



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY



MISSION IN PAKISTAN 2019

FR ROBERT MCCULLOCH

Mission in Pakistan - Success in 2019

This is my annual report about human development, education, professional training, and healthcare works in and near Hyderabad, a major city 170km northeast of Karachi on the edge of the Sindh desert in Pakistan. All made possible by the generosity of donors.

St Elizabeth Hospital reaches out through its *Mobile Medical Outreach Programme*, its *School of Midwifery* and its *Home-based Palliative Care* for the terminally ill, as well as compassionate and quality healthcare at the hospital. These are directed by competent young Catholic professionals: Eric Siraj, Hospital Administrator; Babar Naveed, Financial Controller; Farah Anil, Nursing Director and Sittara Shamas, *School of Midwifery* principal. *Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary* see to the residential hostel for the student midwives. They lead dedicated teams. They have the vision and plans for the continuing growth and development of *St Elizabeth Hospital*.

Bethlehem Shelter Society responds to the situation of landless and homeless people in the southern Pakistani province of Sindh. Solar-powered water systems and verandah construction have greatly improved the quality of lives for many people during this past year.

The two educational works, the *Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence* (CCAIE) and the *Catholic Youth Development Centre* (CYDC), respond to specific needs of young Christians in Hyderabad by enabling them to move across and beyond barriers of religious discrimination and family poverty. During this year a number of CCAIE graduates, the Alumni, returned to conduct an extended *CCAIE Summer School* for the present students. It was their way of thanking CCAIE for the success they themselves have achieved in their own lives. These works are good examples of the practical and open-hearted compassion to which Pope Francis calls us all. The Catholic Church in Pakistan is small in number. Yet in spite of financial difficulties and ever-present cultural and religious discrimination, it manifests the compassion of God.

A characteristic of this report is the harmonious collaboration of competent Christian, Hindu and Muslim male and female doctors, healthcare professionals, teachers and many others: care for mothers and infants, hope through education for boys and young men, training of young women as midwives, providing homes and adequate water supply for the dispossessed, health care for tens of thousands for forgotten and marginalized suffering people. We collaborate with the Government of Pakistan in achieving the *United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals*.

What we have achieved is the fruit of the generosity of our donors.

Thank you.

Fr Robert McCulloch
July 29, 2019

Home-based Palliative Care, Hyderabad

St Elizabeth Hospital continues to provide *Home-based Palliative Care* for terminally-ill cancer patients in Hyderabad. It is a powerful way of expressing our Catholic commitment to the dignity of life even in the presence of the reality of death.

An important benefit of *St Elizabeth's Home-based Palliative Care* service is that it facilitates inter-faith harmony on a human, personal level through the caring ministry of committed Christian nurses, male and female, in the homes of people of different faiths and through the meeting and mutual support of the religious ministers of Muslim, Christian and Hindu patients.

The *Home-based Palliative Care* at *St Elizabeth Hospital* is a first in Pakistan so we did not have specific local expertise to fall back on. Professional links have been established with the *Children's Cancer Hospital Karachi*, *Shaukat Khanum Cancer Hospital Lahore*, *Assisi Hospice Singapore* and *Asia Pacific Hospice and Palliative Care Network* also in Singapore.

There are three nurses and two doctors linked to the palliative care service. They are on 24 hour-call. Care is free but the families of the patients are expected to pay for medicines. In spite of its limited resources, *St Elizabeth* always tries to provide everything in cases of great need. Special care is given to any terminally-ill cancer patient who is referred through *St Elizabeth's Mobile Medical Outreach Programme*.

The *Home-based Palliative Care* nursing at *St Elizabeth Hospital* has always depended on donations. In addition to the annual

running costs (\$7,200), we need urgently to buy a 125cc motorcycle (\$1,650) to enable members of the nursing team to get quickly through the very narrow, crowded and often unmade roads and lanes in the densely populated urban areas of Hyderabad and to provide care promptly.

Through its *Home-based Palliative Care* nursing, *St Elizabeth Hospital* continues to offer the best possible care to those in great need and to manifest compassion and mercy in a practical and outstanding way in Pakistan.

Pope Francis describes palliative care as "an expression of the truly human attitude of taking care of one another, especially of those who suffer. It is a testimony that the human person is always precious, even if marked by illness and old age."



St Elizabeth School of Midwifery, Hyderabad

According to current official statistics, the neo-natal infant mortality rate in Pakistan is 62 per 1,000. The maternal mortality rate is 170 per 100,000 and is amongst the worst rates in South Asia (*Pakistan Economic Survey 2019, p.190*). *St Elizabeth School of Midwifery* continues to make a difference in Pakistan and works to enable Pakistan to achieve the *2030 goals of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals* relating to health. Sixteen new midwives will graduate from the *School of Midwifery* in 2019.

The *School of Midwifery* is attached to *St Elizabeth Hospital* in Hyderabad. It is professionally accountable to the *Pakistan Nursing Council*. Mrs. Sittara Shamas, M.Sc. Nursing, is principal and the *Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary* see to the residential accommodation for the student midwives.

Young women from marginalized communities come to Hyderabad to train at *St Elizabeth School of Midwifery* and to advance their socio-economic position by enabling them to become skilled professional and qualified midwives for maternal, neonatal and infant care. A significant development is the increasing number of young women from the disadvantaged tribal communities in the province of Sindh who are undertaking midwifery studies at the *School of Midwifery*.

St Elizabeth School of Midwifery is unable to be self-supporting and needs financial assistance to carry out its work. Given the background of the trainee midwives, fees are kept at the barest minimum. The total cost to educate one midwife for two years is Rs.585,000 (\$5,270). We receive no assistance from the Pakistan Government in responding to the maternal and infant health care national crisis.



St Elizabeth Hospital, Hyderabad

Every year the Pakistan Government publishes its *Pakistan Economic Survey*. It is always blunt about the actual healthcare situation. The most recent *Economic Survey* (p.188) says that in 2018 Pakistan's per capita health spending was only US\$36. This is well below the World Health Organization's low-income countries bench mark of US\$86 per person for healthcare. Pakistan spends just 0.76% of GDP on healthcare.

St Elizabeth Hospital is a 150-bed hospital in Hyderabad in Southern Pakistan. It is owned and run by the Catholic Church as part of the Catholic Diocese of Hyderabad. It helps bridge the deficit in health care that is provided by the Pakistan Government for its people. *St Elizabeth* has a special focus on Mother and Child Care which responds to the crisis in the infant and under-five child mortality rates and maternal mortality rate, all of which are among the highest in South Asia (*Pakistan Economic Survey 2019*, p.190).

The *School of Midwifery* attached to *St Elizabeth* continues to make a difference in maternal, neonatal, and infant care in Pakistan through the training and annual graduation of midwives and lady health visitors.

We hope to be able to build and equip a new operating theatre in this coming year. It will be the fourth operating theatre at the hospital and is needed to respond to the growing demand for the high-quality medical care which *St Elizabeth* provides.

As part of this demand, we need to increase the hospital's bed capacity by 30 beds to a total of 180. We also have

blueprints and costings ready to expand the emergency department from two to five units.

These extension works are part of the realistic planning being done by the hospital's Administrative Council. It is made up of highly energized, competent young Pakistanis who have administrative (MBA), financial (chartered accountancy), medical, nursing, and human resources skills and qualifications. Enabling such an Administrative Council to emerge with such abilities and capabilities has been my consistent goal since 2002 and has been achieved by funding for professional training and development provided in recent years by generous donors. As equally realistic as the extension plans made is the realistic assessment by the Administrative Council that *St Elizabeth* has no available funds for the work and needs the assistance of our donors to implement them.

Through the previous help of *Cabrini Hospital Melbourne* in providing an internship in infection control, *St Elizabeth* has a strong record in successful infection control. The current infection control Officer is completing a diploma course in infection control in Karachi which will make *St Elizabeth* the leading hospital in this regard in Hyderabad.

St Elizabeth continues to provide free Home-based Palliative Care to terminally-ill cancer patients. Through its Mobile Medical Outreach Programme, *St Elizabeth* is sole medical provider to nearly 50,000 impoverished agricultural labourers trapped in the most appalling and unjust conditions.

Christian, Muslim and Hindu professionals, doctors and nurses work together at *St Elizabeth Hospital* in the best tradition of Catholic healthcare. Providing mother and child care and palliative care for the terminally-ill demonstrates *St Elizabeth's* commitment to affirming and upholding the dignity of human life. *St Elizabeth* is highly respected in predominantly Muslim Hyderabad for this stand. It demonstrates to so-called "progressive" states what is being done with a minimum of resources but with a reservoir of compassion in so called "backward" countries like Pakistan.

Hospital income barely covers *St Elizabeth's* running costs. It is not sufficient for development works and equipment purchase. During 2018-2019, our donors enabled *St Elizabeth* to purchase and install a new 160KVA generator to replace the main hospital generator which was bought thirteen years ago; to purchase 30 new hospital beds; to buy urgently-needed new surgical and diagnostic equipment; to renovate one ward; to replace air conditioners which are needed in the long summer months of continual 45-48 degree temperatures; and to provide medical care and medicines for the many poor who come to the hospital.

As soon as possible, we urgently need to install solar power to provide electricity at *St Elizabeth*. Since May 2019, electricity charges and the cost of diesel fuel have soared due to the tax increases demanded from Pakistan by the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF). The hospital's income cannot keep up with this increased and crippling financial burden. Solar power is the urgent need.



Although Pakistan depends on a mix of public and private healthcare delivery systems (*Pakistan Economic Survey 2019, p.187*) and the Sindh provincial Government recognises the high standards and scope of the healthcare given by *St Elizabeth Hospital*, the Government provides no financial assistance and gives no tax relief.

Our donors help *St Elizabeth* to make compassionate Catholic healthcare a reality in Hyderabad. It is a good partnership. *St Elizabeth* "squeezes" every donation to get great "value for money". The hospital's finances are supervised by the hospital's internal auditor, who is a chartered accountant, and are assessed through the annual external audit.



Mobile Medical Outreach Programme (MMOP)

According to the latest statistics in the *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019, p.187*, there are 195,896 registered doctors in Pakistan. This is a ratio of one doctor for 997 persons. The problem is that the doctors are concentrated in cities. Access to primary health care in rural Pakistan is limited; poverty makes it almost impossible. *As the Economic Survey says: "health care delivery suffers from some key issues like the high population growth, uneven distribution of health professionals, deficient workforce, insufficient funding and limited quality health care services."*

The *Mobile Medical Outreach Programme (MMOP)* of *St Elizabeth Hospital* Hyderabad overcomes these issues by providing regular, effective, professional, compassionate and free health care to many impoverished semi-nomadic tribal people who are bonded agricultural workers in Sindh province in south-east Pakistan.

MMOP is their sole medical provider. The majority are Hindu although many are marginalized Muslims and Christians. They are economically enslaved to landlords who control every aspect of their lives.

The statistics for *St Elizabeth's MMOP* during the last year are impressive. In 50 villages, 49,323 patients including 12,331 children under five years were examined by doctors and received necessary free medicine. Through *MMOP*, patients are able to receive follow-up medical care every few months. A generous donor has enabled *St Elizabeth Hospital* to build and equip a satellite clinic in one central

village where *MMOP* provides regular primary health care, minor surgery and safe child delivery as needed.

In addition to providing free immediate primary healthcare, *MMOP* refers patients for further care to Hyderabad and hospitals in Karachi. *St Elizabeth* accepts financial responsibility for this and monitors all cases through its nursing staff. Eighteen such referrals were made to *St Elizabeth Hospital*.

The *Mobile Medical Outreach Programme* is an outstanding example of inter-faith collaboration between Christian, Muslim and Hindu healthcare professionals. They work happily together. They are able to continue this work of compassion through the generosity of our donors.

St Elizabeth's Mobile Medical Outreach Programme is assisting the Government of Pakistan to achieve *Goal three* and *Goal six* of the *UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals* which are about access by all to quality healthcare. Pakistan values such collaboration with the Catholic Church.

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Solar power, water and verandahs at Jhirruk



Jhirruk in Sindh province of south-east Pakistan about 45 kilometres from Hyderabad used to be a barren place of nothingness. Now it is home to 86 Hindu families from the Parkari Koli tribal community who had lost everything during the flooding of the Indus River in 2012.

The story of Jhirruk is a special one that embraces kindness, compassion and identity-reclaiming.

In 2012, after the floods, the *St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria* donated money to buy four acres of land to build homes for the homeless. The people and especially the women chose the land because it was close to a canal of the Indus River.

The families are now happily settled in Jhirruk each with their own permanent home. Two-roomed houses have been well-constructed of brick, with good roofs, and raised above flood level. After 3000 years of being dispossessed and pushed to the margins in the Indian-sub-continent, they who belong to the original peoples of India can now say “this is ours”.

The settlement at Jhirruk is called *Bethlehem*. The housing settlement is legally registered with the Sindh provincial Government as *Bethlehem Shelter Society*. Their leader and the vice-president of the *Bethlehem Shelter Society* is a woman, Reshma. The *Bethlehem Shelter Society* has enabled the people living at Jhirruk to take responsibility for their lives and collective well-being.

Through the generosity of donors, 41 verandahs are now being added to the front of houses. This doubles the living area of each house, provides shelter from the intense summer sun, and gives protection from the monsoon rains. Ten had previously been built. Thirty five remain to be built at a cost of \$782 each.

Water was piped from the Indus River canal into the 20,000- gallon water-tank and five 500-gallon feeder-tanks in the village. But from December 2018 until April this year, three water pumps were stolen from the canal side. The solution has been to put the pump in the village and to run it on solar power. It has been successful. The tanks are now filled twice a day while the sun is shining (and that is a given generosity of God and nature). There is plenty of water using clean

power; no need to buy diesel for the pump; and no more pump-stealing.

Homes with verandahs, a constant water supply, a functioning satellite clinic of *St Elizabeth Hospital* in the village, trees planted. The families at Jhirruk have a secure future thanks to generous donors. We still need to build 35 verandahs and complete one-third of the perimeter wall.

The story of Jhirruk is a special one that embraces kindness, compassion and identity-reclaiming.



Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence (CCAIE)



In an editorial, October 18, 2018 the *Dawn* newspaper which belongs to the most influential media group in Pakistan said that the Government of Pakistan has failed to protect the future of its young people by insufficient spending for education. The editorial said that the Government “*would do well to learn that development is not just about more money but how well it is spent.*” Perhaps Zaffar Abbas, the editor of *Dawn* and who comes from Hyderabad, has heard about the success of the *Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence* (CCAIE) in Hyderabad.

For the past 14 years, the *Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence* in Hyderabad has continued to use the money donated by donors wisely into providing a sustained environment where academically talented but disadvantaged Catholic young men can be assisted to attain high academic grades. This ensures they can gain university entrance and tertiary education on merit. We want them to be able to live and work effectively in Pakistan’s multi-cultural and multi-religious society. They face the obstacles of family poverty and anti-Christian religious discrimination.

Seventy six students are currently enrolled in the *CCAE four-year programme*. They attend schools in the morning and come to the Centre every week Monday-Friday from 4:30-8.30pm. *CCAE* is staffed by its director and seven teachers (six men and one woman).

Since its beginning in 2004 and with the continuing support of our benefactors, *CCAE* has been able to provide an environment of education and personal development that has matched the enthusiasm of the students. The students at *CCAE* know that their seemingly impossible dreams for their future can come true. *CCAE* graduates who call themselves the 'Alumni' regularly visit *CCAE* to share their own success stories and to encourage the present *CCAE* students to use every opportunity which *CCAE* is providing for them.

CCAE course work includes intensive coaching in school and college class content material. Most *CCAE* students come from large extended families where living arrangements are cramped and space for study is unavailable. Intensive English is a high priority to ensure that each boy achieves excellent speaking, writing and comprehension language skills. Religious instruction and moral formation are essential to the *CCAE* programme.

In 2019 we employed a teacher to develop English and Urdu reading, spelling and composition skills and creative use of *CCAE's* library resources. We finally had sufficient funds to buy multimedia equipment for teaching.

CCAE now has a Student Relations Officer who is a *CCAE* graduate, married with one child and is member of the *National Highway Police Force*. CCTV cameras are installed throughout *CCAE* premises and are monitored by two designated members of the Board of Governors. Beginning in October this year, all *CCAE* staff will attend information sessions on issues relating to the protection and safety of minors. In this *CCAE* is well-ahead of most educational centres and schools in Pakistan.

We ask nothing from *CCAE* students except 100% commitment. We manage to operate within the annual budget of just on AUD\$48,000 which covers all running costs and which is internally and externally audited. We continue to depend upon the generosity of our benefactors. We urgently need more space for the *CCAE* to extend the library and dining area and for two more class rooms. Adjoining our existing rented premises, four more big rooms with wide verandahs and enclosed open area have become available on rent. For this we need an extra \$300 per month.

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Catholic Youth Development Centre (CYDC)

According to the current official *Pakistan Economic Survey p.199*, Pakistan is the sixth most populated country in the world with an estimated population in 2018 of 199.7 million and approximately 39 million between 15-24 years of age. There is a high level of both illiteracy and unemployment. The high level of illiteracy among Catholic boys and young men in Pakistan is due to family poverty and discrimination because of their religion. Life for them can be a long dark tunnel with little hope and much frustration.

The Catholic Youth Development Centre (CYDC) offers the possibility of a better life to young illiterate men in Hyderabad who have dropped out of school or who have never been to school. CYDC enables them to get from illiteracy to 10th Class (the last year of high school in Pakistan) through an accelerated programme of teaching and learning spread over two years, from primary to secondary.

CYDC began in 2008. This year 68 young men aged from 15-21 years are enrolled in CYDC. Most work either before or after the CYDC sessions and all are self-motivated to attend. They know the sort of the work they are confined to without education and are eager to grasp the possibilities before them. Eighty one young men have successfully completed the programme of studies at CYDC and are now well-employed or enrolled in continuing studies. Our CYDC “family” is expanding as our first graduates are marrying and becoming happy and proud fathers.



The staff consists of the director and five teachers (three male, two female). Education, moral guidance, personal confidence building, religious instruction and sacramental preparation are all included in the *CYDC programme*. The students and staff join in the celebrations of the major liturgical feasts in the Catholic cathedral. After completing the *CYDC programme*, all students attend the month-long *Catholic Faith Formation Course* at the *National Pastoral Institute* in Multan in the Punjab.

The morning-scheduled CYDC uses the same rented premises and the same facilities as the *Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence* which is held in the evenings. CYDC runs on an extraordinarily low annual budget of \$25,000 which is internally and externally audited. This covers staff salaries, medical care for students, enrolment for Government Board of Education examinations, and a good morning tea each day. We aim to operate within the annual budget. We continue to depend upon the generosity of all our benefactors. We ask nothing from CYDC students except 100% commitment.



Among our tasks as witnesses to
the love of Christ
is that of giving a voice to the cry of
the poor.
Pope Francis

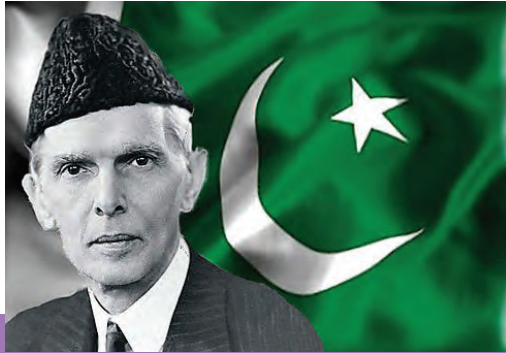
MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

Address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly - August 11, 1947

You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State. We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State.

Message to the Nation - August 15, 1947

The creation of the new State has placed a tremendous responsibility on the citizens of Pakistan. It gives them an opportunity to demonstrate to the world how can a nation, containing many elements, live in peace and amity and work for the betterment of all its citizens, irrespective of caste or creed.



Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan

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