



para el mundo - pour le monde - for the World - para o mundo - per il mondo

Sharing Brother Gabriel and solidarity

Gabriel's family was a large family. In addition to his parents, his three brothers who eventually got married and had children, and two servants lived in his house. The house accommodated passing travellers and a small group of boarders in winter. It also had a room used as a classroom. All of this opened Gabriel's spirit to communication and a wide network of relationships: a good basis for solidarity.

Once he decided to follow his vocation as a Brother, he was almost immediately providentially called to share his personal project with others: to found a community.

In his early years, Brother Gabriel knew very closely the lack of resources, poverty and precariousness. When he lived in Belmont he was frequently forced to go begging in Lyon in order to support the group of boarders who would little by little become the first Brothers of the Institute. The move to the city of Belley was particularly painful for him and his large community when they had to temporarily stay in a building in the bishopric's garden.

The solidarity raised by Brother Gabriel among the Brothers, together with rigorous and strict accounting, allowed the nascent Institute to build the Mother House to lodge everyone, to maintain the formation house and to care for the sick and elderly Brothers.

Despite the precarious economic situation of the Institute, Brother Gabriel did not hesitate to direct the founding of communities towards the rural and most needy areas, making the conditions of the contracts with the mayors more flexible, and even sending a single Brother where the municipality could not accommodate more, due to lack of means. The *Information Sheet for the Placement of the Brothers* (1847) says verbatim: "In localities with few resources and in those where there is only one Brother, whose stay is not permanent, the Society of the Holy Family, if desired, can take care of: 1st., to provide each Brother with the clothing and furniture he needs, remaining the owner of the same; 2nd., to repair and renew them, when necessary; 3rd., the annual round trips of the Brothers to make the retreat, as long as the journey does not exceed 65 km. (that is, 15 leagues). All of this by paying for each Brother to this Society the amount of 100 francs per year, in addition to the stipulated salary."

But when Brother Gabriel best expresses solidarity is when he promotes by all means what he calls "spirit of body and family spirit" because in it he finds full meaning in sharing with others. He says: "What belongs to one belongs to all and the words 'mine' and 'yours' cease to have meaning; each one considers himself less than the others and God reigns over all" (*Circular* of 1864).

Brother Teodoro Berzal
Sigüenza, February 2024



Being a Sa -Fa volon- teer today

Sa-Fa Family volunteering today

Thinking about the figure of volunteering in the reality of the Centre for Missionary Animation of the Brothers of the Holy Family (CAMSAFA), we can talk about these expressions: listening, reflecting, walking together, sharing. Well considered, these expressions, which are also feelings that deserve to be deepened, can nourish a virtuous circle that involves other people and other realities, spreading and strengthening the same cardinal principles of humanity, the first of which is solidarity. Volunteering and solidarity travel, support and reinforce each other on a daily basis, just like the spirit that unites Brothers and lay people; many volunteering experiences began thanks to the friendship and work camps that have been organised and shared with many people for several decades and continue in the various activities on site. Unfortunately, there was a break due to the internal insecurity in Burkina Faso and COVID19. However, several volunteers are asking to be able to organise new experiences. Volunteering is a vocation rather than a choice: as freely as we receive, we freely share the path of our lives. One thought for the near future is the possibility of sharing new paths and experiences of life and solidarity with other countries, following the charism of the Brothers of the Holy Family and supporting the activities of the Institute in other continents. (Matteo Mondino. CAM. Chieri)



Hello everyone, I'm Kiko, a volunteer with the NGO CARUMANDA. Last summer I participated in the Ecuador Project with my family: Jenny, Paula and Xavi, and with other volunteers from the NGO: Fran from Finis-terre and Silvia and Nacho from Madrid.

We spent 5 weeks in Ecuador lending a hand in projects in which Carumanda collaborates. We visited the kindergarten "Centro Infantil Maria Cristina" in Quito Sur, where they train and educate more than 100 children from needy families. We enjoyed a summer camp at Proyecto Encuentro, a school and home for the most disadvantaged children in Puyo (Pastaza). We collaborated with the people of "Su Cambio por el Cambio" in San Simón (Guaranda), giving classes, carrying out recreational workshops and pastoral missions in the nearby communities. We also travelled to Lago Agrio (Sucumbíos) to visit all the children with scholarships from Carumanda.

We have enjoyed incredible experiences, surprising adventures and endearing experiences. We have lived with real "anonymous heroes" who live in MISSION and from whom we have taken away an indescribable learning experience.

On a personal level, I would like to highlight two aspects. The first is how rewarding the family experience has been. Both Jenny and I wanted to go with our children and for them to see that not everyone has the same opportunities and luck that they have. Paula and Xavi have helped, discovered, learnt, enjoyed, laughed... with their childlike eyes.

The other aspect is the deep emotion with which I have lived the experience. After so many years collaborating with Carumanda, putting in hours and making volunteering part of my life... arriving and seeing that everything there makes sense, that the projects are essential, that the scholarships are the future and hope for many young people and their families, that they have us in mind and are grateful for our efforts... it has made me come back renewed.

The Project Ecuador 2023 has been a gift. We return with the obligation to pass on what we have experienced there because we have received so much love from so many good people in Ecuador and for the good care we have received from the Brothers and the rest of the congregations that have welcomed us.

Kiko Alcañiz on behalf of the group 2023

Working with the heart...

This is the beautiful experience with immigrants of a group of teachers from "Nuestra Señora del Carmen" School in Finisterre (Spain). A small school that is part of the Sa-Fa Family, although it is owned by the "Obra Social Nuestra Señora del Carmen". They tell it to us in first person, from the heart...



"In the 17-18 academic year, a young Senegalese who had been in the village for some time came to our centre. A fellow countryman of his asked us to help him learn Spanish so that he could integrate and get a job, which is what they are looking for when they leave their country to improve their situation and that of their family. We offered him our help and he started going to school in the afternoons after we finished our classes. He could neither read nor write; he probably never went to school and we started working with him from scratch. He spoke only his mother tongue, Wolof.

We could not have imagined the effect it would have. The reception meant that what started with

one pupil became a class for 4 or 5 a week, 10 - 12 a fortnight later, until there were 25 Senegalese. Naturally we had to increase the number of volunteer teachers. Three days a week we were with them until 7 p.m., after our work. We bought them all the school materials they needed.

We adapted to the different levels of linguistic competence they had. Some knew the alphabet and had been to school at some point, others did not; some spoke Wolof and French, others only communicated in dialect. What they all had in common was a smile on their faces, enthusiasm and a desire to learn. The pandemic forced us to interrupt our classes in March 2020.

The relationship that was established between them and us was an intense and enriching one. We continue to maintain contact with most of them, we continue to be *"their teachers"* and they, without a doubt, *"our best students"*.

All of them are now citizens who managed to legalise their situation. They got their papers after the three years. We are proud of their work and that they got the award they deserve. Now they are working, they have improved their situation and are helping their families. They have a normal life which is what they all longed for and they deserve no less.

We have also helped them in other situations in which they have turned to us: to solve difficulties when applying for appointments at the immigration office, to cover documentation for family reunification, various particular situations. If they need us, we will be there. We are glad that this is the case and it makes us happy.

We share the testimony of Babacar, one of those students who was able to rebuild his life, getting a stable job that allowed him to visit his family after 6 years. He had arrived by boat to the Canary Islands. He then passed through Madrid, and finally arrived in Finisterre. Here he lived until 2021." *"I want to thank Susana, Yolanda, Bárbara and all the teachers who helped us; from the bottom of my heart because they helped me to be able to speak*



Spanish well. You are examples that we cannot forget. When we arrived in Spain we didn't even know how to say hello, nothing, and you helped us a lot. And I speak and count on you because you are an example. It is a story of learning that you can be whatever you want to be in life, that you should not be afraid of failure and that you should always do things with a good heart. There are few people like you. We keep trying to improve our language".

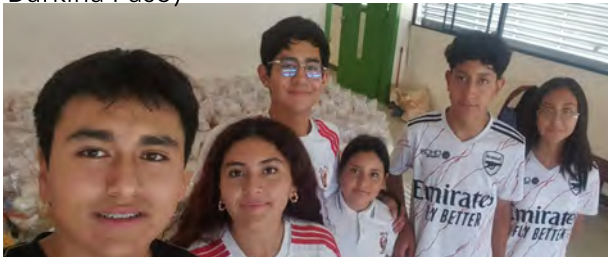
Small acts that change the World



““Being a volunteer has made me grow as a person. I started when I was 14 years old and, together with many other companions, I have progressively carried out numerous activities and projects: ‘operation kilo’, toy collection, Picoli Saggi scholarships, Peque-safa, the Safamistad fair trade shop and school support in a school in the Orcasitas neighbourhood. What marked me on a personal level was being part of the Ecuador Project in 2013. Together we will make sure that our help reaches many people”. (Carmen Calderari. Carumanda Madrid)

“Volunteering is an exceptional form of personal development, especially in the life of a young person. You end up enriching yourself with unforgettable experiences. I volunteer because I want to help others a little bit. Volunteering is sometimes a difficult choice, but it is rewarding to see that a project has a beautiful outcome. The beauty of volunteer work is in the eyes of the person you have helped”. (Roberta Cunha, Itapiranga, Brazil)

“I am a volunteer at the ‘Notre-Dame de l’Espérance’ centre for mentally ill people. Why do I participate? Faced with the illness, I can offer my support and presence to the people. As we are neither family members nor carers, we can talk about any subject they wish. I am both essential and insignificant to them. At the end of each day I feel that I have done something good and that I have been useful. It gives me great joy”. (KABRE Elisée, member of JASAF. Burkina Faso)



“We have a solidarity group and we have collaborated in the distribution of food donated by families for vulnerable people. It is a beautiful and rewarding experience. I never imagined doing this task and the feeling of sharing is one of joy for the social work. Despite the fatigue, I feel satisfied and in my heart there is an indescribable feeling”. (Mateo Fuentes. Ambato. Ecuador)



“Participating as a volunteer in a ‘merendero’ is a way of bringing about change. Every Friday we try to bring about social change and we try to listen to each person who comes to receive our help. The ‘merendero’ is not just about food, it’s about understanding and support”. (Lolo Lorenzo. Montevideo). “To participate in the ‘olla’ is to receive more than what I give, to see things in a different way, offering others a little bit of my time”. (Victoria Minutti. Salto-Uruguay)

“My experience as a participant in a Work Camp, back in 1983/84, marked my life, it opened up a world that no one tells you about unless you live this experience in first person and fully assume the importance of solidarity. It helped me to face life in an altruistic way. Now that I am retired, knowing that I am still useful by helping the brothers to prepare containers to send to Africa with basic necessities for the works of Burkina Faso makes me feel good”. (Paolo. Chieri)

“Change comes about as a result of millions of small, seemingly insignificant actions”



“Volunteering makes me happy. At the age of 75 I am a volunteer at CAR-UMANDA. The volunteering that makes me most excited is ‘Les Paredetes’. With my wife and 5 other people, every first Sunday of the month we set up a ‘Paradeta’ with various objects. Although we are old, despite the cold or the heat... we get up with a lot of enthusiasm and desire to do this activity. Many people come to watch and when they like something we exchange it for a donation. This makes me feel happy because I collaborate with people who need it. And also because I feel active and not thinking only about my own things. What more could you ask for?” (Andrés Alcañiz, Barcelona).

Pope Francis said goodbye to Lisbon, with the last quote to the young people who, with their commitment and effort, made World Youth Day possible: “May the service you have done be the first of many waves of good”. This is also how we understand the voluntary service rendered by the Brothers of the Holy Family as “a wave of good” in the world. (Laura. Italy)

“Called to walk together in a participatory style”