



Columban Mission in Pakistan



The Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence
Hyderabad, Pakistan



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

THE CATHOLIC CENTRE OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The goal of the Centre is to provide a sustained environment where academically capable Catholic boys can be assisted to attain high academic grades which will ensure that they can gain university entrance on merit [i.e. totally free on government scholarship basis]. By its focus on moral, spiritual and personal development, the Centre ensures that the candidates will be able both to enter confidently into tertiary education and to successfully complete their studies so that they can ultimately move into opinion-influencing positions and employment. We look forward to them becoming positive Christian leaders in the Church in the diocese of Hyderabad and to their becoming an influential Catholic voice in Pakistan. Family poverty and anti-Christian religious discrimination are the two obstacles which the Centre seeks to overcome to achieve this goal.

The Centre is for Catholic boys from Hyderabad in south-east Pakistan. It runs on a non-residential basis and operates Monday to Friday from 4-9pm. The boys attend their own schools in the morning [high school timings are 7.30-1.30] and then come to the Centre in the late afternoon. They receive afternoon tea and also a substantial evening meal. Enrolment is limited to 60 boys and young men to ensure that the goal of the Centre can be achieved. Keeping in mind the socio-economic background of most of the candidates, no financial charge is made for any of the Centre's activities. Candidates are expected to see to their own transport costs and to provide

their own school textbooks. In addition, each candidate must enter into a commitment and behavioural covenant, one aspect of the covenant being that the candidate will maintain or improve his school examination results on the academic level required for participation in the programme of the Centre.

Entrance to the Centre's programme is for boys beginning their 9th class. The programme extends for 4 years, i.e. 9th and 10th class of high school [results of which influence admission in to pre-university college level studies], and 1st and 2nd years of college [the results here are crucial for merit admission to university].

The CCAE selection process:

The initial selection of the candidates is on the basis of academic results of 8th class with a letter of recommendation from their parish priest. This is followed by preliminary subject efficiency testing in language, both Urdu and English, numeracy, Catholic religious knowledge, and an intelligence test which balances the candidates' common sense and personal ability with his academic results. This ensures a 'level field' in the selection process, especially in the case of the majority of candidates who cannot get into better schools because of financial and social reasons. Interviews with the parents and candidates then take place. After the selection, a general medical test for each candidate is carried out at St. Elizabeth's Hospital which is paid for by the Centre.



The Statutes and Policies of the Centre were approved in 2009 by the bishop of Hyderabad. The Board of Governors is made up of the bishop, 6 lay people, 2 female religious and one priest, and includes educators, businessmen and a chartered accountant. The bishop is not the chairman of the Board of Governors.

Finances: As of June 2010, Rs.10,000,000 of the total goal of Rs.15,000,000 have been placed in the Endowment Fund, of which Rs.3,000,000 is at 15% per annum and Rs.2,000,000 is at 13% per annum and Rs.5,000,000 at 12.5% [\$1=Rs.73]. Interest is rolled over. We are fortunate to have a competent bookkeeper and an extremely vigilant Treasurer. Monthly statements of accounts with bank statements are presented at every meeting of the Board of Governors for examination and approval. An external audit is carried out each year.

Because of increasing numbers, we have had to move twice in the last 2 years into bigger and more spacious premises. In 2010 we have a two storey building on rent which has 6 rooms, a large staff room, a kitchen, a very large dining area. One of the rooms is for computers. The library is in one of the class rooms. We have the whole roof area, a feature of Pakistani houses, which enables us to use this large area for activities.

CCAIE staff comprises the director, 5 teachers, an art teacher, a music teacher, a computer instructor, and a cook. [The boys are given a very substantial evening meal]. The Director of CCAIE is always a married man who is a committed and practising Catholic. All the teaching staff are required to be committed and practising Catholics. This is by deliberate choice and is mandatory as the Centre wishes its staff to be role models for the young participants.

The Centre's daily schedule is:

- 2 hours daily: homework/tuition in schoolwork = 3 classes
- 2 hours daily: CCAIE courses = 3 classes every day
- 1 hour daily: sport and mealtime and teatime

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| Rs.10,000,000 = | \$132,095.37 AUD |
| Rs.15,000,000 = | \$198,090.79 AUD |
| Rs.3,000,000 = | \$39,616.09 AUD |
| Rs.5,000,000 = | \$66,026.81 AUD |
| Rs.2,000,000 = | \$26,412.72 AUD |

Monthly costs average Rs.243,500 [approximately \$3,500] which includes rent, utilities, salaries, food, medical care, and ongoing library development and equipment purchase. This is the equivalent of \$58 student per month. Our plan is that the income from the endowment fund will be sufficient to cover the running costs of the Centre. Rent is a continuing financial drain on our resources so we look forward to being able to purchase a building as the permanent home for the CCAIE.

Special emphasis is placed on English speaking, writing, reading and comprehension; religious instruction; Urdu; general knowledge, including politics, history, geography, current affairs; public speaking; newspaper reading, reading techniques, and study methods; IT skills; and personal development.

Currently 60 boys are enrolled in CCAIE: 23 in the 1st year [second last year of high school], 14 in the 2nd year [last year of high school], 12 in the 3rd year [first year of pre-university college], and 11 in the fourth year [second year of pre university college].



Some highlights during 2009-2010:

1. Lent was observed with Stations of the Cross every Friday evening followed by Mass. Special arrangements were made to break the fast at 6pm for those students and staff who were keeping the fast ["keeping the fast" for Pakistani Catholics means not eating or drinking for a period of either 12 or 24 hours].
2. 4 staff members attended professional development sessions at the Pakistan Institute of Management in Karachi
3. The 11 second year college students with 2 staff members made a study tour to Karachi on 13-14 February, visiting the National Museum, the tomb of Jinnah [the founder of Pakistan], St. Patrick's Cathedral, the National Catholic Institute of Theology, and Christ the King Major Seminary. Some of the students saw the sea for the first time.
4. The staff carried out visits to the families of all students during January and February 2010. Parents attend the bi-monthly parent-teacher meetings at the Centre as a means of ensuring parental involvement in the ongoing education and development of their sons.
5. Class 10 students attended a month-long Catholic Faith Formation Course in May at the Pastoral Institute, Multan [in central Pakistan].
6. Academic results have been excellent. The matriculation/10th class results were announced by the Sindh Board of Education on July 12, 6 of our students obtained A+, 4 obtained an A and 2 obtained a B, premium results indeed. This group of boys will now go into pre-university college: 4 for pre-commerce, 2 for pre-medical, 6 for pre-engineering. We await the results for our group of college students which will come out in late August.

Overall, I am extremely pleased with how the Centre has grown and developed in the past 4 years. Bishop Max Rodrigues always urges the Director and staff to keep the vision of committed service to others and to the Church before the students both now while at the CCAE and in whatever field they may enter in the future. I see the students responding to this challenge. The professionalism and enthusiasm of our Board of Governors ensures the continuity of direction for the Centre. You, our benefactors, give us life. Many thanks to all of you.

Fr. Robert McCulloch

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