

CITY OF JOY

MISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2020

1. OVERVIEW OF OUR MISSION

“City of Joy” in Mazabuka (Zambia) is a “Home for Girls at Risk”. The Salesian Sisters welcome girls who are brought by the Social Welfare because of serious family problems. The majority of them are single or double orphans, without a guardian able to look after them and provide for their basic needs (schooling, medical care...); they might even have been abused or are HIV positive. This is one of the very few Zambian structures fully dedicated to girls at risk.

The choice of the Salesian Sisters of opening a new reality is due to the increasing number of girls at risk, as product of the modernization of the Country, with weaker enlarged families and increased reality of impoverishment. While in the Zambian tradition an additional dish for the everyday meal in the family was normal, now families struggle to pay school fees and fulfill school requirements for their own children. Thus, an additional person in the family is not anymore welcome.

Also, the number of girls living on the roads has become a worry, and the Social Welfare authorities cannot but acknowledge the situation.

1.1 History of our Mission

The reality of City of Joy started in 2008, when the Diocese of Monze asked for the presence of the Salesian Sisters in Mazabuka, in order to complement this activity with the reality of orphans and vulnerable girls. The first girls were welcomed in a small house, where they were sharing the very same life with the Sisters

Eventually there was the possibility to provide a structure purposely built in order to allow the girls to experience, to some extent, the life of the family.

The girls arrive at City of Joy in different ways:

- from orphanages from where they are dismissed since they reached the age or class limit (e.g., if they have completed grade 9);
- from orphanages where they cannot be hosted any longer because of behavioral problems;
- from families of single parents who cannot afford taking care of them or paying for their schooling;
- from families where both parents are deceased and relatives cannot take care of the orphans;
- From Social Welfare offices, after taking away the children from their own families because of abuses or lack of sufficient care.
- From different religious institutions

During the early years, the girls were big in numbers (23, 35 girls). They were divided in groups and living in 3 houses with 3 big bedrooms each, toilets and showers, a kitchenette, a storeroom, a self-contained bedroom for the house mother, a large room used as living room, dining room and study room.

At the moment there are only 12 girls and are living in one of the houses with a house mother.

The girls feel responsible for their home. They do the cleaning of the house and the washing of their own clothes. They take care of the courtyards and help also in the garden to cultivate some vegetables. These simple activities help them to grow in a responsible way, develop positive attitudes and learn life skills. They also attend different classes in different schools.

The ages of the girls range between 9 and 19 years old. This composition allows them to create a sisterly relationship among themselves, where the big girls feel responsible for the small ones, helping them and caring for them.

In the afternoon of Saturdays and Sundays, the girls attend the oratory that takes place within the premises of the mission. They play with young people coming from neighboring houses and towns, make friends and build up relationships with their age mates. We organize termly formation moments for their Holistic growth as well as formation about the lives of our Salesian Saints, the Strenna of our Rector Major, Salesian Spirituality and Gospel Values. We invite young people from the nearby parishes for the same events. After the formation moment, we have games together and a meal. It is always a wonderful, enriching time for the young people.

Some girls have already been successfully reinserted in their original families. Others are still involved in further studies and are being taken care of by the Sisters with their school fees and their basic needs. In any case their follow up continues also after they leave City of Joy.

This mission has been running for almost 12 years, thanks to the help of well wishers, locally and internationally. Having experienced the reality of this mission within a period of time, the needs of children keep increasing due to the economic constraints that keep changing.

1.2 Current Profile and work of the Mission

- This time, the community consists of three Sisters of which two are students taking up Social Work and Counseling. The other Sister is a teacher by profession.
- We have our co-workers: a house mother, domestic helper and gardener.
- Volunteers from other countries come. Some stay for 2 months, others for a year. They help to run the Oratory, organize activities with our Oratorian Leaders as well as helping our girls with their studies and other activities.
- We cooperate with Social Welfare Department, with the schools the girls attend, the Local Church and the volunteers' organizations.
- The land is quite big and belongs to the Diocese of Mazabuka. All the buildings were built by the Salesian Sisters and funded by donors. The buildings in the Mission are: three houses for the girls; one house for the volunteers, the Sisters' residence, garages and the Hall; there are also outside storage buildings, chickens' and other animals' houses, and a big but empty fish pond. There are playgrounds and a sports field.

1.3 Operating Environment

The City of Joy is located in Namulonga within the Township of Mazabuka. Many of the families in the area are poor, headed by single mothers, grandmothers or widowers. Many of the children from these families frequent our oratory. They found a safe place where they can be themselves, play, learn about life, about and God and pray.

In Mazabuka, there are no other facilities which render services like City of Joy.

1.4 Strategic Planning Process

The strategic plan was drafted by the Sisters and co-workers. We somehow translated the Strategic Planning guidelines in local language, discussed and planned.

2. MISSION SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- We have reliable personnel, our co-workers, our collaborators and the Sisters who do their best to make City of Joy exist according to its vision.
- City of Joy is well known in Mazabuka, as a place of good reputation which is ready to receive young girls and children who are vulnerable.
- Because of its role in society, City of Joy is trusted by the government, non-governmental organizations and the local Church.
- Since people recognize us as an Institution which helps the vulnerable young people and children, they are ready to donate financial and in kind.

WEAKNESSES

- Our financial status is not stable in the sense that we only rely on individual benefactors who donate money periodically. The only stable income is the monthly salary of a Sister which we use to pay for the salary of the workers.
- Shortage of personnel. Two of the Sisters are students. They do wonders according to their availability, when free from school hours. However, when they are in school, the running of the place limps. In addition to that, the presence of the Sisters is not stable, due to transfers and this affects the mission.
- The numbers of the girls are dwindling.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Write project proposal to get financial aids.
- Possibility to improve on the small projects such as rearing chicken and fish pond.
- Making good use of the two houses as a place for study and dining room.
- Possibility of Skills training for the co-workers to improve their performance and to gain more skills.
- To work more closely with the Social Welfare in order to offer more girls at risk, a home.
- Opportunity to expand the mission by building a school.
- Improve the Oratory in terms of repairing the surface/floor of the basketball, netball and volleyball courts.

THREATS

- Donors are hesitant to finance the facility knowing that the land is not ours.
- Progress is slow because of financial constraints
- Decrease in the number of girls, thus defeating the purpose of City of Joy.
- Funds are not stable

VISION FOR OUR MISSION

Envision a place in which the most vulnerable young people will have the power to lift themselves out of material, emotional, spiritual, intellectual poverty and to create vital, healthy lives for themselves, for their families and communities now and for the future.

GUIDING IMAGE FOR 2023 + 2026

- A City of Joy with more girls, before 2023
- An Oratory with Sports Facilities.
- A Secondary school / Skills Training Centre / IT Facilities for Young People

GOAL 1 To provide life-changing family experience for the girls at risk

GOAL 2 To empower young people to enhance their knowledge and education, and raise themselves of poverty

GOAL 3 To create transformative, athletic and healthy outdoor adventures for young people.