

# Stories from Sri Lanka and India

## **La Salle Foundation monitoring visit to La Salle Educational Centers for the most vulnerable**

A. is an 8-year-old student at St. Xavier Boys College in Mannar, northeastern Sri Lanka. Like most of his classmates, A. is of Tamil descent, belonging to a historically marginalized minority group that speaks Tamil in a country where Sinhalese is the dominant language.

A.'s family, engaged in fishing and subsistence farming like many Tamil families in the area, resides in a simple home shared with his parents and three siblings. Every day, A. commutes to school on his bike, passing through fishing villages and palm-shaded dirt roads, arriving at the courtyard of St. Xavier Boys College. A. is very proud of his school. The La Salle school, one of the oldest and most renowned in the area, has produced numerous successful professionals among its alumni who, grateful for their education, continue to support the school with donations. A.'s uniform and backpack were secured by these alumni. Although a government school, it is managed by the La Salle Brothers, ensuring quality and inclusivity.

Initially, A. didn't envision dreaming big for his future, but with encouragement from the Brothers and teachers, he is learning to believe in himself and work hard to build the future he envisions for himself, his family, and his community.

Recently, a residence hall for 80 secondary school students was constructed at St. Xavier Boys College. Due to challenging road conditions and public transportation, many students endure lengthy commutes, changing multiple buses to cover short distances. Additionally, some lack electricity at home for studying, leading many to drop out and abandon their dreams.

The residence was built through the efforts of La Salle Foundation, and thanks to 8xmille funds destined for the Italian Catholic Church.

For more than a decade, La Salle Foundation, whose president is our Brother Superior General Armin Luistro, has been carrying out solidarity and development projects to promote access to education for children and youth in

the most fragile contexts where our educational centers are located.

La Salle Foundation presented this impactful project to the Italian Episcopal Conference, which, through 8xmille funds, facilitated positive change for our students.

In the first two weeks of February, part of the La Salle Foundation team visited Sri Lanka and India to monitor various La Salle works benefiting the most vulnerable.

Close to St. Xavier's, the La Salle Brothers manage a recently built school, the Lasallian Educational Campus, catering to children aged 3 to 10. What is special about this school is that the language of instruction is English. From a very young age, children learn a new language, which will open up a world of new opportunities for them, while still respecting their Tamil cultural origins.

Even in Colombo, La Salle extends educational opportunities to children and youth from diverse neighborhoods and social backgrounds.

The monitoring visit of La Salle Foundation concluded in India, specifically in Assam, in the northeast of the country. In this region between China, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, the La Salle Brothers are establishing a skills development center to address the urgent educational needs.

Surrounded by vegetation, most of the population lives in small villages, far from any services. Many young people are forced to drop out of school because of such an isolated and impoverished reality and struggle to establish themselves in decent jobs. Through the new development center, La Salle wants to offer these boys and girls the chance to train and become those workers that the local community desperately needs.

Once again, La Salle succeeds in reaching the most fragile corners in our world and by listening to the needs of the realities in which it finds itself, it responds with effective and innovative solutions that truly change community life and bring about that change, which we all want to see in the world through education.

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