



The Proof is in the Pudding

by Fr Paul Formosa, sdb

Run by an experienced team of lay youth leaders under the direction of Fr Paul Formosa SDB, the Salesian Pastoral Youth Services (SPYS) seeks to develop and implement a programme of holistic formation for young people; this is achieved through a number of seminars and other activities aimed at gathering young people from all walks of life.

For a number of years now, one of the main activities undertaken by SPYS has given Maltese young people the opportunity to go on voluntary work experiences abroad with other Salesian communities, focussing on communities in developing countries. In fact, SPYS has, over the years, forged a very strong relationship with a number of Salesian communities in India and Ghana, although it has also sent volunteers to other member organisations of Don Bosco Youth-Net ivzw, which encompasses Salesian organisations from 13 EU countries.

The journey does not however start and end with the experience away from Maltese shores. Rather, at SPYS we consider the experience to be a journey that commences well in advance of the visit to the overseas community. A meeting is in fact held at the beginning of the year to inform prospective volunteers about the types of experience that SPYS can offer, and in which interested youths get the chance to listen to first-hand experiences and start to get a better appreciation for voluntary work and for the Salesian spirit.

This is then followed by a series of activity-filled sessions, during which the prospective volunteers are given the opportunity to learn about Don Bosco and the preventive system, and discover and reflect on a number of situations and experiences that they may encounter along the journey, for example being in a different culture, or being in a community which lacks a number of luxuries that are taken for granted in the volunteers' day to day lives. They are also given the opportunity, through sessions aimed at identi-

