



MISSIONARY SISTERS OF

ST PETER CLAVER

CARE AND EDUCATION - DON BOSCO SALESIANS

“We came to Kara more than 35 years ago, and from the beginning in a spirit of Christian charity we dedicated ourselves to abandoned youth, the street children who are in danger of being abused and arrested for petty thefts or because they are accused of witchcraft”, said Father Georges Koevi of the Salesians of Don Bosco in an interview with Fides about their missionary commitment in Africa and the challenges that they face there every day.

The tragedy of street children is a growing reality in Togo”, explains Fr. Georges, “and the causes are region, there are 200 new cases every year of children and adolescents to be found in the contradictions of a difficult environment without structures to protect minors. Added to this are the consequences of widespread poverty that is getting worse: here in Kara region, there are 200 new cases every year of children and adolescents between 8 and 17, who are abandoned by their parents due to lack of means of support”. In this bleak framework, a space of welcome, affection and care, is a missionary work that brings the Gospel of Christ into the lives of children and into society.

“One out of eight children does not reach the age of five“, Fr Koevi told fides, “and the proportion of those who drop out of school is very high. Rising poverty forces thousands of children to work in exploitative and dangerous conditions to support their families”.

In Togo there are a total of six Salesian Don Bosco missions with 36 reception centres. More than 800 missionaries, staff, volunteers and lay people work alongside the most disadvantaged peoples.

Father Georges explains: “The Don Bosco Congregation in Kara runs three homes for street children, boys and girls. Our action consists in carrying out daily administrative activities, i.e. buying food, clothes and medicines to give concrete help, as well as psychosocial support: the payment of school fees, and the purchase of school supplies for literacy courses for young people rescued from the streets; for professional training courses, equipment for courses in bricklaying, electricians, carpenters, tailors, welding and mechanical courses.

We work with juvenile prisons, fund and lead projects for reintegration which include a gradual return to the family or to a care facility, enabling minors to develop autonomy and confidence in themselves and in others. There is still a lot to be done. It is very important to see the many young Togolese who are in formation, and the encouraging positive reactions from the locals who need to be encouraged and supported. We missionaries are entrusted with the task of responding in our own way in accordance with the charism of our Founder, St. John Bosco, to the challenges that this country and society present to us”. Fides

