard-working Salesians. Of particular importance were those first direct disciples of Don Bosco. Their spirit is seen in the charism that still permeates Salesian missionary life.

The museum exhibits recall and present the first Salesian missions in southern Patagonia, San Rafael and El Buen Pastor in Magallanes, La Candelaria in Tierra del Fuego. They are presented in their typical setting. They bear witness to the various activities that took place in them, in the field of formal education, livestock, cooking, weaving, sawmilling, music, singing and religious instruction, among others. They recall occupations created with the purpose of integrating the indigenous people to a sedentary life that the new reality imposed on them. This reflects the deepest sense that sustains missionary work,

which is none other than the spiritual and material redemption of the native peoples. It was guided by Bishop José Fagnano and Sister Ángela Vallese and a legion of Salesians. Through hard and sacrificial work, they literally gave their lives to respond fully to their Salesian and missionary vocations.

The museum exhibits a material heritage which you can admire through historical and geographical illustrations accompanied by a diversity of objects, particularly lithic, osseous and vegetal. Above all, it has an immaterial heritage consisting of writings and documents of the first missionaries. Maggiorino Borgatello, Father José María Beauvoir and many other published texts considered today as the first sources on diverse aspects of the culture and customs of the native peoples. Among them the comparative writings of the native languages stand out.

The museum has a library, a reading room and a small conference room for readers and scholars interested in the native peoples of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. The museum is the ideal place to consult numerous texts by different authors who wrote about Patagonia – its history, its lands, its climate and resources.

## The Museum and science

Together with Borgatello, the museum highlights the figure of the Salesian coadjutor Ángel Benove. From the very beginning of the museum, Brother Benove was in charge of and specialised in the collection and conservation of the numerous specimens of Patagonian fauna and flora. Brother Ángel is considered an exceptional zoologist and botanist. Thanks to his work and research, the museum currently

exhibits the richest and most complete stuffed collection of aquatic and terrestrial fauna of Patagonia. Already in the first postcards of the museum you can appreciate his contribution. It is to him that we owe the conservation of two extinct species, a specimen of the Fuegian dog that accompanied the natives in hunting and a migratory bird from the northern hemisphere known by the name of "Boreal Curlew". Thanks to Benove, we can still study and admire them. On the basis of these contributions he could be considered a co-founder of the museum.

In the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, scientific circles in Europe came to know of the presence of the Salesians in Patagonia. The Academy of Meteorology approached Don Bosco through the famous scientist Denza. They asked him, for scientific purposes, that his sons could take charge of the meteorological stations throughout South America, especially in the southernmost latitudes. The request was accepted by Don Bosco and several observatories were built. The Salesians were so conscientious that in the same year that they arrived in Punta Arenas in 1887, they built a wooden tower that housed the first meteorological station of Punta Arenas. Monsignor Fagnano himself, assisted by Father Ferrero, was the first director appointed for this task.

Father Griffa, Monsignor Fagnano and Father Ferrero were the first Salesians to set foot on Punta Arenas soil. As the years went by, the station was equipped with very modern equipment for the time, and Father Marabini and later Father Re were its outstanding directors. They organised the publication of a monthly bulletin, which was highly appreciated by scientific academies and received important acknowledgements from European newspapers and scientific magazines. The weather station remained in operation at the Liceo San José until the 1970s, the last director being Father Francisco Petek.



NASA, through the IEDRO organisation, facilitated the digitalisation of all the alphanumeric data, and its history and information are kept in the museum for consultation and analysis by scholars.

## **The museum and the heritage of Fr De Agostini**

Another important area of the museum is related to the explorations carried out by the distinguished Fr Alberto María De Agostini, a Salesian who undertook this scientific mission with the approval of Monsignor Fagnano. The famous Father De Agostini arrived in Punta Arenas in 1910 and he dedicated the next fifty years of his life to exploring the immense territory of Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego up to Cape Horn and the southern islands.

The museum inherited a large part of his work. In 1984, during the second remodelling of the museum, a restored library with the name "Father Alberto M. De Agostini" was opened. It houses the innumerable publications he authored and a large part of his personal collection, his photographs and slides, as well as the films he produced.

The museum has a reading room that has been transformed into an educational service for school students, university students and national and foreign scholars.

## **Consolidation of the museum**

The size of the first space where the museum was inaugurated consisted simply of a room inside the "San José" school. This foundational institution of the Salesian Congregation, built in wood in 1888, was situated next to the Plaza de Armas in Punta Arenas. The first director and curator of the Museum was Fr Maggiorino Borgatello, supported,

as already mentioned, by the Salesian Brother Angelo Benove. To both of them we owe the finest quality of a work destined for great future development.

In 1908, Fr Pietro Marabini, SDB (1872-1953), director of the Collegio San Giuseppe, took notice of the importance that the museum was acquiring, especially for the richness of its collections and the consequent interest it was arousing among scientists. He provided the museum with solid premises, especially to protect such an important heritage from any danger of damage or destruction by fire. This was of great importance at that time because the buildings, made entirely of wood, were very prone to fires due to the intense cold and dry weather.

The collections continued to grow so much that on the occasion of the solemn commemoration of the fourth centenary of the discovery of the Strait of Magellan in 1920, Fr Luis Costamagna, SDB (1866-1941), superior of the Salesians, enlarged the premises to form the "Museo Territorial" (Territorial Museum). By this time the museum was already universally recognised and always the subject of unanimous praise and a must for illustrious visitors to the city of Punta Arenas.

As a testimony to this, it is recalled that on 5 April 1920, when leaving Punta Arenas, Gabriela Mistral, future Nobel Prize winner for literature (1945), in an interview granted to "La Unión", the public newspaper of the Apostolic Vicariate of Magallanes, declared: "The Salesian Regional Museum is an admirable initiative, one of the few things that could be proudly shown to foreign visitors on the occasion of the Fourth Centenary of the Discovery of the Strait of Magellan".

## Epilogue

Further extensions were carried out in 1984 and 1999, and the museum now has an exhibition area of 1,500m<sup>2</sup>, with a special emphasis on educational activities. There is special programming of age-adapted workshops on the missionary activities of the first Salesians who arrived in Magallanes. Various recreational materials are used in these workshops. These initiatives are highly appreciated, and a conference room is available for this purpose.

In these 130 years of its existence, the museum has evolved thanks to the initiatives of distinguished Salesians. The then Provincial, Fr Juan Aliberti, moved it from the Liceo San José, where it occupied two rooms, to the first floor of a spacious building adjacent to the monumental sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians. The two together form an impressive architectural ensemble. In 1984, the then Rector Major, Fr Egidio Viganó, provided the necessary resources for a thorough remodelling. The museum now occupied two floors of the old building reaching 700 m<sup>2</sup>. Finally, at the beginning of the 20th century the then directors, successively Fr Raimundo Roccero and Fr Juan Favaretto, enlarged it further. They added a new three-storey building with new areas for permanent and temporary exhibitions, service area and conference room to reach its present area of 1,500m<sup>2</sup>.

Here is a memorable event in the area of evangelisation. On the occasion of the celebration of the second millennium, Monsignor Liberio Andreatta, President of the Opera Romana pilgrimage, took an Astile cross to the North Pole and the same cross to the South Pole where he celebrated Mass, in the name of Pope John Paul II. He then gave the museum this cross of the South for the veneration of pilgrims

and visitors to the museum, reminding them that Redemption is for all, whether in the north or the south of the earth.

Finally, the museum preserves and exhibits testimonials of the passage of Don Bosco's relics through the mission land of his dream.

There is a lot more to write about this Salesian presence built on the foundation of the Salesian charisma of those first sons of Don Bosco. They founded it in Punta Arenas 130 years ago in a small room and now it occupies two buildings with a surface area of 1,700 m<sup>2</sup> and with a challenging vocation to further development in the future.





## ELIZABETH VIVANCO

Province of Chile (CIL)

From Santiago de Chile; 41 years old; pastorally trained since the age of 12 in the Don Bosco Youth Centre of the San Gabriel the Archangel Province in Chile; actively participating in the Salesian missionary communities, in the Salesian youth movement at the national level.

Studied Administration and Judicial Management, Public Administration and Social Work, providing services in the public and private sectors.

Since 2020 I am integrated into the Office of Planning and Development of the Salesian Congregation, being responsible for the area of Projects and Fundraising. I coordinate the works of the Province in different projects, such as environmental area, social foundations, education sector, professional technical fields, and the domain of heritage and culture of the congregation in its museums and archives. I accompany them in applying for projects inside and outside the country; managing, accompanying and supervising the sustainability of this sector of heritage of the Salesian network in the country.



# CHAPTER 7

## MARIAN MUSEUM PORT MORESBY PAPUA NEW GUINEA



**Srimal Priyanga Silva, SDB**

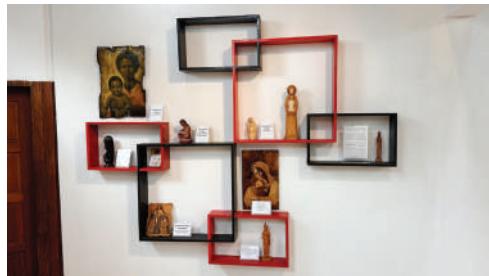


## The Marian Museum of SDB in Port Moresby: A Space of Devotion and Evangelization

**I**n the heart of Port Moresby, the Marian Museum of the Salesians of Don Bosco stands as a beacon of devotion to Our Lady, particularly under her beloved title, Mary Help of Christians. The museum, home to an array of statues of Mary from various parts of the world, serves not only as a place for veneration but also as a powerful tool for evangelization and spreading devotion.

The Marian Museum gathers together statues that reflect the rich cultural expressions of Marian devotion, each representing a unique story, tradition, and history of faith. From the graceful representation of Mary Help of Christians, the museum provides visitors with a journey through the global tapestry of love and reverence for the Blessed Mother. These statues are more than works of art; they are symbols of faith, hope, and devotion that have inspired countless believers across centuries and continents.

At the heart of the museum's mission is the promotion of devotion to Mary Help of Christians, the title under which Don Bosco himself



entrusted his mission and work. St. John Bosco knew well the strength and grace that came from trusting in Mary. His confidence in her intercession and guidance became the cornerstone of the Salesian family's spirituality. Today, the Marian Museum stands as a continuation of that deep trust and devotion, offering visitors an opportunity to encounter Mary, to learn from her virtues, and to seek her motherly care.

## A Tool for Evangelization

Beyond its cultural and spiritual significance, the Marian Museum is a dynamic tool for evangelization. As Pope Francis often reminds us, we are called to find new ways of bringing the Gospel to the world, especially through innovative and creative means. The museum embodies this by offering a space where faith can be encountered visually, through sacred art and history. It becomes a place where devotion can lead to deeper evangelization.

By inviting parishes, schools, and communities to visit the museum, we open the door for many to experience Mary's love and intercession in a new and powerful way. Through guided tours, reflections on the life of Mary, and an understanding of the diversity of Marian devotion, the museum offers a tangible way of deepening one's faith and relationship with God. It





also serves as a space for ecumenical dialogue, welcoming people of all Christian traditions to come together in reverence of the Mother of Jesus.

## Inviting Schools and Parishes

We extend a heartfelt invitation to parishes and school students to explore the treasures housed in this Marian sanctuary. For young people in particular, visiting the museum can be an inspiring and formative experience. In a world where many are searching for meaning and purpose, the Marian Museum offers a chance to reflect on the life of Mary, her virtues of humility, service, and unwavering faith, and how these can be emulated in our own lives.

Furthermore, the museum acts as a bridge between generations, allowing older visitors to share their own stories of Marian devotion with the younger generation. It becomes a living testimony to the ongoing presence of Mary in the lives of her children, guiding them towards her Son, Jesus Christ.



## Spreading Devotion to Mary Help of Christians

The devotion to Mary Help of Christians is particularly dear to us Salesians. Her powerful intercession has been felt in countless ways



throughout the world, and we continue to place our work under her protection. Through this museum, we hope to spread this devotion even further, inviting more hearts to trust in Mary's help and to turn to her in times of need.

The Marian Museum in Port Moresby is more than a collection of statues; it is a place where faith comes alive, where devotion is deepened, and where evangelization finds new expression. It is our prayer that all who visit will leave with a renewed sense of Mary's love and a stronger desire to walk in faith, hand in hand with Mary Help of Christians.

## Dream Realized

It was the dream of Fr Alfred Maravilla, the then Provincial of PGS to establish a museum dedicated to Mary Help of Christians at the shrine of Mary Help of Christians. He initiated the collection of statues through the Salesians around the world.

Fr. Srimal Silva, Economer of PGS appreciated the dream and made it a reality with the support and guidance of Fr. Gregorio Bicomong, the provincial superior of PGS.

A number of Salesians, Salesian family members and lay partners contributed to making the museum a success. Also local donors





helped financially; others bought statues from their respective countries and donated them to the museum.

The interior works were done with the help of Mr. Dominic An and Mr. Joseph Thiem, two volunteers from Vietnam who were brought in to the country with the help of Fr. Joseph Tinh. Fr. Tinh was part of the team in designing the interior of the museum.

The museum was completed and blessed on 24th May 2022, on the feast of Mary Help of Christians.

Visitors to the museum are offered more than just a visual experience. The museum provides free pictures, posters, and prayer cards of Mary Help of Christians, allowing them to take a piece of this sacred space with them as they continue their spiritual journey. For those seeking to further express their devotion, the museum's attached gift shop offers a variety of Marian books, rosaries, medals, statues, and other articles of popular devotion for purchase.





## FR. SRIMAL SILVA

**PGS - Provincial Economer  
Director - PDO/MO**

Born in Sri Lanka, Srimal belongs now to the Vice-Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (PGS).

He has a B.Ph (Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy) from Chinthalaloka, Don Bosco Institution of Philosophy, Humanities and Religions. Sri Lanka; B.Th (Bachelor's Degree in Theology) from Universita Pontificia Salesiana, Rome –Italy; B.Ed (Bachelor's Degree in Education) from Universita Pontificia Salesiana, Rome – Italy; Licenza (Master's Degree in Education) from Universita Pontificia Salesiana, Rome – Italy; Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from the Australia pacific technical college under the auspices of sunshine coast institute of TAFE, Australia.

Since 2020 he is the provincial economer, and the in-charge of PDO/MO. Fluent in Italian and English.





# CHAPTER 8

## MUSEUM – CASA MAMMA MARGHERITA AND THE RURAL WISDOM OF THE 1800'S AT CAPRIGLIO



**Diego Occhiena**

**President**



## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY

**C**he ancient word 'Caprilji' would indicate the 'proper place of goats', and even today the village lies in an area rich in woods. The derivation of the place name Caprile, which first appears in a document of 1153, is confirmed by the drawing on the medieval coat of arms, namely a goat.

Capriglio was for a long time a fief of the Radicati Counts of Cocconato, purchased by a merchant from Turin, Giovanni Paolo Melina. In 1839

Count Sapelli, son of Rosa

Giuseppina Melina, took over the title. Capriglio, like all the towns in the area, naturally had a castle, located on the site where the parish church and the building known as 'l'asilo' (kindergarten) now stand. The castle was destroyed (between 1400 and 1500), while its dungeons remain covering the entire central area of the village.

Among the monuments, we would like to mention: the Parish Church of San Martino, built on a small rise, extended in the 18th century; and the Church of San Martino, in the cemetery, whose foundation dates back to the Romanesque period and preserves traces of its 14th century structure. The plaster ceilings in the municipal building, examples of a traditional construction technique, are very well preserved. The territory of the municipality is rich in fossils dating back to the Late Palaeolithic period. A local speciality, now a SlowFood champion, is





the 'Capriglio pepper', which used to be preserved under grape-marc throughout the winter.

The village in the province of Asti, located 231 metres above sea level, covers an area of 510 hectares and has a population of about 300 inhabitants (about the same number as in Mamma Margherita's time). The town is aligned on a wide ridge, to the right of the Triversa Torrent and is composed of hamlets and villages scattered over green hills.

Capriglio is about 4 km from Colle Don Bosco (SP 33), 20 km from Chieri, 23 km from Asti and 36 km from Turin (via Chieri - Pino Torinese - Sassi). Illustrious personalities, in addition to Margherita Occhiena, were Don Mario Caustico SDB (see photo below), military chaplain shot by German soldiers in Grugliasco in 1945.



Don Mario Caustico (classe 1913, primo a sinistra con il berretto) in una foto di famiglia con la madre Giovanna Vigna ed i fratelli Luigi (classe 1906) e Francesco (classe 1908), ultimo a destra.

and Sister Vera Occhiena FMA (see photo on next page), her distant relative, missionary and martyr in 1982 in Maputo (Mozambique).



## MAMMA MARGHERITA'S BIRTHPLACE

Today the house, located in the hamlet of Cecca in the municipality of Capriglio, is privately owned and has also been partially remodelled. In 1956, on the occasion of the centenary of Margherita Occhiena's death, a commemorative plaque was placed on its façade:

"IN THIS HOUSE / WAS BORN ON 1 APRIL 1788 / MARGHERITA OCCHIENA / PISSIMA MADRE / DEL VEN. DON BOSCO'.

Margherita lived in a discreet house for those times as witnessed by the historical photos collected in the museum. It had two rooms on the ground floor, a barn and a storeroom on the upper floor. In addition, there was an outhouse with a hayloft, stable, cellar and chicken coop. In the farmyard, there was a well with a wooden wheel on which was a rope, manoeuvred





by a crank handle to fetch water in a bucket. On the threshing-floor there took place Margaret's childhood episode with the Germans and the corn and the horses. Here is the biographer's account:

*"It was the month of September 1799, the corn harvesting season. The corn was lying on the threshing-floor in front of the Occhiena house to dry out in the sun, when a squadron of German cavalry arrived. The soldiers stopped in the neighbouring field. The horses, freed from their harness, came into the middle of the threshing floor. Margaret, who was guarding the farmyard, on seeing this invasion on her property, raised her voice and tried to drive the horses away by pushing and beating them with her hands. But those mighty beasts did not move and continued to feed greedily on such lavish forage. Undaunted, she turned to the soldiers, who were on the other side of the ditch. They were looking at her, laughing at her agitation and vain efforts. She began to scold them in her dialect for not guarding their horses better. The soldiers, who understood nothing of her language, continued to laugh, repeating from time to time: 'Ja ja' – "You laugh?" Margaret continued with her hands on her hips, "you care little that the horses consume our harvest, which is worth fourteen and a half lire a ha! To you this corn costs nothing, but we have sweated around it all year! What shall we eat this winter? With what shall we make our polenta? This is arrogance on your part! Do you want to lead these horses away or not?" – "Ja ja", replied the soldiers... Margherita then, in order to pay them back, replied with another monosyllable, which in Piedmontese*





*dialect means an affirmation, but in a mocking way – “bo bo!” - ...Here she mocked with “jaja”, there she repeated: “bo bo”. The bo and ja intertwined amidst the soldiers’ boisterous laughter. Margaret eventually lost her patience and concluded: - “Yes, yes: bo and ja, bo and ja; do you know what that makes? Margaret saw that her words were of no avail. Her patience wore thin and she ran off and picked up her rake. She struck the horses one after another, at first with the handle. Realising that they were not bothered by these attacks, she reversed her weapon. She began to use the iron points to prick them in the flanks and to tickle their nostrils. The horses then reared up and fled from the farmyard.*

(G. B. Lemoyne – MB vol. I pg 17-19)

It was here that Margaret lived until her wedding day, and it was probably here that her brother, Uncle Michele (1795-1867), continued to live, a valuable help in difficult times. It was he who led Giovanni away from the Moglia farm, supported him in his desire to attend school and found him accommodation in Chieri. It is interesting to note that Don Bosco's maternal grandfather Melchiorre died on 11 January 1844 at the age of 92; he thus had the joy of seeing his grandson a priest.

## THE PARISH OF SAINT MARTIN

Mama Margaret was baptised in this church, studied Catechism, made her First Communion, received Confirmation and was married on 12 June 1812 to Francis Bosco. After the first year of theology (1838) the



cleric John Bosco was invited to Capriglio to give the homily on the feast of the Nativity of Mary:

*"I preached on the feast of the Nativity of Mary in Capriglio. I do not know what the fruit was. On all sides, however, it was applauded, so that vainglory drove me, until I was disillusioned as follows. One day, after the said sermon on the Birth of Mary, I questioned someone, who seemed to be one of the more intelligent, about the sermon, of which he gave rave praise, and he answered me: - "The sermon was on the poor souls in purgatory." And I had preached on the glories of Mary' (MO 96-97).*



Belonging to the Diocese of Asti, it was originally dedicated to St Martin, and in more recent times to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The façade we now see dates back to 1950 and features exposed brickwork and modern marble pilasters that do not entirely match the style of the building, which was erected before the 17th century. The church originally consisted probably only of the nave, on which the main entrance is still located. During the 17th century, two lower, narrower naves were added to the right of the main nave. Immediately after the main entrance, on the wall to the left of the nave, is the bronze bust of Margherita Occhiena, placed there in 1956 on the occasion of the centenary of her death. It is the work of the sculptor Ferrari of Turin, in which the artist was able to evidence the sweet and gentle, strong and imposing expression of Don Bosco's mother. The plaque below reads:



“TO / MARGHERITA OCCHIENA / MOTHER OF SAINT JOHN BOSCO / IN THIS CHURCH / BAPTISED ON 1 APRIL 1788 / MARRIED TO FRANCESCO BOSCO ON 6 JUNE 1812 / THE MOTHERS OF CAPRIGLIO / ON THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF HER BIRTH / DEDICATE / 1963”.

In this place was the **Baptismal Font**, now located on the back wall between the two entrance doors, enriched by the marble **Tabernacle** with a gilded wooden door depicting the baptism of Jesus. The stained-glass window at the top depicting St John the Baptist is related to the baptismal font. A little further up, to the right, is another stained-glass window with the icon of Bishop St Martin with the churches of the cemetery and the hamlet of Serra on either side.

Continuing our visit of the nave, we see on the upper left a niche containing the plaster statue of the Madonna in imitation of the Apparition of Lourdes. Of particular interest is the presbytery: it is raised by a few steps in local stone and enclosed by two stone balustrades consisting of nine small columns surmounted on a base. The altar group is composed of plastered masonry (plaster antependium) with faux marble decorations. The Tabernacle is surmounted by a gilded wooden decoration in the form of a crown enclosing a small crucifix. The large Cross rises from this point above the whole structure. The scene is enriched by the presence of candelabra arranged on three levels.

The two side passages leading to the Choir are surmounted by large candelabras with baroque and gold-coloured decorations. The wooden Choir, which is in a worryingly dilapidated condition, is surrounded at the top by the inscription 'ADORO TE DEVOTE'. In the centre of the back wall, under the ceiling, is a fresco depicting two deer drinking at the fountain symbolising eternal life.



In the first lower nave is the Altar of Our Lady. Placed on a two-step elevation, it is made of stone with supporting columns. The marble Tabernacle is surrounded at the sides by candelabra arranged on two brackets. Above the structure is a niche containing a gilded wooden statue of the Madonna and Child.

In the second low nave on the wall, between two confessional, is the altar of the Sacred Heart, a round-arched tympanum surmounted by a gilded wooden decoration. The plaster statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is in a niche between two pilasters painted in imitation marble. The ceiling, now plastered white after the work to consolidate the structure and roof, had several frescoes before those interventions: triumphs of angels, divine allegories, geometric decorations and the effigy of the patron Saint Martin.

## MAMMA MARGHERITA MUSEUM

### THE FIRST UNIT

In 1988, the centenary year of the death of St. John Bosco, which is also the bicentenary year of the birth of Mamma Margaret, a desire arose among the people of Capriglio to create a museum in her honour. Since it was not possible to set it up in the house where she was born because it was privately owned, they chose the house in which the town's teacher Don Giuseppe Lacqua lived, a building adjacent to Capriglio's Town Hall. On the first floor he collected the children from the municipal



The mayor Massimino Occhiena



primary school. Giovannino was also his pupil for at least two winters. Although he belonged to a different municipality, he was accepted as a student thanks to the interest of his aunt Marianna Occhiena (1785-1857), sister of Margherita Occhiena, at the time housekeeper to don Lacqua. The date of this school attendance is uncertain, to be placed between 1824 and 1827. This was Don Bosco's first encounter with the school. During this period the boy lived with his grandparents and uncles in the house on the Serra di Capriglio.

The plaque, placed on the wall in 1934, reads:

“THIS HUMBLE LITTLE HOUSE / SCHOOL OF CAPRIGLIO UNTIL 1920 / WELCOMED SEVEN-YEAR-OLD / GUEST OF RELATIVES OF MAMMA MARGHERITA / SAINT GIOVANNI BOSCO / WHO UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF / DON GIUSEPPE LACQUA / PRIEST OF GREAT PIETY / THERE LEARNT THE FIRST ELEMENTS / OF READING AND WRITING / AND THE EDUCATIVE VIRTUES / OF OUR PEOPLE / AMPLIFIED BY HIM / IN THE WORLD”.

Here Giovannino “learned to read, write and do arithmetic”, as they said at the time, and since religious instruction was also compulsory, he also prepared for his First Communion. Don Bosco writes in his Memoirs:

*“Meanwhile, I was in my ninth year; my mother wanted to send me to school, but she was very reluctant because of the distance, since it was five kilometres from Castelnuovo. Going to boarding school was opposed by my brother Antonio. He took a temper. In wintertime I attended school in the nearby village of Capriglio, where I could learn the elements of reading and writing. My teacher was a pious priest called Giuseppe Delacqua (sic), who showed me a great deal of*



*consideration, taking great pleasure in my education and even more in my Christian upbringing. In the summer, then, I pleased my brother by working in the fields". (MO 22)*

He always remained attached to his first teacher. In 1841, as a new priest, he went to visit him in Ponzano, where Fr Lacqua had moved as a teacher. He died in Godio (a hamlet of Castelletto Merli in the province of Alessandria) on 3 January 1847, at the age of 83. Aunt Marianna, invited by Don Bosco, spent her last years at Valdocco, helping Mamma Margaret, dying there on 21 June 1857.

The museum was inaugurated in 1996 in the presence of the Rector Major of the Salesians don Juan Vecchi: at that time, it consisted only of the entrance room on the ground floor, the site of the school. In 2001/2002, the municipal administration inaugurated a new extension that also included the rear room (mezzanine, originally a stable) and the underground part including a room formerly used as a cellar.

## THE MUSEUM IS COMPLETED

Finally, thanks to the intervention of the BMA Ecomuseum, in April 2006, the year of the 150th anniversary of the death of Mamma Margherita, the completion of the entire building was achieved, with rooms set up on the two upper floors and the recovery of the plaster ceilings. Present at the ceremony was the Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva, who on this occasion was made an honorary citizen of Capriglio.



The mayor Giovanni Barberis with the Rector Major



September 2008 saw the inauguration of the hall dedicated to Sr. Vera Occhiena, a Salesian, Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, born in Capriglio on 6 September 1922 to Giacomo and Erminia Agaglia, a distant relative of Mamma Margherita. A missionary first in Brazil, she later moved to Maputo in Mozambique as a teacher, where she died on 2 June 1982 at the hands of unknown assailants who attacked her, hitting her on the head.

In April 2010, the photographic section dedicated to farming families and traditions from the 19th century to the first decades of the 20th century was inaugurated. In September 2011, the Association 'Friends of the Mamma Margherita Museum' was founded to take charge of the ordinary management of the museum, previously entrusted to the Municipality. They would enrich the collections, and manage the flow



of pilgrims with a view to presenting the figure of Mamma Margherita to the world as an educator and model for the contemporary Christian family.

Finally, in September 2013, the rooms on the top floor dedicated to the flora and fauna of the Capriglian region were inaugurated and dedicated to the memory of Dr Giovanna Peira, a Capriglian, distinguished scholar of botany and mineral waters.

The museum was structured as follows:

**GROUND FLOOR: ENTRANCE ROOM:** mementos from Giovannino's school, documents about Mamma Margherita (genealogical records, historical photos of the house where she was born, etc.).

**MEZZANINE ROOM:** paintings of anecdotal scenes about Mamma Margherita done with the ex-voto technique, religious mementoes, church furnishings.

**BASEMENT: ACCESS STAIRWAY:** cards and photographs on vine cultivation and wine production.

**UNDERGROUND ROOM:** evocation of the wine cellar of Occhiena Melchiorre, Mamma Margherita's father; access point to underground tunnels and galleries that wind their way through the territory (currently not accessible).

**FIRST FLOOR: ACCESS STAIRWAY:** photographs of the votive pillars of the Capriglio area.

**THREE ROOMS:** collection of photos of Capriglio's farming families and traditions; mannequins with clothes from the late 19th and early 20th centuries; plaster ceilings.



ONE ROOM: memories of Sister Vera Occhiiena and Don Mario Caustico, Salesian martyrs.

ATTIC:

ONE ROOM: re-enactment of rural life in the past with a display of tools and various objects.

SECOND FLOOR:

ACCESS STAIRWAY: photographs of the Capriglian region, paths, greenways, springs and mills.

TWO ROOMS: photographs of local flora and fauna; panels with medicinal herbs; display cases with fossils from the area.

### THE RENOVATED MUSEUM

As noted, the initial layout divided the spaces into two parts. One section was dedicated to the life of Mamma Margherita and Don Bosco with particular reference to the school he attended. The other section was devoted to the popular peasant customs and traditions of the time with an in-depth study of field grasses and plaster artefacts, a building material with artistic uses historically produced in large quantities in the neighbouring municipality of Castelnuovo Don Bosco



The Postulator Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, SDB blessed the new museum



(first of Asti and then with the predicate dedicated to the local saint). Since 2011, the Museum has been managed in collaboration with the 'Amici di Mamma Margherita Association'.

Over the past two years, coinciding with the blockage of visits due to Covid, the municipality has carried out numerous works, including the removal of architectural barriers. That has made the ground floor rooms accessible to the disabled. A process was begun for the adaptation and reorganisation of spaces and objects.

Since its foundation, the small museum has become the repository of the memories of locals and visitors: someone has worn their First Communion dress found in the attic, some else their grandmother's religious confraternity dress, yet another an ancient rosary chaplet or a 19th-century breviary. The Capriglio parish priest has given ex voto and liturgical vestments.... Thus, in addition to the documentation relating to Mamma Margherita and Don Bosco, innumerable objects, photographs and documents have been collected in the rooms. The municipality, in addition to the former school, has loaned another two rooms on the first floor, bringing the total number of rooms to ten, for a total of 230 square metres of usable space. Even so, the rooms have a concentration of artefacts that makes them difficult to reach.

Considering these circumstances, the municipality and the Association of Friends of Mamma Margherita agreed that a reorganisation was





necessary that would thin out the corpus on display, archive what could not be exhibited, but at the same time make the varied mass of material documentation usable. Therefore, a digital organisation was designed that, through the identification of themes emerging from the preserved material, could be consulted by visitors. Two totems with touch screens were installed to facilitate digital access for consultation. One is placed in the entrance area: the San Giovanni Bosco school, to welcome visitors as they enter. The second totem is on the first floor of the building, in room 7. It allows the viewing of other artefacts in addition to those on display, according to the various types of collections.

At present, the number of exhibits, objects, period photographs and documents adds up to approximately one thousand five hundred, divided as follows:

128 religious paintings

13 ex-votos

127 religious furnishings

24 school furnishings

232 tools (peasant work, kitchen utensils...)

140 clothes

32 books (breviaries, on Don Bosco's life, collections of documents...)

153 paintings

781 photos (baptisms, communions, weddings, militias, civil feasts...)

116 fossils

Each object is catalogued in a basic sheet in excel format in which are entered essential data and a small, low-resolution photograph.

Stands and display cases were made for exhibiting or storing various objects. The guiding principle followed was that varying types of materials coexist as little as possible. Since there were numerous pieces of period furniture and furnishings made of wood, the display apparatus was also made of wood, scientifically treated to make it fireproof, and fitted with safety glass to suit its display function.

Captions were made for each room in mdf (i.e. a panel made of wood fibres pressed with glues and resins at high temperatures, environmentally friendly and eco-sustainable, which is a valid alternative to the use of solid wood). They are printed in black characters on coloured backgrounds with the same colours that identify the themes in the various rooms, to allow for the rapid identification of the subject illustrated.

A digital updating, both on site through interactive totems and on the website, is strongly desired by the Capriglio Municipality and the Friends of Mamma Margherita Association. It will, in any case, be used as a platform for the contents of the totems. It will bring the values of St. John Bosco's mother to the young, to the 'always connected'. It will also serve to make known the small but deeply rooted museum and Margherita's values: work, honesty and sacrifice; in her case for her children, for the young people who in the miserable suburbs of the cities of the mid-19th century did not have enough to feed themselves.

Margherita Occhiena was a woman who owned nothing and left nothing behind; but she impacted many who came after, through her work and that of her saintly son. The museum bears witness to the era in which she lived so that everyone could identify for a few moments with her life – poor, but led by the Faith and spent in caring for those



youngsters rejected by all but received by them in a family form of welcome.

The physical reorganisation of the material on display was done by making the necessary choices from the countless artefacts, according to the themes in the building plans mentioned above:

- 0 The cellar of the Cecca era: Mamma Margherita's birthplace
- 1 Giovannino's school
- 2 The life of Mamma Margherita
- 3 Mamma Margherita's vegetable garden
- 4 Mamma Margherita's soup
- 5 Religious life in Capriglio in the 19th and early 20th centuries:  
Baptisms, Communions....
- 6 idem
- 7 idem
- 8 idem
- 9 Martyrs of Capriglio: Sr. Vera Occhiena, FMA and Fr Mario Caustico, SDB
- 10 Saints and Blessed of the Castelnovese in the Salesian Family

## MEET MAMMA MARGERITA

### CONCISE GENERAL BIOGRAPHY

01/04/1788, born at Capriglio to Melchiorre and Domenica Bossone

06/06/1812, marries Bosco Francesco in Capriglio (widow of Margherita Cagliero with 3-year-old Antonio and infirm mother Margherita Zucca)

08/04/1813, her son Giuseppe is born

16/08/1815, her son Giovanni is born

11/05/1817, her husband Francesco Bosco dies of pneumonia at the age of 34

22/03/1818, her mother Domenica Bossone died

1824, Giovannino's first prophetic dream

1824-1826, she sends Giovannino to school in Capriglio

1826-1827, Giovannino goes as an apprentice to the Moglia farmstead

22/03/1831, his stepson Antonio marries Anna Rosso; by her he will have 7 children

November 1831, she moves with Giuseppe to the Sussambrino farmstead, Giovanni starts school in Chieri

09/03/1833, Giuseppe marries Maria Calosso, by her he will have 10 children

05/06/1841, she is the mother of the priest Don Giovanni Bosco

11/01/1844, her father Melchiorre Occhiena dies

03/11/1846, arrives at Valdocco – Turin – with Don Bosco in the rooms of the Pinardi house and begins with her son the work of the Oratories as a Cooperator

18/01/1849, her stepson Antonio Bosco died

In 1850, discouraged, she wants to return to Becchi: John points at the crucifix to her and she resumes work until her death without ever complaining again

29/10/1854, saintly boy, Dominic Savio, enters the Oratory

25/11/1856, dies at Valdocco at 3 am





## DIEGO OCCHIENA

President

Association of the Friends of the  
Mamma Margaret Museum  
Capriglio (Asti)

Diego Occhiena, born in Turin on 16 December 1960 to parents originally from Capriglio and a distant relative of Mamma Margherita. I studied at the Salesian Industrial Technical Institute E. Agnelli in Turin, and work as a railway signalling technician. I have always been linked to Capriglio and the Salesian world, and have experienced first-hand the most important events linked to Don Bosco and Mamma Margaret. In 1988 for the 200th anniversary of the birth of John's mother, in 2006 for the 150th anniversary of her death, and in 2015 for the bicentenary of the birth of the Father and Master of the young.

Since 2006 I have collaborated as a volunteer in the setting up, care and cataloguing of the material in the Mamma Margherita Museum. In 2007 I created and set up the exhibition section of the museum dedicated to Sr. Vera Occhiena, FMA, native of Capriglio and missionary in Brazil and Mozambique.

In 2011 the Associazione Amici del Museo Mamma Margherita (Friends of the Mamma Margherita Museum Association) was founded, of which I am still the President today. With



the Association (all volunteers), in addition to taking care of the museum, we organise guided tours for groups, organise temporary exhibitions, take care of the paper documentation (guides, notebooks and in-depth handouts) and the digital documentation with the care and maintenance of the website and the digitisation of the material on display.

I have also collaborated since 2012 with the Salesian Postulator General for the promotion of the Cause of Beatification and Canonisation of Venerable Margherita Occhiena. In 2018 I actively participated in the realisation and inauguration of the large statue dedicated to Mamma Margherita and placed outside the museum. From 2021 to 2023 I collaborated on the new layout of the museum, as it is presented to visitors today, blessed on 9 September 2023 by the Postulator Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, SDB.

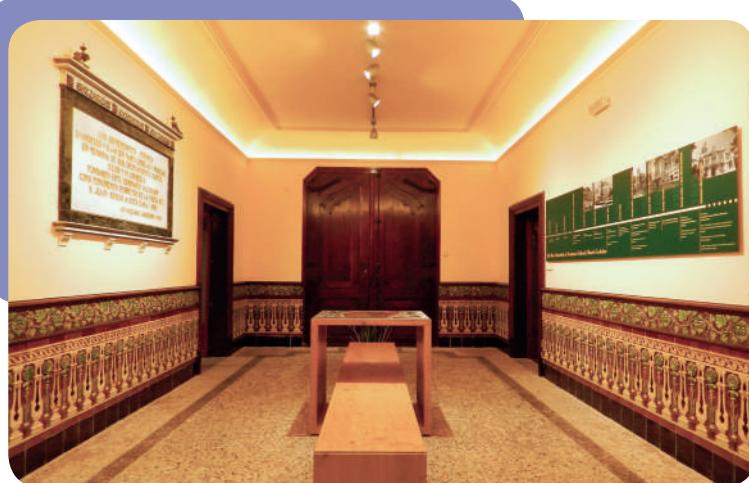




# CHAPTER 9

## **MARTÍ-CODOLAR MUSEUM**

**Mr. Luis Martí-Codolar and Saint John  
Bosco in Barcelona**



**Jordi Latorre i Castillo**

Avda. Cardenal Vidal i Barraquer, 15

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**T**he Martí-Codolar Museum is dedicated to the memory of the historic welcome that the family of Mr. Lluís Martí-Codolar offered to Don Bosco at his Granja Vella (Old Farm) on 3 May 1886.

On Friday, 31 January 2014, Father Ángel Asurmendi, then Provincial of Barcelona, blessed the first two rooms of this Museum.

The Salesian Martí-Codolar Museum in Barcelona became a reality after its inauguration and blessing on Saturday, 4 July 2015, by Fr Cristóbal López, then Provincial of Barcelona.

The visitor has access to five rooms: the modernist room, the room of Mr. Lluís Martí-Codolar, his family and his commercial activity, the room dedicated to the photo of Saint John Bosco, and the room of objects and relics. An educational tour is also possible of the romantic garden of the Salesian Centre.



The design of the museum, which follows the most current trends, is the professional work of *Pla-Valldaura Disseny*, in collaboration with brother Miguel Ángel Fernández, under the auspices of Fr. Rafael Casasnovas and Fr. Jordi Latorre, the present Rector of the Salesian House Martí-Codolar.

In short, it is a museum designed to preserve this significant Barcelona home and, above all, the memory of and gratitude to the Martí-Codolar family, and of the time Don Bosco spent in this house.



## 1. La Granja Vella



Welcome to the *Granja Vella* (Old Farm)! The panel on the left wall takes us on a journey through the history of the *Granja Vella*. The first references to it are in 1376. It recalls the centuries-old history of the *Granja* from the Middle Ages

to the present day and the families who lived and worked there: The *Sabastida*, the *Gausachs*, the monks of the Hieronymite Order, the *Milas* and, finally, the *Martí-Codolars*, who remodelled it definitively.

The *Martí-Codolar* family owned it from 1852 to 1949. Saint John Bosco was welcomed here on 3 May 1886. In the centre of the room, a map shows what the central part of the *Martí-Codolar* family's property looked like on the day of Don Bosco's visit. The memorial stone on the right-hand wall thanks Brothers Javier and Ángeles for their donation of the House for the formation of the Salesians in Barcelona.

Salesians have lived in this house since 18 May 1949. Since then, they have been carrying out the theological formation of Salesian Seminarians (Salesian Theological Seminary); and other Salesian and Christian training activities: educating young people in the use of their free time and social integration, offering youth spirituality activities, and maintaining a hostel service.

## 2. Modernist room

The so-called Chimney room was the noble room of the house and served as the waiting room of Mr. Luis Martí-Codolar's office. Remodelled



in the Art Nouveau style in 1890, as indicated in the window, it imitates medieval halls. The ceramic pieces are original from the period. The furnace, now disused, was in the old farmhouse, the Granja Vella.

### 3. Meeting room

This room, with a direct access to the outside, was used for meetings of Don Luis Martí-Codolar with the farm staff. The farm had vineyards, grain fields and olive trees. It was also dedicated to dairy and poultry production.



Outside, a memorial stone commemorates the first prize in the popular DEU agricultural competition in 1910. Today, this room commemorates the business, financial and diplomatic activities of Mr. Luis Martí-Codolar. His companies, with the passage of time, survive in MOVISTAR, FECSA and RENFE, besides others.

### 4. Mr. Luis Martí-Codolar and his family

This room presents the office of Don Luis Martí-Codolar with original furniture from the period. The most interesting detail is the family tree and the photos of its members, all of which are copies of the original plates kept in the Museum.

The bookcase contains 19th century books from the Salesian Press in Turin (Italy) given to the family by Don Bosco. Some of them contain a personal dedication by the saint.



The office-room recalls the personal mark Mr. Luis Martí-Codolar left on the city of Barcelona and its social and business world.

## 5. Saint John Bosco photo room

The room displays some of the photograph collection of the museum. The main photo reproduces the image taken in the early afternoon of 3 May 1886. It shows Saint John Bosco, Mr. Luis Martí-Codolar and the Trappist abbot Fr. Cándido Albalat.



The other characters are identified in the panel on the left, together with the chronicle of the scene by Carlo Viglietti, SDB, one of the protagonists. The panel also contains photographs of the next three Rector Majors of the Salesian Society, successors of Don Bosco, on their visit to this house.

The armchair is the original one in which Don Bosco was seated when the photograph was taken. Carefully preserved by the family, it



has recently been upholstered. The photographic panel on the right contains some of the prints from the more than six hundred glass plates by Kimm, Mr. Martí-Codolar's nephew, which are kept in the Museum, with scenes of the house, its inhabitants and a collection of animals in the gardens.

The benches allow us to sit and serenely contemplate the image of the Martí-Codolar family and their guests, some of them pupils of the Salesian House inaugurated in 1884 in Sarriá (Barcelona). We can turn our hearts to the saint and pray for a few moments for the young people of today, who are the future of our society.

## 6. Objects and relics



This room displays some of the main historical objects kept in the Museum. The showcases on the left contain objects used by the Martí-Codolar family. The last display case shows objects used by Saint John Bosco. Of particular note is a metal image of the Virgin Mary, whose veneration was propagated by Saint John Bosco under the title of Help of Christians. The image used to adorn the worktable of Don Bosco, who donated it to the Martí-Codolar family in 1887.

On the right-hand wall, some scenes are reproduced of the daily life at the Granja Vella: production of poultry, milk and wine. Of particular note are the benches of the wine presses from 1802 and 1805.





## PROF. DR. JORDI LATORRE I CASTILLO, SDB

Jordi Latorre i Castillo (Barcelona 1958), Salesian since 1976 and priest since 1985, graduated in Biblical Sciences (Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome 1988), Doctor in Biblical Theology (Faculty of Theology of Catalonia, Barcelona 2001), specialised in Old Testament and intertestamental literature.

He has been professor of Sacred Scripture at the Salesian Theological Centre Martí-Codolar (1988-2010), and is currently professor at the Don Bosco Higher Institute of Religious Sciences in Barcelona (1999...), where he has also been Secretary and is currently the Rector (1999-2002, and 2005...); professor in charge of the course at the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia (Barcelona 2001), specialised in Old Testament and intertestamental literature. ), where he has also been Secretary and is currently Director (1999-2002, and 2005...); lecturer in charge of courses at the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia (since 2008), at the Higher Institute of Liturgy of Barcelona (2007...), at the Institute of Fundamental Theology of Sant Cugat del Vallés (2008-2018), at the Monastic Study of Poblet, in Tarragona (2006-2017), and at the Monastic Study of Montserrat, in Barcelona (2019-2021).



He has participated in numerous courses for catechists and in the training of teachers of Catholic religion, and also frequently leads retreats and spiritual exercises for young people and adults. Member of the team for the formation specific to the stage of Salesian youth (1988-2012 and 2019-2022); he was in charge of formation for the Salesian Province of Catalonia, Aragon and the Balearic Islands (1996-2002).

Member of the Diocesan Commission for Sacramental Pastoral Care of the Archdiocese of Barcelona (2018 ...).

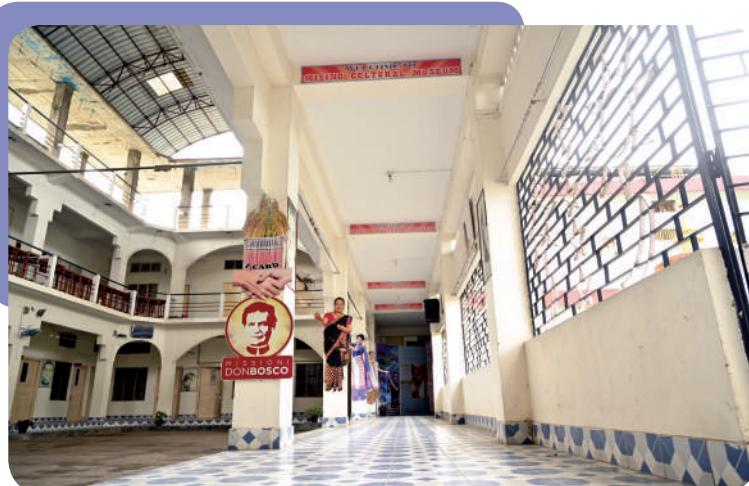




# CHAPTER 10

## MISING CULTURAL MUSEUM

Life Plus, Baghchung, Jorhat, 785001, Assam, India  
Institution for Culture And Rural Development (I-CARD)



**Fr. Thomas Kalapurackal, SDB**

+91-9435050601

[icardjorhat@gmail.com](mailto:icardjorhat@gmail.com)



This is the first and only museum of the Mising tribe which is the second largest tribe in North-East India. It was founded by the Institution for Culture And Rural Development (I-CARD), to draw attention to this tribe and its culture. Misings, numbering around 1.4 million people, is the largest tribe in the Salesian Province of Dimapur (IND). They are settled in over 2000 villages, spread out over 11 districts of Assam and 3 districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

This is at present the only museum of the Salesian Province that caters to Nagaland, Manipur, Upper Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. This museum is intended to focus on the historical, social and cultural aspects of the Mising tribe. It also throws light on the important personalities who have worked for the holistic development of the tribe. Visitors will find statues of Late Taburam Taid (called the father of Mising language), Mrs. Miladoi Medok (the first and only woman contractor), Dr. Durgeswar Doley (who was instrumental in bringing the best educational institution to Majuli, the largest river Island in the world) and another 17 prominent personalities.

Visitors will also get an idea about the problems faced by the tribe, in addition to the beautiful aspects that attract outsiders to the tribe. The museum helps research and development into the Mising tribe.





Three things are necessary for the cultural development of any tribe: a library, a museum and live cultural performances. With the starting of the museum, I-CARD has all three.



Besides all that is mentioned above, the Mising Cultural Museum, under the Institution for Culture And Rural Development, is a testament to the loving and respectful involvement of Fr. Thomas Kalapurackal, SDB in the heart of the Mising tribe. It is one of the fruits of his dedicated, persevering, consistent, social development work with this tribe for over 25 years through his NGO, I-CARD.

The museum is situated in Jorhat which is essentially an Assamese town. Hence, through this museum non-tribal people have access to Mising culture. They come to visit the centre and attend training programmes in the institution.



The students who are being trained in the Institution also get to study about various aspects of the tribe through the museum. Misings who visit the museum are absolutely proud of this prized possession.

Fr. Thomas had been planning for this museum for many years and had been collecting artifacts during his many missionary and social journeys to various parts of the region – an activity of more than 15 years. Today these objects are on display in the museum for which he was given a small grant by Missioni Don Bosco, Turin.



The new museum contains some rare items, like a *Nyanyur*, used for carving the corners of a boat under production, a *giding* (used for fishing), a *Miri Gadu* (Mising handmade blanket), etc. Friends of I-CARD have been willingly coming forward to donate other artifacts to the museum. He also asks his staff and friends who have the expertise needed, to make anew those artifacts, like musical instruments, that are not available anymore.

Fr. Thomas himself designed the entire museum. The construction was done by an interior designer, Mr. Sunny Khan of Jorhat.



In the course of one of his visits to the USA Fr. Thomas came across an object hanging in the backyard of his friends, Edna and Tito Dimalanta. He recognized it as a “Lenong”, a precious heritage of the Mising tribe. He brought it back all the way from California, USA. A Lenong is a brass cymbal used by the Misings, and sounded like a gong from the roof of their house when someone of importance dies in the village. The benefactor said that it may have been taken there by some Tibetan travellers.

Today the staff of I-CARD help collect artifacts or even help make some items that are not available anymore. Fr. Thomas is on a constant search for new artifacts during all his frequent journeys to villages. In the meanwhile, efforts are on to list and document each item in the collection and present them to visitors in a book form.





## THOMAS KALAPURACKAL

Chief Functionary of I-CARD

Name	:	Thomas Kalapurackal
Member	:	Salesians of Don Bosco
Fellow	:	Ashoka Foundation, Washington, USA
Director	:	Institution for Culture And Rural Development (I-CARD)

Languages known : English, Assamese, Malayalam, Hindi, Mising

Academic qualifications

- : BA – North Bengal University, passed with distinction
- : BA – in Assamese – Guwahati University
- : BPh from Salesian College, Darjeeling
- : BTh from Sacred Heart Th. College, Shillong, affiliated to UPS, Rome
- : B Ed - Dibrugarh University, with first rank in the university
- : MA – in Multicultural Ministry, from Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, USA



Positions held	: Asst. Teacher, St. Joseph's school, Barpeta Road : Headmaster, Don Bosco School, Dibrugarh : Headmaster, St. Thomas School, Sadiya : Asst. Headmaster, Don Bosco School, Jorhat
Founded	: <i>Bosco Kalaniketan</i> , school of music and arts in Don Bosco, Dibrugarh : Bosco Youth, Dibrugarh : Bosco Memorial Evening School, free school for poor children, at Don Bosco, Dibrugarh : <i>Karsang Takar</i> , Mising Leadership Training Centre, Sadiya. As the founder director of Institution for Culture And Rural Development (i-card) , all the various aspects and activities of I-CARD are his creation.
Headed	: Diocesan Board for Education, Dibrugarh Diocese from 1988 to 2000
Member	: Don Bosco Provincial Executive Council, from 2000 to 2006
Member	: Diocesan Senate, Dibrugarh Diocese, from 2000 to 2006
Designed	: School buildings of Don Bosco School, Paglam : School buildings of St. Thomas School, Sadiya
Producer	: <i>Nom Vrroi</i> , a devotional audio cassette in Mising : 'Sadiya - Dancing Ground of the Gods" – a video about the land and people of Sadiya : "We are Misings" (16 parts) - video about Mising History and socio cultural life, performed by



students. Designed the first and only Mising Cultural Museum in Life Plus, Jorhat and set up.

Edited	: 'Misings Through Mising Eyes' – a collection of seminar speeches
	: 'Mising General Knowledge' – bilingual in Mising and English
Authored	: 'Petals' – a book of general knowledge about Assam (bilingual)
	: 'A Manual for Teachers'
	: Articles about Mising socio cultural life
	: Four Short Bible Dramas - published by Pastoral centre, Dibrugarh
Publisher	: Fourteen books in Mising
	: Four books in Assamese
	: <i>Nava Dristi</i> – a monthly paper in Assamese
	: proMising Action – an English bi-Monthly about Mising tribe
	: <i>Anu Agom</i> , a monthly newspaper in Mising
	: <i>Misingé Aiyané</i> , a bimonthly magazine about Misings in Mising
Researched	: Satra Institution of Assam, and wrote the thesis "Neo-Vaisnavite Monasticism in Assam in the Light of Christian Monasticism", in 1984.

Translated and got published the first volume of rituals, hymns and prayers in Assamese, called *Jeevanjoli*, for the diocese of Dibrugarh.

Thomas Kalapurackal has traveled widely in Northeast India, knows its people and cultures, and specializes in the culture of the local people.



He has traveled in the USA, Canada and Mexico, and has learned about the life and culture of second generation Philippino-Americans.

He is at present working on the translation of the life of Don Bosco, of Mama Margaret and of St. Alphonsa Muttathupadathu, into Assamese.

He has worked for forty five years in Assam.

He focused his attention on the Mising tribe of Assam and Arunachal, trying to prepare a model of development adaptable to other tribes. He is in touch with most intellectuals and leaders of the Mising tribe, and is well versed in their life and culture.

Started Club Life Boat Trust - to sponsor poor village children in education. The members contribute Rs 500 for this purpose.

Started Jeevan Entrepreneurship Training Institute (JETI) to train educated unemployed youth in Computer, English and personality development.

Started and organized 14 Ethnic Festivals in Jorhat, focusing on Mising tribe

Has taken drop out youth to perform cultural functions in many cities of India, invited and paid for by Sangeet Natak Akademy and by the Ministry of Culture.

Has founded with the help of school dropout youth 560 youth groups in as many villages.

Set up the best audio video recording and training studio in Jorhat.

At present he is assistant parish priest in Catholic Church, Golaghat (2004)



Number of years working with the Mising apostolate:

1. I was officially appointed by the province to this ministry in 2000.
2. But I had already started the work in 1998, as the assistant Headmaster of Don Bosco School, Baghchung.
3. The preparations started when I was appointed to Sadiya in 1991, as assistant priest and in charge of St. Thomas school.

Number of villages under the Mising apostolate

1. Under the Mising apostolate, one count is wherever we have Young Misings Association groups, which is 560 villages.
2. But there are many more, because of the presences of past students of Jeevan Entrepreneurship Training Institute, under I-CARD (Institution for Culture And Rural Development), and wherever there are ex students of Karsang Takar leadership training centre for school dropouts.
3. Our target is to cover all the villages of Misings in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, which is over 2000 in Assam and 50 in Arunachal Pradesh.

Number of beneficiaries:

Each of the Young Misings Association youth groups consists of approximately 25 young men and women.

Number of youths trained to be youth leaders / animators

1. In our leadership training centre for school dropouts, called Karsang Takar, we trained 25 youth, giving them one year of empowerment skills.



2. In 2012 we started Jeevan Entrepreneurship Training Institute (JETI), under which we have trained, giving five months of training, 302 educated (Graduate) unemployed youth.
3. We have given skills training to 130 unemployed and illiterate youth, through Yuva Bandhu in Sadiya. This is entirely managed by lay people, and ex students of our I-CARD. However these youths who are trained, belong to all communities, not only Misings. These too receive five months training, each batch with 30 to 40 trainees.
4. Our staff and KARDA have been continuously training village youths in leadership skills.

#### Innovative and creative initiatives you had introduced

1. Wherever we operate, we start a branch of the Young Misings Association (YMA).
2. "Probation" was a very innovative and challenging activity for the young dropouts in training. Each group of 20 trainees were divided into four groups, and sent to four different areas, to cover 10 villages each. They stayed in these villages for six months, during which they visited every home, created awareness, showed street theatre performances and finally started the Young Misings Association groups. Thus the young men and women became 'angels of change' for their community.
3. Every ten village circle where we had the probation, we start ARDA (Agency for Rural Development Action). They are adults, but one of their departments is youth work.



4. We started Jeevan Entrepreneurship Training Institute (JETI) in 2012, for educated (graduate) unemployed youth, training 30 youth for five months. There are two sessions in one year which makes 60 young people in one year.
5. We also started KARDA for smarter Karsang Takar students. They act like staff, helping the training of others.
6. We perform street theatre programmes in villages, and we teach the same to village youth, for the transformation of their villages.

Number of employees or personnel under the Mising apostolate

We have 19 employees.

Any mega events

1. Annually on 8-10 January, we have **Ethnique**, cultural Tourism Festival, done entirely by school dropouts and unemployed youth. This is a public function for the public. This started in 2012.
2. We have an annual meeting of the best groups of the Young Misings Association. This happens simultaneously with the annual Ethnique.
3. The first trial meeting was the Mising Catholic Youth Meet in Sadiya in 2001.

Varia

### **1. CULTURAL PERFORMANCES ACROSS INDIA:**

The school dropout troupe has been invited by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, by Sangeet Natak Akademy, by North East Zone Cultural Centre (Dimapur) or by other agencies to perform Mising cultural shows in various cities of India. These



shows were a publicity for the tribe, empowerment of the youth and a boost for their self image:

- a. New Delhi Choral Music festival of Northeast India - 2005
- b. Varanasi - 2013
- c. Mumbai – 2015
- d. Adivasi Mahotsav in Raipur, Madhya Pradesh in 2017
- e. Gujarat Rajkot (Choral Music festival) – 2018
- f. Himachal Pradesh (Kullu) - 2019
- g. Mizoram
- h. Nagaland
- i. Guwahati
- j. Majuli festival - 2015
- k. Virtual Cultural Performances – of Three dances in 2021(NEZCC)

**2. *Student Sponsorship: I-CARD assists poor students to pursue formal and informal schooling. My crowns are The people I have built:***

- One MBA (from Don Bosco University Guwahati)
- One Master of Computer and Journalism (from Kannur University Kerala)
- One Mass-Com (from St. Anthony's college, Shillong), worked with an MNC
- One MSW (from Kannur University, Kerala) – Now in National Health Mission, Dibrugarh
- One GNM Nurse (From VG Hospital Dibrugarh), Now a staff nurse in Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh
- One Teacher (passed TET), working in Dhubri



- One teacher now in Kendriya Vidyalaya, Gogamukh
- One Laboratory Technician (from Jorhat Paramedics Institution), working in VG Hospital, Dibrugarh
- Two nurses (from Paramedics Institution Jorhat)
- One would be Lawyer (from Dibrugarh University) – doing her fourth year
- One Mobile technologist from Down Town University, Guwahati. (Now in TCS), tipped to go to Australia soon. Now she passed interview and is working with US Deloitte International
- One preparing for UPSC exam, with support from I-CARD
- Most of those trained by JETI are employed, either self or in government jobs
- One village animal health worker (Tarzan Chintey)
- I have to still take a count of all those who have completed skills training (like tailors, motor mechanics, carpenters, welders, electricians, plumbers, beauticians, handloom designers etc

### **AWARDS To Fr. Thomas, Director of I-CARD**

- **Ashoka Fellowship** - In 2002, Fr. K.A. Thomas, director of I-CARD, was selected as a fellow by the International Ashoka Foundation, based in Washington, USA, recognizing him as a social entrepreneur and innovator for his work with the Mising tribe. The modus operandi of I-CARD for development has been adopted as a replicable model for other tribes. International Acclamation of the director, Fr. K.A. Thomas, by the Ashoka Foundation, based in Washington (USA) - guaranteeing its ethical fiber, replicability, innovativeness and potency to create national impact.



- 12 February 2011, honoured as a social entrepreneur in Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, during a national conference called ePRENEUR.
- On 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 the people of Baghchung in Jorhat felicitated Fr. Thomas, with a plaque and memento for his contributions to society, especially the poor, during the annual Bohag Bihu function.
- **On 22 March, 2014, Fr. Thomas was officially honoured by the apex body of Misings, by Bane Kebang, for the contribution he has rendered for the development of the 1.4 million strong tribe.**
- **Jewel of India Award**, conferred on Fr. Thomas, director of I-CARD on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2016, by International Institute of Education and Management for his outstanding achievements.
- **Vijay Rattan Gold Medal Award**, conferred on Fr. Thomas, director of I-CARD on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2016, by Indian Solidarity Council, for his outstanding achievements.
- **Star of Asia Award**, conferred on Fr. Thomas, director of I-CARD on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2016, by Indian Business Council, for his outstanding achievements.
- **Recognition by the District of Jorhat** for contribution to ethnic culture and for promoting culture among youth, on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017, Republic Day Celebrations.
- **Best Citizen of India Award 2017**
- **Life Time Education Award 2017**
- **Pride of India Award in 2018**





# CHAPTER 11

## MUSEO MISIONES SALESIANAS



**Mariano García Borreguero**



The history of the Salesian Missions Museum is inseparable from the story of the Salesian Missions Mission Office in Madrid (Spain) and from the work of missionary animation carried out in Spain. We introduce this organization first in order to contextualize the significance of the Museum within the general structure.

## The Mission Office, Misiones Salesianas, at Madrid

Many people think that a Mission Office should only collect concrete aid. This vision is so restricted that it forgets the human dimension of any material aid.

The Mission Office of New Rochelle was the 'Mother' of the whole movement of aid to the Salesian Missions of the world, showing the way to many others, but then each of the others has developed according to its own nature and having its own characteristics. Some are now very complex and have a great number of activities in favour of humankind, the Missions and the spreading of the missionary spirit. Each of them works in its own national context and with people who have different intuitions. Others are more modest. Some work on the basis of preferred territories or in specific sectors, according to their geographical location or historical links with certain countries.

The main activities of these Mission Offices are essentially: Fundraising; the implementation of projects; missionary animation; help and assistance to missionaries; management of material resources; voluntary work; and all those initiatives or activities that contribute to their missionary purpose.

The Misiones Salesianas of Madrid has very modest origins but, step by step, it has become one of the largest, best organised and most



efficient in the Salesian world. It began informally in 1947. Don Modesto Bellido, Provincial of the Celtic Province, entrusted Don Rómulo Piñol with a task – ‘to take charge of avoiding the frequent ridicule that the Salesians faced by not being present as such in the a) pontifical and b) Spanish missionary movement’ (Crónica p. 1). As soon as Don Modesto was called to be a member of the Superior Council in charge of the missions, he wrote a letter to Don Romulo to set up a Secretariat whose purpose would be to:

- a) to stir up missionary enthusiasm within our schools, and among benefactors and former students;
- b) to look after all the Spanish missionaries in order to standardise departures, passports, journeys...
- c) to support the Spanish missionaries morally and financially in the preparation of their journeys;
- d) to correspond with all the Spanish missionaries scattered throughout the world in order to maintain their enthusiasm and to relieve them of the sacrifice of absence and, often, of the moral loneliness in which they find themselves;
- e) to represent the Salesian Missions in national organisations, such as the Consejo Superior de Misiones (which depended on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and often asked for information or provided facilities for Spanish missionaries).

The new Secretariat of the missions was thus established and defined, albeit unofficially. Some difficulties soon arose. First of all, there was the question of the headquarters. Rómulo Piñol lived in a suburb of Vallecas and went to work at times at the headquarters of the SEI (Sociedad Editorial Internacional, now CCS), located in Calle Alcalá



(Madrid). It was an uncomfortable and unsatisfactory situation, as the secretariat required more space and more dedication. Above all, it was a question of helping both the missionaries who were going to the missions and those who were coming from the missions.

One of the main activities was to help new missionaries to process their passport to leave Spain. This required the Cédula Misional. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs only recognised the person and signature of Don Romulo. It was extremely difficult for him to attend to this work because he lacked personnel and financial means as the donations that arrived for the missions were received by the provincials and they were the ones who sent them to Turin.

Another activity was the production of the magazine 'Juventud Misionera'. It could be maintained for some time, but then the province of Tarragona created a series of magazines, supported by dedicated personnel free from other occupations and financed by the province. The national magazine began to languish and became an unbearable burden, unless the provincials would come to its aid.

Fortunately, in 1958, Don Hiscio Morales, who had been a missionary in India for ten years, arrived in Madrid. He lived in the Don Bosco house on Calle Alcalá, and was in charge of looking after the many Spaniards who were leaving for the Missions,. He was asked also to run the magazine Juventud Misionera. He rented a villa at 1 Marqués de Vallejo Street. It was not far from Alcalá Street, where the first headquarters of the Mission Office was established, and where he was the first director. Years later, on 7 September 1970, by means of a decree signed by the Rector Major Fr Luis Ricceri, the house of San Francisco Javier was canonically erected in Madrid as the headquarters of the Salesian

Missions. A year later, on 29 September 1971, Fr José Luis Bastarrica took charge as the first Rector of the new house. The community consisted of the Rector, the procurator Fr Hiscio Morales, the propagandist Fr Rafael Maiqués and the bursar, Salesian Brother Isidoro Aranda.

At the beginning of 1972 the Rector, Fr José Luis Bastarrica, was forced to resign for health reasons and was replaced by Fr Modesto Bellido, who took up his post on 2 February 1972. Hiscio Morales continued as procurator and two Salesian Brothers attended to the various aspects of the Mission Office. More staff was needed. On 5 April, **Fr Ezequías Gonzalo Gallego** joined the Mission Office and took charge of everything related to the missionary exposition.

On 7 April 1972, the chalet where the new community resided was purchased, and shortly afterwards, on 26 July of the same year, another chalet was bought, located in Calle Eduardo Aunós, adjacent to the previous one.

The number of staff also increased in order to cover all the activities that the Mission Office carried out: passport procedures and other legal requirements for new missionaries; welcoming Salesian guests, especially missionaries passing through Madrid; editing, printing and distribution of the magazine Juventud Misionera; missionary propaganda, especially through a travelling exhibition that toured Salesian houses and other institutions; collecting aid; attending to benefactors...

In September, Fr Carlos Moretón arrived to take charge of the magazine Juventud Misionera. As a chauffeur was needed to accompany and help Fr Ezequías Gonzalo in bringing the exhibition to and from the houses, various Salesian Brothers passed through the house and successively



carried out this task. Step by step a team was formed, which, together with the Rector and the procurator, fulfilled the aims of the Mission Office.

Modesto's arrival was decisive. He was a man of great personality and great experience in the missionary field, having been for many years the General Councillor of the missions in the Congregation. The number of benefactors increased, the circulation of the missionary youth multiplied and soon reached 17,000 copies. A large number of missionaries and Salesians passed through the procure, attracted by the figure of Fr Modesto, whom they knew well, some because he had been director of Mataró and Sarriá in the province of Tarragona, others because he had been Provincial of the province of Celtica before it was divided into three, and others because he had been a member of the General Council for almost 24 years and had visited all the missionaries in the world.

In addition to the care of the Mission Office, the priests also looked after several chaplaincies of religious sisters. Fr Modesto was also appointed member of the CONFER commission. In this way the Mission Office became more and more integrated into the national and diocesan missionary organisations and took an active part in the campaigns organised by them, especially in the hunger campaign.

On 27 July 1972, after 18 intense years of work for the missions, Fr Hiscio Morales left the Mission Office. Tired and ill, he was assigned to the house in Carabanchel. Two new members joined the community. One was Fr Germán Santamaría, who after a few years in the Mission Office left the Congregation to make his career in La Trapa. The other was **Fr German Arín**, who had been a member of the Congregation for several



years. Fr Arín's main task was to accompany Fr Gonzalo on his travels for the missionary exhibition.

On 12 July 1973, a third chalet was bought, also located in Eduardo Aunós Street. The three chalets were gradually adapted to the needs of the community and of the Mission Office, which was acquiring great importance and was at the disposal of the numerous missionaries who were leaving or arriving in Madrid. Few were the days when there wasn't a guest at the Mission Office. There were even days when some could not stay there, because all the rooms were occupied.

On 4 November a press conference was held on the centenary of the approval of the rule of the society of Saint Francis De Sales by Pope Pius IX. It was attended by the Provincial, a group of Salesians and FMA and some, but not many journalists. On the 11th there were several religious events to commemorate the centenary. But the big event of the centenary was to be the Missionary Exhibition to be held in the Palacio de Exposiciones.

The first centenary of the Salesian missions was celebrated in 1975. From the beginning of the year, Fr Modesto took part in various preparatory meetings and visited different places, giving conferences to commemorate the missionary event. Eduardo Gancedo was entrusted with the preparation of a book entitled *Don Bosco Misionero*. A literary competition was launched among all the schools in Spain, with prizes chosen for the best works on the missions. We also took part in the competition for missionary posters promoted by the superiors in Turin.

On 24 January the exhibition was solemnly inaugurated in the presence of the Cardinal of Madrid. From that day until 1 February 1976, when it closed, the exhibition was visited by many people. An extra special

guest was Queen Sofia, surrounded by prominent members of the nobility, such as the Duchess of Alba, and politicians. Above all, students from the schools of Madrid and many friends of Salesian works visited it. Missionary conferences were also held in the same pavilion. The exhibition was a great success and was an excellent means of making the Salesian missions and the Mission Office famous.

As originally intended, diligent preparations were made for the closing of the centenary. On 3 February, Fr Modesto accompanied the Provincial, Fr José Antonio Rico, on his visit to the Nuncio to invite him to the closing ceremony of the centenary of the missions and to the homage to be paid to the parents of Salesian missionaries.

The closing ceremony of the centenary of the Salesian missions was prepared by the two provinces of Madrid, that of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) and that of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA). On 5th February, a missionary song festival was held in the school San Juan Bautista-Salesianos Estrecho (Madrid). On the 6th, a Mass was celebrated in the parish of St Francis de Sales, presided over by the Nuncio. It was followed by the official commemoration in the assembly hall of the school María Auxiliadora-Salesianas Villaamil. The Nuncio presided over this, too, and many relatives of Spanish missionaries attended. In all the events of the centenary, the Mission Office received the very best collaboration.

On 16 January of that year (1976), Salesian Brother Severiano Sanz, a missionary in Paraguay, arrived to spend a short while at the Mission Office. His stay finally lasted several years and he became a key figure in the history of the Mission Office.



Br Severiano Sanz, sdb

The movement in and out of the Mission Office was intensifying and it became necessary to expand the space. A fourth villa at 11 Marqués de Vallejo Street was purchased on 23 November 1976. The Mission Office thus occupied the entire square formed by the four chalets. The purchase was made possible thanks to the tenacity of Fr Hiscio Morales, and the financial support of the superiors and the Mission Office of the USA. The larger the space, the greater the accommodation capacity and the better the conditions in which the missionaries and guests could be looked after.

In 1978, Modesto's six-year term as Rector came to an end. Antonio Mélida was appointed as the new Rector. Before he could take charge, on 14 August, Carlos Moretón died suddenly in Béjar, where he was spending a few days with his family. It was a hard blow for the Mission Office, as he had been the great promoter of the magazine *Juventud Misionera*. The installation of the new Rector took place on

8 September. The outgoing Rector gave a brief summary of his six-year mandate. Both he and the regional director, Fr José Antonio Rico, who presided over the ceremony, clearly reaffirmed the purpose of the Mission Office: 'pastoral missionary animation of the Salesian family in Spain; attention to Spanish missionaries; and promotion and organisation of economic missionary aid'.

A turning point in the history of the Madrid Mission Office was the appointment, first as administrator and then as director, of Fr Salvador Bastarrica. This coincided with the appointment of Fr Antonio Mélida as General Coordinator of the Pontifical Missionary Works and Secretary General of the Work of the Propagation of the Faith. This nomination by the Church was a significant recognition and evidence of the high degree of confidence in the management of a member of the Salesians by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Fr Salvador was a man of great experience in the governance of the society and an expert in economic matters. He was well supported by his collaborators, especially Fr Modesto, Fr Antonio Mélida and Br Severiano, who was in charge of missionary animation in Vicariate II of the diocese.

During his mandate, he carried out a total transformation and modernisation of the Mission Office, which can be summarised in four aspects: structural, economic, juridical and missionary animation.

The headquarters of the Procura was moved from Calle Eduardo Aunós 50 to Calle Ferraz 81. Although in previous years the headquarters had been enlarged with the purchase of four villas, as the number of activities increased and the number of missionaries visiting Madrid multiplied, it became insufficient. For this reason, it was decided to look for a larger building, in which all the activities of the Mission Offices could be carried out with ease.

It was learned that the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception had a building for sale at 81 Ferraz Street, on the corner of Lisbon Street. Given the size of the building and its good location, it was decided to buy it. The idea was well received by the major superiors, who expressed the wish that the change be made as soon as possible.

Some alterations had to be made. The staircase had to be moved, and for this it was necessary to obtain permission from the town hall of Madrid. The provincial bursar, Fr Joaquín García, took care of all the legal formalities. On 8 January 1986, work began on the building. It was to be completed by 21 April, so that the renewed building could be used as the venue for the conference that the Mission Office had scheduled for that day, but it took much longer than planned. In the meantime, between March and July, the four villas were sold. The money was used to finance a large part of the purchase and renovation of the new headquarters. The community left the chalets and dispersed to various Salesian communities while waiting for the new premises to be ready for occupation.

On 3 September, the director was able to sleep in the new Procura, followed a few days later by the other members of the community. The details were still to be completed little by little.

On 5 September the first missionary arrived to stay. From that moment on, the new headquarters was gradually equipped with everything necessary to be able to carry out the normal activities of ordinary life, from the rooms, to the kitchen, to the chapel...

The house was blessed, but a suitable occasion for the official inauguration was awaited. As the Rector Major Fr Viganó was planning

to come to Spain in March, the solemn inauguration was scheduled for 6 March 1987.

In economic terms, the Mission Office went from being a collection house for donations for the missions to becoming a fund raising organization, using the most advanced marketing methods in the field. In terms of regulations, the Mission Office was given its own statutes and its functioning was regulated in accordance with official and ecclesiastical norms. In terms of promotion, in addition to promoting the publication of the magazine *Juventud Misionera*, a technical office for missionary propaganda was set up; a Museum was set up to publicise the missionary work of the Salesians and to arouse the missionary interest of visitors, especially the young people of our environment; and the travelling missionary exhibition was continued.

In economic terms, the Procura went from being a collection house for donations for the missions to becoming a fundraising company, using the most advanced marketing methods on the market; in terms of regulations, the Procura was given its own statutes and its functioning was regulated in accordance with official and ecclesiastical norms; In terms of promotion, in addition to promoting the publication of the magazine *Juventud Misionera*, a technical office for missionary propaganda was set up, a Missionary Museum was set up to publicise the missionary work of the Salesians and to arouse the missionary interest of visitors, especially the young people of our environment, and the travelling missionary exhibition was continued.

In the meantime, the fundraising effort continued to grow. The fund raising organisation was growing day by day and needed premises



to set up the offices and set up the new machines. Provisionally, the basement was made available, but it soon became clear that, despite the extension, the Procure was too small. Fortunately, the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception decided to concentrate all their activity in the building at Ferraz 83, leaving free the residence for university students that they had in Lisbon Street. It was time to buy the building. Even the youth ministry delegation had its eyes on the building as a possible headquarters for themselves. The formalities were expedited and after overcoming many difficulties in reaching an agreement on the financial side, the building was purchased at the end of April 1987.

The expansion was not going to stop there. Next to the new building at 6, Lisbon Street, there was a 7-storey building which was a burns and plastic surgery centre of the Red Cross. In 1991, this building was vacated when a new hospital was built in Getafe, into which the Red Cross burns centre was integrated. In a meeting held on 7 July 1993, the community of the Mission Office saw the building as 'very convenient to unify the activities of its various sectors and to improve the care of our missionaries and missionary pastoral work'. After the legal formalities had been completed, the purchase contract was signed on 28 July.

At first, some of the offices were moved to the new building and a floor was set up for the incoming volunteers, but then the decision was taken to demolish the building and build a new one in order to better adapt it to the rest of the Mission Office and to place there the fundraising activities and the NGO, Jóvenes del Tercer Mundo (Third World Youth).

The new headquarters was thus complete: spacious, at a good location and very well connected. It soon became one of the most important Mission Offices of the Congregation.



On the juridical level, the Procure needed statutes to define its own identity and relations within the Congregation. The first internal and functional statutes were drawn up and, with the necessary corrections, were approved on 12 October 1985. The Madrid Mission Office thus became part of the organigram of national Mission Offices that had been created within the Congregation.

The representatives of these Mission Offices began to meet regularly. In 1986 they did so in Madrid. At these meetings, the main functions of the Mission Offices were defined more and more clearly: 'to spread educational and Christian values; to raise awareness of the problems of impoverished countries; to undertake new development projects; to welcome missionaries returning to their places of origin; to support the work of the missions'.

In the area of missionary animation, a new impetus was given to the magazine *Missionary Youth*, aimed especially at promoting the missionary spirit and missionary aid among the young people in Salesian schools. Since November 1987, the Salesian Missions (MS) magazine has also been published for benefactors, as publicity for missionary work, as information on the use of funds received and as a way of making known the campaigns organised by the Procure.

An important instrument of missionary animation was and still is the museum and the exhibitions. At first 'itinerant', later permanent as a Missionary Museum and finally in both forms: Museum and travelling exhibitions.

Today the Mission Office, with its two sections, Salesian Missions and Youth and Development, is a non-profit religious entity of Christian inspiration, created by the Salesian Congregation in Spain, whose

mission is to strengthen and accompany the missionary activity of promotion, protection and education of children and Youth, to promote their integral development, with special attention to the most vulnerable people in impoverished countries, promoting the solidarity commitment of people in order to make them co-participants in the mission and generate changes to transform society.

Aware of the value and originality of Don Bosco's charism in our vision, we want to be an organisation that contributes with quality to the construction of a just, equitable, inclusive and sustainable world:

1. Fostering, in the targeted children and youth, an integral educational development in an environment of joy and security, giving them the tools to be protagonists /empowered people with critical and inclusive citizenship awareness.
2. Applying the Preventive System of Don Bosco and its educational /pastoral intervention criteria in all contexts of action.
3. Involving society in general and, especially, the Salesian Movement, so that it participates in an effective way in our mission.
4. Being a point of reference for society as an institution that promotes education and evangelisation as motors of development, generating strategic alliances with institutions, companies and other entities in the sector.
5. Ensuring quality management and professionalism in all processes to increase the scope of the mission.



## History of the Missionary Exhibition

As we have seen, the exhibition began as an initiative to promote interest in the missions in the Salesian houses of Spain. Little by little, its structure took shape, selecting resources and opting to go beyond curiosity and interest in objects and open up to culture and the missionary spirit. It became a true school for teaching about Salesian work in the missions.

### 1. Itinerant Exhibitions

In order to stimulate the missionary spirit, some 'flying Missionary Exhibitions' were proposed as early as April 1972. These exhibitions could be dismantled and reassembled and would be accompanied by 'missionary films, filmstrips, cards, leaflets, bibliography, exotic objects (for lotteries, raffles...) posters and photographs for the setting'.

Modesto Bellido was a Salesian and a great connoisseur of the missionary world, but the one who took the initiative was Fr Ezequías Gonzalo Gallego, a member of the Mission Office community since 1972.

This exhibition "was simple and humble, with no pretensions other than to offer a missionary resource to our houses in Spain," said Father Hezekiah. He travelled, with the "belongings" in the van, as an itinerant wherever his presence was requested. It had objects brought from the missions, posters, shows, slides, 'film reports', missionary orientation talks and the wisdom and passion of Father Hezekiah who was in charge of explaining and teaching the exhibition to visitors.

The first Itinerant Salesian Missionary Exhibition took place from November 6, 1972 to June 3, 1973. Fr Gonzalo's work was overwhelming.



In the Salesian Bulletin of December 1973, we are told that "he had already visited 58 schools in six of the seven provinces" and that "he made more than 350 talks on missionary subjects". It is not surprising that he was considered "Christ's Globetrotter" and that his work was recognized by the Salesian family. It was published also in the *Bollettino Salesiano*, March 1976 (Image 1).



**DA TRE ANNI IN GIRO PER LA SPAGNA**

E' la «Mostra missionaria itinerante» organizzata dalla Procura Missionaria di Madrid. Ha fatto sosta in quasi tutte le case salesiane e delle FMA di Spagna, e in tantissime altre opere giovanili e parrocchiali. Un missionario (nella foto: padre E. Gonzalo Gallego) spiega a ragazzi, giovani e adulti il lavoro delle missioni, illustra, documenta. Tiene conferenze, messe «missionarie», proiezioni cinematografiche. I ragazzi imparano che cosa sia missione, offrono la loro collaborazione, qualcuno (la Spagna è stata sempre generosa di apostoli) matura il suo personale progetto missionario nelle file dei figli di Don Bosco.

Image 1. Da tre anni in giro per la Spagna (Three years of travel in Spain).

We see Ezequías Gonzalo with a group of boys explaining to them an object from the Traveling Exhibition.

The dedication, the enthusiasm, the difficulties of these beginnings were recorded in a report by Hezekiah himself:



“I feel obliged to send you this report on my months of pilgrimage. My gratitude to you for fraternal hospitality and apostolic solidarity... Aims of the exhibition: to offer our confreres an extraordinary resource to help them “create an intense missionary climate”; to make available to our students the missionary dimension of the Salesian Congregation as a possible field for their vocational fulfilment; to make known to the people linked to our work an unknown aspect of it and, at present, the most needed.

“Fruits obtained: everywhere it has been a pleasant and unexpected surprise that gives a glimpse of great future possibilities; it has stimulated not only natural curiosity; instead, above all, interest in the message that every missionary exhibition carries with it. It is comforting to know and verify that young people and outsiders have been the most affected; it has been a magnificent way of making known the Salesian works developed in environments that so impress today's sensitivities such as those of the Third World; it has turned out to be a wonderful means of promoting vocations and opening horizons.

“Obstacles encountered: improvisation, because it was not expected to have such breadth. It was almost always beyond all expectations and surprised the locals and outsiders; The time allotted to each house was too short to reach all the students and seniors. In more than a few houses it has only aroused curiosity. There was no prepared climate. An immature idea of the missions still predominates in many sectors. Hence, in many houses the elderly were left out of this educational resource. The cult of the schedule, programmes and discipline made us lose precious time.”



We have verified that in this work Fr Ezequias received the disinterested help of some collaborators and helpers. We will mention Br Mariano García Bonilla, Salesian Brother, Fr Germán Santamaría, a Camaldoles monk, Sister Clotilde Fernández de Angulo, Sister Pilar de Andrés and Fr Franco. These last ones were of the utmost importance for the Salesian Missionary Exhibition that was held at the Palace of Exhibitions of the Chamber of Commerce from January 24 to February 1, 1976 on the occasion of the centenary of the Salesian Missions, which was the beginning of the current Museum.

## **2. Salesian Missionary Exhibition (1976)**

Due to its importance for the future of the Salesian Missions Museum, we will briefly dwell on the “temporary” exhibition that was held in Madrid in 1976. Let us remember that on November 11, 1875, the first expedition of Salesian missionaries in history took place, to Argentina (Image 2).



Image 2. Don Bosco and the first Salesian Missionary Expedition (1875)



One hundred years later and as part of the events commemorating that first expedition, it was decided to hold an exhibition in Madrid. The place chosen was the Palace of Exhibitions of the official Chamber of Commerce and Industry located at Avda. del Generalísimo, 175.

On January 24, 1976, Cardinal Vicente Enrique Tarancón, Archbishop of Madrid, cut the inaugural ribbon of the Missionary Exhibition with which the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians commemorated the Centenary of their Missions.

The exposition was considered "not a mere display of exotic objects from the farthest corners of the planet ... nor a cold presentation of more or less eloquent statistical data ...; it was a missionary message addressed mainly to the youth of our times". The exhibition lasted until February 1, and together with the explanations of Fr Gonzalo, the objects and the information, there was a cycle of daily conferences and different documentary projections in an adjacent hall. The following participated in these conferences: Fr José Antonio Rico (Provincial of the Salesians and President of the National C.O.N.F.E.R. of Religious), Fr Manuel Unciti (Secretary of the Pontifical Missionary Works), Fr Fidel González (Director of the magazine *Mundo Negro*), Fr Juan Pes (Director in Madrid of "Youth without Borders"), Mr José Valdavida (Director of the Institute of Missiology of Burgos), the missionaries Sister Manuela Herrero and Dorinda Puga, and Ezequías Gonzalo Gallego himself, Salesian missionary.

The visit of Queen Sofia and Doña Cayetana, Duchess of Alba, made the News at the time, but the greater achievement was to accomplish what was intended "to make people aware of the importance of the Missions in Christian life and to make known what has been done in the last hundred years".

What this exhibition meant for the Museum were mainly two things: on the one hand, it certified that the idea was valid for achieving missionary animation; and on the other hand, the arrival of a greater number of objects from the missions than could be used by the traveling exhibition.

### **3. Itinerant Exhibitions from 1981 to 2002**

Fr Ezequías continued with the traveling exhibition until 1981, when he returned to Paraguay, where he died in 1983. To give us an idea of the magnificent and extensive work he did, here are a few figures from July 1978:

After 6 years of the Traveling Missionary Exhibition, it was estimated that there had been 175 performances and 750,000 visitors (450,000 students and 300,000 adults).

This work initiated by Father Gonzalo is still bearing fruit and that continues to this day through the different traveling exhibitions of the Museum.

From 1981 until 1987 the exposition was only exhibited on the occasion of Domund (World Missions Day) or Domisal (Salesian Missionary Sunday), a special day of missionary animation of the Salesian Family, which was celebrated on the second Sunday of March.

We have documentation of three exhibitions:

**October 15-21, 1984.** Parish “Sagrada Familia” (Holy Family) of Madrid.

It was entitled “Missionary Dynamics in Today’s World” and was intended to “offer points of vibrant reflection on the presence of Christ



in mankind; on the missionary attitude of the Christian in a changing society far from God; on the problems of underdevelopment and the fundamental rights of the person". The content of the exposition was expressed in 32 panels, divided into four sectors: Being interested, Missionary education, Personal and community implications, and is my community missionary?

#### **Missionary Exhibition – Domund'85.** Parish of the Holy Spirit in Madrid.

It had 18 panels of 1 x 2 metres in size with preset contents; another 4 panels served as general ambience. A few well-distributed exotic objects decorated the exhibition without taking away the sense of the content that we wanted as the main objective. There was an audiovisual montage made with 18 slides of the exhibition panels and a 13-minute cassette was projected to the visitors.....". The themes were very varied: St Francis Xavier, Committed Youth, Lay Missionaries .....

#### **Missionary Exhibition – Domund'86.** Parish of the Incarnation of the Lord at Madrid.

That year the theme was Missionaries, Builders of Peace. And the main objectives:

- a. To sensitize all Christians to the evangelical commitment to build peace, with special attention to the young churches that suffer the reality or the threat of war; to live spiritually this aspect of ecclesial communion, by virtue of which our churches are deeply linked with those in mission territories.
- b. We commit ourselves to work here for peace through our word and witness, with the building of reconciled communities and by

fostering evangelical contemplation that leads to a missionary commitment to peace-making.

- c. To grow in esteem and solicitude for all the work that the Church does where evangelization is in its initial phase and to collaborate with greater generosity with missionaries and young Churches that announce, witness, sow and serve peace.
- d. To make known the conflictive situations that occur today in the Third World where poverty and injustice are greater, and consequently there is a greater lack of true peace. To help overcome these situations with the proclamation and practice of integral evangelical liberation.

As we have seen, the itinerant exhibition was used only on a few occasions since the departure of Fr Ezequias. It was then resumed with the principles for which it was originally created and it launched what was possibly the most fruitful and splendid period that the itinerant expositions have known. During this period it was called **EXPOMIT** (Itinerant Missionary Exhibition). We have been able to count a hundred schools or cities visited, including Salesian schools in Andorra and the Canary Islands.

Three people were in charge: **Severiano Sanz, Juan Amoretti** and **Manuel Cambronero**. All three had been Salesian missionaries and knew what they were talking about.

According to the documentation that has been preserved, three environments were presented in the rooms, chapels, gymnasiums..... that were available for the exhibition: America, Africa and Asia-Oceania. Accompanied by informative posters and photographs, the objects



Manuel Cambronero, sdb, at Arévalo (1998)

were of all types and materials: dresses, bags, masks, bowls, fans, daily utensils, wood carvings, fetishes, walking sticks, books in the original language, sandals..... . There was a painting on canvas of the Virgin and Child. This image could be seen in the exhibition at the Palacio de Congresos in Madrid (1976) and was painted by the Salesian sister, Sr Sofia Coronado. It is painted on canvas and represents the Virgin holding the Child and carrying a sceptre. The oriental features of both are striking. Artist sister Dona Sofia died in 1985, Salesian missionary in Equatorial Guinea. She said, "my life would have no meaning without Mary Help of Christians. She has been, is and will continue to be the shortcut that leads me to Christ. One day it occurred to me to consecrate my brushes to her and ask her to let me be her little painter. I wanted to paint Mary so that both sisters and girls, seeing her images, would have more and more confidence in her".



Virgin and Child, Sr Sofía Coronado, FMA



Image of the Virgin and Child in the background, exhibition of 1976

The objective was missionary animation, sensitization regarding the work in the missions and the knowledge of different cultures: Shuar, Fang, Assam..... and for this, besides the guidance by the missionaries, films were projected and even talks were prepared. Severiano said, "We don't sell anything. There is no entrance fee..... We only offer an opportunity to know a little of the existence of other worlds, of other cultures, of other people far from us ..... We only want people to visit us and, as we go along, to ask us questions and listen to us..... .

The death of Juan Amoretti and the departure of Manuel Cambronero, were followed by a serious indisposition of Severiano. All these together were the reasons for the lethargy of the traveling exhibition.

#### **4. Itinerant Exhibitions (2009 – today)**

Within the work carried out by Fr Agustín Pacheco, director of the Mission Office from 2007, we witnessed the same spirit and intentions as at the beginning. At the end of 2009, in the Salesian College of Atocha, an exhibition of a missionary character was installed as part of the activities of missionary animation of the Mission Office. The personnel of the Mission Office participated in putting it together and Lorenzo Herrero was in charge of its presentation. It had so much repercussion and was so well received that a firm decision was made to "revitalize" the activity of the traveling exhibit. It was called Raíces (Roots), with the conviction that it would penetrate the deepest part of each visitor.

A person was hired to make the exhibition more dynamic and from then on **Juan Luis Herrero Sánchez** was in charge of it.



Juan Luis Herrero Sánchez (2011)

Juan Luis worked tirelessly on Raíces until August 2012, traveling with twelve showcases, three exhibitors, ten posters and more than one hundred objects brought from thirty different countries. It was a multicultural exhibition that made visible the Salesian presences and work in the world. It was an opportunity to learn about the arduous missionary work and a way, through culture, to raise awareness about the realities that our Salesian confreres live.

It was called Roots because it is an evocative word, which takes us back to our origins, to the essence of each being. The root is the foundation of growth; to take root means to settle, to remain, to have presence. Roots take us back to the origins, to the fundamental, to the basic, to what is strictly necessary. Through a selection of handicraft items, clothing, household objects.....he approached the essence of many known peoples and others that are not so well known. His work took him in less than two years to more than 30 schools and cultural centres throughout the peninsula.

In September 2012, **Mariano García Borreguero** took over the baton and continued the work of his predecessors, always supported by Victorino González and José Luis Pérez in their travels. They continue to contribute to a better knowledge of Salesian missionary work. Raíces continues to be an asset of the Museum. The last time it was exhibited was in March 2022 to contribute to the missionary month in Pozoblanco (Córdoba). The current conservation measures require that the movements of the anthropological collection are increasingly limited. So it was decided to hold only traveling exhibitions that did not need the transfer of the collection.

These exhibitions have always been a strategic line of dissemination of the Mission Office. Since 2015 we have developed a new way of managing them. Diverse, itinerant, sustainable and committed to youth and global citizenship, we decided to design exhibitions that connect with different audiences through current themes, allowing us to show in a more current way the Salesian missionary action in the field. The exhibitions that have achieved the greatest reach are:

**Indestructibles.** Since 2019 we sponsor this photographic exhibition by Alfons Rodríguez and Xavier Aldekoa. Within a broader multimedia project, the exhibition shows the stories of young people in different African countries. The exhibition is itinerant and consists of 44 large-format images. It aims to bring the stories of the protagonists to the public in a more direct way and one of the main objectives is to reach young people to empathize with African youth. This exhibition has reached emblematic places such as the Tibidabo in Barcelona (where in one month it had 60,000 visitors).



**Feminae. The world in feminine.** In our commitment to propose and make visible the problems that we face in today's world, we wanted to develop an exhibition that would allow us to work on the difficulties of being a woman today. We conceived an exhibition that would be a cultural tour with a gender approach, through photographs by Alfons Rodriguez, taken in the five continents. The exhibition consists of 33 images taken in 29 countries on 5 continents. Through the looks, gestures and actions of the women who are the protagonists, the author tries to show their strength and determination.



**Life in a suitcase: stories of an armed conflict.** Exhibition by photojournalists Olmo Calvo, Bruno Thevenin, Ioana Moldovan and Edu León that reflects on the greatest humanitarian tragedy since World War II in Europe. It accompanies the emergency campaign carried out by the organization. We also wanted to show the global situation of the more than 88 million people living displaced from their homes and reflect on the consequences conflicts have on heritage.

**We are Refuge. Commitment to the challenge.** 'We Are Refuge' is a traveling exhibition that is conceived as an educational project in which we seek to bring the Salesian work with migrants and refugees to the youngest in a sustainable and creative way. This totemic installation

shows the Salesian commitment to welcome, protect, promote and integrate, through education and training of children and young people in complex situations.

## History of the Salesian Missions Museum

The link between the itinerant exhibitions and the Museum is very important and demanding, due to the inter-provincial nature of the Mission Office, since it demands many trips and its presence in many places. Attending to the presences outside the central headquarters is a priority. Little by little the Missionary Museum will have greater protagonism, linked to missionary animation, and the itinerant exhibitions will depend directly on the Museum.

Before speaking of the Museum itself, let us dwell on three important facts that will help to contextualize the evolution of its history:

*Mission Office, "Misiones Salesianas – calle Ferraz, 81"*

The transfer of the Mission Office inaugurated by Don Egidio Vigano on March 6, 1987, provided for the first time a permanent space in Madrid where to exhibit, preserve and make missionary work known through objects brought from the missions. This room, now part of the Museum, had a series of showcases, photographs, explanatory texts, an interactive map of the Salesian presences in mission, dolls with different costumes..... but what was most relevant was its pedagogical orientation to present it to young people.

Divided into different sections: firstly, the Missionary Church, with its showcases of Races, Religions and Third World Problems, and the Church's response to these problems; secondly, showcases with objects from the different peoples among whom there is a Salesian

presence, showcases with objects from new presences (Benin, Mali, Togo, Senegal.... and at the end a section with the work that the Mission Office carries out in terms of missionary animation; finally, at the end of the room there was a large mural with a map and a computer marking the Salesian presences in the world. Many of the objects from that first museum are still preserved today, and some of them are those used in the Chamber of Commerce exhibition in 1976.



Inauguration of the Mission Office (6 March 1987)

The idea of making a permanent installation for the exposition (Museum) appears in writing in the Chronicles of September 1986. In the meeting of the Council on September 19, Fr Modesto Bellido leaves a note after the intervention of Fr José María Rubio, Pastoral delegate of the Community. In this note under "Missionary Animation" and, after mentioning several other matters, he writes "Missionary Exhibition – Got thinking about its installation. It seems that the place could be the patio next to the garage."

### *Severiano Sanz, Salesian Brother and missionary*

Severiano Sanz, Salesian Brother and missionary in Paraguay since 1955, worked in Misiones Salesianas from 1973 until his death, first as coordinator of Missions for Vicariate II in Madrid until 1987 and, from 1988, in charge of the Itinerant Exhibition and the Missionary Museum. Seve, as he was called, was the first director of the Museum. It was Fr José Antonio Rico who called him and told him to take over the work that Fr Ezequías was doing. Fr Severiano accepted and, together with Santiago Martínez Álvarez first (1988-1991), and then with Fr Juan Amoretti and Fr Manuel Cambronero (1991-2002), they took over Fr Gonzalo's activity. From 1987 onwards, when they did not travel with the traveling exhibition, they managed the visits to the permanent collection.

### *Donation from the Colle Don Bosco Missionary Museum, 1989*

The request for and the donation of objects by the Colle don Bosco Missionary Museum was very relevant, in our opinion, for two reasons: the quality and diversity of the objects; and the donation from the most unique ethnographic museum of the Congregation of a collection that met the necessary exhibition needs.

The Salesian Congregation has a long and special bond with museums. Don Bosco encouraged their creation to serve in the education of youngsters; for example, the Museum of Natural History at Valsalice, one of the oldest scientific museums in Turin, was founded by him in 1878 to serve as a scientific endowment for the school.

Following that historical thread, the first time we participated as a Congregation in a major exhibition was at the 1925 Missionary



Exposition held at the Vatican. This exposition was set up under the papacy of Pius XI. Its main objective was to make known the Catholic evangelical missions and it was the origin of the present Ethnographic Museum at the Vatican. What attracted the most attention at this event were the sculptural groups of some ethnic communities and peoples with whom we work in the missions.



The view towards the hall of South America. Source: "Through the halls", Illustrated Magazine of the Missionary Exhibition, Vatican 2, n.º 3 (15 January 1925): 88

We point this out because these same groups, and not only groups but also individual ones, will be highlighted again in the Salesian Missionary Exhibition of 1926, held in Turin and, once again, in the Pavilion of the Missions at the International Exhibition of Barcelona (1929). We have even noticed that some of these pieces were itinerant, for example, "a large illuminated map (5 x 3 m) entitled *Cinquantenario delle Misioni ed Opere Salesiane d'America (1875-1925)*. It was lit up by 500 micro-lamps of different colors which alternate automatically and pointed out the missionary and civil centres, including all the Salesian residences

and institutions existing in 1925 in Latin America". It was displayed in 1935 at the Mostra Missionaria Salesiana at the 'Maschio Angioino' in Naples. It is the same "poster" that could be seen in Barcelona years earlier and that, probably, was made for the exhibition of 1925 in the Vatican (celebrating the fifty years of the Salesian Missions) or for the one of 1926, where we know for certain that it could be seen.

Let us return to what concerns us: the pieces donated to the Museum. Br Severiano Sanz and Fr Santiago Martinez paid a visit in 1988 to Colle Don Bosco. How the initiative came about, whose idea it was, we know nothing, but in December 1988 the trip had already taken place, the need for objects had been assessed and a letter was sent to Fr Anthony Sylvester requesting: hats, crowns, instruments, ornaments, necklaces, baskets..... by country: Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina, China..... or ethnic group: Karajá, Bororó, Shuar..... All this was left in the hands of the Museum Commission, and it was up to them whether to accept it or not.

Between April and May 1989, a meeting of the Council was held and the proposal for the donation of objects was approved, by order of Fr Luc Van Looy (May 20, 1989). 65 magnificent pieces of different origins: China, India, Japan, Brazil, Paraguay..... testimonies of the missionary work of such important personalities as: Bishop Canazei, Fr Cimatti, Bishop Obelar, Fr Torquist or Bishop Massa.

All this was a great impulse and a recognition of the work that was being carried out in the Mission Office. Without this trust, it would have been impossible to carry out this work. It shows the concern, on the part of the Congregation, in the conservation, diffusion and protection of the traditions of the different cultures and peoples with whom the missionaries work.



## 1. Salesian Missionary Museum, 1987 – 2020

We did not hold on to the museography Project. Instead, the idea was closely related to the traveling exhibitions: to have a space to raise awareness about the missions and the knowledge of different cultures. The Museum had different spaces: from the starting point where the visitor is informed about missionary work; a projection place for the dynamics and activities carried out with various school groups that come to see us; the exhibition hall, organized by continents (America, Africa, Asia); storage rooms where the unexhibited collection is kept; and the different study areas where the collection is documented (library and study rooms).

After many years of hard work, Fr Juan Amoretti passed away (1992). Manuel Cambronero changed assignments and Br Severiano suffered a serious illness. These were the main reasons for the lethargy of both the traveling exhibition and the activities at the Museum. Nevertheless, in November 2002, Fr Justo Gonzalez wrote in the Salesian Bulletin calling attention to the Missionary Museum, the “jewel in the crown” of the Mission Office. The dynamism of previous years did not return





until almost a decade later when Fr Agustín Pacheco reconditioned the facilities and, on January 31, 2011, feast of Don Bosco, the Salesian Missionary Museum was reopened.

Sara was responsible for the Museum at this stage and was presenting the permanent Museum to many schools until April 2013, always accompanied by Fr Dionisio Pacheco, a Salesian missionary who since 2010 lived in the Community of the Mission Office.



Dionisio Pacheco with the Rector Major, Fr Ángel  
Fernandez Artimo (2015)

Since May 2013, by mandate of Fr Agustín Pacheco, Mariano García Borreguero has been in charge of the Salesian Missionary Museum.

Fr Dionisio accompanied the work in the Museum until he left as a missionary to Angola, where he died on December 7, 2020. Severiano, too, contributed by advising and supporting the work being done, until he left for the Salesian community of Arevalo where he died on March 16, 2018. Later, and until his death on October 21, 2019, it was Quintiliano Peña, who contributed to the pedagogical tasks carried out at the Museum.

Both the permanent and traveling exhibitions are the result of the work carried out over the years by many people linked to the cause of the missions and the Salesian Congregation, but the spirit of the work has not changed one iota. All efforts are aimed at preserving the history and culture of communities, peoples and nations with whom our missionaries live; to study the different missions over the years; to make known the great variety of Salesian work; to preserve the legacy and the material and immaterial heritage of the collection; to give visibility to the different styles of life that exist in the world; to raise awareness of the diversity of the Common Home – all in continuation of Don Bosco's dream.

## **2. Project “Promoting the Salesian Missions Museum” (2021-2023)**

In 2020, the management of the Mission Office wanted to give a new impetus to the Museum. After placing Fr Jose Antonio San Martín in the sphere of the Communication Department in 2015 and the Department of Education for Development in 2016, the intention was to identify what could be the best contribution from the Museum to the Mission Office.

Under the direction of Fr Eusebio Muñoz first, and then Fr Luis Manuel Moral Lamela, a biannual project was proposed in which to experiment and collect data to make a better decision. This project, *Impulsando el Museo Misiones Salesianas* (Promoting the Salesian Missions Museum) was a museum proposal different from the previous one, but maintaining the essence of those who preceded us and, above all, being faithful to the Salesian charism and Don Bosco's pedagogy.

After some renovation works, we saw that we had an opportunity for renewal, positioning ourselves as an educational tool linked to



the Salesian educational-pastoral proposal. We had the possibility of creating a modern museum where we could link local and global problems and provide an optimal service to society for its development and transformation.

The Museum would have an important role in the development of citizenship. It would be a place to build awareness from the Salesian perspective and charisma and contribute to the understanding of the problems we face as global citizens. It would be a more social museum, open to the neighbourhood, the city and the world.

We conceived the museum as a cultural space that would stimulate the participation, transformation and creativity of its visitors. We place the people who visit us at the centre of our practices. With this, we fulfil the objectives of the Salesian educational-pastoral proposal which, among others, seeks to form people capable of understanding the world around them, people with adequate cultural knowledge that allows them to interpret the world with a critical sense. They Will then participate in its development and promote changes in society that Will generate a commitment to solidarity and move towards the construction of a more just, inclusive and egalitarian society.



Colloquium Migrant Stories: Transformative Narratives (22/09/2022)



In addition, to broaden the dimension of our local action and as a Salesian work that belongs to a network of institutions that conserve the assets of the Congregation, we aligned ourselves with the project of the Rector Major for the six-year period 2014-2020. He proposed a goal “to initiate in a coordinated manner the care and promotion of Salesian artistic and cultural assets as wealth and heritage of the Congregation in favour of the mission”. Its processes would be “to move from a conception of artistic and cultural assets only as material and as a reserved right, to a practice of conservation, communication, dissemination and education, including digital, in favour of young people and popular environments”. This was the main reason why we developed a strategic line focused on the management of the collection, its conservation and research; and for this purpose, **Virginia Escrivá Navarro** was incorporated as head of the Cultural Heritage of the Museum.

Likewise, in the Rector Major’s project for the six-year period 2020-2026, special emphasis was placed on missionary animation. The Museum also accompanies this work, sharing with the participating population the different missionary realities of the Congregation.

We do this by deepening the knowledge of the different ethnic groups with whom we live, stimulating the knowledge of new Salesian presences; preserving the memory of those where we are no longer present; disseminating our action among different religious realities; making visible the work with people in refugee situations or forced to migrate; raising awareness of the rich and differentiated realities that are present in the different continents; or showing the missionary reality of our Congregation. This is the reason why we developed a



strategic line focused on the pedagogical mediation of the people who visit us, for which **Eva María Orozco del Álamo** was incorporated as the person in charge of Cultural Mediation.



Finally, we wanted to strengthen the communication and dissemination potential of the Museum and to ensure that different audiences are reached as Global Citizenship. Thanks to the improvement in the communication and marketing capabilities of workshops, events, exhibitions and other activities aligned with missionary animation and its values, we established a strategic line of Communication, and **Isabel Salcedo Quiroga** was incorporated as responsible for Communication at the Museum.

At the end of the project, the conclusions and evaluations derived from the work carried out during two years were presented. The management team approved the new definition, structure and contribution of the museum to the organization, giving rise to a new stage.

### 3. Misiones Salesianas Museum - MuseoMS



From January 2024, the Salesian Missions Museum – MuseoMS – after renewing its strategy and after positioning itself as an educational tool linked to the Salesian educational-pastoral proposal, takes a new path inserted in the structure of the Salesian Missions entity.

Continuing the work done previously and based on the experiences made, from now on we will focus on the current reality. It will be marked by the impact of new technologies, and the dynamics and logic of a globalized world. It will seek to transcend the role of custody and exhibition of heritage traditionally assigned to museums. It will encourage the involvement of the public and promotion of knowledge, practices and alternative cultural realities. Exhibitions, pedagogical programmes and support for creativity in all its dimensions will contribute to its realization. All of this has the aim of protecting, preserving, encouraging and promoting the mission of the Mission Office:

*To be a non-profit organization of Christian inspiration, created by the Salesian Congregation in Spain whose mission is to strengthen and accompany the missionary activity of promotion, protection and education of children and youth to promote their integral development, with special attention to the most vulnerable in impoverished*

*countries, promoting the solidarity commitment of people in order to make them co-participants in the mission of generating changes to transform society.*

The MuseoMS will contribute to the achievement of the general mission of the entity, and this contribution is defined as:

“A Museum of private ownership of the Salesian Congregation that depends organically on the Mission Office, Misiones Salesianas of Madrid. It is a permanent non-profit institution that safeguards the anthropological heritage of the different cultures where the Salesian mission develops its work around the world. Its mission is to acquire, conserve, organize, document, research, disseminate and exhibit these ethnographic collections in a scientific, didactic and aesthetic way, in order to make the visiting public participate in the values of cultural diversity and fraternity from a rights-based approach.

The MS Museum has the following objectives:

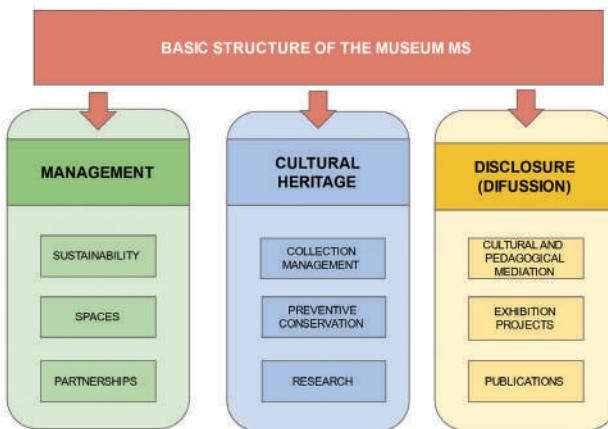
- To highlight cultural diversity and the richness it brings to global society, based on the knowledge and readings offered by anthropology.
- To generate a space in which the visiting public can interpret, reflect over and understand the Salesian mission and the world around them; a place where they have the opportunity to participate as global citizens.
- To encourage people's commitment to solidarity in order to generate changes in society, using heritage, culture and art as means.
- To act against xenophobia and racism, as well as to promote respect for other peoples and other cultures, and the equality,



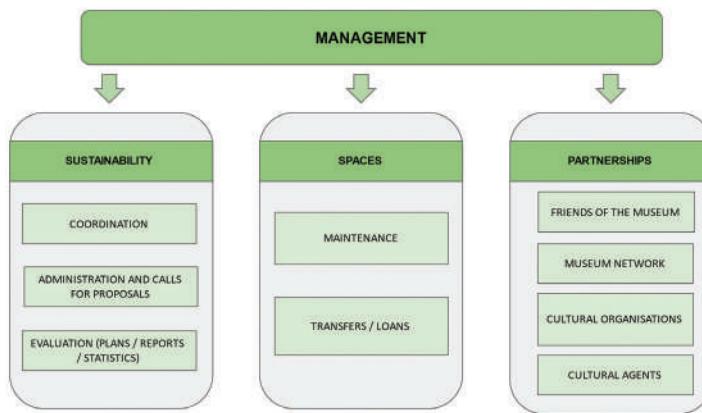
freedom and dignity of individuals, through cultural activities and exhibitions.

- To favour intercultural understanding, as well as the encounter and coexistence of peoples and cultures.
- To facilitate accessibility for all people and social groups to the collections, exhibitions and activities that constitute the *raison d'être* of the museum.
- To follow the principles of sustainability and respect for the environment in the design of projects and activities, and to disseminate the values of an ecological society.

To achieve this, the following structure is established:



**Management.** The mission of the management sector is to coordinate the museographic and museological work within the MuseoMS; coordinate interdepartmental actions involving the activities of the Museum; to ensure that the mandates are fulfilled as a museum belonging to the Network of Salesian Museums.



Without prejudice to the powers of the governing and advisory bodies of a collegiate nature that may exist in the Mission Office, the functions of the person responsible for the Museum are as follows:

- To exercise executive management, coordinate and supervise all activities of the museum.
- To convene the Superior Council according to the needs of the institution.
- To elaborate an annual operative work plan respecting the objectives of the museum.
- To direct and coordinate the work derived from the administrative and technical treatment of the collections.
- Organize and manage the provision of the museum's services.
- To adopt the necessary measures for the security of the cultural heritage held in the Museum.
- To prepare and propose to the competent body the annual plan of activities related to the basic areas of the institution.

- To prepare and present to various organizations the Annual Report of Activities.
- To supervise the development and management of a programme for the exhibition and pedagogical-educational dissemination.
- Prepare an annual operating budget, as well as capital and project budgets, controlling and distributing funds in an efficient and responsible manner.
- Keep responsible members abreast of regional and national museum trends and developments affecting the museum.
- Support and motivate board members and work with them to build greater capacity.
- Oversee and actively participate in development programmes and fundraising for the museum.
- Maintain the highest ethical and legal standards in all professional actions of staff, as well as corporate and institutional actions of the museum.
- Work with the board, staff and community to develop and implement a strategic plan for the Museum.
- Be the primary spokesperson for the Museum.
- Promote staff education and training through agreements, in-house training courses.....
- Oversee the exhibition set-up and duration.

The principles of personal conduct and Don Bosco's principles of preventive education, as well as those proposed by international organizations, such as ICOM, will govern our work.



Knowledge of relevant legislation. We are to be aware of national and local laws, as well as their conditions of application. We avoid situations that could lead to our actions being interpreted as reprehensible conduct. We will be familiar with the provisions proposed by the Salesian Congregation regarding Museums.

Professional Responsibility. We have an obligation to follow the policies and procedures of the institutions that hire us. However, we may object to practices that we consider detrimental to a museum or the profession, or contrary to professional ethics.

Professional conduct. Loyalty to colleagues and to the museum in which we work is an important professional obligation and is based on respect for the fundamental ethical principles applicable to the profession as a whole. We comply with the provisions proposed by the Salesian Congregation for Museums, the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and are aware of other codes or policies relating to museum work.

Academic and scientific responsibilities. We promote research on the collections, as well as their protection and the use of information related to them. Therefore, we avoid any activity or circumstance that could result in the loss of scholarly and scientific data.

Illicit trafficking. We never contribute, directly or indirectly, to illicit trafficking or trade in natural or cultural property.

Confidentiality. Confidential information obtained in the course of our duties are to be protected. In addition, information relating to objects brought to museums for identification is confidential and is

not published or communicated to any institution or person without the specific authorisation of their owners.

Security of museums and collections. Museum personnel observe the strictest confidentiality with respect to information relating to the security of the museum and of private collections and premises visited in the course of their duties.

Exception to the Obligation of Confidentiality. Confidentiality is subject to a legal obligation to assist the police or other competent authorities in their investigations of property that may have been stolen, acquired or transferred illegally.

Professional relationships. We encourage working relationships with a wide range of people, both inside and outside museums. We should provide all such persons with effective and high standards of professional service.

Professional consultation. Where the museum does not have sufficient resources to ensure effective decision-making, museum staff have a professional obligation to consult with other colleagues within or outside the institution.

Conflicts of Interest. Gifts, favours, loans or other personal benefits. Museum staff do not accept gifts, favours, loans or other personal advantages that may be offered to them because of their duties. In some cases gifts may be offered and accepted as a professional courtesy, but such exchanges are made solely on behalf of the institution concerned.

Outside employment or business interests. No one working for the museum has other paid employment or accept outside commissions that are or may appear to be incompatible with the museum's interests.

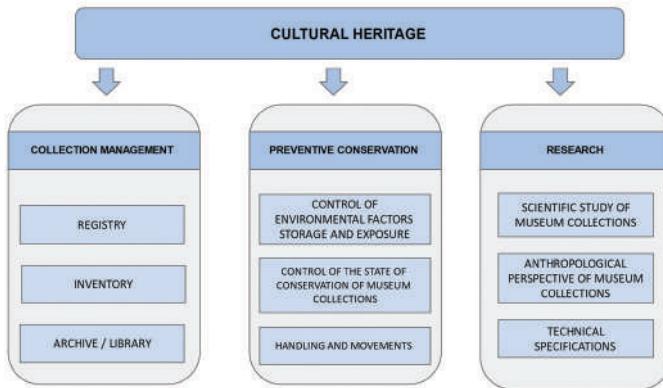
Trading in cultural or natural heritage property. No person employed by the Museum is directly or indirectly involved in the trade (buying or selling for profit) of cultural and natural heritage items.

Private collections. All museum staff do not compete with their museum, either for the acquisition of objects or for any personal collection. For any private collecting activity, an agreement is made between the professionals concerned and the museum's governing bodies, and is strictly adhered to.

Other conflicts of interest. In the event of any other conflict of interest between an individual and the museum, the interests of the museum prevails.

**Cultural Heritage.** The museum preserves cultural property in order to ensure its transmission to future generations. This function is an essential purpose and in itself justifies the existence of the museum.

The methods of scientific analysis, currently within the reach of conservation, allow us to know a series of data on the nature, constitutive technique and degradation of materials, and their causes, and based on these analyses, we can choose the ideal treatments for each action. The variety of situations that arise from this study highlights the difficulty of establishing conservation conditions common to all assets.



The area follows the following guidelines:

- To procure the necessary conditions for the preventive conservation of the collections.
- To monitor and control the physical state of the collections, such as their movements.
- To programme and carry out the analyses and examinations necessary for the knowledge of the state of conservation of the collections and to develop the tasks of prevention, cleaning and restoration.
- Report on the advisability of loans and propose transfer conditions.
- Organise storage systems: orderly, accessible and in good condition.
- Manage the movement of collections in and out of the museum.
- Collaborate in research programmes of institutions outside the museum.



We consider research to be one of the basic tasks entrusted to museums in all their spheres of activity. It is also the basis of all museum functions, as heritage cannot be protected, conserved or disseminated in an adequate manner without prior knowledge of it. Research, in short, is the basis for the development of all museum functions.

To carry out this function, museums have tools such as libraries, archives, laboratories and workshops. With them, research in the Museum is developed in two ways: as internal work, and as a result of collaboration with other research institutions.

Its responsibilities are:

- To develop description and cataloguing instruments for a scientific analysis of the collections assigned to them, working in close collaboration with the documentation department.
- To carry out research in the area of its competence and issue the scientific reports requested, including the collection and recording of data on the context of objects, by means of field work and, where appropriate, the collection of these objects for their preservation and defence.
- To publish and disseminate the results of the museum's research, and to supervise the scientific content of any other of the centre's publications.
- To programme and plan the scientific aspect of the permanent exhibition, as well as to collaborate in the organisation of temporary exhibitions in the field of its speciality.
- To study the scientific needs for increasing the collection.
- To collaborate in research programmes of institutions outside the museum, in the area of its competence.

- To provide advice and information services to researchers in relation to the museum's collections and in the area of their speciality.
- To assist the Head in the preparation of the annual report, presenting, in all cases, a report on the department's activities.

We subscribe to the mandates of the ICOM Code of Ethics:

As regards the protection and permanence of collections. A museum should establish and implement policies to ensure that its collections (permanent and temporary) and the information inherent in them, duly recorded, are passed on to future generations in the best possible condition, in accordance with current knowledge and resources (Icom Museum Code of Ethics 2017. art.2.18).

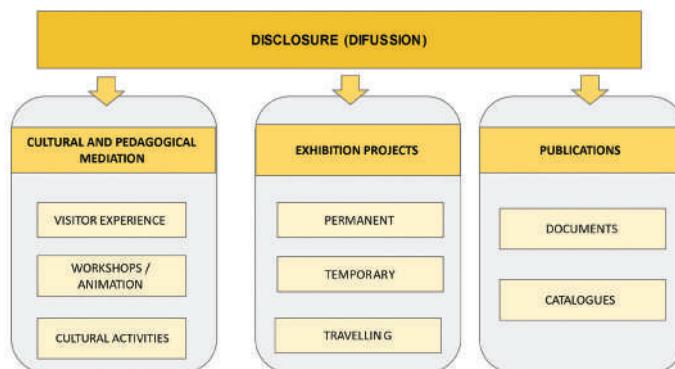
Preventive conservation as an important element of museum policy and the protection of collections. Museum professionals have a fundamental responsibility to create and maintain a suitable protective environment for the collections in storage, on display or in transit for which they are responsible. (Icom Museum Code of Ethics 2017. art.2.23).

As regards the documentation of collections. Museum collections should be documented in accordance with generally accepted professional standards. Documentation should include a full identification and description of each object and its associated elements, provenance, condition, treatment and current location. This data should be kept in a secure location and search facilities should be in place to allow staff and other legitimate users to consult it. (Icom Museum Code of Ethics 2017. art.2.20).



**Disclosure/Diffusion.** The activity carried out in the area is oriented towards the ultimate objective of bringing the museum closer to society. This is achieved through didactic methods of presentation, the application of communication techniques and the organization of complementary activities such as cultural activities, workshops, dialogues, presentations, etc. This area includes, therefore, all the strategies that allow the achievement of the objectives of communication, contemplation and education entrusted to the museum.

We consider that, as indicated in the ICOM Code of Ethics, museums have special obligations to society with regard to the protection, accessibility and interpretation of the essential testimonies that they have collected and preserved in their collections (cd. Deontological Museums Icom 2017. art.3 pp).



It is entrusted with the following functions:

- Carry out the Museum's Pedagogical-Educational Project.
- Scientifically study the characteristics, needs and motivations of the public.



- Design loyalty policies.
- Programming, projecting and carrying out both permanent and temporary exhibitions. Scientific and informative exhibitions in accordance with the nature of the Museum.
- Scientifically elaborate the impact of the exhibitions on the public.
- Organise and collaborate in the plans of cultural activities and in the development of dissemination programmes that allow a greater knowledge of their collections and what they represent to society.
- Manage the implementation of the museum's publications plan.
- To carry out the necessary research on museographic techniques and to collaborate with research programmes of institutions outside the museum, in the area of its competence.



For more  
information on  
this museum,  
scan this code.



## **MARIANO GARCÍA BORREGUERO**

**Misiones Salesianas, Madrid  
Direction and coordination of  
cultural institutions**

Born in Madrid, Spain.

He holds a degree in Art History from the Complutense University of Madrid.

With a strong educational vocation, he was originally going to dedicate himself to teaching, but he has been serving in the cultural field since 2010, when he started working as a cultural mediator in private institutions.

In 2012 he began his work at the Salesian Missions Museum as head of travelling exhibitions. After different stages in the same institution, today he performs the functions of coordination in the Museum. Since January 2024, he has been a member of the Advisory Team of the Salesian Missionary Museums of the Salesian Congregation.



# CHAPTER 12

## **MUSEO REGIONAL SALESIANO** CHUBUT ARGENTINA

When History Presents Itself



**Cintia Navas**



**T**he Salesian Congregation of Argentina is divided into two large Provinces: ARN – Province of North Argentina, "Artémides Zatti" – and ARS – Province of South Argentina, "Ceferino Namuncurá". Over one hundred Centres depend on them.

In order to know a little more about its richness, the Ceferino Namuncurá Province has generated a tourist map indicating the places that depend on it, on which you can see churches, schools, theatres, archives, museums, etc.

To access it, please scan this QR code:



Among these places there are more than 15 heritage sites, archives and museums connected/coordinated through a Heritage and Historical Archives Team. Among them we mention:



**Image 1:** Salesian Historical Archives – Bahía Blanca

- *Salesian Historical Archive, where the documents are organized and preserved that record the Salesian past in Argentina, from the arrival of the first missionaries sent by Don Bosco in 1875 to the present day.*

It has two branches, one located in Bahía Blanca and the other in the city of Buenos Aires.

In the latter, a “museum deposit” was recently inaugurated for the preservation, research and communication of material works produced by the Salesians or institutions linked to them. It is currently in the phase of rescuing, cleaning and enhancing the value of the pieces preserved in 24 boxes of a former museum archive, which were flooded.,,

*Mater Misericordiae (Church and heritage site):* also known as “the Church of the Italians”, built in 1870. It was the first residence and place of work of the Salesians during their missionary expedition in the city of Buenos Aires. On 14 December 1875, the first ten Salesians, sent by Don Bosco, took over the pastoral care of Italian immigrants in this church, located in the city of Buenos Aires.

In 2015, a light and sound show was inaugurated there, showing the early days of the mission, highlighting the actions carried out by the pioneers.

- *Memories of St. John the Evangelist Museum (Museum and archives), a tour of the church commemorates those who participated in the construction of the first Salesian parish and the founding of the neighbourhood of La Boca, in the city of*



**Image 2:** Museum - Memories of Saint John the Evangelist

Buenos Aires. The collection is displayed both in the sacristy and in the hall. The plaques and different altars of the church allow the visitor to enter into the mysticism of La Boca, its art and its processions.

- *Father Juan Edmundo Vecchi Regional Museum:* the space seeks to recuperate the memory of the promotional, educational and evangelizing activities of the first missionary work of the



**Image 3:** Regional Museum – “Padre Juan Edmundo Vecchi”

Salesian Congregation in Patagonia. It also has botanical and mineralogical exhibits. The Museum was founded in 1925, in Fortín Mercedes, province of Buenos Aires.

- *Site Artémides Zatti*: a space that highlights the saint who, for more than fifty years, dedicated his life to the health and spiritual care of the poor and sick in the first hospital in Patagonia. It is located in Viedma, province of Río Negro, Patagonia Argentina.<sup>1</sup>
- *Salesiano Museum – “Cardinal Cagliero”*: it was built in the space where the Apostolic Vicariate of Patagonia functioned at the end of the XIX century, under the charge of Monsignor Juan Cagliero. It was inaugurated in 1980 in Viedma, province of Río Negro, Patagonia Argentina.<sup>2</sup>



**Image 4:** Salesian Museum “Cardinal Cagliero”

1 Visitar: <https://zatti.org/>

2 Para conocer más ver: [https://turismo.rionegro.gov.ar/actividad/museo-salesiano-y34;cardenal-cagliero34;\\_350](https://turismo.rionegro.gov.ar/actividad/museo-salesiano-y34;cardenal-cagliero34;_350)

- *Monseñor Fagnano Museum of History and Natural Sciences:* The museum is located inside the Salesian Mission of Río Grande. The exhibition includes a sector dedicated to the Natural Sciences; another one where elements related to anthropology and native peoples are exhibited; and finally, personal objects of the Salesians who formed the Community. The museum is located in the province of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and South Atlantic Islands.<sup>3</sup>
- *Regional Salesian Museum:* created in the city of Rawson, capital of the province of Chubut, in 1941. The rest of this paper will treat of this museum.

## SALESIAN WORK AT RAWSON

The arrival of the Salesian missionaries in the south of the country was the realization of Don Bosco's dream, who always sought to accompany young people and children as the preferred recipients of his work.

On the other hand, the Argentine National State sought to show its presence in Patagonia. It was, above all, interested in "bringing civilisation" there by installing religious missions.

This convergence of interests led to the arrival in 1892 of two Salesian representatives, Father Pedro Bonacina and later Bernardo Vacchina. The latter was responsible for the implementation and realization of the mission in Rawson.

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<sup>3</sup> Más información en: <https://findelmundo.tur.ar/es/c/conocer-la-mision-salesiana/3801>



**Image 5:** The first days of Salesian Work at Rawson

As they would later do in several places in Patagonia, the Congregation did not only dedicate itself to the work of evangelization. It also developed an important work of community-education, besides carrying out tasks related to health and vocational training.

Shortly after his arrival, Father Vacchini drew up his plan of action: "To open two schools, one for boys and the other for girls, run by the Salesians and the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians respectively. To open a small boarding school, and a School of Arts and Crafts .... for the Indians, for Catholics and for Protestants ...., open an infirmary for adults". (Vanzini, 2005, p 29).

The plan was put into action and, little by little, the Congregation was adding parishioners and meeting the demands of the local population that the State was unable to meet: school, hospital, printing press, training in trades, as well as developing a cemetery, etc.

## Church

Until 1886 Rawson did not have a church to gather its parishioners, and in March the long awaited foundation stone of 'Our Lady of Lourdes' was laid.



But the tranquillity ended in 1889 when a strong storm tore off the roof and heavy rains flooded the incipient town. As a consequence of the storm, the image of the Virgin of Lourdes fell to the ground and was destroyed; only an image of the Virgin of Sorrows remained intact; the event was considered a miracle and the church received its name.

The administration of the church, until then diocesan, was handed over to the Salesians after the arrival of Fathers Bonacina and Vacchina (1892). The Congregation restored the place, after which they renamed it Mary Help of Christians.

The disasters did not end there. The religious centre suffered a fire in 1910. The fire started in one of the halls, and quickly spread to the chapel building and destroyed it.

After this episode, and verifying that the construction had been seriously affected, it was decided to build a new building only 40 metres away from the site; the works started in 1916 finished in 1919 with the inauguration of the current María Auxiliadora Chapel.



**Image 6:** María Auxiliadora Chapel and the old tower of the burnt temple.

## Hospital

Father Vacchina's plan of action included the construction of an infirmary. In his memoirs he recounts how he began to care for the sick:

*In the same month of March (1893) the Chief of Police (Arturo Woodley), a Welsh Methodist, son-in-law of the Anglican pastor Mattius (Matthews), sent us a policeman with Typhoid, a semi-civilised Indian. To keep him isolated, I put him up in the wooden loft at the back of the chapel, and placed my bed on the floor beside him to look after him. .... In Rawson we had no pharmacy or doctor... After the policeman, they sent me an arthritic sailor from the schooner "Chubut".... We also massaged him with turpentine and methyl, and he was cured. We had, in effect, started to take care of the sick and I thought we would be forced to continue. .... I then resolved to build a proper infirmary for that population". (Salesian Historical Archive of Bahía Blanca. Vacchina's memoirs. Folder 9 pages 1 to 3)*

Thus, almost without thinking about it, health care began to be provided in the city.

On 12 October 1903, the foundation stone was laid for the building of the Good Shepherd Hospital building. The clinic, the only one of its kind in the region, came to treat victims of the oil well explosions in Comodoro Rivadavia (some 400 km away).

The building was completed in October 1904, with an apothecary, rooms, quarantine rooms, a surgery room (equipped by the Rector Major, Don Michael Rua) and a large basement with a crematorium.

The hospital survived thanks to the collaboration of the population and the money that was (rarely) provided by the National Hygiene Council (today the Ministry of Health). This situation resulted in a period of closures and reopenings, depending on the authorities who were in



charge of the Salesian Work and the funds they were able to obtain. In 1941 the place was definitively closed.



**Image 7:** Two churhes: chapel of Mary Help of Christians and the tower of the burnt temple

## Seminary – The Southern Cross

When the Salesians arrived, the local population did not have a Spanish-language newspaper, so Father Bernardo Vacchina began the process of acquiring the necessary machinery and personnel to set up a printing press in the Salesian Block.

The first edition of *La Cruz del Sur* was published on January 1, 1905. The news it contained was related not only to the religious, educational and moral spheres, but also to international, national and local information. For instance, during the two World Wars it gave an account of the events that took place week by week. It would also detail the actions of the government of the area: inaugurations of works, changes in the cabinets, social meetings, etc.

Finally, in 1952, due to budgetary and staffing problems, it ceased to be printed. By that time there were other publications in Spanish.



**Image 8:** Workshop of La Cruz del Sur printing press

## School

In 1893, the acting Governor of the National Territory of Chubut, Mr. Alejandro Conesa submitted a report to the president of the National Council of Education. In this report he stated that a Salesian school for boys called "Our Lady of Sorrows" had been opened in Rawson in mid 1892, with Father Vacchina as director and Ramón Díaz as apprentice teacher, with 14 children at that time.

On 20 November it was the turn of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to form the first school for girls. It had 40 students and two teachers, Anunciada Tolomei and Elena Caffey, under the direction of Sister Maria Panzica.

Two years later, in 1894, the school "Our Lady of Sorrows" had 42 pupils and began to function as a boarding school for children who had no



resources or those that the State authorities sent to be "civilised". By then there were 22 boarders among whom were some natives.

At present, the Don Bosco Institute provides education to children and adolescents at all levels of primary, middle and secondary education.



Image 9: Students of the school atop the old tower of the church

## A MUSEUM WITH A HISTORY

In 1941, Father Antonio Fernández entrusted the 6th grade teacher, Morell, with the task of creating a School Museum. The intention was



Image 10: Logo of the Salesian Regional Museum



Image 11: The Beginnings of the Salesian Museum

to revalue the pieces that the school had and to ask the population for their collaboration to build a place where the history of the city and the province would be presented, thus creating the first museum of the then National Territory of Chubut.

In its beginnings the place had two pieces, a mortar cannon found on a nearby beach, and a wooden cart for transport, one of the first ones used in the Chubut Colony by the Welsh settlers.

There was also an important collection of lithic artefacts that the students went out to look for in the nearby fields with their teachers. The outings to the picaderos and the hearths were constant. They were strongly motivated; they wanted to show in reality what their teachers explained to them from the theoretical point of view in their classrooms.

As the collection of pieces they had was insufficient for the construction of a museum, in May 1941, they began to publish advertisements in the weekly *La Cruz del Sur*, asking neighbours to donate antique or unique objects.

The material was divided into sections, each of them under the charge of a group of students belonging to the final year of their studies.

At present, the museum has the following heritage collections:

**Original Peoples:** lithic artefacts and exploration material

**Immigrants:** objects related to Welsh and Italian settlers

**Institutions in the city:** items used in the post office, government house and schools

**Salesian Work:** original pieces from the church, the school, the hospital, the printing house

**Naturales Sciences:** fossils, embalmed animals, rocks and minerals

**Fitterling:** a collection of ceramics from the native peoples of northwestern Argentina that had been in the hands of a private individual and was recently given to the museum

**Numismatics** from different countries of the world

**Library** containing old books brought by Salesians, and current books about the history of the area

The Museum was blessed and inaugurated on 18 June 1941. Despite periods of closure and reopening, since 2014, a process of heritage revaluation has begun that will put it back in contact with the community and its needs.

In this context, it is necessary to understand that a museum is not only an exhibition space, but that there are many lessons, connections, values and aspects that are at stake.

### **The museum is enhanced**

We understand cultural heritage in its broadest sense: historical documents and all those sources that bear witness to the actions of the Salesian congregation, its subjects, its beneficiaries, and the products of its interaction with all the actors within society (PINASSI, 2014, p.136).

The different openings and closings of the museum depended on the importance given to it by the people of the period and/or the budget available to the directors of the Work.



On the occasion of the commemoration in 2015 of 200 years since the birth of Don Bosco, 140 years since the arrival of the Salesians in Argentina and 150 years since the landing of the Welsh settlers in the area, a heritage and historical recovery project began in 2014 and continues to this day.

The project began with the restoration of one of the **school's galleries** through the intervention of the UBA Heritage Department, directed by Architect Scagliotti. The work consisted of the restoration of the ceiling and walls.

Another major objective was to repair the **Good Shepherd Hospital**, which was previously used as the school's storeroom. Thanks to a grant from the provincial government, work began on restoring the façade, removing the layers of exterior plaster down to the original brickwork and preserving the old windows. The restored room is the space where the first definitive room of the Salesian Regional Museum has been located since 2017.



**Image 12:** 360° view of the hall of the Salesian Regional Museum



## Museum and the Community

In order to bring the community closer to the Museum, different activities have been developed, among them: training with specialists: "Theoretical approach to museological care: prevention and conservation of archives and museum objects".

Every year a **Museum Night** is organized: as part of the anniversary celebrations and special activities highlighting the historical value of the Manzana and the Museum, with the participation of the community and local artists.

There are projects such as "**memories**" in which grandparents share personal stories with their grandchildren by exhibiting objects from the Museum that allowed their life experiences to materialise.

Communication on **social networks** have become stable, publishing every week two or three news items about the museum, activities, projects, stories, archival material, Salesian, local, regional and national anniversaries, etc.

## Museum and Institutions

Those of us who work in museums are aware of the importance of connecting with other institutions in order to exchange knowledge and strategies.

In the case of the Salesian Regional Museum, we are in permanent contact with the museums of the city, carrying out activities such as the **International Week of Museums**, or joint exhibitions in which each one exhibits outstanding objects in the same location.

We are regularly in contact with the **Salesian Historical Archives** of the city of Buenos Aires and Bahía Blanca, seeking uniformity of criteria. Their professionals help us to resolve situations that may arise in the museum in terms of conservation, treatment of objects or specific documents.

We have collaborated with the city **municipality** to celebrate local anniversaries and have participated in book fairs, presenting special exhibitions, among other activities.

Students at different **educational levels** are the main recipients of our daily work. With the schools we generate special exhibitions adapted to the themes that the students are working on with their teachers, highlighting not only history but also the importance of caring for our heritage.

## **Museum and Research**

The museum is also a place where visitors can find documentation, including primary sources, to research **local and regional histories**.

On this basis, several researchers from the province, Argentina and other countries contact us to access our material.

Within the museum, different researches related to the **history of the Salesians** and their relationship with the community have been developed. The final productions have been published in social networks, but also in magazines and local newspapers. They have also been used as exhibition material in different conferences and even in postgraduate theses.

The museum has also provided the necessary material for a **thesis** in which the use of the Salesian Regional Museum as a didactic resource is highlighted.

## Museum and IT

It should be In recent years we have sought to incorporate modern technological tools. For example, **360° images** and videos have been created to allow virtual tours of the Salesian Regional Museum. This material has also been showcased using augmented reality glasses at various events hosted by the Salesian House. Additionally, following the educational work that started the museum, we worked with the secondary school English teacher and her students to translate the exhibition posters, which were transformed into **QR codes**.

Finally, **augmented reality** was developed on two outstanding objects. One is a spearhead – by scanning the codes it is possible to access an interactive image that through a voiceover speaks of the original peoples of the area. The second object is a pair of scissors belonging to one of the first Welsh settlers to arrive in the area. As with the previous object, a voiceover explains what the object represents.

## Museum as Initial Proclamation

Among members of the Salesian House in Rawson, it was observed that there was limited knowledge about the origins of the Work. To address this, a project was initiated to 'reconstruct history,' starting with the creation of a timeline from the arrival of the first Salesians, highlighting each significant event. The community was invited to contribute by adding facts, memories, and events related to the House. Based on this reconstruction, talks

and workshops were organized for the entire community. Through this process, an important symbol was revived: the tower of the first church, which has since become the House's logo and is now used in events, publications, and even on the students' uniforms.

Additionally, the museum strengthened its connection with the Oratories by organizing guided tours for children and young people participating in these activities.

## Oratories

Another key function within the Salesian House is the work done in the oratories.

Two are developed in parallel:

- **"It's all about walking together"**: set up in one of the most needy neighbourhoods of the city, fulfilling social functions and socially related accompaniment. There are activities every day: bicycle repair workshops, blacksmithing, preparation for the world of work, school support, workshops for mothers, etc., without neglecting the Salesian spirit that covers and accompanies each of the actions undertaken by a large number of volunteers.
- **"Come to the playground"**: the school opens its doors to all those who want to participate. There, through the Salesian Youth Movement (MJS) and animators, playful activities take place every Friday. They learn the values of the Salesian community, respect, and the relationship with the community and with others.



## IN CONCLUSION

As it has been possible to see throughout this paper, the Ceferino Namuncurá Province takes care of a large number of spaces of heritage value that seek to recall the life and activities of the first Salesians.

Particularly in the case of the Salesian Regional Museum, from technical museological aspects, from the activities and articulations that are being generated, we try to favour the dissemination of values and the Salesian charism, as well as the knowledge and safeguarding of the historical-cultural heritage that we have.

We are aware that this is a long and painstaking road, but we are willing to travel it in order to transform it into a participatory space of community ownership that is strengthened day by day, and continues the purpose of telling the enriching Salesian history in Rawson.

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## CINTIA NAVAS

*Museo Regional Salesiano de Rawson  
Chubut, Argentina*

Cintia Navas. I am 37 years old. I live in Rawson, Province of Chubut, Argentina. I am a history teacher and I have been teaching at the secondary level for 13 years. In 2023 I completed a Master's degree in Specific Didactics, presenting a thesis on the importance of using the Salesian Museum of Rawson as a teaching resource.

Since 2008 I have been working in the Historical Archive of the Province of Chubut, where important historical documentation is kept.

In 2013 I published the book *Touring Club: aromas del pasado con sabor a presente*, about a local historical café. Since then, I have made several publications in magazines, newspapers and social networks.

In 2017 I started working at the Salesian Regional Museum of Rawson, and to date I am responsible for the place, developing tasks ranging from cleaning and preventive conservation, the assembly of exhibitions and educational activities, to actions related to the relationships with the community. The diversity of work areas where I work allows me to relate history, heritage and education from different perspectives.





# CHAPTER 13

## MUSEUM OF SALESIAN WORK IN BRAZIL



**Marcos de Lima Moreira**

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM

**M**useum of Salesian Work in Brazil – MOSB, officially created in 2008, is located on the premises of the Coração de Jesus School, the first Salesian house opened in São Paulo during the missionary expedition of Fr Luis Lasagna.

The school was built with the name Liceu de Artes Ofício e Comércio, in the Campos Elíseos area, a former noble neighbourhood in the city of São Paulo, known for its famous mansions inhabited by the coffee aristocracy at the beginning of the 19th

century. In 2013 the school was listed by the Council for the Defence of Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage of the State of São Paulo – Condephaat – making it a historical heritage site for the city of São Paulo.



The building that houses the Museum is full of many remarkable stories. In 1924, the school's premises were bombed in the midst of the Paulista Revolt, as recounted by the headmaster at the time, Fr Luiz Marcigaglia, in his book *Férias de Julho* (July Holidays):<sup>1</sup>

“It was hit hard by the first grenade; the roof and the plaster ceiling collapsed... Next door is the large Bindery and Tailoring room. It was hit by two grenades. The roof opened up a large hole twenty metres long and eight metres wide...” (MARCIGAGLIA, 1927, p.46)

<sup>1</sup> MARCIGAGLIA, Luiz. *Ensaio da crônica dos primeiros vinte anos da obra de Dom Bosco no Brasil (1883-1903). Os salesianos no Brasil. São Paulo: Escolas Profissionais Salesianas*, 1956. v. 1.

The marks of the Revolt can be seen at the gate to the Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which still bears the scars of the bullets that hit the school. In the museum you can also find fragments of the bombs that hit the school, destroying the professional school's Bookbinding and Tailoring Workshop.

Another remarkable moment in the school's history took place in 1932, during the Constitutional Revolution, an armed movement that began on 9 July, led by the state of São Paulo, which demanded a new constitution for Brazil and attacked the authoritarianism of Getúlio Vargas' Provisional Government. The Liceu Coração de Jesus had its classes suspended during this period and its classrooms became infirmaries to care for those wounded in the revolution.

In addition to the museum, part of the Liceu complex is the Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in neoclassical style, inaugurated in 1901. It has French and Italian imagery, as well as the Grande Otelo theatre, named after former Salesian student Sebastião Bernardes de Souza Prata, who later adopted the pseudonym Grande Otelo, becoming one of the most recognised Brazilian artists in the world.



## THE TEAM

The Museum of the Salesian Work in Brazil (MOSB) has the support of an efficient and diverse team, dedicated to the process of recovering and preserving the rich history of the Salesians in the country.

The vision of André Simões guides the museum's activities.

Marcos Lima, a master's student in museology with a background in history, edutainment and project management, is the coordinator. He plays a crucial role in defining and executing the MOSB's activities, contributing not only his technical knowledge in the field of museology, but also his ability to effectively communicate the rich history of the Salesians in Brazil. His leadership is key to ensuring that the museum fulfills its educational and cultural mission in an impactful and meaningful way.



Technical expertise is guaranteed by Bruna Dourado, a historian and Museology technician. Her specialisation in Archive and Database Management contributes significantly to the efficient handling of the information preserved in the museum.

The team also includes young apprentices Gabriel Perpetuo and Gabriel Souza, who complement the team and bring a youthful perspective to the museum environment. The building conservation team is made up of Francileide and Simone, who play a crucial role in organising the museum's physical spaces.

This small but highly specialised and committed team plays an essential role in the MOSB's mission to keep the history of the Salesians in Brazil alive, providing visitors with an enriching and educational experience.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

The Museum of the Salesian Work in Brazil (MOSB) houses more than 30,000 items, covering a wide range of categories that enrich the visitors' experience. This comprehensive collection is the result of meticulous work carried out over time, emphasising the dedication and passion of Fathers Mario Quilici and José Geraldo de Souza.

Among the treasures housed, numismatics stands out as a fascinating study of coins over time, revealing not only economic transactions but also historical and cultural nuances, while mineralogy reveals the impressive variety of geological formations from different parts of Brazil and the world. The presence of sacred art enriches the collection with artistic expressions intrinsically linked to spiritual beliefs, providing a glimpse of devotion and artistic talent over the centuries. The collection dedicated to religious garments offers a foray into the costumes that witnessed ceremonies and rituals, reflecting the diversity of religious practices around the world.



The furniture, carefully preserved, gives us a tangible view of the products by the students of Salesian vocational schools in the 19th century. The music collection has over 5,000 musical scores, among which we can find material from important Salesian personalities such as José Geraldo de Souza and Fausto Santa Catarina (SDB). The presence of audiovisual materials further enriches the experience,



providing a modern approach to historical preservation. Ethnography completes the panorama, offering a glimpse into the missionary work of the Salesian Congregation with the various indigenous communities of Brazil.



Taxidermy, finally, offers a unique experience by presenting realistically preserved animals. This aspect of the collection contributes to an understanding of the fauna and enriches the collection with a perspective on biodiversity.

This hybrid collection not only preserves the past, but also connects us with the cultural and scientific riches that have shaped the history of Liceu Coração de Jesus and brought our museum to life. Each item is more than a display piece; it is a gateway to understanding and appreciating the complexity and diversity that make up the history of humanity and nature, and offers visitors a unique opportunity to explore and understand the rich heritage of the Salesians in Brazil.

## THE EXHIBITIONS

The museum has two permanent exhibitions: the Don Bosco Exhibition and the Faces of Our Lady around the World. Divided into six blocks, these exhibitions reflect the missionary work of the Salesians in education, professionalisation, art, culture and formation.

In the first block, entitled The Great Teacher, visitors are welcomed by Don Bosco himself, in a painting commissioned by the saint of

youth himself as a gift for the inauguration of the first Salesian house in São Paulo, the Liceu Coração de Jesus, which stands out at the entrance, alongside St Dominic Savio and Don Luigi Lasagna.

Visitors have the opportunity to watch videos about the miracles, dreams and other themes related to Don Bosco. The Missions block displays belongings and artefacts, including photos of an indigenous tribe from Mato Grosso who had significant contact with Salesian missionaries.

The Liturgy section features a panel from the high altar of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was elevated to the status of a Shrine in addition to being made a Basilica by the Vatican in 1914. The space features vestments worn by former religious, and tributes to Salesian benefactors, including Fr Mario Quilici.

The Cabinet of Curiosities, inspired by the old "Cabinet of Natural History", displays taxidermied animals, collections of butterflies, insects, organic stones and shelves dedicated to mineralogy. A video about the taxidermy process is available to the public.

The Education section highlights three moments at Liceu Coração de Jesus, including photos of vocational education, medals from sports



competitions and a representation of a physics classroom. The sixth and final section features the exhibition, The Faces of Our Lady around the World, a private collection of representations of Our Lady, donated by missionary priest Evaristo Higa. The exhibition is a journey through the diversity and plurality of the figure of the great Mother and the way in which each culture represents her.



## MUSEUM ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES WITH THE PUBLIC

According to museologist Cristina Bruno:<sup>2</sup>

Managing memory or, as some prefer, manipulating heritage references, based on objects, collections and holdings, presupposes a sure mastery of methods and techniques for conserving the materiality of this cultural evidence and the documentary retention of the meanings of these indicators of memory. In the same way, managing the coherence of exhibition discourses can represent a great possibility for intervention in the lives of the public (BRUNO, 1999, p.334).

Based on this principle, we began the process of inventorying the museum's collection. Part of this initiative was the replacement of the furniture used to store the collection, which took place in 2021. This

<sup>2</sup> BRUNO, M. C. O. The importance of museological processes for the preservation of Patrimy. *Revista do Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia. Suplemento, n. supl. 3, p. 333-337, 7 nov. 1999.*

furniture was largely financed with funds from the Salesian Province of Madrid. In the process of reorganising the objects we came to understand the need for an immediate inventory of these collections. We decided to carry out more adequate documentation for the safekeeping of these collections. To date, 4,276 items have been inventoried.

Besides the inventory work, the museum sanitises its exhibition spaces every fortnight. It carries out research into its collections in an attempt to locate the origin and provenance of these objects.



As far as the public is concerned, through a carefully crafted approach, the museum uses its social networks as effective communication channels, presenting the attractions and peculiarities of its collection in an engaging and captivating way. The content shared ranges from information about the pieces on display to behind-the-scenes looks at events and cultural initiatives, providing followers with a comprehensive and thought-provoking view of the museum universe.

Although it doesn't offer explicit and direct discourses about Jesus Christ or the preaching of Christianity, the museum seeks, through its initiatives, to draw the visitors' attention to spirituality and divine love through the objects on display in its rooms. The exhibition of these items gives visitors the opportunity to contemplate tangible manifestations of devotion and spirituality, inviting them to reflect on the transcendental dimension of their lives.

The Museum is a dynamic space that promotes a variety of activities throughout the year, aimed at both internal and external audiences. These initiatives aim not only to enrich the visitors' experience, but also to contribute to their educational and cultural formation.

Among the activities are educational visits, which offer visitors a guided immersion in Brazil's rich Salesian history, providing a deeper understanding of the museum's collection. These visits are designed to be informative and educational, seeking to convey knowledge in an engaging way.

In addition, the MOSB runs training courses in the field of museology, offering a unique opportunity for those interested in deepening their knowledge in this field. The courses are structured to provide a comprehensive understanding of museological principles and contemporary practices. Lectures, workshops and seminars are also held as an integral part of the museum's training activities. These events address a variety of relevant topics, providing a forum for discussion and further study on issues related to the preservation of cultural heritage, religious history and museology.

It's worth noting that all these educational activities are carried out in strategic partnership with the Salesian University Centre of São Paulo – UNISAL, further strengthening the MOSB's commitment to academic and cultural excellence. This collaboration establishes a valuable bridge between academic theory and museological practice,



enriching the educational scenario offered by the institution.

## EXTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The MOSB extends its presence beyond its premises through extramural activities, consolidating valuable partnerships that further enrich its activities. In close collaboration with the Colégio Salesiano Santa Teresinha, the museum extends its activities to the local educational community, promoting integration between formal education and the cultural experiences offered by the collection.



In addition, the museum establishes significant collaborations with surrounding cultural institutions, including partnerships with SESC, the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, the Energy Museum and the Portuguese Language Museum. These partnerships extend the museum's reach and provide a network of collaboration that enriches the cultural activities offered to the community.

Extramural activities can involve travelling exhibitions, lectures, workshops and other initiatives that bring the richness of the MOSB's collection to different cultural spaces. This decentralised approach not only diversifies the public served, but also strengthens ties with other institutions committed to promoting culture and education.

These strategic partnerships not only enrich the MOSB's cultural offer,



but also contribute to the creation of a collaborative network in which cultural institutions support each other in their mission to preserve, publicise and celebrate the rich cultural and historical heritage. Through these extramural actions and partnerships, the MOSB continues to play a vital role in promoting culture and education in collaboration with various organisations committed to these values.



## THE MUSEUM DURING THE PANDEMIC

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Museum of the Salesian Work in Brazil (MOSB) faced significant challenges, leading to the suspension of face-to-face activities as a safety measure. However, in the face of this challenging scenario, the museum team adopted creative and adaptive initiatives to continue sharing its rich cultural heritage with the public.

A strategic partnership was established with Google to provide access to the museum via the Cultural Institute platform. This partnership resulted in the creation of two virtual exhibitions and a 360° tour, providing an immersive and educational experience for visitors, even from a distance.

In addition, recognising the importance of maintaining a close link with the public, the MOSB activated its YouTube Channel as a response to the pandemic. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the museum organised

a series of talks involving professionals from different areas of museology. These conversations not only addressed the direct impact of the pandemic on the professionals' areas of expertise, but also provided valuable reflections and opportunities for knowledge exchange.

The debates held on the channel offered a space to discuss the necessary adaptations, the challenges faced and the innovations emerging in the museum context. The reflections became a valuable record of the period, capturing the resilience and adaptability of the museum community in the face of the unique circumstances imposed by the pandemic.



Thus, the MOSB not only overcame the challenges of the pandemic, but also emerged as an example of how technology and collaboration can be harnessed to continue fulfilling its educational and cultural mission, even in extraordinary times.

## **FINANCES**

Finances invariably emerge as a perennial challenge when it comes to preserving and maintaining museological institutions. At the moment, the Museum of the Salesian Work in Brazil is no exception to this painful reality.

The support for the museum's operational viability comes, for the most part, from the financial contributions provided by the Salesian Province

of São Paulo. It should be noted that a substantial portion of these funds is used to cover essential expenses, such as staff salaries, as well as fixed costs, such as water, electricity, telephone and the purchase of materials that are essential for maintaining the collection.

In addition, the museum actively participates in cultural competitions, through which it seeks to obtain supplementary resources and promote cultural initiatives. This strategic approach reflects the MOSB's commitment to promoting and disseminating cultural expressions, especially those linked to the vast heritage it preserves. It is also worth noting that the museum has been included in calls for proposals organised by the office of the Salesian Procurator, demonstrating a broad and strategic approach to the search for resources and support.

Thus, faced with the economic challenges inherent to the museum sector, the MOSB is making continuous and strategic efforts, based on partnerships, fundraising and participation in calls for proposals, to ensure the sustainability and continuity of its noble cultural and educational tasks.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The Museum of the Salesian Work in Brazil (MOSB) faces significant challenges for the future, all of which need to be confronted to consolidate and broaden its relevance to the Salesian community and beyond. Some key areas of focus include:

- Establish the importance of the MOSB for the Salesian Community:**

The challenge lies in effectively communicating the importance of the museum to the Salesian community. This involves

developing engagement strategies that highlight how the MOSB preserves, celebrates and shares the rich history of the Salesians in Brazil, thus strengthening the bonds of identity and belonging.

**- Museological Documentation:**

Documentation is crucial for preserving the collection. The MOSB faces the challenge of improving its documentation processes, ensuring the precise and detailed cataloguing of each item. This would not only facilitate the efficient management of the collection, but also contribute to future research and long-term preservation.

**- Research into the Collection:**

Investing in ongoing research into the collection is fundamental to deepening our understanding of the pieces and stories present in the museum. Stimulating academic research, encouraging scholars and researchers to explore the collection and to share their discoveries, is an important step towards enriching the understanding of Salesian history.

**- Collections Policy/Museological Plan:**

Developing and implementing a sound collections policy, aligned with a strategic plan for the museum, is vital. This includes establishing clear criteria for acquisition, responsible disposal and proper maintenance, guaranteeing the integrity of the collection over time.

**- Networking:**

To meet contemporary challenges, the MOSB must strengthen its networking activities. Broader collaborations with other

museums, cultural institutions and educational centres can leverage resources and expertise, enabling joint projects and broadening the scope of the museum's activities.

By addressing these challenges, the MOSB will be better placed to stand out as a vital cultural space, not only preserving Salesian history, but also playing an active role in education, research and dialogue with the community and society at large.

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**For more  
information on  
this museum,  
scan**





## **MARCOS DE LIMA MOREIRA**

**Coordinator, Museu da Obra  
Salesiana no Brasil**

43 years, born in the city of São Paulo, Brasil.

Since 2017, I coordinate the 'Museo de la Obra Salesiana en Brasil' and I am a member of 'Association Cultores de Historia Salesiana' - ACSSA Brazil.

In 2016 I assumed the position of Museology Technician at the Museum of Salesian Work in Brazil and in May 2017 I was promoted to coordinator.

I have a degree in History (UNIBAN), Specialist in History, Society and Culture from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUCSP), Technician in Museology (ETEC), Educommunicator from the Catholic University Dom Bosco (UCDB) and Project Manager from the Salesian University Centre of São Paulo (UNISAL).I have worked as a teacher in public and private education networks, teaching History and Geography.

In the cultural field, I participated in the Heritage Management in Network (GEPRE) project, where I mapped the historical and cultural heritage of the Technical Schools and Technological Faculties of the Government of the State of São Paulo.



Between 2015 and 2016, I participated in the implementation process of the Carandiru Memory Space, a cultural resource of the Secretariat of Culture of the State of São Paulo. The Space is dedicated to preserving the history and memory of the inhabitants of one of the largest prisons in Latin America.

Also in 2016, I had the opportunity to participate in the first phase of the restructuring of the Mackenzie Historical and Cultural Centre, located at the Mackenzie Presbyterian University in São Paulo.

I represent Brazil as an Ambassador for MUSEUMWEEK.ORG. I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Museology at the University of São Paulo - USP.

I enjoy reading, cinema, theatre and music.





**Musei in Missione**  
Musei Missionari Salesiani  
Colle Don Bosco  
18 - 22 January 2024



Museo e Istituto  
Agrotecnico Salesiano  
**PASCUAL GENTILINI**

# CHAPTER 14

## **SALESIAN MUSEUM SALESIAN AGROTECHNICAL INSTITUTE PASCUAL GENTILINI**



**Bro. Lic. Agustín Borzi, SDB  
San José, Misiones**



## GENTILINI MUSEUM

**T**he Museum begins with the collections of the Gentilini Pastoral School since 1927.

They were gathered and collected by Father Juan Pedro Ramón Nicolau OMS (1904-1991) in the years 1941-42. From 1950 to 1960 they are located in the buildings constructed in 1944<sup>1</sup> in the old Theatre and Studio (southern sector) by the Father Director Emilio Scrosatti (1892-1969) when he was Director of the Gentilini (1943-51).

Photo of Father Scrosatti



Photo of Father Nicolau



This place contains different elements of the Jesuit ruins of San José adapted for display as in museums. There is also a sector dedicated to Natural Sciences, which is used as a teaching aid. Also exhibited is a collection of equipment that shows the evolution of technology.

<sup>1</sup> El Territorio Newspaper. Posadas. Missions. November 13, 1944



## Partial view of the Gentilini Museum

### SALESIAN PRESENCE IN SAN JOSÉ, MISIONES (1927-2027)

#### Salesian Pascual Gentilini Agrotechnical Institute; Misiones

##### **General objective**

Give an overview of the development of the activities of the Salesians of Don Bosco in "San José Misiones" from the moment of their arrival (1927) to the present day.

##### **Specific objectives**

Introduce the viewer to the topic to be discussed: history, nature, tradition and technological changes.

Disseminate the historical missionary past among students and the visiting public.

Get to know the different animal and plant species that live in this place.

Enjoy the biodiversity in Misiones.

Appreciate the culture of the Guarani Jesuit missions.

Experience the technological changes developed in different electronic equipment.

"The Kingdom of heaven is already within you,  
And no one can take your joy away from you..." JOHN 16:22

## **Development of the Work of Don Bosco in Misiones**

### **Presentation from History**

#### **Our Benefactor Mr Pascual Leandro Gentilini**

Mr Pascual Leandro Gentilini was born on May 13, 1864 in Azul, Province of Buenos Aires. He studied Surveying at the University of Buenos Aires. Evidently this man was part of the Generation of the 1880's in Argentina.

The politicians of the Generation of the 1880's defended positivist positions, symbolizing their actions with Auguste Comte's motto of "Order and Progress."



The leaders of this generation blindly believed in progress, identifying such a concept with economic growth and modernization. Order was considered a necessary condition for such progress, since it established the conditions of tranquility which people must have in order to achieve progress.

With similar ideology, the two presidencies of Julio Argentino Roca were founded on the motto “Peace and administration”, which synthesized liberal and conservative thought.

On June 10, 1896, Mr Pascual Gentilini purchased at auction from Banco Hipotecario Nacional 11,280.1431 hectares in San José, Misiones. It was known as Estancia Saturno.

On October 22, 1896, he signed a deed of purchase of the San José field.



There must have been some friendship or acquaintance between Governor Juan José Lanusse and Don Pascual Gentilini. That is evident from the way the two of them worked together to make all this possible. A study of this is one of the tasks that could be carried out by specialist researchers.

Two historic herb gardens from the time of our benefactor are still preserved in the School. One is located at the main entrance to the Institute and has been identified and preserved. Unfortunately, only 3 specimens from this first herbal garden remain.

The other herb garden is located in the project area of the Guarani Jesuit Garden. Due to its characteristics of the line planting system and

the shapes of the plants, it is a protected area because it was part of the old Saturno ranch of Don Pascual Gentilini.

Through a will that he signed on September 8, 1922, he gave his fields to the National State so that the Salesians of Don Bosco could build an Agricultural Pastoral School in them. It is known that Gentilini carried out the survey of Tierra del Fuego and there he came to know the activities of Salesians. From there began this relationship that ended with the donation of the Saturno Ranch to them.

On October 1, 1923, Don Pascual Gentilini died in Buenos Aires. On August 15, 1925, President Marcelo Alvear signed a decree taking possession of the Gentilini field.

On September 18, 1925, the Salesian Congregation took charge of the donation.

On February 23, 1927, the Salesians arrived in San José. The founding community was led by Father Juan Bautista Gherra as Rector until he died at the school on January 23, 1931. He was accompanied by Father Francisco Wilczek, Brother José Miglietta and by Brother Pablo Mujica who was doing his regency/practical training.

## **History of San José**

San José has its origin in a Jesuit reduction called San José de Ita-Cua. The historian Pablo Pastells<sup>2</sup> tells in his "History of the Company of Jesus" that the Jesuit Reduction of San José was founded in 1633

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<sup>2</sup> Pablo Pastells (1846, Figueras, province of Gerona, Spain - 1932, Seville) was a Jesuit priest who tried to convince José Rizal by letter to return to Roman Catholicism – Student at the Jesuit Conciliar Seminary in Barcelona, refugee in France after the fourth suppression of the Jesuits in Spain in 1868, experiencing the anti-clerical movements after the defeat of Napoleon II in the Franco-Prussian War, organizer of Workers' Circles against the anarchist movements.

near the Serranía del Tapé. They had fled from the Mamelukes and Portuguese of Brazil, transmigrating in the year 1638 to the margins of eastern Paraná. According to Félix de Azara, the reduction was moved in 1660 to its final location to the NE of the sources of the Pindapoy stream in the mountain region of Tabiapú. However, there are no details of the specific place where the reduction was located between the years 1638 and 1660.



The Jesuit Missions were created by the Company of Jesus, the Jesuits, by royal order of the Crown of Spain on January 30, 1609, and the Reduction of San José in 1660. These were later destroyed along with those formed on the Uruguay River, San Carlos and Apóstoles.

Source: Léonie Matthis (Troyes, 1883 – Turdera, 1952) was a French painter.

The continuous wars with the bandeirantes prevented the normal development of the town until the battle of Mbororé ended these attacks.

This is why a new location was assigned to San José between Apóstoles and Candelaria, in the vicinity of the sources of the Pindapoy Grande and San José



streams. An important inn for travelers was established in the town, where many sick priests went to be cured due to its healthy climate.

The economy at that time was based mainly on livestock and had 3 yerbales (herbal gardens).

The Jesuit Antonio Sepp wrote here in 1732 his famous book on "Some warnings regarding the current government of towns in their factories, fields and other tasks" where he teaches how to make mission wine.

The battle of Mbororé which occurred on March 11, 1641, was a confrontation between the Guaraníes who inhabited the Jesuit Missions and the Portuguese bandeirantes, explorers and adventurers whose centre of action was in San Pablo. The site of the battle was near Mount Mbororé, today the municipality of Panambí in the Province of Misiones, Argentina. The battle ended with a victory for the Guaraní.

The Spanish King Charles III, imitating the policies followed in the Kingdom of Portugal (1759) and in the Kingdom of France (1762), through the Pragmatic Sanction of 1767 issued on February 27 of that year, ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits from all the dominions of the crown of Spain, including those of America and other overseas territories. It affected more than 6,000 religious.

The monarchy's attack on this religious order also included its temporal assets, since the Pragmatic also decreed the seizure of the assets of the Society of Jesus. After the Royal Decree of expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, the reductions of Misiones slowly became depopulated and turned into ruins.



Image of the old Jesuit mission of San Ignacio Mini

Andrés Guacurári y Artigas ( San Tomé, November 30, 1778 - Rio de Janeiro, around 1821), known as Comandante Andresito, was a military man and a leading Argentinian. He was one of the first federal leaders of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata in Argentine History. Of indigenous origin, he governed between 1811 and 1818 the Greater Province of the Misiones. The current Argentine province of the same name is only a remnant of it. November 30 was established as National Mate Day, in commemoration of the birth of Andrés Guacurári Artigas. Source: [revisoristas.com.ar](http://revisoristas.com.ar)



There are records that San José contributed 100 Indian cavalry to the troops of General Manuel Belgrano.

Andresito was one of the most faithful collaborators of the general of the Banda Oriental (currently Uruguay) José Gervasio Artigas, who sponsored him and adopted him as a son. He allowed him to

sign as Andrés Artigas. With the battle of San Borja, the Portuguese General Francisco das Chagas Santos ended all the Jesuit missions that still remained. In addition, José Gaspar Rodríguez of Francia from Paraguay devastated the neighboring towns of Candelaria, Santa Ana, San Ignacio Mini and Loreto.

These regions were repopulated before the Paraguayan War in 1860. Solano López's invasion of Paraguay established a garrison in this town in 1849 and then again destroyed all its progress.

The War of the Triple Alliance – Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay – against Paraguay (Oct 12, 1864 – March 1, 1870), called the Guasú War by the Paraguayans, began in this area with the Pindapoy camp. After the war ended, through the Argentine-Paraguayan Peace Treaty of 1876, Paraguay definitively abandoned its claims to the territory of Misiones.

After the war, these lands became dependent on the province of Corrientes until December 22, 1881 with the Federalization of the Territory of Misiones. On December 22, 1881, President Julio Argentino Roca promulgated the decree of the law of Federalization of Misiones. Through this act Misiones became a National Territory of the Argentine State, partially recovering its autonomy by separating from the province of Corrientes. Its first Governor was Col. Rudecindo Roca (01/01/1882 -04-13-1891).

San José was declared a town on December 2, 1887 by the Governorate of Corrientes (which had Misiones annexed). In the 1890s, surveyor Juan Queirel mapped and measured the current town and colony of San José, located just a few kilometres west of the original Jesuit reduction. These subdivisions were not carried out until the order of the National

Government arrived in 1891. Engineer Juan Queirel subdivided the current town of San José and its Colony composed of 8,000 hectares.

A fateful decree of 1928 removed the reduction from the Historical Reserve category of the ruins of the mission, though it still had preserved the stairs, temple and walls of the school.

The greatest economic boost came with the railway station in 1910. It helped the installation of sawmills, yerba mate manufacturing plants and juice processing plants with the important Pindapoy company. The colony itself mainly produced yerba mate and citrus fruits.

The National Commission of Monuments, Places and Historical Assets catalogues the Jesuit Mission of San José through Historic Place Decree 16,482 1943 on December 17, 1943 San José Misiones

Source: Gutierrez-Maeders

Before the arrival of engineer Queirel, the existing settlers resided to the East and South of the Jesuit Ruins. The small neighbourhood was moved to the subdivision of this town, strengthened by some other families, the beginning of the current population.



Some owners of the first lots acquired were: Francisco Bordas, Francisco Pereyra, Yango Novais, Emilio Kopistinki, Jerónimo Rodríguez, Casiano Carballo, Francisco Bueno, Francisco Domínguez and Marciano Claro.

On August 14, 1892, by decree, the President of the Republic, Dr Carlos Pellegrini approved the measurement and subdivision of the Colonia de San José carried out by the surveyor Juan Queirel, thus establishing the Refoundation of the Town of San José.

On December 10, 1953, at the initiative of the president Juan Domingo Peron, Law No. 14,294 provided for the provincialization of the National Territory of Misiones. Congress sanctions Law 14,294 the National Territory of Misiones was provincialized. Thus, Misiones once again had the status of an Argentine Province and regained its full autonomy as a federal state. The first Governor was Dr. Claudio Arrechea.

Some provincial dates: 1956 – tourism to the ruins. 03.16.57 – Bishop Jorge Kemerer. 1962 – basketball amphitheatre. 1972 – agrarian movement strike. 1973 – signature on the treaty to build Yaciretá. 1973 – National University of Misiones law 20288. 1979 – Itaipú, 17 km from the limit. 1979 – tender for Posadas Encarnación bridge. 1985 – Tancredo Neves Bridge inaugurated by Alfonsín and Sarney. 1990 – Menem inaugurates the Posadas Encarnación bridge. 1998 Death of Bishop Kemerer.

### **Salesian Agrotechnical Institute Pascual Gentilini**

The Patron: They talk about Saint John Bosco. It seems that initially it was the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On December 5, 2006 the Rector Major changed the name of the House to "MISIONES-SAINT JOSEPH", Patron Saint John Bosco (Prot. No. 316/2006).

#### **Rectors:**

Father Juan B. Gherra 1927-30

Father Serafín Santolini 1931-33

Father Manuel Martínez 1934-36

Father Juan Nazzi 1936-37

Father Francisco J. Pérez 1937-42

Father Emilio Scrosatti 1943-51

Father Teresio Giordano 1952-57

Father José Lago 1958-59

Father Teodoro Sack 1960-62

Father Teresio Giordano 1964-66

Father Mario Gallenca 1967-76

Father Ernesto Di Bárbora 1977-82

Father Edgardo Zenklusen 1983-85

Father Carlos Rebinski 1986-91

Father Antonio Malarczuk 1992

Father Mario Del Degán 1993-98

Father Ernesto Di Bárbora 1999-2003

Father Mariano Tkachuk 2004-2009

Father Orestes Barra 2010-2013

Father Adolfo Aguiire 2014-2019

Father Andres del Campo 2020

Father Miguel Bencharski 2021-

The responsibility of complying with the testament of the donor, Mr Pascual Gentilini, led the Salesians to face very great difficulties, especially due to distances and precarious means.

A project was made to build the School on the paved National Route 14, near San José. This would have prevented many difficulties, but



the Superiors did not understand the project.

Don Castillo Lara, Extraordinary Visitor, did not give a favourable vote for its realization. This appears in the Minutes of the year 1970.



The School is still in the place where it had its beginnings and is already celebrating more than 90 years. It was renovated, expanded and beautified. Since 2007, it has an asphalt road that connects it with the rest of the provincial and national routes.



Source: Salesian archives, January 2022

#### 1. The constructions:

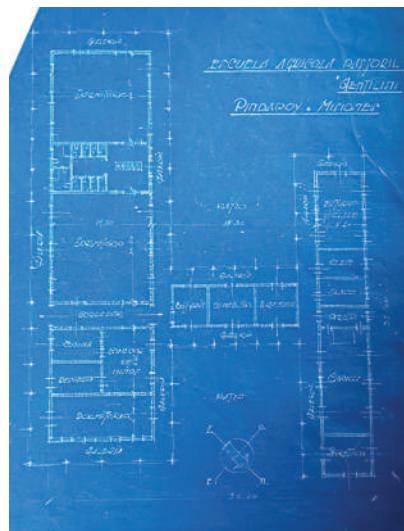
Initially they were made with materials from the area: wood from the mountain, "rough scratched" sand, adobe...

Drawings are preserved of a building project, prepared in the Province of Buenos Aires, which was never carried out.

A second, completely new building project, studied in the 1960s, also failed to come to fruition.

#### Old School Plan

Which is located in the Salesian Archives of Buenos Aires.



1949 Award Brochure



In the current buildings, the following stages can be distinguished:

1. Before Father Emilio Scrosatti and his constructions (1943 - 1951)



2. In the early 1950s, the bakery buildings were built (1954, in Homage to the 25th Anniversary of Salesian Father Próspero). The design of all of them were in the colonial style.

3. The front building, built towards the end of the 60s (69-70)





4. The replacement of the primitive dormitory at the beginning of the 80s led to the expansion of the internal patio. The larger dormitory accommodated more students.

## 2. Drinking water and electric light

The precariousness and poverty with which the work operated from its origins until 1952 was proverbial, especially in the supply of water, both for consumption and for other needs.

October 26, 1952 marked a milestone in the history of the Gentilini, since a pump was installed on a slope next to the stream. Water was pumped up by an internal combustion engine through a suction pool. A network of 1800 meters of pipes was set up. There was a difference of 70 metres in elevation. A water tower with a metal tank of 15,000 litres on it completed the solution to all water problems.

The original installation underwent important modifications over time.

Today the School has a computerized electric motor pump that facilitates the supply of the vital element for various uses.

The Comptroller Mr. Hugo Jorge Montiel (07/27/1966 - 11/18/1969) donated the materials for the installation and for the connection to EMSA of the High Voltage network.

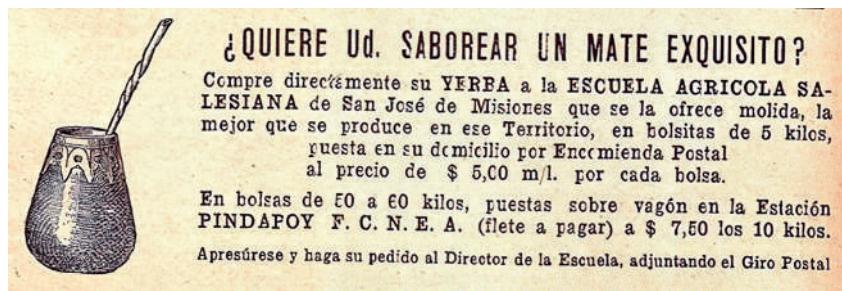
Since then, the “old Ruston,” which had been in operation since March 19, 1935, began to perform only emergency duties. Earlier, it used to generate electricity for the School.

In 2016, the new SCANIA automatic generating equipment was purchased

### 3. The Yerba Mill: Yerbatero Mill “Don Próspero”

On July 12, 1928, the first Gentilini barbecue was blessed.

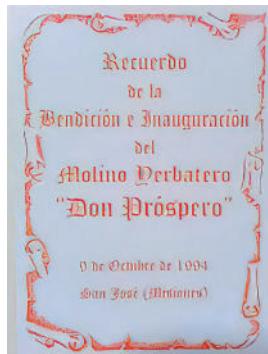
On March 13, 1929, a yerba mill was installed and seven ounces of Yerba mate were shipped for the first time (1 ounce equals 28 grams).



In 1931, at the start of the new school year, the first 35 hectares of yerba mate were planted.

Since then, the old “Pastoral Agricultural School” annually harvests the yerba mate and subjects it to the drying process using the barbacuá system. The School immediately tried to have a mill to produce mate with its own brand.

As the years went by, the plantations increased, and part of the yerba canada crop was sold to industrial yerba growers in the area; and the rest was used for internal consumption.



Thus, we reach the 90's and the idea of owning a mill is strongly revived. 1992 was the year of the project; 1993 and 1994 were when it was achieved.

The name of the brand of the yerba, "Don Bosco", was the choice of the students themselves in 1993.

The herbal mill is named after "Don Próspero", in homage to the Salesian Coadjutor Don Próspero Schiaffino (1931-1996), who in 1993 marked 63 years of presence in the Salesian Work of Misiones.

Don Próspero died on August 7, 1996, after having spent most of his Salesian life in this School where everyone remembers him as "Teacher", "Brother" and "Friend". Since 2017, his ashes rest in a pavilion at the entrance of the school.

## SALESIAN AGROTECHNICAL INSTITUTE “PASCUAL GENTILINI”

### “SAN JOSÉ – MISIONES – ARGENTINA”

#### Socio-community intervention

Identity: Salesian Museum IAS Gentilini

- a. Place: **A. The area of the old theatre-studio: Salesian School Museum** and the **area of the internal patio of the water tower and Don Bosco barbecue area** (next to the dining room): **B. Gentilini Interpretation Space** (the room behind the school kiosk).
- b. Two sectors: a school museum and an interpretation space

#### ***Museum Restoration***

Main objective: **“Recover the memory of the SALESIAN AGROTECHNICAL INSTITUTE “PASCUAL GENTILINI”**

This multidisciplinary work covered historical, architectural, religious, museological and sociocultural animation facets.

Members of the pastoral educational community interested in the recovery of memories intervened from their different perspectives.

The Salesian Museum SALESIAN AGROTECHNICAL INSTITUTE “PASCUAL GENTILINI” aimed at recovering memories through the identification of the characteristic features of its uniqueness, manifested through the different characters who inhabited it and the features of each era.

## A. Gentilini School Museum

The Museum began with the collections made by Father Juan Nicolau and located in the constructions carried out by Father Rector, Emilio Scrosatti (1943-51) in the old theatre (southern sector). This place consists of two parts: different elements of the ruins of the Jesuits of San José converted as museological displays, and a sector for Natural Sciences used as teaching support, in addition to the Technology sector.

### Timeline:

February 23, 2017. 90 years since the arrival of the Salesians to San José in 1927. What was achieved was the creation of the "PASCUAL GENTILINI" SALESIAN AGROTECHNICAL INSTITUTE.

October 2017. Opening of Espacio Gentilini

May 18, 2022. Re-functionalization of the Gentilini School Museum

### **Gentilini Museum: Inventory and script**





Climbing the access staircase, the 15 steps take us to the Museum:

1. Salesian Museum; 2. Pascual Gentilini; 3. Don Bosco; 4. Guaraniés; 5. Jesuits; 6. Vipers; 7. Argentina; 8. Missions; 9. machines and tools; 10. Biodiversity; 11. Technologies; 12. toucans; 13. yerba mate; 14. missionary woods. 15. tiles.

You can observe the birds of the Gentilini field. On the left side the collection of snakes and insects and the map of Argentine oil. Then large Animals with their skeletons. Cow, horse and pig.

The area of the Guaraniés Jesuit Missions. There is a collection of floors (pavements) of 12 different tiles, which makes the collection the most important among the various museums. Also tiles, burned columns from the temple and millstone.

Advances in Technology: the different calculators, telephones, radio recorders and projectors. Gentilini soda factory, camera and military projectiles.

The Mission Woods. Collection of different woods from the province

Yerba mate. Sector where various brands and production stages are observed



## B-INTERPRETATION SPACE: GENTILINI SPACE



What was done was to rescue the area and create a new Museum as a cultural unit in the Gentilini Space. That is, it revalued the house and its gardens, through the renovation and zoning of the different places.

One space and three areas displaying three different times. The first settlers: the Guaraníes, the Jesuit missions and the arrival of immigrants to the territory. In one place three colours identify us: the Guaraní red, the gold of the Guarani Jesuit missions and the blue of the eyes of the Poles and Ukrainians. These displays generate interest in the population and attract tourism.

This project was carried out within the framework of the 90 years of the IAS and taking into account that the Institution is valued by the population as a cultural heritage. The renovation, therefore, cared for and respected the collections and also made it a tourist attraction.

The objectives were:

General: achieve the revaluation of the area and create a new museum in the Gentilini space, as a cultural heritage of the province of Misiones.

Specific: renovate the water tank area and the Don Bosco barbecue area to increase their attraction, both for tourists and the local population; and also, improve its signage.

### **The Museum and its realities**

In our museums, data creates value by driving efficient growth as it informs strategic and operational decisions.

Operational decisions concern things such as opening hours, how many front-line staff to have, or how to optimize inventory for demand, usually with a view to improving cost savings.

The adoption of data-informed decision making is best handled through three vehicles in the organization: 1/ at the management level, 2/ through the senior leadership team, and 3/ by the heads of each department.

Each stakeholder group has a timeline that automated reporting can support and a forum to encourage the use of the live dashboard. Data transformation rarely occurs when the data itself responds to work performed by a single analyst: cultural change requires a range of

users for data management that are diverse at the departmental level and at the management level, under the executive coordination.

It is through these three vehicles of management, leadership and administration that decision styles – based on the use of data – can gain traction.

These stages will go through descriptive, predictive and prescriptive analysis:

**Descriptive analytics** presents summaries and insights into historical and current data through visualizations, dashboards, and reports. They answer the question of what happened before? What is happening now? Because? For example:

How many visitors did we have this month? Are we still reaching the goal?

How does that compare to last month? What happened last year at this time?

What was the impact of rainy days and school holidays?

**Predictive analysis** presents us with forecasts and probabilities that facilitate future planning. Since no model can perfectly predict the future, it must be accompanied by a precision result that guides the range of future possibilities. They answer the question: What could happen next? Or What is a certain person likely to do? For example:

How many visitors should we expect this month? What should be our goal? How likely is it that we will achieve it?

How accurate is that prediction? What are the upper and lower limits of the range of scenarios we should plan for? How did the model reach that conclusion?

**Prescriptive analysis** presents us with recommendations to guide our action and optimize performance. To begin with, these actions can be provided as insights for a data user to consider in decision making. They answer the question: What now? The next iteration on this is cognitive, and poses the question: What did we learn? Ultimately, calls can be automated to make a system dynamically respond to its environment, asking the question: What is best? OR, What is the best time to organize this exhibition and maximize attendance? What is the optimal marketing budget for this event?

Big data is the critical ingredient at all levels: typically, the more a visitor's interest progresses, the more data they require. There is no technical measure of what makes data big, although the standard definition is the "V" list: data that comes in Volume, is Variable, and has Velocity. Among the challenges of big data are ensuring that it is valid, that it has veracity (a bit like provenance) and that it is managed to avoid vulnerabilities.

A museum should be a place where community stories are told, thus fostering a certain sense of belonging and ownership. The community must love the museum and feel that its mission is important.

The museum, in turn, must be a true reflection of the character of the community.<sup>3</sup>

Museums that have done this effectively have fewer problems planning their survival and day-to-day operations.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.evermuseografia.com](http://www.evermuseografia.com)

The people and groups that have coped most effectively with scarce resources are those that are actively committed to making the museum an indispensable part of the life of their community.

This happens when the museum is connected, visible, and actively engaged with its community.

The museum must help visitors enjoy and learn from its collections through exhibitions, programming, and generating opportunities for research. In doing so, they provide the visitor with access to the collection, both physical and intellectual.

It must also adapt to the reality of a diverse public, which demands different ways of accessing information (languages, for example).

Visitors, of all ages and economic circumstances, religious and cultural backgrounds, should be able to easily understand the museum's messages.

The role of the museum is not simply to show students and visitors the collection, but also to provide opportunities for them to engage with it.

Traditionally, museums have been founded around a collection, which could be on any subject. Some are a combination of a variety of objects and ideas. This is our case, since the historical, educational and technological are combined.

The idea is to organize a functioning museum where stories are told accompanied by a collection of objects and equipment specifically displayed for this purpose. Both in the field of history itself and in the evolutionary process of technological advances in different industries.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [www.evermuseografia.com](http://www.evermuseografia.com)

The museum cannot continue to be a great cemetery of objects; the cemeteries of culture will disappear. They must tell us stories of people through things, objects. But these stories cannot be uncritical; we need to show the complexity of the events of the past.<sup>5</sup>

A heritage museologist, Architect Adriana Ortea, said, “I think we have to change our perspective: ‘not only take the tourist into account’ but also ‘empower’ the NEIGHBOUR. There are many techniques in the interpretation of heritage, collective participative actions that can be generated... and without forgetting new technologies to support these efforts. My best example to recommend is the Ferrowhite – workshop museum.”

We like to think – and verify – that we leave museums as better people.

In one way or another, the generic objectives that we can develop in a museum as an educational project aimed at non-formal or informal education can be framed along the following lines:

1. Provide the visitor with knowledge and techniques necessary for the interpretation of societies of the present and the past, through heritage, overcoming the anecdotal and strengthening the comprehensive vision of the environment, from a socio-historical, natural and scientific-technological perspective.
2. Raise awareness in society of the need for shared conservation, an aspect that is relevant for any heritage education project,

<sup>5</sup> BY THE NOTEBOOK. AUGUST, 2021 / Look in the rearview mirror / Joan Santacana Mestre / Dr. Silvana M. Lovay, regional coordinator of ICOM-CECA for Latin America and the Caribbean, has invited me to give a conference for Argentina on a hot topic: the need to change museums. Responding to this invitation, I have allowed myself to reflect on the theme that heads this article: “Deconstructing the museum, building the future.”

since heritage assets contribute to the understanding of collective identities, due to their capacity to promote citizen participation, social cohesion and cultural promotion.

3. Revitalize the social function of heritage, enhancing its significance as a resource for social, economic and cultural development. Understanding heritage as an economic and cultural resource implies that we must be able to create the necessary instruments of management for its inclusion in strategies that generate wealth and quality of life in the environment.
4. Demand scientific research on the museum, its environment and the communication structure used; highlight at this point the need to maintain research projects permanently, which means understanding research as a value that must return to society, while generating new economic resources of a heritage and cultural nature.
5. Plan strategies for continuous evaluation of the educational quality and sociocultural profitability of the project, in which the visitor feels involved and acts as an external evaluator of the educational project itself.

The 5 verbs of objectives: Provide, Raise awareness, Revitalize, Demand and Plan must be the guide to be able to establish a dialogue between visitors and those of us who have the difficult task of guiding and accompanying in Salesian Museums.

SPEECH – Fr. SCROSATTI, 1944

Posadas, November 13, 1944, Diario el Territorio, Misiones.

A clip from the newspaper: "In a solemn and emotional ceremony, important facilities of the High School of Agriculture and Livestock, P. Gentilini."

Source: Gentilini awards brochure 1946

The article says in one place: "After greeting the visitors and expressing that he regretted the absence of the Provincial Rev. Fr. Dr. Raspanti, the Rev. Fr. Scrosatti, director of the establishment, addressed the issue of rural problems with eloquent words: 'as a result of the second sample of Posadas' regional work, several collaborations were published in local newspapers. Among others, one caught our attention that promoted the creation of an Agricultural School in Misiones. You see, gentlemen, that until today the Gentilini School, for many, did not exist. Hence the need to make this kind of refoundation. A little more than 15 years ago, this School of Agriculture and Livestock was founded with the "Gentilini" legacy. The Salesian Fathers made great sacrifices to form this school, encountering great difficulties, such that they cost the life of the first director of the Establishment, **Fr. Juan Cherra, of saintly reputation, whose memory still endures in the hearts of many**, and the third director, Fr. Manuel Martínez, who died in 1937 in Córdoba.

"Today, after 15 years of bloodless sacrifices, without official help from any government, the Gentilini agricultural school is built on solid





foundations that must resist all difficulties and carry out its mission of forming honest citizens who will shape the future of the Territory. The current government formed in an hour of deviation from nationality, is determined to direct everything on the paths that our patriots traced with the sword inked in blood spilled in countless battles. It also longs to take youth to the countryside because we are all witnesses of the desertion of fields.

“The farmer emigrates.

As swallows emigrate to warmer regions, he emigrates to the cities where he finds all kinds of comforts, where he can satisfy all his tastes and live

better, thus increasing the number of proletarian citizens.



“We know that there is no proportion between the inhabitants of the countryside and the cities. Almost 80% live in cities; the countryside in huge areas is depopulated. Many of those who live cultivating the land, are already tired and defeated in the hard struggle to support themselves and their numerous children. They are waiting for the right opportunity to get rid of their animals, utensils and other belongings that they acquired after much sweat and fasting.

“What is the reason for this defection?

“The countryside is not always to blame. It is the improvident man who is the cause of this failure and this defeat. All the settlers emigrated from old Europe, particularly from Poland and Ukraine. They arrived

in our territory to work, without the slightest preparation, in a land so different from the one where they were born in, in a climate so different and for them unhealthy. What they did was to try their luck. The blame, which the government never accepts, lies with the wind, the earth and the rain. Let us not forget the ants, for whom they even grew corn, cut it and put it in the mouth of the anthill, to try to prevent them from advancing towards the house they lived in. Everything is resolved here with a single phrase 'it doesn't work.' Corn does not grow because they do not know how to chase the ants or they do not know how to cultivate it; citrus does not grow because the pests that attack it are not known and there are no remedies to combat them; potatoes and tomatoes don't flourish because we don't know how to combat the Moor bug; and they don't work because we don't know anything about agriculture. It is certainly not the ignorant who succeed in Agriculture, but the intelligent and constant workers. The time has passed to become the 'America' the first immigrants spoke of. They are now large ranchers or landowners who sell at the price of gold what they perhaps acquired as a gift.

"We are in a time when the farmer's life is quite heavy. What he produces is worth little and what he must buy for his sustenance and clothing costs a lot. The poor settlers of Azara, Apóstoles and San José know it well. They go to Posadas in their typical carts to sell onions and garlic for a few cents per kilo. They return disappointed after two or three days of fasting. They now have provisions but, it must be said, they cost him 'an arm and a leg'.

"We hope that the study and reflections at the Misiones on the status of the farmer will raise the economic level of the poor rural worker, until now so inadequately paid. I believe, gentlemen, that evil is not eternal

and that this horrible war, whose shrapnel wounds hurt us, will one day end; 'This storm will pass' and, when confidence is reborn in the heart of humanity, the men of the countryside will be full of healthy optimism.

"We must study the problems of the countryside on the ground, so that the farmer and the rancher will take advantage of the immense treasures that this blessed red land contains.

**"The farmer must succeed, but he will only succeed when he cultivates intelligently."**



Source: Salesian Archive Buenos Aires. c1931. Gentilini. P. Serafin Santolini (1876-1952)

"Create agriculture and livestock schools. Here is a great solution, as the newspaper suggested a few days ago, **the territory of Posadas.**

"That is why we, the children of Don Bosco, were the founders of the first agricultural school in the country and which precisely this year celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its creation. I say, the Salesians that support this republic, among our 100 schools of all kinds, have 10



schools of agriculture, livestock and farm industry. We feel encouraged today with your presence to **bless and inaugurate the new building of the Gentilini school**, the only agricultural school in Misiones.

'The return to the land' mentioned by the representative of M. of A. in Córdoba the last few days, has been promoted more than once. An urban-rural balance has been and is being claimed as a way to invigorate our economic structure. It is expected to define even more clearly our spiritual physiognomy and our social formation. However, it cannot be a reality if we do not begin by reactivating the principles and guiding ideas of our agricultural school, infusing our life into the structures in charge of directing it.



Primeros Aquisitores (de izq. a der.) de la Escuela Agrícola P. Gentilini:  
Sentados: Américo Andrade, T. Gómez, Ceferino Vélez  
Parados: Juan Grindola, Miguel Stacul, Isidro Héctor Vázquez  
4 de enero de 1959

"In a country like ours, we need at least to double the number of establishments of this type. They are needed not only to instil in youth the love of the land and the tasks of the countryside, but also because the facts show us that the best ally of a healthy and prosperous agriculture is the technique.

"We, the Salesians in Misiones, have begun to solve the problem of urban and rural imbalance. **It doesn't seem too much to us to have invested almost \$100,000 in this construction. The benefits will be enjoyed tomorrow with the training of hundreds and thousands of healthy and intelligent farmers. Let's go back to the field. This**



## should be the key word. Return to the countryside and bring the youth back to the countryside.

“We are committed to doing it and even though we are priests, we are not ashamed to take up the hoe or the plough to set an example for the children and make them love agricultural work.

“You also have a part in this effort to carve out the future of the youth. In this noble desire to ‘make a homeland’ it is your responsibility to help. Cooperate with those like us who work for the poor, for the children of the people, for agriculture, for the homeland, for our beloved homeland, for Misiones so that what is written about it becomes a reality: ‘An earthly paradise, the promised land’.”

This speech led to the publication of the book “The Promised Land Misiones The Earthly Paradise”. The printing of it was completed on November 30, 1944, at the International Publishing Society of Buenos Aires.





## **BRO AGUSTIN BORZI**

**Argentina**

Bro. Agustin Borzi was born in Mendoza in 1957.

He is a Salesian of Don Bosco and has a degree in oenology and fruit and vegetable industries. He was dean of the Faculty of Oenology. He is a founding member of the Argentinean Academy of Vine and Wine.

He is a foreign corresponding member of the Accademia Italiana della Vite y del Vino.

He was appointed honorary member of the Board of Historical Studies of Mendoza.

He has authored didactic publications and books where he stands out in co-authorship with Julieta Gargiulo of *Il vino si fa così*.

He is dedicated to the preservation of the Argentinean wine and olive heritage.

He is dedicated to the Jesuit Guaraní Orchard within the Jesuit Missions of Guaraní, a programme of the Ministry of Culture of Argentina.



# CHAPTER 15

## RESISTENCIA

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PRESENCE  
THE WORK OF DON BOSCO  
RESISTENCIA - CHACO - ARGENTINA (1941-2023)



**Arch. Ana María Villalobos, Arch. María Gabriela Santibáñez,  
Arch. Adriana Hernández Toso, Arch. Pablo Bianchi and  
Bro. Lic. Agustín Borzi, Salesian of Don Bosco**

Chair of History of Architecture and Urbanism II  
Faculty of Architecture, Urbanism and Design. University of Mendoza.  
Work of Don Bosco. Rodeo del Medio. Maipú. Mendoza. Argentina. 2023



## General Objective

To give an overview of the development of the activities of the Work of Don Bosco in Resistencia, Chaco, Argentina from the time of the arrival of the first Salesians (1941) to the present day.

## Specific Objectives

To introduce the reader to the subject matter: culture, education, history, tourism, tradition and heritage.

To observe the growth of the various actors in the community and their influence on the environment.

To understand, today, our past and to apply this knowledge in ways that help students, alumni, teachers, families and friends of the Work of Don Bosco in Resistencia Chaco Argentina, to respond with specific actions to local situations.

To present, from the Salesian Museum, the actions carried out in the School, the Parish, the Salesian Intercultural Professional Training Centre and their impact on the original Qom people in Resistencia, Chaco.





## History

The foundation of the Work of Don Bosco in Resistencia dates back to 8 December 1941. Father Horacio Lóvine, Father Juan Rolando and Brother Francisco Marozzi had arrived in Resistencia. They intended to start first a festive oratory, the Exploradores, and then a school. This was because of the constant insistence of Bishop Nicolás De Carlo. He had been refused several times. He managed, finally, to realise an old desire of his: he believed it necessary due to the existing social deficiencies.

The fact is doubly significant because just one hundred years earlier, on 8 December 1841, the founder of the Salesians began his work for the benefit of the poorest and most abandoned young children in the city of Turin, with a 16-year-old bricklayer's apprentice, Bartholomew Garelli. One hundred years later, the work, already consolidated throughout the world, was beginning in Chaco, Argentina.

On 21 June 1942, six months after the beginning of the Oratory, the shed at the junction of Avenida Italia and Pirovano (currently named



after Don Bosco), where the first chapel was built, was inaugurated with the blessings of Monsignor De Carlo.

The first school year was in 1943, with a total of 150 students, 45 of them boarders from the interior of Chaco and the north of Santa Fe. The official inauguration of the school was on 11 July 1943 in the presence of Monsignor De Carlo and the Governor of the territory, Colonel Lugones.

The school grew as the years went by and the number of pupils increased, exceeding a thousand pupils in many years between primary and secondary school.

In 1946 a sports commission of the oratory was constituted. About 7 years later, the first pupils graduated with the title of Bachilleres.

On 23 December 1956, the foundation stone of the current parish church 'María Auxiliadora' was laid and blessed in the presence of the then bishop Monsignor Enrique Rauch, Salesian superiors, representatives of the government and various institutions of the city. The temple was inaugurated on 24 May 1969, in the presence of Monsignor José Agustín Marozzi.

Shortly afterwards, the boarding school was closed, but more emphasis was given to secondary education, with the gradual incorporation of lay staff, both in terms of teaching and administration and management.

Today, with the directives of the Salesian Congregation, the institution is run by a team of education professionals, all of them lay people, who are accompanied by consecrated Salesians. Networking with other teams spread throughout the country and deepening the principles of the Preventive System for their works adapt the specific spirit of Salesian schools to this changing world.

No less than 80,000 students from all over the region have passed through the classrooms of this institution in its 75 years of existence. To these must be added the thousands of explorers, oratorians and committed lay people who have been trained according to its principles, as well as having given rise to two sporting institutions: the Sports Club and the Bowls Club.

On the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Work of Don Bosco in Resistencia, there was a need to show the different sectors and their activities.

The museum should be the place where the stories of the community are told, thus fostering a certain sense of belonging and ownership. The community must love the museum and feel that its mission is important. The museum, in turn, must be a true reflection of the character of the community. And so, the Salesian Museum was created in 1991.

Salesians, teachers, former pupils, students and Salesian cooperators put their memories at the service of history.

Many have been involved in the development of the Museum and steps are still being taken to achieve the proposed objectives.

## **The Salesian Founders and new realities**

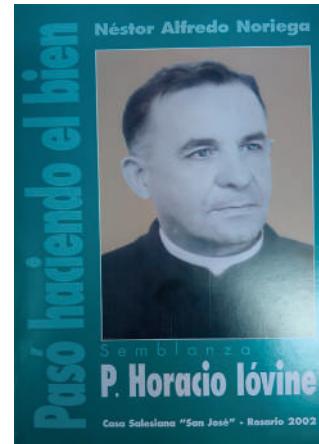
The pastoral educative community of Don Bosco School and its closeness to the needs of the original Qom people of the Argentinean Chaco.

Father Horacio Ióvine, Founder, and Dr. Antonio Pedone, Lay Director of the Work of Don Bosco in Resistencia, have been and are the Salesian



and lay person responsible for the various activities.

The figure of Father Horacio Iovine in the book written in 2002 by Father Néstor Noriega marks its title with, 'He went about doing good', the style that marked the entire pastoral educative community of the work of Don Bosco at Chaco. and that today the lay director Dr. Antonio Pedone continues with this Salesian style.

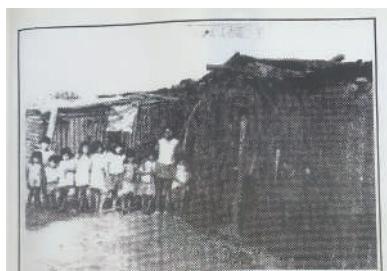


### The indigenous Qom people

The Qom - 60,000 according to the latest census - live especially in Chaco, in the eastern part, along the coast, and in the area known as The Impenetrable, in the west of the province.

The Qom language is a fundamental part of the cultural identity of the native peoples of Chaco.

It is the Qom community's own language that has been passed down through generations and plays a crucial role in the preservation of the worldview, history and traditions of this community.



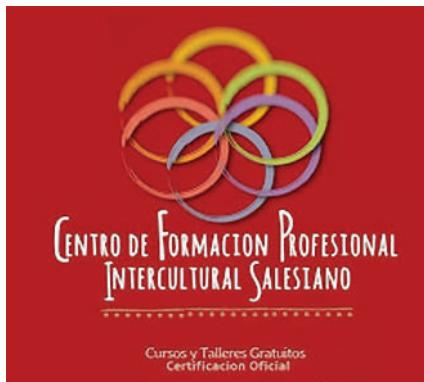
Barrio Toba, Rancho típico, construido por los aborigenes.



Barrio Toba, construido por el gobierno, para los aborigenes.



**The Qom people have been forgotten by many, but not by the Salesians, who dedicated themselves to 'caring for their ancestral heritage and evangelising by educating the community'.**



The Salesian Intercultural Vocational Training Centre (C.F.P.I.S.) is the Salesian vocational school in the city of Resistencia, province of Chaco, Argentina.



The C.F.P.I.S. was founded in April 2018 with the support of the Swiss Papalin Foundation in cooperation with Jugendhilfe Weltweit, Switzerland.



Achieving containment and support for the QOM people

Among the house's own training offers, the following trades of the community stand out

Qom: Qom language, Qom basketry and Qom ceramics.

These training courses have been offered since the inauguration of the C.F.P.I.S. and seek to revalue and make visible the art and ancestral knowledge of the Qom community.

In addition, students from the Qom community are supported in starting, sustaining and completing their training by means of a series of aids. Completing a course allows them to enter the world of work and improve their quality of life.





## Development and Presentation

In addition, the planning framework of a museum defines a series of guiding elements related to each project.

Although there is no concrete and closed design when it comes to drawing up a museum project, it is based on three premises: What to tell (the script); where to tell it (the space) and what to tell it with (the objects).



The aim of the Museo de la Obra de Don Bosco in Resistencia is to integrate history with the actions carried out in favour of the culture of the Qom people.

The new museological script seeks to achieve a new location with greater accessibility.

In addition to recovering the museum objects, the objects of the community will be integrated.



## Don Bosco Salesian complex Rodeo del Medio The Olive Mill and Olive Tree Museum

Salesians have been protagonists of olive cultivation in Mendoza; they developed it from the teaching, practical and production points of view. Incorporating advanced technologies, they have positioned this activity as one of the most important in the province at present. Their activity has placed the work at the forefront of the industry's development. However, it must be acknowledged that the Salesian project did not have a rapid and sustained progress over time. In its historical development it endured the vicissitudes of commercialisation, industrialisation and the overwhelming growth of the wine industry. That prevented it from achieving higher levels and it has reached our days in a primitive state.

There is growing interest in agricultural tourism in our province. The value of the Salesian brand and its characteristics have been recognised. We have an identity of our own. We consider it appropriate to incorporate it into the heritage-tourism circuits with an equal rank and importance as given to the wine route. The olive industry can no longer be considered as a secondary activity, but as an industry in continuous growth. These days, the trend towards the recognition of production gives the olive industry a new position, and this motivates



us to value and include the case of Rodeo del Medio in cultural-tourism itineraries on a larger scale.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To recognise and position olive cultivation as a cutting-edge productive activity, complementary to those already existing in the province and the region.
- To raise awareness of its monumental heritage value by observing it as an ensemble; a product of the past, still in operation today, and to establish relations with the present.
- To disseminate the intrinsic values of the work of the Salesian House of Rodeo del Medio, its contribution to the development of the area and to the history of the new Argentinean olive cultivation.
- To create a valid argument that, at different levels of depth, will serve as a support structure for the formulation and development of a museum and cultural tourist circuit at provincial and regional level.

## SPECIFIC TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- To create, on the basis of field experience, a body of documentary material for consultation, which will form the basis for other work related to the development of olive cultivation.
- To develop in students the skills of observation, analysis, synthesis, interrelation and critical judgement, and graphic, oral and written expression.
- To handle the terms inherent to architecture and urban planning and their meaning, in order to understand from them the technological, industrial and design processes.



## DEVELOPMENT: THE OASIS-TERRITORIAL MODEL

Mendoza is a province of Argentina located in the centre-west of the country, characterised by its desert, alluvial and seismic conditions. A particular model of agricultural practices has developed here, based on the transformation of the desert into oases, with an irrigation system supported by dams, canals and irrigation channels. These oases have been mainly the support for wine production. As a whole, they constitute heritage assets for the nation.

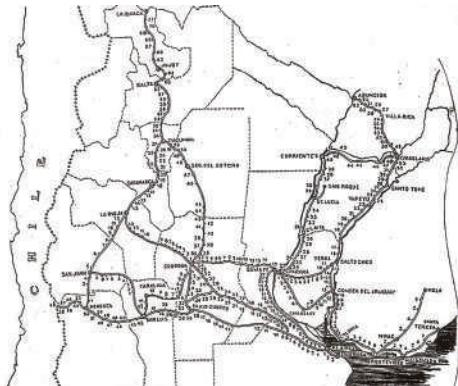
These local models, made up of lines, areas and focal points, are Dynamic. They have changed over time through the activities of the people who inhabited the region and can be distinguished into significant historical periods. Within this structure there are rural and agricultural areas (both very ordered and precise in their layout) and focal points of varying intensity and importance such as minor towns, hamlets and industries.

These groups are logically structured within the territory. Although they have common characteristics throughout the province, they also have particularities that define a territorial identity with a specific meaning within the context of the province, which allows us to define them as "heritage units".

## THE OLD POSTAL ROAD

In order to understand the resultant phenomenon in Rodeo del Medio, it is necessary to go back into history since colonial times. There was then the old Camino Real or Camino de las Postas, established by the Bourbon administration from 1776, which served as the link between the Port of Buenos Aires and Valparaíso.

Its route coincided with National Route 7 during the period 1862-1970 and ran parallel to the railway line which created the towns of San Roque, Beltrán, Rodeo del Medio, Coquimbito and Gutiérrez as its stages. In the 1970s, it lost its structural purpose and its national status and became a provincial route (RP50), avoiding the towns that had been established, but close to the new MERCOSUR road system.



## THE CITY OF RODEO DEL MEDIO

The urban area of Rodeo del Medio is of particular historical interest as it is intimately linked to the Salesian Work of Don Bosco in Argentina. Before the arrival of the Salesians, there was only a scattered hamlet in the middle of the vast territory owned by Mrs. Lucila Barrionuevo de Bombal and the Lieutenant General Don Rufino Ortega,



who decided, on the recommendation of the priest Aquiles Pedrolini, to sell plots of land to consolidate the settlement.<sup>1</sup>



The town is the result of an original layout based on diagonals, which connect the two most important poles. Its educational and religious focus was the Don Bosco Centre, and the productive focus was the Railway Station (1885).

The Salesian Institution was established in the area in 1898, at the request of Mrs. Lucila de Bombal. She donated 48 hectares for the development of the educational centre, under the express condition of relating it to oenology.

Other focal points were the residence of Pedro Molina, general of the Liberation Campaign. Today, it is the "Casa de las bóvedas" (House of the Vaults), a testimony of the wheat and cereal growing period of the territory. It was also the site of the Posta de Moyano. The Battle of

<sup>1</sup> The industrial complex Bodega Don Bosco in Rodeo del Medio. Braconi, Lopresti, Valdemoros. Faculty of Architecture. University of Mendoza. Mendoza. Mendoza. Argentina. ICOMOS Meeting. 2017



Rodeo del Medio, took place here on September 24th, 1841, between the Unitarians and the Federals.



The house of Mrs. Lucila Barrionuevo de Bombal restored by the members of the Cultural Centre of Rodeo del Medio.

## EVOLUTION OF THE OLIVE OIL INDUSTRY

According to some, olive cultivation spread before 1000 BC in certain Mediterranean countries, notably Palestine, Syria and Egypt. Many authors presume the practice of olive cultivation in Egypt before 2000 BC but claim that it existed from 1500 BC onwards.

From the 16th century BC onwards, the Phoenicians spread the olive tree: first to the Greek islands, then to Greece itself, then to Libya and Carthage (14th and 12th century BC). In Greek Cyrenaica, olive cultivation increased and was perfected in the 8th and 7th centuries BC, although it was flourishing as early as the 14th century BC.





Attic oil was in use throughout the world since the 6th century BC. It was produced in such quantities that in addition to satisfying domestic consumption, large portions of it were transported in the renowned 'lekithoi' or panathenaean amphorae.

These amphorae, richly ornamented and filled with an oil very suitable for the preparation of essences, came from Focida.

The olive tree continued to spread to other Mediterranean coastal countries. In Marseilles, where it had been introduced by the Phoenicians, this crop was favoured by the sun and sky of Provence. It gradually spread, through the work of the Romans, throughout the Gallic country together with the vine.

COLUMELLA, in his second volume of the work "On Agrarian Questions", speaks of the intercropping of olive trees and wheat. Other Latin authors such as PLINIUS, VARRON and CATON speak about the olive tree in their treatises.

In Spain, the olive tree was first introduced at the time of the maritime domination of the Phoenicians, especially in Baetica. Due to foreign invasions, no appreciable products were obtained until the arrival of Scipio and the domination by Rome.

The olive tree spread along the banks of the Ebro and Guadiana rivers and was the object of Mediterranean trade from the first century of the empire. Spain was and is the main producer of olive oil. Ancient Rome was supplied with Andalusian oil which was transported by ship from Betica (Spain) in amphorae (today called





Dressel amphorae in homage to the German scientist who classified them on Mount Testaccio, Italy. This mountain, located on the outskirts of Rome, is an artificial mount 50 metres high, which was formed with the amphorae (potsherds) that were thrown there.

In America, the consumption of olive oil accompanied colonisation and spread in the same way as the vine. Convents and orders owned olive plants and pressed their oil.

From its origins as a Spanish city, Mendoza had an incipient agricultural base, meeting only local consumption. This subsistence economy grew gradually due to the use of water, allowing the diversification to vineyards, wheat, corn and alfalfa fields for cattle fattening, which led to an increase in trade and commerce.

The beginning of the Independence campaign and the presence of General San Martín in these lands favoured the development of industries linked to the "war economy", such as tanneries and saddleries, mining and foundries, among others. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Mendoza had the necessary conditions to promote a specialised and intensive economic model. This made it possible to consolidate the wine industry as a traditional activity in Mendoza, in addition to the factors triggered by the immigration process and the arrival of the railway. The wine industry became the matrix of the provincial productive system. 80 years would pass before the emergence of other agro-industries and other industries that diversified the economic base (fruit, horticultural and olive crops). The economic base took an industrial form with the impulse of the Generation of the 80s, within the framework of the ideas of Progress, Evolution and Technology.



## SALESIANS AT RODEO DEL MEDIO: THE OIL INDUSTRY AND ITS TRANSFORMATION

In 1932, Law 11.643 on the Promotion of Olive Cultivation or the Economic Area of the Olive Tree was passed, signed by Julio Argentino Roca (h), vice-president of Agustín P. Justo (1932-1938). This national law, which set a precedent since it was passed prior to the Spanish legislation, authorised the cultivation of olive trees and the industrialisation of the fruit.

Agronomist, Rev. Fr. Dr. Leonardo Pedano generously poured all this science into a book. In 1945 he published *Olivicultura y Elayotecnia* with a preface by Professor Dr. Julio Savastano, head of Agricultural Industries and Director of the National Corporation of Olive Cultivation.

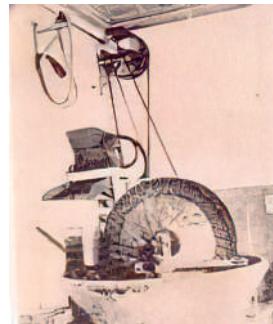
Father Pedano begins the book with the Latin quotation by Columela “*Olea quae prima ommium arborum est*” “the olive tree is the first of all trees”.

He is particularly grateful to Dr. Savastano for his wisdom but, above all, for being an enthusiastic builder of the cultural awareness of the olive tree.

It was the right framework for the Salesians to start negotiations aimed at constructing a factory and the development of education on the subject. Engineer Esteban Popón wrote in the magazine *Industria Olivícola*: ... “The Don Bosco School was the first Argentinean institution that, looking into the future, took on the study and teaching of olive cultivation and olive oil technology; it is the only one that grants its graduates the title of olive growing technician”<sup>2</sup>.



The first factory began to operate with the adaptation of the stone from the flour mill of General Rufino Ortega in Malargüe, which had fallen into disuse. A press was attached to this stone, thus creating the first oil mill. The ripe olives, ground, crushed and kneaded by this stone, produced the first Don Bosco Extra Virgin Olive Oil.



This entire production process was based not only on practice but also on theory, as the teachers at the Don Bosco Wine School placed special emphasis on teacher-training, creating the title of Olive Grower and the Chair of Elayotecnia in the 1930s. Thus, the knowledge imparted to the students who produced olive oil and carried out the physical-chemical analysis of the product's quality was transferred to their practical work.

In 1945 the factory was renovated and production continued until the mid 1950s, during the directorship of Father Juan Brissio (1951-1954). 1954 was a very important year for the Work of Don Bosco. It was the Universal Marian Year and the year of the canonisation of St. Dominic Savio (an example for young people). On 24 July 1954, it was decided to inaugurate the new oil extraction plant and olive canning factory: the oil mill or Frantoi.



The construction company was that of the Senior Master builder, Mr Pappa. The Don Bosco institution pays a tribute of gratitude to Fr



Thomas Young (1882-1952), a Salesian priest who played an important role in this school. A medallion of glasiris (Venetian mosaic) on the front commemorates his image. Mr. Pappa had a nephew in Italy who was a Bishop and whenever he wrote letters he always signed at the end as "Il suo nipote semplice Vescovo" "His simple nephew Bishop". This anecdote was told by Fr Ildemar Gómez (1920-1996) who managed the Don Bosco factory and winery for more than 25 years, with a very commendable level of honesty and abnegation.



The new facilities ushered in a new era of production and continued into the 1955 season during the directorship of Fr Roberto D'Amico (1955-1958).





The factory was at its best when the Rector Major Don Renato Ziggiotti visited the factory on 19 and 23 July 1956 as an illustrious guest of the province of Mendoza.

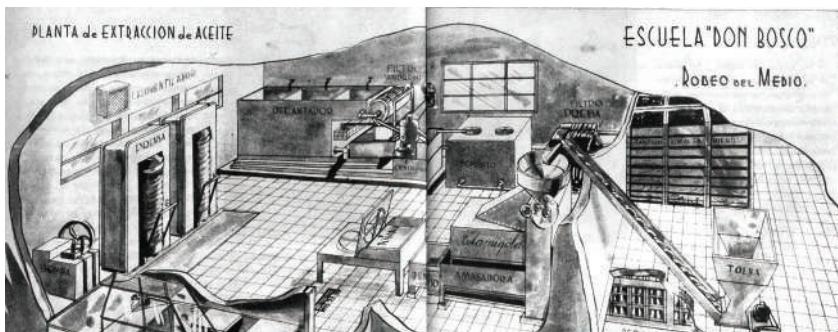
During the visit Don Renato Ziggiotti was able to appreciate the quality of the oils produced by the students. The photo shows Don Ziggiotti and Father Francisco Oreglia smiling happily. The journalist put in the note, visited the “oil mills”.



The new facilities inaugurated a new era in production. The oil factory had two distinct sections: the canned olive processing section and the oil extraction section.

The oil extraction plant had a very modern and innovative section for storing olives in cane-bottomed crates that allowed the olives to be stacked and not crushed. The interest in incorporating state-of-the-art equipment linked the Salesians with the Florentine firm Galardi (an industrial company dedicated to the manufacture of equipment).

Some equipment is worth mentioning, such as the clamigola, which replaces the old millstone and allows mechanical grinding and kneading. The super-presses allowed the pressing process to be automated, with a significant saving of time. The stainless steel coil optimised the washing and removal of the oil and the ambient temperature regulator increased the hourly output.



In this historical drawing of the Oil Extraction Plant, we see the equipment of the factory, which belonged to the firm Galardi of Florence, Italy.

Clamígola. The name is derived from Greek and Latin roots: Cla (I break, I crush) migo (I knead) ola (olive). It replaces with advantage the stone mill, as it was a machine with the necessary devices to grind the olives with mechanical mills, but without metallic friction. It reduces the paste to the desired fineness, deposits it and subsequently kneads it. Even better, using the Acapulco principle (difference in surface tension between the water and the oil), it obtains a quantity of virgin oil by spontaneous dripping. That is the equivalent to a first pressing, which greatly improves the subsequent exhaustion of the paste by pressing. This is achieved by increasing the natural disproportion between the quality of the alpechín and the oil in the paste.

The book dosing system was very convenient, because it allowed a perfectly uniform loading of the sporters or mats.

The 400 mm Piston presses apply a pressure of 440,000 kg on the plates. They were equipped with a centrifugal device that allowed the instantaneous and automatic lifting of the piston to be pressed.

The consequence was a saving of time and the absolute elimination of the possibility of deforming the tower shaft. This same device was used after the pressing, for the very rapid unloading of the press. The presses were driven by a two-speed pump for high and low automatic pressure so that the press was protected from any damage resulting from inadvertent distraction of the personnel.

This was followed by a stainless steel coil that allowed a quick washing and draining of the oil with self-discharge of the washings and washing water. There were the Andreani filters that improve the performance of the centrifuge, oil and air de-emulsifier, recovery wells, pre-filter and filter tanks.

Ambience temperature regulator.

Output is 600 kg/h.

Then there was a control laboratory and a warehouse in the basement, and a large storage and fractionation sector was also foreseen.

During the period of Father Cristóbal Brissio's directorship (1959-1964), negotiations began to acquire a plant from the company Rapanelli Fioravante from its representative in Argentina, "Francisco Biazzo" of Buenos Aires.

Very typical of Italian publicity, in addition to listing the qualities of the method, they called the processors "frantoiani".

Subsequently, an attempt was made to incorporate a plant of the company Rapanelli Fioravante, which would provide a remarkable method of production. The attempts were postponed due to the critical situation of olive cultivation in Argentina, which had begun its decline in the mid-1960s. In 1963 the Olycon S.A. plant was inaugurated



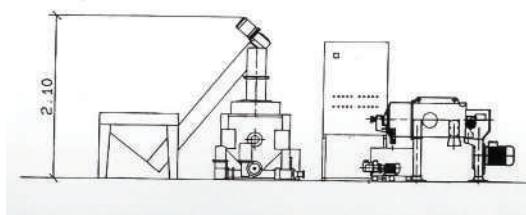
in Cruz del Eje. There were contacts with the company to install their new plant in Rodeo del Medio. The negotiations for the creation of the Faculty of Oenology (1965) and the situation of the Argentinean olive cultivation prevented the installation.

In 2005, during Father Eduardo Giorda's term of office, the NGO "Noi per Loro" from Italy donated the Rapanelli Fioravante S.p.A. factory, Viale Umbria, 14 - 06034 Foligno (PG) - ITALY – and installed it on the site (storage and fractionation) that had already been destined for the plant since 1954.

Its main characteristic is that it can guarantee a product that fetches a higher price: it obtains an extra virgin oil with the advanced qualities obtained from the natural cold draining.

The fundamental elements for obtaining a product of the highest quality are the following: degree of maturation of the drupe; modality of harvesting, transfer and storage of the olives; system of extraction; methods and times of conservation. The first, second and fourth points can be modified and adapted to optimise the quality of the product, while the determining factor is that the system has connected the extraction to the technologies applied.

The system works completely cold and performs the extraction through natural runoff.





In this way, the quality of the extra virgin olive oil is optimised, in relation to the degree of ripeness, the method of harvesting, the storage of the olives, the extraction system and the method and time of conservation.

At the moment, around 50,000 kg of olives of the Arauco, Arbequina, Manzanilla, Empeltre, Farga and Frantoio varieties are being processed to obtain the characteristic blend of AOVE Don Bosco.

This entire production process was based not only on practice but also on theory, as the leaders of the Congregation placed special emphasis on teacher training when they created the Diploma of Olive Grower and the Chair of Elayotecnia. Thus, the knowledge imparted to the students who made olive oil and carried out the physical-chemical analyses of the product's quality was transferred to the practical training.





## THE OIL MILL AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The oil mill building contains all the productive activity related to oil production.

This building is part of a Monumental Complex that is the result of the actions of the Salesians over time. It consists of the Shrine, Schools, Laboratories, Canning Factory, the Torre Vinaria Sernagiotto Winery and the annexes that support these activities.

The donation made by Mrs. Lucila Barrionuevo de Bombal to the Salesians in the original Bodega and Cava constitute the headquarters of this complex, complemented by the planting of olive trees and vines.

The construction of the new wine cellar in this area could have been a serious problem for the garden, but the valuable intervention of the architect Ana Etkin managed not only to save but also to enhance the value of this place.



An olive orchard was created, initially with more than 60 varieties of olive trees. At the moment we still find some of them, such as the typical Argentinean Arauco, the Spanish Manzanilla, Alorena, Changlot



Real, Arbequina, Spanish Manzanilla, the Italian Ascolano, Cerignola, Frantoio, Liguria and the Greek Empeltre.



This garden is the focus for the annual pilgrimage by the Brotherhood of the Virgin of the Olive Tree to the Sanctuary of María Auxiliadora, Patron Saint of Argentine Agriculture.

The creation of a cultural itinerary through heritage sites that preserve historical olive trees in the Argentine Republic will now be listed from on the Network of Historical Heritage Olive Trees of Argentina (ROHPA). This network allows us to identify and travel through different urban and rural landscapes both in Mendoza and the rest of the country.

It also opens us up to the knowledge and enjoyment of the culture of the olive tree and olive oil; observing, visiting, tasting and experiencing the world of olives and its tangible and intangible heritage in an enjoyable way.

In the approach to the elements of the heritage network, three levels of different scales were detected: (1) on the one hand, the sprouts that



were planted from the quadricentennial olive tree located in Maipú, Mendoza, were valued, (2) on the other hand, old olive trees of historical, heritage or tourist interest located in different places were detected, and (3) the third form is the planting of blessed olive trees of the Brotherhood of the Virgen del Olivo, as an icon and recognition in historical-heritage sites and places of tourist interest.

With this project, cultural circuits were organised to reveal the richness and diversity of Argentina's olive-growing landscape. This was developed by the Seminare Foundation with the International CuyOliva International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition in conjunction with the Italian Chamber of Commerce and the Maza University of Mendoza, the Catholic University of Cuyo Don Bosco Faculty and the Islas Malvinas International School of Tourism.



Red de Olivos Históricos  
Patrimoniales de Argentina



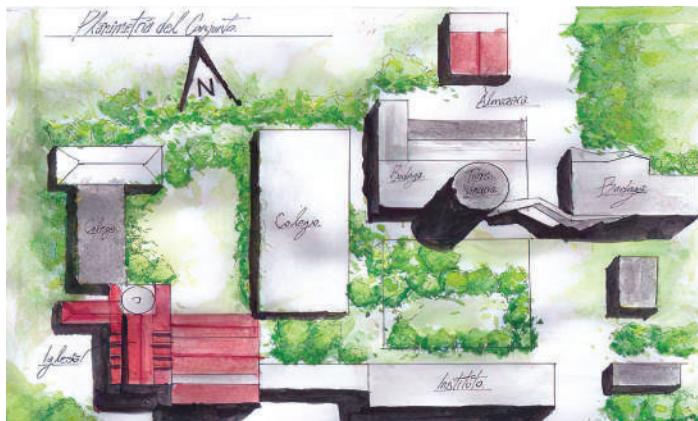
## RODEO DEL MEDIO PRODUCTION COMPLEX



The olive mill is the focus of olive production in the Salesian complex. Based on this recognition, the Faculty of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design (History of Architecture and Urban Planning II, section B)



programmed a fieldwork project, aimed at surveying it in all its material aspects. This is how a full day's practical work was organised, in which the oil mill and its history, the oil mill and its immediate and intermediate context and its production system were recorded. This was complemented with a detailed study of a metric survey, the study of the materiality and language, a table of diseases and pathologies and, finally, a study of its construction system and execution techniques. The exercise compared it with Northern Italian architecture related to the master Andrea Palladio<sup>2</sup>.



The fieldwork was aimed at revealing the oil mill within the productive complex of the Salesian centre. Thus, with the work of other groups, the Sanctuary of María Auxiliadora, the Camarín de la Virgen, the Bodega, the Torre Vinaria, the Nueva Bodega, the educational facilities (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary School) and the Casa Lucila Bombal, the "Centro Cultural Rodeo del Medio" was documented.

<sup>2</sup> The industrial complex Bodega Don Bosco in Rodeo del Medio. Braconi, Lopresti, Valdemoros. Faculty of Architecture. University of Mendoza. Mendoza. Mendoza. Argentina. ICOMOS Meeting. 2017



## CONCLUSIONS

- Currently the province is developing tourism programmes as a new industrial activity. Undoubtedly, given the physical and cultural conditions of our oasis, this policy is correct.
- We suggest the creation of the Olive Tree Museum together with the tourism proposal of the Work of Don Bosco in Rodeo del Medio (Sanctuary, Warehouse and Cellars).
- We understand that the case of Rodeo del Medio fits within this framework through its own strength due to its tourist identity. Its value of authenticity in the tangible and intangible transforms it into a favourable germ for this purpose. It is a valuable milestone in the productive history of the province.
- Given the characteristics of the complex and the importance of its presence in the historical development of Rodeo del Medio, we recognise not only the historical and testimonial values but also the urban and landscape values of the agricultural oasis formed on the site.

- It has the value of being a precursor activity in the province. It is a product of the vision of the Salesians of Don Bosco and the historical context. It bore fruit with the support of the Bombal family. These constitute a contribution to the development of Rodeo del Medio as a productive centre operating even today.
- Finally, it should be noted that there is an intangible heritage that operates from the recognition of the olive-growing activity, with the systematic practices of the Brotherhood of the Virgin of the Olive Tree and the enhancement of the olive garden. These have raised awareness in the surrounding community and the province. The activities of this Brotherhood of the Virgin showcase the contribution of the centre to missionary animation.



**Museums have no borders,  
they have a Network.**

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Aportes para la interpretación de las transformaciones de la industria vitivinícola en Mendoza. Elconjuntoindustrial Bodega Don Bosco en Rodeo del Medio. Joaquín Braconi, Enzo Gabriel Lopresti, Juan Manuel Valdemoros. Facultad de Arquitectura, Urbanismo y Diseño. Universidad de Mendoza. Mendoza. Argentina. Encuentro de Comités Latinoamericanos de ICOMOS Siglo XX. Patrimonio Industrial. 2017.





# CHAPTER 16

## COLLECTIONS MISSIONARY MUSEUMS POLAND



**Fr Tadek (Tadeusz) Lewicki, SDB**



 Polish Salesians first took part in missionary expeditions as early as 1889 and in the first years of the next decade. Coadjutor Feliks Kaczmarczyk went to Colombia, cleric Jan Sikora left in 1891 for Argentina and, in 1893, cleric Stanisław Cynalewski and coadjutor Jakob Sikora became missionaries to Argentina. This was, despite the non-existence of Salesian works in the Polish lands and the non-existence of a free, independent Poland. There followed a long, numerous stream of missionaries destined for Salesian missionary works and assistance to Polish-speaking emigrants.

In the years 1895-1910, that is, up to the year of the death of Blessed Don Michael Rua, already 81 young Polish Salesians and 10 aspirants left their homes in Italy for the missions. After 1918, independent Poland was reborn from the ashes of the First World War. A few houses had already been opened before the war – Oświęcim, Daszawa, Przemyśl, Kraków. Salesian work now began to flourish and new centres were created. In 1919, the Polish-Yugoslavian Province was born and in 1922, a Polish Province with its headquarters in Warsaw.

In some houses, mainly those dedicated to the formation of young Salesians, possibly thanks to the visits of missionaries, the first collections began with the objects they brought – in the novitiate at Czerwińsk, the philosophical studentate in Marszałki and the theological studentate in Krakow. Those collections illustrated and bore witness to the presence of Poles in the Salesian missions but, above all, nurtured new missionary vocations. In 1939, the year of the German aggression against Poland and the beginning of the Second World War, there were 221 Polish Salesian missionaries, participants in various missionary expeditions. Unfortunately, the Nazi-German conquest

and occupation resulted in the closure of Salesian houses. There was destruction, in many cases, of heritage too. Salesian collections were destroyed or, at least, seriously impoverished.

After the Second World War, in the 1950s, the communist regime shut down Catholic schools and Salesian works. In the political situation that prevailed, visits by missionaries to their homeland became rare, if not impossible, and this favoured neither the revival of old collections nor the birth of new ones. Only with the end of the 1960s did we notice the first visits of missionaries, often after long decades abroad, who brought with them testimonies from various lands, the places of their apostolate. This is how the collections, of which we give brief descriptions below, came into being.

The 1981 Africa Project and the establishment of the Salesian Mission Centre in Warsaw (Salezjański Ośrodek Misyjny) increased the influx of objects and artefacts thanks to donations from missionaries. To this was added the intense exchange of letters, the first research dedicated to the Polish Salesian missionaries and the publishing initiatives of the well-known 'Salesian Hundred' series (active since 1983) focusing on the biographies and memoirs of missionaries. In the last few decades, especially in the case of the Missionary Centre, the policy of creating real collections has been enhanced with both museum purposes in the traditional sense of collections and for informative-educational purposes.

## **The Salesian Missionary Centre Museum in Warsaw, Korowodu 20 Street**

The Museum began with the foundation of the Centre in 1980 with the collection of missionary objects in the Provincial House and

other Salesian houses. The organiser of that first nucleus was also the founder of the Centre, Fr Bronisław Kant, for many years the Director of the Centre. The official opening of the Museum took place on 24 May 1995. The scientific organisation and cataloguing at the museum was carried out in cooperation with scientist-friends of the National Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw. The museum layout corresponded to Don Bosco's last missionary dream, which saw the Salesian works scattered all over the world, on all continents, from Valparaíso in Chile, through the African continent, and on to Beijing in China.

The entire collection has been divided into five departments: the ethnographic being the largest one, containing cloths and clothing, musical instruments, household utensils, weapons, etc.; natural history with objects in the area of flora and fauna from various countries; numismatics and philately (coins, banknotes and stamps from different countries); special collections of an arts-and-crafts type (paintings, sculptures); and folk art (especially objects from Zambia and other African countries).

Don Kant, the well-known folk writer, has also developed educational paths offered to all visitors of the Museum, but especially to Warsaw schools. At the turn of the millennia, the Museum enjoyed a truly remarkable reputation (it even had its own Internet site and information in Wikipedia: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salezja%C5%84skie\\_Muzeum\\_Misyjne\\_w\\_Warszawie](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salezja%C5%84skie_Muzeum_Misyjne_w_Warszawie)).

Unfortunately, in recent years, due to the planned renovation of the Centre's premises, the Museum has been closed and it awaits new accommodation. The new project envisages the location of the exhibitions in the large basements under the Sacred Heart Basilica in



Warsaw, on Kawęczyńska Street. This location, in a strategic point of the Polish capital, linked to the youth ministry centre, the provincial house would have the status of a public, educational and museum institution open to the general public, especially schools of different grades. The completion and opening of the museum is planned for the year 2025.

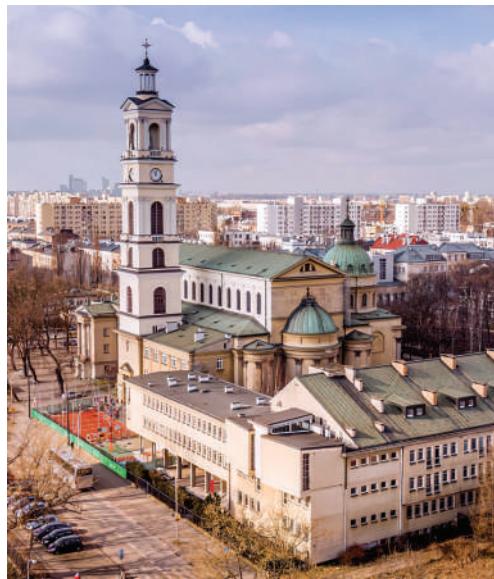


Photo. 1 Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Warsaw, Praga

## **Permanent Missionary Exhibition in Don Bosco Salesian School Complex (Zespół Szkół Salezjańskich im. Ks. Bosko), 34 Wodna Street in Łódź**

This collection was transferred from the studentate of philosophy at Kutno-Woźniaków in 1992, together with the entire academic structure

of the studentate, its teachers and students. It was the fruit of the passionate work of Fr Stanisław Szmidt, a well-known Latin teacher and co-author of the lyrics of the famous song of Caesar Gabarain, "Gloria di Dios", under the Polish title "Barka". With the start of Project Africa, Fr Szmidt began to keep up an intense correspondence with Polish missionaries, first in Zambia, then, broadening his interest and passion, with many missionaries around the world. He was also the author of the first two biographical volumes in the Centre's series in 1983. The first was dedicated to the Polish Salesian missionary in China, Fr Teodor Wieczorek (1888-1957) "The Highs and Lows of the Mandarin Wai Tsui Lek" ("Dole i niedole mandaryna Wai Tsui Lek") and the second was dedicated to the missionary in India, Fr Leon Piasecki (1889-1957), "The Lion of Bramaputra" ("Lew Bramaputry").

In letters and in preparation for missionary visits to the studentate of philosophy, Fr Szmidt often openly asked for gifts – objects for the missionary collections and further exhibitions. The generosity of the missionary-confreres and the passion of Fr Stanisław gave rise to an exhibition consisting of a dozen showcases either hanging or leaning on the walls of the main corridor of the Salesian house, which is today the site of the school complex. The exhibition is organised considering the geography and the specificity of the objects (cloth-clothing, natural history, numismatics and philately, religious and cult objects, utensils and everyday objects, etc.). The route is visited and often used by the school population in accordance with their curricular instructions. The institute's website: <https://wodna.edu.pl/>.



Phot. 2 Łódź, Don Bosco Salesian School Complex



Phot. 3 Łódź, Permanent Missionary Exhibition



Phot. 4 Łódź, Permanent Missionary Exhibition

## Permanent Missionary Exhibition in the Salesian House in Czerwińsk on the Vistula, 23 Klasztorna Street

From the very beginning of the Salesian presence in Czerwińsk, i.e. from 1923, we note a lively interest in the missions. This led also to the collection of objects, mementos from the Salesian missions and donated to this house. For generations of Salesians, here was the beginning of their religious life and, often, the beginning of a Salesian missionary vocation. The Salesian novitiate was moved here in 1923, and with the interval of its closure during World War II, it was active until 2010, the year when it was moved to Swobnica and then Kutno-Woźniaków.

In the Chronicles of the Novitiate in the 1920s and 1930s, especially from 1928 to 1937, one can read entire pages dedicated to the missionary zeal of the novices (the missionary academies and evenings during the course of the year). There were visits of missionaries from all parts of the Salesian world. The novices devoted themselves to the preparation and departure of new missionaries as soon as the novitiate year ended with the first religious vows. Deeper research carried out on these



Phot. 5 Czerwińsk, Permanent Missionary Exhibition: overview



Chronicles abundantly documents the liveliness of the missionary spirit.

The origins of the exhibition as it appears today date back to the years 1975-77, the two years of the Salesian novitiate at this location. The initiative to organise and arrange the collections is linked to the person of the novice master, Fr Wojciech Szulczyński and the music teacher, Fr Zbigniew Malinowski. A few collections existed even earlier. In those years, wooden showcases were built on the two walls along the main



Phot. 6 Czerwińsk, Permanent Missionary Exhibition: overview



Phot. 7 Czerwińsk, Permanent Missionary Exhibition



corridor of the monastery. They were filled in a certain geographical order with, at that time, almost two thousand items. All of these had been donated to the house in Czerwińsk by different missionaries and in different years, who, while visiting their homeland, went also to the novitiate house where their Salesian life had begun.

In addition, special lighting was installed in the corridor and in the showcases hanging on the wall and the standing chests of drawers. The exhibits were enriched with captions reconstructed by some novices, members of the missionary group under the care of Fr Malinowski and Mr Paweł Prokopowicz, who was a former missionary to the Philippines.

1975/76 was also the centenary year of the Salesian missions, and the novices of these years participated in the missionary congress in the church of St Therese of the Child Jesus in 1975, and in the closing session in 1976. The novices of these years also witnessed the departure of a dozen (at least) young brothers, students of philosophy and theology, for their missionary destinations in Latin America (Chile, Peru, Bolivia) and Japan.

Fr Malinowski looked after the activities of the missionary group and the exchange of letters with missionaries. Mr Prokopowicz, the educator, postman and stationery man (as well as the English teacher in the novitiate), often shared his own missionary experiences with the novices, full of wit and humour.

The exhibition route was partly researched by some of the novices serving as the monastery's tour guides. It was immediately included in the regular religious tourism routes of many visitors. This was the case for many years and till today. Thanks to the care of the community, the

Exhibition is part of the usual tourist route led by the Brother in charge of the tourist apostolate in Czerwińsk.

There are other museum routes in this ancient seat of religious life. The Abbey of the Canons Regular of St Augustine (Lateran Canons) was founded back in 1155, next to the Romanesque parish church built by the Bishop of Płock, Alexander, in 1124. The Canons, with all their rich and remarkable history in the Polish Church and in the nation, remained active until their cassation in 1819, under the Tsarist Russian occupation.

Between 1819 and 1902, the Gothic-Renaissance monastery was inhabited by Norbertine nuns, expelled by the Russians from their convent in Płock. After a few years of diocesan management of both the church-sanctuary and the monastery, the entire complex was entrusted to the Salesians in 1923.

It represents a true national treasure, of European, Christian culture, with its Romanesque-style church, although rendered Baroque inside, and the monumental monastery. Despite being a victim of fires and reconstructions, this monastery retains its imposing and dominant



Phot. 8 Czerwińsk, The Monastery and the Basilica



Phot. 9 Czerwińsk, The Cloister and the Basilica



Phot. 10 Czerwińsk, The Basilica Interior



Phot. 11 Czerwińsk, The Basilica Front

appearance on the hill overlooking the small town of Czerwińsk on the Vistula River, the queen of Polish rivers.

This entire architectural-religious complex is a very popular attraction at the national level; the most popular in the Masovian tourist half of the region. It is a Marian shrine in the Romanesque Church of the Mother of God (built between 1129 and 1156). Inside, in the right apse-chapel, there are precious biblical frescoes from the 13th century (Creation, story of Abraham and Noah, New Testament stories of the Apostles). Today, the Marian minor basilica is the destination of pilgrimages and lively popular piety.

In the east wing of the monastery, the ground floor is dedicated to Card. Augustus Hlond, a Salesian (1885-1948). It houses a rich collection of the Cardinal's documents and personal belongings. Here, lectures are conducted on the recent history of the Church and Europe. It has on display paintings and sculptures of a religious nature that are part of the monastery's heritage. The first floor of the same wing recently housed an interesting and rich collection dedicated to the history of the region's agricultural culture.

The entire abbey complex and the church remain open for organised and individual visits, outside the times of religious worship services. It welcomes visitors throughout the year, and the Salesian guide and some local history enthusiasts are always available with a true historical-religious lesson. See: <https://czerwinski.salezjanie.pl/>.

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## **FR TADEUSZ LEWICKI UPS**

Tadeusz LEWICKI PhD, Prof. Emeritus, born in 1957 (Poland).

The university studies in Poland (Master's Degree, KUL of Lublin, 1986); further studies in education at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome. Master's Degree in Education – Specialisation in History and Theory of Education, 1990). The doctoral programme at the University of Durham – School of Education (Great Britain, 1995).

He is the author of several publications on educational and theatrical issues.

He was a founding member of the Faculty of Social Communication Sciences (Pontifical Salesian University, Rome) in 1987/88. In 2004-2007 he was dean of Communication Studies. For thirty years he worked as a lecturer in theory and history of performance/theatre and in general semiotics. Consultant for theatre in education groups, theatre/drama centres in Italy and Poland, member of the theatre/drama in education associations; consultant for the Italian Public Administration Institute FORMEZ –



RIPAM; executive secretary of the Centre for the Studies of Medieval and Renaissance Theatre; visiting lecturer at the University of Malta, and the Diederich Distinguished Scholar at the College of Communication at Marquette University (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA); visiting lecturer at the Catholic University of Croatia (Zagreb, Croatia) and at the Cardinal Wyszyński University (Warsaw, Poland).

In Autumn 2023 he was appointed vice-director of the Central Salesian Archives in Rome and presently realises research studies in Salesian educational theatre, literature and music.





# PART III

# EVALUATION SALESIAN MISSIONARY MUSEUMS FIRST MEETING

(18 TO 22 JANUARY 2023 – COLLE DON BOSCO)



Conference Participants

Here are the aspects of the Conference highlighted by the participants in response to a request for an evaluation.

### **Positive aspects**

- **The atmosphere generated.** Considered excellent. The post-work interactions helped to generate a positive and trusting atmosphere. It was possible to connect a diverse group through emotions, closeness and joy. This climate and the willingness of all participants helped the work. The sessions, the visits, the exchanges, the discussion groups, the meals, the coffees... were demanding but very fruitful because of the family atmosphere that prevailed throughout.
- **The organisation of the event.** It was very well carried out. With an efficient plan and execution that fulfilled in all the programmed points with contents that were in line with the proposed objectives. Thanks to the proposal and commitment of Fr George Menampampil, supported by Fr Reginaldo Cordeiro. Thanks also to the accompaniment by the Councillor for the Missions Sector, Fr Alfred Maravilla, and the rest of the Salesians involved, the translation by Fr Gilson da Silva and Br Cosimo Cossu, and the participation of Fr Francesco Motto, Fr Tadeus Lewicki and Fr Eric Mairura.
- **Great effort to prepare the meeting,** large group, from so many different places but with a well programmed road map. Professionalism in the management.
- **The hospitality** and the welcoming feeling of the Salesians in Colle don Bosco. Sense of brotherhood, which generated a

climate of friendship and fostered contact and planning for the future. Days of strong Salesian spirituality. Recognition of the figure of Fr Vijay Thathireddy, Rector of the centre, and also of Fr José María Sabé, for his attention and dedication, during the guided tour, for example.

- **Teamwork.** With such diverse groups, mainly in terms of language, it was possible to organise very rich dialogues that led to interesting proposals. The effort to understand the person next to us and to enrich the common work rather than individualism.
- **A professional group of people with a strong commitment.** Contents, participants and presentations... of high level and professionalism (there are many very good people working hard in our museums).
- **Involvement of the Congregation.** Real participation by the General Councillor, whose presence gave weight to the meeting and showed the involvement at Congregational level and the new paradigm with regard to heritage and museums, promoted by the Rector Major and his Council.
- **Relay of guarantees.** Confidence in Fr Reginaldo, who showed his interest and motivation for this new assignment, taking over the torch from Fr George. We felt confident that the network will consolidate the great work that has been done. The Network (REPASA) and its work will be a direct witness of the great value of the Salesian heritage. The museums of the congregation will contribute seriously to the mission entrusted to them by the Rector Major.

- **The satisfaction of doing something historic.** Awareness of being on a new path for the Salesian family. Fulfilling a mandate and aligned with the proposal for the six-year term of the Rector Major.
- **Programmed visits.** The visits to the sites were very well considered. In addition to showing 'in situ' the work carried out, the explanations and the attention given to them were exquisite. It is considered highly recommendable for other events, this way of proceeding in which the theoretical and the practical are mixed.

### **Aspects to be improved:**

- **Presentations that take too long.** Some interventions were excessively long and delayed the participation of other people.
- **Low representation of other museum leaders.** This may have been motivated by the need to bring together the missionary museums first, but other museum specialities were missing from the meeting.
- It would be highly desirable to hold a conference with **other structures that handle aspects of the history and heritage** of the Congregation, such as the historians and historical institutes, the archivists and chroniclers, .....
- **Other professional profiles.** For future meetings, in addition to the people in charge, educators, curators, researchers, etc., who are involved in our museums could also participate.





## FR. GEORGE MENAMPAMPIL

**Missions Sector**

**First Coordinator of Salesian Missionary  
Museums**

George was born in Kerala, India, in 1949 and belongs to the province of Dimapur (IND) India. He graduated in Science (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry) from the university of Madras.

He was Rector, Parish Priest and Principal at Imphal and Tamenglong. He founded BOSCO MANGAAL at Imphal and was its director for 6 years.

As world chaplain for two terms of MIJARC/IMCARY, the international Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth, he was based eight years in Belgium.

As a member of the Youth Ministry team of the Salesian Region of South Asia for four years, founder of the Don Bosco National Forum for the Young-at-Risk (DF forum for YaR) and its coordinator for three years, and as the secretary-cum-treasurer of the All-India Association of Catholic Schools (AINACS) for 1.5 years, he was based in New Delhi.

During a separate posting in Delhi, he founded BOSCONET, the Mission Office of South Asia Region, and BOSCO AID TRUST for funds for formation and for religious activities. He was the director of both for 7 years.

The last 7.5 years he has been a member of the team of the Missions Sector at the Generalate in Rome.

Of the several books he has written / edited / translated, the 23 textbooks he wrote for the value-education of school students have sold the largest number of copies (over 6 million, and selling).

He has enjoyed the hospitality of and learnt from the peoples of 73 countries.



## SALESIAN MISSIONARY MUSEUMS ADVISORY TEAM



Dirceu Maurício VAN LONKHUIZJEN

**Goal:**

To assist the reference person of the Missions Sector in the coordination and animation of the Salesian Missionary Museums.

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain the link with the Missions Sector and create opportunities, spaces and processes in which collaboration, networking and the sharing of good practices develop and strengthen the Salesian Missionary Museum.
2. Promote and assist the training of Salesian Mission Museum Directors, pointing them to available opportunities for the professional training of their staff.
3. Support and accompany the Directors of Salesian Missionary Museums taking into account the current statutes, approaches, cultures and contexts of the countries in which they operate.

The group is composed of: Ana MARTÍN GARCÍA (ICP); Dirceu Mauricio VAN LONKHUIZJEN (BCG); Letizia PESETTO (ICP); Nataly ORBE ORTIZ (ECU); Mariano GARCÍA BORREGUERO (SSM) and Fr Reginaldo CORDEIRO, as the Sector's reference person for the Missions.





**The hillock by the side of his house from where Don Bosco saw, in a dream, his future missionaries at work around the world, from Valparaiso to Beijing.**