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Bilancio Sociale 2020

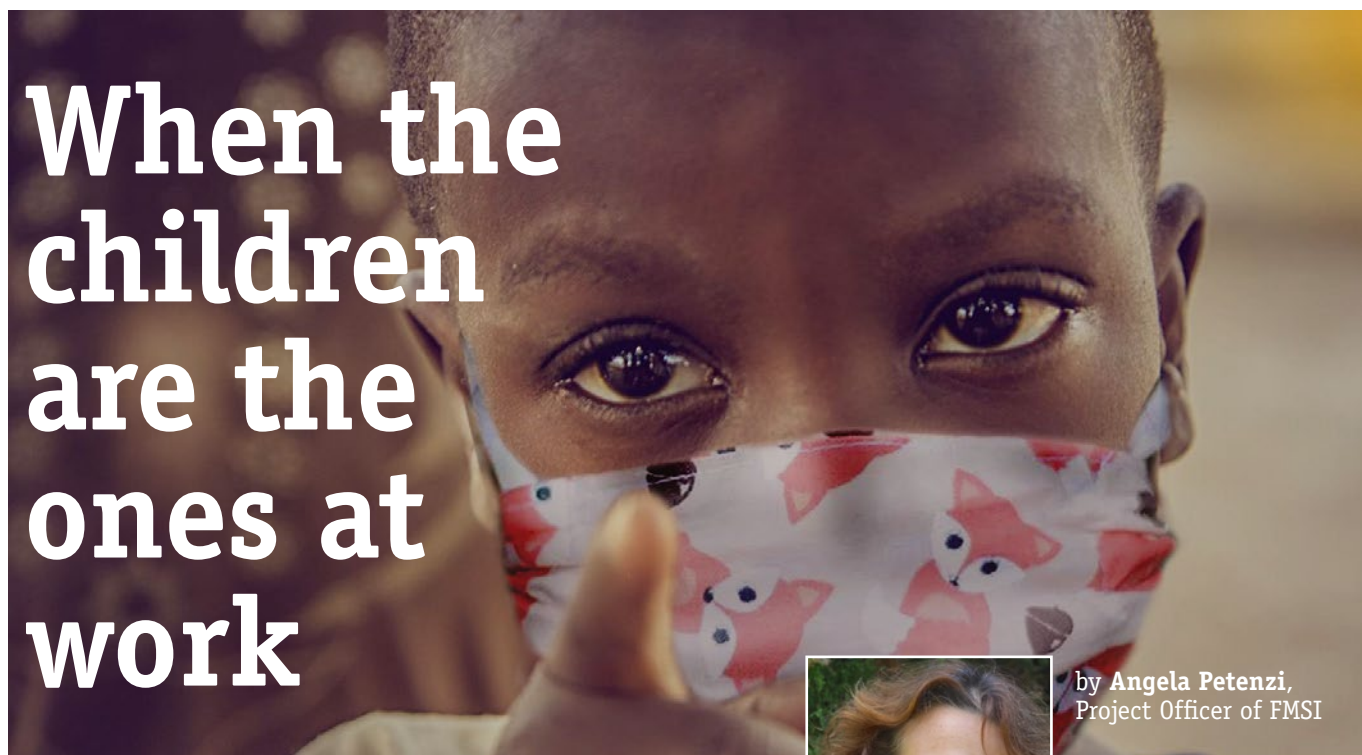
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When the children are the ones at work



by **Angela Petenzi**,
Project Officer of FMSI

2021 is the International Year for the Eradication of Child Labor and the global partnership [Alliance 8.7](#), of which UNICEF and the International Labour Organization are parties, is encouraging member states, social partners, businesses, civil society and regional and international organizations to increase their efforts in the global fight against child labor and to make concrete commitments.

In a world where the number of adults unemployed is growing, the number of child workers is 160 million, 50% of whom are between 5 and 11 years old.

Most children do not receive a fixed salary and are compensated according to their "production level". Their work is **paid very little or not at all**. Sometimes employers cheat them of their wages, with the excuse that they are not satisfied with the job.

Many children take up to one fifth of the local minimum wage. We are talking about 2 or 1 Euro per day and per week. Their earnings are often not even enough to buy food and after long hours of work they remain hungry, with all that this entails

for their growth and health.

Girls are usually paid less than boys who do the same job and often experience sexual harassment and abuse. Many children are subjected to violence and mistreatment.

According to ILO data, between 2000 and 2016 the number of child workers in the world had decreased by 38% - 94 million. But the Covid 19 pandemic has caused a massive closure of schools and an unprecedented loss of jobs by families. Many





The FMSI campaign: children for Child Rights

FMSI believes it is important that children themselves participate actively in advocacy initiatives. An example is the social campaign "children for Child Rights", conceived by Laura Anna Cecchini, a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome who collaborates with FMSI as a volunteer and who will present the project at her university.

The social campaign started on May 27, 2021, the 30th anniversary of Italy's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and provided the selection of 12 drawings from those done by primary and junior secondary school children. These drawings were the basis for the composition of 12 posts published in Italian, English and Spanish, which follow the 4 fundamental pillars of the Convention.

children have begun to work to help their families to survive, while others have been forced to work longer hours a day or in worse situations of exploitation and danger. Some children have become the only ones providing the family's income after the loss of a family member because of the virus.

What to do?

School closures due to the pandemic have contributed to an increase in child labor around the world, as well as the migration of unaccompanied minors and forced child marriages which is a disguised form of trafficking.

Keeping children in school and reintegrating victims of exploitation into the school system is a very protective factor. Education must not only be accessible to all but also of good quality. If children do not learn while going to school every day, they can be inclined to drop out and enter the circuit of exploitation.

Various FMSI projects include activities such as awareness campaigns to promote access to education and back-to-school, especially for those children who have fewer opportunities and chances such as child workers, migrants and refugees, children with disabilities, children living in rural areas; monitoring the attendance of children to avoid the risk of new school drop outs; working with families to provide them with the support they need, offering free meals in the school as an aid and incentive.

In fact, in many countries, **social aid to families** has successfully reduced child labor and increased school enrollment. Governments and international donors are encouraged to create family aid programs to stem the phenomenon. In many cases, however, assistance is still far from what is needed.

Also in this sector **FMSI has intervened with actions for the distribution of food parcels, payment of health care**

and scholarships, as well as with advocacy activities to strengthen the laws against child labor in various countries. At the international level, states have in fact been required to ensure that their legislation on child labor is in line with common standards, to carry out rigorous investigations and demand adequate sanctions in case of violations, to establish laws that require companies to conduct human rights monitoring in their global supply chains to ensure they do not contribute to child labor or other human rights violations. ■

Bilancio sociale

By launching the first 2020 *Bilancio Sociale*, we are writing an important page in the history of FMSI

After nearly fifteen years of operation, all FMSI staff are now committed to fulfilling this important Third Sector Reform by responding to the request to report on our internal organization, decision-making processes, financial transparency, and employment policies. All these are fundamental aspects of our work that we are pleased to demonstrate to all FMSI stakeholders: our supporters and donors, the governing and control bodies, the people of FMSI and, above all, to the beneficiaries of our initiatives. Even more significant is the possibility to measure and report the most relevant and essential aspect of our work: the impact of our activities on **children's lives**.

Therefore, we have a brand-new chance of producing communication tools based on objective data and a reporting methodology that pay particular attention to the effectiveness of our work. And, at the same time, to overcome some marketing-oriented choices that, especially in recent times, tend to mask rather than strengthen the real **essence** and the **impact** of the actions that NGOs carry out.

We are convinced that all Third Sector Entities and in particular NGOs, especially those that operating at an international level and who are widely recognized as privileged actors in responding to emerging global and local needs, must also be able to respond to these requests promptly, clearly and transparently.

Using a technical terminology with words such as *output*, *outcome* and *impact* should not fuel the fear, albeit unfounded, of creating distances with less experienced readers. Instead, it is now the opportunity to bring them closer and make them more aware of the tools we have to measure the **value** of what we do.

This *Bilancio Sociale* aims at describing how FMSI projects have the ability to translate our mission and our statutory objectives into **concrete results**. Education, training and all actions in sup-



port of children and local communities are the means we have chosen to support the defense of rights and processes of **change** at the local and international level.

All the FMSI staff worked extensively on the drafting of this institutional document, always mindful of our responsibility to report the concrete results obtained to all our supporters in a clear and objective way.

The *Bilancio Sociale* represents an important challenge: one of being recognized and operating in the field of international cooperation as an entity that places coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, but now also **transparency**, at the top of the list of its priorities. That is to say, to be an organization capable of always keeping these elements in mind in how we respond to challenges and needs, how we relate to donors, how we network with others. It represents the opportunity to concretely demonstrate the added value of our work which is of fundamental importance in the lives of the people we have promised to help.

We therefore invite you to read our Bilancio Sociale [here](#) and to evaluate our work, thanking you in advance for your contribution and your participation.

5 per mille

It's time for reporting!

Nel mese di luglio abbiamo pubblicato, con grande soddisfazione, i due report sull'utilizzo dei contributi derivanti dal 5 per mille all'IRPEF incassati lo scorso anno e riferiti alle scelte dei nostri sostenitori negli anni 2018 e 2019.

With great satisfaction, we published the two reports on the use of the 5 per mille contributions received last year with reference to the choices of our supporters in the years 2018 and 2019.

Following an internal evaluation process, aimed at ensuring the transparency of the allocations, all the funds received were used to implement and support two specific projects.

The 5 per mille contribution for 2018, which amounted to € 6,754.80, supported the proj-

ect "Drinking water, solar panels and a clinic room" in the small town of Betroka, Madagascar. In an area which is particularly marked by severe drought, where even access to electricity is extremely rare, the lack of drinking water affects both the health and school attendance of children and young people.

Thanks to some technical renovations to the Saint Vincent de Paul school, it has been possible to ensure access to drinking water and better sanitary conditions for hundreds of children and their families. The new photovoltaic panels have also enabled a water pump to function and a power supply for the school's computers. This was also very important for enabling informal education activities to be carried out, thus enabling a wider number of beneficiaries to be reached. Thanks to the funds received, it has been possible to make a significant contribution to improving the living conditions of around 1,500 children and young people.

The 5 per mille contribution for 2019, which amounted to € 7,012.23, supported the "Train-

ing the new generation" project in South Sudan, with a specific action within the more extensive [Solidarity with South Sudan programme](#) (launched in 2008 thanks to the cooperation between several religious congregations, public bodies and private partners). The programme aims to promote sustainable educational, health and agricultural institutions and programmes to enable the development of a fair and peaceful community. Particular attention is paid to sustainable agriculture, teacher training and nursing and midwifery training. The funds allocated to the project have enabled training courses for new teachers, involving a total of 99 participants from all over the country. These are professional training courses in primary education, held at the *Solidarity Teacher Training College* in Yambio, with specific focus on teaching and communication methods for the most vulnerable children with learning difficulties, on gender equality and on the ability to be active agents of change in society. At the end of their studies, students are evaluated according to national standards, set by the Ministry

Il tuo 5xMille a FMSI ARRIVA LONTANO!



Dona il tuo 5xMille a FMSI

of Education. Once certified to teach in primary schools, they can return to their communities, playing a significant role in the education of children and the transmission of knowledge and skills to other teachers.

We would like to warmly thank all those who have decided to support the values and aims of FMSI through this means, underlining once again how important and incisive a small action can be.

You can consult all the reports on 5 per mille in the [archive](#) on our website.

Help us to make a difference again. Your contribution will go a long way! ■

FMSI Board Meeting



The Board of Auditors of FMSI held an extraordinary meeting on Wednesday 26 May. During the meeting, the Board thanked Andrea Rossi for accepting the position of Director during this significant time of change for FMSI. The purpose of the meeting was to reflect on the new Third Sectors laws in Italy which will have an impact on the management and governance of FMSI.

The Board is formed by Br. Ken McDonald (President), from the General Council; Inmaculada Maillo (Board Secretary), from Spain; Br. Allen Sherry, from Australia; Analia Ruggeri from Argentina; Br. Pascal Birken, from Ghana; and Br. Libardo Garzón, Bursar General.

The pandemic has changed the nature of these meetings. Previously the Board held two-day meetings which gave ample time for reflection and sharing before making decisions. During these times, the meetings are by Zoom and are usually much shorter. With Board members from different

parts of the world with differing time zones, meetings often require some members to rise very early or to wait up till very late. This means a great deal of generosity and commitment on the part of the members of the Board.

The board was informed about the compliance processes currently in progress: the adaptation to the new *legge del terzo settore* which led to the drafting of the first *Bilancio Sociale* of FMSI; but also the conformity to the GDPR and the Italian Legislative Decree n.231/2001 which required some re-organization.

The Board will continue to work towards compliance with the new regulations in Italy. This will ensure that FMSI can continue to provide a much-needed service to the children throughout the Institute by funding projects that develop the potential of children, especially those who are the most vulnerable and marginalized, through education, advocacy for Child Rights and solidarity initiatives. ■



Project "Feed the children", Syria

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF:

The pandemic has caused living conditions to worsen very quickly in a country where 90% of the population now lives in poverty. The project "**Feed the children**" was supported by **Misean Cara** envisaging the **distribution of food** parcels to 1000 families in Aleppo, selected as among the most vulnerable and in need: displaced families, large families with many **children, widows, widowers** and **orphans**.

CONTEXT:

Syria's conflict led to the world's largest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. March 2021 marked 10 years since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, 10 years in which the lives of many people have been stopped and in addition the COVID-19 pandemic has upended the lives of families and is also affecting the mental health of young people and pushing more and more people into poverty. Millions of Syrians have escaped across borders,

fleeing the bombs and bullets that have devastated their homes; over 6.2 million Syrians are internally displaced and 5.6 million are refugees, predominantly in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey that hosts the largest number of registered Syrian refugees. Because of the war the education of hundreds of millions of children has been disrupted and access to protection services and health services – including routine vaccinations – has been severely impacted. People living in poor social economic conditions and vulnerable groups are those who have suffered the most in this situation, as opportunities for a subsistence income or help for their basic needs have drastically reduced. It is even worse in Syria's refugees' camps where people struggle to survive in even worse living conditions. The majority of Syrians, impoverished by ten years of war and by the pandemic, can no longer make ends meet and the 80 % of people live under the poverty line and need support to live

and to survive.

AIM OF THE PROJECT:

As part of this initiative, two types of food baskets were distributed. Each basket included spaghetti, tomato paste, sugar, olive oil, cooking oil, butter and cheese. Large families with many children were given larger baskets.

Since the beginning of the war, the **Blue Marists** have been running 15 programs, some aid projects and other development and education programs, and they have expanded their scope to include, in addition to the poorest families, hundreds of displaced families, Christian and Muslim. **FMSI** has more

than 14 years' experience working in the field of International Solidarity and, inspired by Marist spirituality and charisma of St. Marcellin Champagnat, will support the Blue Marists to implement projects that can help many families and people who live in very difficult situations. ■

The project by numbers:



1.000 families received food parcels
4.800 beneficiaries

Children's and women's rights in Bolivia:

Follow up on the UN bodies recommendations

This Project funded by Misesan Cara is conceived as the follow up to the project *Strengthening Bolivia's civil society in the context of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)* run in Bolivia in 2018-2019 by FMSI, International Catholic Center of Geneva (CCIG), Edmund Rice International (ERI) with a coalition of 19 civil society actors in Bolivia. Upon the completion of that project, 45 Human Rights' Defenders, belonging to the 19 local and international organizations that participated, were trained on UN Human Rights mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, especially the UPR.



The new Project *"Children's and women's rights in Bolivia: Follow up on the UN bodies recommendations"* aims at scaling-up and further improving the situation of women and children in Bolivia, through an effective implementation of recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Bolivia was reviewed under the UPR in 2019 and will be reviewed by CRC in 2021. This is a unique opportunity for the Bolivian civil society (CSO) to foster the implementation of women, youth and child rights, by monitoring the 28 recommendations stemming from the lobbying of the local coalition in the first project. FMSI, CCIG, ERI worked on this new initiative on child and youth participation, gender violence and child labor. The project was approved by Misesan Cara in May 2021 and will start in December 2021.

The Project will: enable CSO to address human rights violations and evaluate the government's compliance with human rights obligations (Outcome 1); and will allow vulnerable women

and children to be more aware of their rights and be better equipped to defend them (Outcome 2).

Accordingly, the capacity of CSO representatives to monitor and follow up on international recommendations on children's and women's rights will be enhanced.

Activities will include:

- an on-line course on how to follow up on UPR and CRC recommendations; the creation of a group of CSOs leading the monitoring activity;
- a training cycle for youth on the right to participation; awareness raising events on child rights advocacy using social media;
- collection of quantitative and qualitative data on child labor, with the support of the academia;
- education spaces to empower child workers to defend their rights and make their voices heard;
- workshops to prevent gender violence and empower victims to seek justice; informative sessions on National Law 348/2013 (violence against women).

FMSI will support the Marist Brothers Institute, in particular the Marist Province of Santa Maria de los Andes, determined to implement this project as a continuation of its multiple advocacy actions implemented in Bolivia and as a vital part of its strategic presence in South America and as a way to improve access to rights especially in favour of disadvantaged children and youth. ■



New project in Zambia

(Chibuluma Kalulusha)
The St. Marcellin Skills Training Center, the vocational training center founded by the Marist Brothers, offers training in carpentry, tailoring, ICT and hospitality to young people and women of Chibuluma, Chibute, Kalulushi, Nkana and Chambishi. The Center was established in 2011 and has trained nearly **1000 students** so far. There are currently four brothers in the Chibuluma community who teach in both the secondary school and the Center.

In January 2019 they started an intensive production project. They were able to purchase the chicks, raw materials and poultry equipment. Poultry is one of the center's most profitable businesses. However, the project is currently unable to fully support the Center due to the

continuous increase in the prices of raw materials and chicks. It is for this reason and to make the most of their resources that they decided to start the production of raw materials in support of the Center. This project will produce raw materials to feed broilers for both the Center and the **local community**.

People in this area are mainly dependent on the micro-economy of small businesses for their survival

The main objective of the project is to improve the income in the Center through the project to produce the necessary feed for the chickens and thus have chicks to support the Center. Once the project is implemented, the Center with its own economic profit will be able to pay workers, purchase training materials, support the Center's current costs and introduce more programs for the benefit of **young people and women**.

The need to carry out the project arises from the consider-

ation that most of the students of the Center have dropped out of primary school and many also from secondary schools due to the lack of financial support for their education. Therefore, the Skills Center is their hope to acquire the necessary skills for employment.

People in this area are mainly dependent on the micro-economy of small businesses for their survival as formal employment in companies and industry is very scarce. A large part of families depends on subsistence agriculture where they grow food to feed themselves and sell the small surplus that remains to generate profit to buy other necessities.

Forty percent of the area's population does not own a home. This means that rent is the main type of expense besides food, personal expenses, clothing, education and transportation. As well as making the St. Marcellin Skills Training Center **self-sufficient**, the project also helps the local economy. ■