DON BOSCO YOUTH MINISTRY- UPANGA, DARESSALAAM

Don Bosco Youth Center is one of the famous centers, which provides services to young people of Dar es Salaam city, for the past twenty years. The centre came into existence following the initiatives of the late Laurian Cardinal Rugambwa and the Catholic Church of Dar es Salaam. The centre, which is now administered by Salesians of Don Bosco, was opened in October, 1982. Priests and Brothers of Don Bosco are characterized for their outstanding youth charisma. The heart of the Salesians of Don Bosco educative plan was “to be church” and to make “the experience of church as the family of God.” Generations of Salesians have lived up to this challenging mission of Don Bosco and we want to live it with our African youth. Together with the Salesians Family, the young and everyone who shares our mission want to “incarnate love, joy, hope, awareness and vigilance to every aspect that people may render the kingdom of God present at the threshold of the third millennium.”

Our Vision

We, the Salesians of Eastern Africa, believe that we have been called and sent by God to “empower the young especially the marginalized poor, street children, displaced youth and those orphaned by AIDS and victims of addiction” in the charismatic style of Don Bosco.”

Aim of the center

The main objective of Don Bosco Youth Center is to provide proper direction to the youth, by building up their character, developing their intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual growth in and around Dar es Salaam.

Geographical Environment

The City experiences a modified type of equatorial climate. It is generally hot and humid throughout the year with an average temperature of 29°C. The hottest season is from October to March during which temperatures can raise up to 35°C. It is relatively cool between May and August, with temperature around 25°C. There are two main rainy seasons; a short rainy season from the month of October to December and a long rainy season between the months of March and May.
The average rainfall is 1000mm (lowest 800mm and highest 1300mm). Humidity is around 96% in the mornings and 67% in the afternoons. The climate is also influenced by the southwesterly monsoon winds from April to October and northwesterly monsoon winds between November and March.

The City is divided into three ecological zones, namely the upland zone comprising the hilly areas to the west and north of the City, the middle plateau, and the low lands including Msimbazi valley, Jangwani, Mtoni, Africana and Ununio areas. The main natural vegetation includes coastal shrubs, Miombo woodland, coastal swamps and mangrove trees.

**Organization Structure**

**The Organization structure of Don Bosco Youth Center is as shown below;**

- Director of the Centre
- Youth Organizer
- Youth Council
- Members of the different clubs

**Contribution of The center’s contribution towards the lives of young people;**

For more than 23 years, the Don Bosco Youth center has remained a place for sports and leisure, where the youth spend their time exchanging ideas, experience and visions. Programs designed for such youth helped many to reform their life styles towards healthier and positive characters. It is said that someone will remain with dormant talents unless he/she is given an opportunity to expose it.

For all this time Don Bosco Youth center has many talents among them being famous musicians, actors and athletes in Tanzania. Youth are also given opportunity to experience leadership and learn more on organization skills, this is a good sign of having good future leaders in sports, education, politics, religion etc.

Charity activities help to strengthen a sense of humor as well as giving hope to those in despair (i.e. the sick, orphans etc).
Dar es Salaam boasts of more than 100 secondary schools, colleges and institutions of higher learning with students drawn from all over the nation. Many of them face challenges that threaten their value systems. To counteract these challenges, the Archdiocese has come up with a three dimensional strategy.

**This has involved the setting up of;**

- Tanzania Young Catholic Student Movement (T.Y.C.S Movement)
- Tanzania Association of Catholic Teachers (T.A.C.T)
- Catholic Religious Education (C.R.E Team)

**A. YCS**

**Y.C.S** is a student movement, approved by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The movement is composed of students, discusses issues centered on the lives of students, and affecting the students’ world. Students know all the ups and downs of life that stream past teachers, parents, educators and adults.

**Movement:** This is because we are a people in motion. Young people bring the world with us as we move at the rapid pace of modern youth. We are moving towards change in all aspects of the crucial issues that surround us. Just like a football team will never be satisfied with a score of 2-0 but will keep on moving, and remain on the move till the bitter end, trying to improve the position of the game at each moment.

Thus, Y.C.S is not the place for pleasant discussion and intellectual subjects. Y.C.S is the place where everyday problems, needs and situations of the students’ world are grappled with, analyzed and acted on.

**Y.C.S AND ITS GOALS**

To make the world in which the student is living a better and happier world to live in, both spiritually and materially. In a nutshell, the Young Christian Students Movement aims to be exactly what its name stands for;
**Young:** for the sake of people who have hope, ideals and courage. They are still young enough to believe there is a better future, and they have the strength and courage to do something about what needs to be done.

**Christian:** Since it is Christ’s message of love and justice that motivates their action. It is Christ’s Command to action and apostleship that guide them to their commitment. And it is Christ’s promise that gives them the strength to continue their activity not only of bringing to their fellow students and fellow men the message and grace of Christ, but also of penetrating and perfecting the temporal sphere with the spirit of the Gospel.

**Students:** For the reason that they are University and Senior Secondary students, they seek to strive in order to change their student society. As students, they are still ready to learn not just from books but also from everyday life, the people around them, and their own experience.

**Y.C.S IS SERVICE**

“Change the world but start with you” is a saying that the real Y.C.S. should never forget. It is by continuous self-improvement that a Y.C.S service will be better prepared to improve his fellow students. It is by himself taking a more Christian attitude in all he thinks, says and does each day that he will be better and be able to Christianize his student world. His own spiritual training is therefore of great importance.

The apostolic role of the Y.C.S. is to SERVE the students, helping them to achieve the aim of their vocation in school. It develops, upholds and strengthens the Christian life of students in school according to their spiritual and social needs. It helps the students to understand their problems, needs and situations or conditions, and to find an answer to them in the light of the gospel.

It develops in them a sense of responsibility for Christianizing their environment. It trains students to become LEADERS and to form their characters. Leaders are not born but are formed through action.
Leaders are people who are shaped to serve the needs of others; people who care enough about the other to do something for them. Leaders are Servants. It is only in service of action that makes a man a leader. It is only in the servant whom men will be allowed to be masters.

As the learning experience of the students goes beyond the strict limits of the school, so the service of the Y.C.S service extends to all domains in the life of young people; family, parish, neighborhood and social milieu.

THE TYCS MOVEMENT IN TANZANIA

The YCS movement came to Tanzania in 1960. It was later adopted by the Episcopal Conference in 1963 as TYCS (Tanzania Young Catholic Students) Movement. The first national seminar was held at Morogoro and the participants came from Mwanza, Moshi, Shinyanga, Bukoba, Musoma, Morogoro and Dar es Salaam.

Today the movement can boast of being present in all the catholic dioceses in Tanzania with its membership from secondary schools, colleges and universities. The national office is situated in Upanga in Dar es Salaam along Kibasila Street.

TYCS MOVEMENT IN DAR ES SALAAM

The TYCS movement has since its inception in Tanzania developed a strong presence within the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam. Almost every year the number of schools joining the movement keeps growing. Currently the total number of schools in which the movement is actively present is 51.

However, there are a number of requests coming in from many other schools within the archdiocese, which comprises of two political jurisdictions of the Coast and Dar es Salaam itself. The YCS headquarter in Dar es Salaam is at Don Bosco Upanga where the Diocesan Chaplain also resides. Right from 1980s the captaincy of the YCS in Dar es Salaam was given to the Salesians congregation.
THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF TYCS IN DON BOSCO YOUTH CENTER DAR ES SALAAM

1. Organizing Regular Joint Masses

As a religious movement, TYCS organizes inter-school religious functions. Some of the key occasions are:

- Every month the diocesan team organizes special Masses, which are always followed by seminars
- There are also sectional mass send off for form four, form six and third year college students
- There are also Masses celebrated, in which the new members are officially received at the moment

On both occasions, the celebration of the mass is usually followed by a seminar on a particular theme

2. Conducting value Educational Seminar for Youth

Every year the YCS movement embarks on striving to equip the members with skills to help them to face challenges of life. Right now TYCS movement is conducting a two year value education Program for three schools. The name of the program is the CROSS ROAD and is conducted on a weekly basis by a team from the Life Ministry Association based at Sinza 2 in Dar es Salaam.

It is aimed at helping the young people to come to grips with the challenges facing them on a daily basis. The outcome of the program should see the participants’ formal system of values that will help them to value themselves as persons and so help to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people.

The course itself is interactive and participatory in nature. Efforts are made to improve the involvement of all the participants. Every Saturday an average of 80 students participate at the course. There are also other seminars organized on a monthly basis in which participants from all the YCS schools attend. The turn up has always been impressive, sometimes reaching six hundred per single event.
3. **Weekly Visit to Schools to Assess the Progress of YCS Members**

This kind of program usually takes place on Saturdays. The diocesan YCS Chaplain and the diocesan committee visit the schools in which the movement is established on a regular basis.

**B. T.A.C.T**

The Tanzania Association of Catholic Teachers (TACT) is an association for teachers whose profession is teaching irrespective of the kind of educational institutions he/she belongs.

The purpose of the association is to promote the Human and Spiritual welfare of the teachers for them to help the development of their students and educational institutions. It is guided by its methodology of See, Judge, Act and Reflect. Currently in membership is drawn from more than 100 schools.

From the time of inception, TACT has succeeded in organizing seminars, workshops, conferences and jubilee celebrations for the teachers and rallies. All these are aimed at promoting formative, cultural and social growth to them to make realize their responsibilities as educators of young people.

**C. C.R.E Team**

This is a team of teachers who, through their teaching provide Catholic information to Catholic students in schools and colleges. At the moment, the team has 41 teachers within the premise of the archdiocese. The purpose of teaching religion is to instruct our youth in the faith.

Thus the activities of the center can be summarized as;

**Organizing regular joint masses** for TYCS, inter-school religious functions every month where new members are officially received to the movement.

**Conducting value educational seminar** for youth, aimed at equipping the members with skills to help them face the challenges of life.

**Do weekly visits** to schools to assess the progress of YCS members. The programme usually takes place on Saturdays. The purpose of these visits is to inspire advice, discuss, and demonstrate friendly relations with the team consequently provide information to the team from the national committee.

**Chaplaincy** at various schools and colleges
Co-ordination of the national committee meetings/ teachers and Diocesan leaders

TYCS Youth Festival- the yearly festival brings together YCS students from all the schools to display their talents

Annual Conference- The main purpose is to give a chance to the youth to pray, reflect and celebrate the Easter mystery as a group. Participation varies yearly but averages 400-600 youth.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

To reach the targeted goals, the center had divided the activities in the following categories;

I. Education
II. Religion
III. Special programs
IV. Girls empowerment
V. Sports & Culture

1. EDUCATION

Each activity taking place at Don Bosco Youth Center is used for imparting knowledge, providing guidance in life. Basically, all activities (sports, culture, religious etc) include an aspect of educating formally and informally. In addition to that, the following are designed for disseminating information and knowledge to the younger ones.

a) Seminars & Workshops
Several times in a year, the Center organizes different seminars for different groups of young people. Every time a specific topic is chosen for the need of the group or society.

b) Values meeting
Formally known as scriptures meetings, a number of students gather residing in hostels found near the Center. Sensitive topics are usually discussed by the students and conclusions taken forward for reactions. This program takes place once a week, and its aim is to help the students live a positive life in the midst of all youth pressures and other problems.

c) Bridge Courses
Being aware of education system of Tanzania, which leaves a big gap of time from one academic level to another, the centre runs a special program to prepare the students for the next level.
This program also helps to make the kids a bit occupied during this time for if they would be left completely free the possibility of joining unhealthy company is high. For the time being the center is organizing a course for primary school leavers only.

d) Library & Notice Board
During the times when the youth are not at schools, they make use of the small library for their private study. Although the centre is short appropriate textbooks, the space and environment for studying are enjoyed by the students. On the other hand, the notice boards around the centre provide a wide range of knowledge and information.

e) Resources Persons
Don Bosco Youth Center provides the facilitators, teachers or trainers for other youth programs when requested. This ranges from formal trainings, youth to youth programs and other youth awareness and educational programs. Counseling programme with the cooperation of YOPC (Youth Parents crisis Counseling Center) for all HIV/AIDS related problems.

2. RELIGION
This is being administered by a religious leader, the center helps its Christian members to observe their religious responsibilities every year, together with the neighboring Christian community.

The youth are always involved in the following:

i. Feast of St. John Bosco
ii. Palm Sunday; This day is celebrated at the center and usually include the youth from all parishes of Dar es Salaam Archdiocese, and from youth movements as well. Youth participate in organizing the holy mass, entertainments, presentations and even fun games.
iii. Lent and Easter
iv. Feast of Mary Help of Christian
v. Advent and X-mass
vi. Regular participation in the parish life including Don Bosco Youth Choir

3. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

a) Children’s day
This is a special program for children of 6 – 15 years, which brings about children from different places; regardless of religious or educational background. The purpose of this program is to prepare a child to be responsible in the community and contribute his/her talents for the benefit of their elf and others also to experience love, joy and friendship in a free environment.

b) Carols Concert
This is an opportunity for choirs, individual and small singing groups to compete in Christmas Carols, tradition, western and modern. Usually this takes place a Saturday before Christmas.

Choirs from the Christian choir of different denomination participate and small awards are given to the best choirs, individuals or groups.

c) Leisure programs
In different times during the year the center organizes leisure programs such as picnics or tours. These programs are intended for leaders, team members, center members, children and students of the bridge courses in different time for each specific group.

d) Partnership and participation
Don Bosco Youth Center is collaborating with other bodies in organizing some other events. Also is a member in sports associations and social services organization. Don Bosco Youth Center is a member of youth organization which organizes an annual tournament called Sober Cup to address drugs prevention among youth in Dar es Salaam city.

The youth also participate in the national anti-drugs day, world AIDS day, International day of peace, children’s day etc. During the year, the Don Bosco teams play a number of friendly matches with teams from schools, clubs, centers and parishes. The center is also in good relationship with organization such as UNICEF, Family Care International, Life Ministry, IOGT, Ministry of Labour, Sports and development, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Education & Culture.
In conclusion, the institution has ensured that the youth grow up to be responsible citizens, who are able to embrace integrity, in all they do. Don Bosco youth ministry also works excellently with other institutions in Tanzania so bring about solidarity in the country.