



The City of Children

Corumbá - *Brasil*

Corumbá is located in Brasil in the region of “Mato Grosso do Sul”.

It faces the banks of the river Rio Paraguay and borders on the natural reserve of **Pantanal** and is only 15 km away from **Bolivia**.

It is a town with a population of 89.000 with extreme poverty and no job opportunities. There is a cement factory, iron mines and ranches for cattle raising but only seasonal jobs are offered. Tourism is not yet a work generator.

“The City of Children” is in the “Cidade Dom Bosco Mission” founded 45 years ago by a Salesian father named **Padre Ernesto Saksida** who is now 86 years old.

This is a **city** within a city created to house those who are homeless. This neighbourhood, even more poverty stricken in the years past, was created to house all those people who were deprived of their most fundamental rights and live below the poverty line.

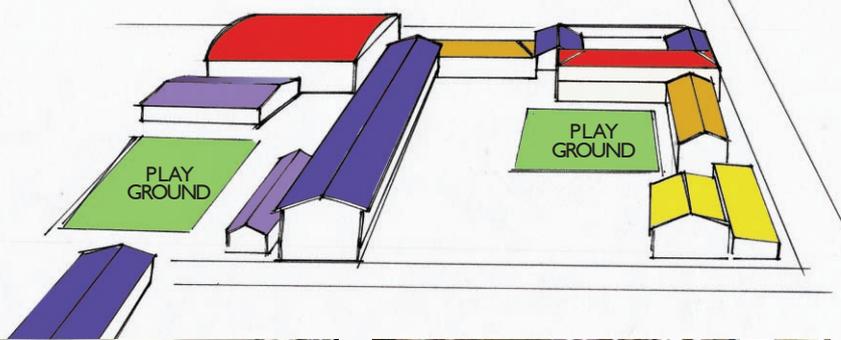
The Salesian fathers arrived in “Mato Grosso” at the end of the 1800’s and began a schooling system. In 1961 there were more than 500 huts made of tins and wood panels with many abandoned children. The first nucleus of “The City of Children” was an area barely 15 feet by 18 feet in a hut donated by a woman named “Caterina” in which 22 desks were placed. No electricity, water, toilettes, nor books and school supplies were available.



“The City of Children” was built with the dedication and economic support of european associations including Italy. It was structured following the model of “Boys Town” founded in the United States by father Flanagan with a philosophy based on self-management, self-development and self-responsibility.



These are the **elementary schools**, the **junior high sch** and the **high schools** which prepare the students for work in the fields of carpentry, computers, tailoring, and culinary arts. Every day **1800** poor children and teenagers attend the school in 3 shifts from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. providing them with a meal, uniform, books and binders. They have access to a **gymnasium**, a **theatre**, and fields to do sports.



This project called "**Projeto Criança Feliz**", (which means happy adolescence), works with **280** children daily who range in age from 8 to 14 years. These children come from difficult homes with experiences of violence, abuse and reclusiveness. poor parenthood consequently fosters problematic youngsters. Here they find support for their studies and they find security which they were not supplied for by their own parents. The staff organizes activities and group games to recreate a serene atmosphere in which to study and play.



The **Social Workers** help all those who seek it and distribute food and supplies. They record the situations as they visit the families and try to program the necessary work. Foster parents are encouraged even at a distance for those children who are in grave difficulty, and with the assistance received, they are accompanied in their education and in their family life. The **Medical/Dental Clinic** is open to all the needy and consultations, cures and medicines are free.

CIDADE DOM BOSCO

Director of the Mission: **Father Osvaldo Scotti**
 Founder and Responsible Social Workers: **Father Ernesto Saksida**

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