



Association suisse des Amis
de Soeur Emmanuelle

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LETTER TO THE FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

N° 103

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Dear Friends,

Like every year at this period, our friend Kamal Tadros from the Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP), our partner in Khartoum, is among us as we are writing this letter.

Unfortunately, the news for 2008 and the current year, collected during the last months, is not good. The targeted population of our programs still badly needs our support, whereas donations are significantly down because of the financial and economical world crisis. Furthermore the combined effect of inflation exceeding 20% and a local currency holding steady, has greatly increased for two years now the costs of our programs.

Once more in 2008 ASASE had to draw on its reserves to live up to its commitments; however **SVDP has undertaken, since about a year, a major reorganization in order to reduce all its costs (-10% in 2008):** the Vocational Training program has particularly reduced its activity in 2008, with the closing of one of our centres (Gabarona) and the dismissal of some forty people (see below). In 2009, it is the Babies Feeding program that is suffering from this critical situation. In general, SVDP has considerably cut down on spending, **and the costs to date are on a decreasing trend of over 20% compared to 2008.**

To keep this letter not too long, we have chosen to give you a detailed report of only two of our programs: the Babies Feeding and the Street Children ones. Detailed presentation sheets of the other programs are available on our website at www.asase.org. We recommend that you read them.

By the way, you will notice that it is now possible to make donations online on our website via the secured Paypal system (credit card). We also encourage you to promote our website around you: it is a modern, very simple and effective way to help us carry on Sister Emmanuelle's action for the benefit of the poor.

STATUTORY GENERAL MEETING

We invite all the members of the Swiss Association of the friends of Sister Emmanuelle to attend its statutory general meeting, which will take place on:

**Thursday the 28th of May 2008 at 8 p.m.
At the Cercle de l'Espérance, salle Rhône (1st floor)
8 rue de la Chapelle, 1207 Genève (Eaux-Vives)**

During this Assembly, will be discussed and voted various points raised by the persons who will be present.

The head of SVDP in Sudan, Kamal Tadros, will be happy to meet our donors to thank them and answer their questions.

NEWS FROM SUDAN

The Babies Feeding Program

In 2008, 8010 children have benefited from this program against 9 050 children the year before. These figures are those of the children officially registered; they are lower than the actual number of children beneficiaries.

Despite the considerable logistics of the program, **food** accounts for 51% of the total cost of the program, knowing that the price of certain foodstuff has risen sharply during the year: dura sorghum (a staple food of the poor) +129%, lentils +155%, rice + 116%, onions +150%, spices +44%...



Wage represent 11% of total costs. In one year, it has increased by 70% and its relative weight has doubled.

This is partly due to the fact that some employees are mothers who are paid in food, which cost has risen sharply.

Moreover this item has been charged with part of the costs of SVDP severance pay. These costs have been particularly high in 2008, given that SVDP has drastically reduced its activity (for instance, 33 teachers were dismissed in our vocational training program), and that the Sudanese law guarantees 6 months salary in compensation.

The total number of employees dismissed has been 55, including a director of a centre, 3 social workers, 3 child care workers, 2 foster families (including 3 assistants of the foster mothers after the closing of two homes), one doctor, one veterinarian, 2 farm workers and 4 guards.

Over the last three years, **the cost of construction and maintenance** accounts for 12 to 13% of total program costs. In 2008, it was necessary to repair the damage caused by the summer storms on shelters, mats and barriers around the centres. Some cookware or distribution tools (scales, pots etc) have also been replaced.

Transport costs accounted for only 4% of the total cost of the program, as against 12% in 2007. SVDP has recently decided to rent some vehicles near the feeding centers to transport food supplies, rather than have one of its old wrecks come from downtown.

Finally, like in 2007, **SVDP overheads** charged to this program account for 8% of its total costs.

Until 2007, SVDP was running 17 feeding centres and provided a meal 5 days a week.

But the global crisis that has seriously reduced the donations in 2008, has prompted us to take drastic measures.

The increase in program costs due to the soaring prices of basic foodstuffs, and the shortening of funding resulting from the global financial crisis, **have forced us to close one centre in 2008 and seven other ones in March 2009**, after all food reserves that were stored in them had been eaten...

Today only 9 centres are still functioning: Mandella Mayo, the three Karia centres in Omdurman, and the John Madit, Gamayer Hofra, Marol Chok and Amal Mayo centres, and a centre in a women's prison as well.

Moreover, in early 2009, the weekly number of meals has dropped from 5 to 3 (on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday) and we had to reduce food quantities and to ask the parents to pay a monthly 6 SDG (2 €) per child.

We shall do everything to make these measures temporary. In the camps, there are still children who are more malnourished than ever, because of the soaring prices and the precarious situation of local economy. Kamal told us that every day, the small ones cry and ask their elder brothers and sisters to take them to our centres, albeit closed. We are all set to reopen them as soon as we find the necessary funds.

The Street Children Program

Since the peace agreement has enabled to make contact again with the South, the systematic collection of information on the children taken care of in our homes and farms has been fruitful. The children who still had some relatives in the former combat zones, could get back in touch with them.



Bicycles Repairing Program

In 2008, 82 children from our program have voluntarily quit SVDP structures to join their families. They were 44 teenagers from the Haj Youssif farm, and 38 boys and girls from our homes: 20 boys from Maygoma home, 11 from Ferdinand home, and 7 girls from El Takamul.

After these departures, according to its global cutback policy, SVDP has closed two homes: Sharia 1, a home for girls in Haj Youssif, and in July, the Maygoma home for boys.

The 6 girls from Sharia 1 joined their friends from the home for girls El Takamul, where they are now 17. Among the boys who left the Ferdinand home, there were for instance Anwar, who works now in construction, and Jumma, who wishes he could run a small consumer electronics shop (phones, watches etc...). Both live in Khartoum. Other ones, like Jumma or Thabo, joined their relatives at Malakal, in the South. The former is a motorboat driver, the latter is a bus ticket collector (and would like to take his bus driver's test).

End of 2008, we had over 578 children. In fact, the number of children taken care of in 2008 was higher because the 82 who left us did it along the year. Out of these 82, it seems fair to keep the figure of 25 children over the year, **which brings the number of supported children up to 603 in 2008, as against 573 in 2007 and 615 in 2006.** Moreover, it should be noted that the total number of children of our foster parents is 25 (including 14 girls), and that these children are also indirectly supported by SVDP.

The proportion of girls decreased from 14% in 2007 to 11% in 2008 (64 girls).

66 boys have been accommodated in our homes and 473 teenagers in our farms.

81% of the children (and 81% of the boys in particular) go to primary schools, the rest goes to secondary school.

In 2008, 87 new boys have been welcomed in our program. Among them, 35 have been freed from slavery condition.

The new farm "Dar Juan Mata" has hosted 166 boys for the first time in 2008.

All in all, the budget of this program has been exceeded by 37%.

We had anticipated an inflation of 10%, while the official inflation over the year has been 23%.

The costs of primary education have almost doubled in one year (tuition fees for the schools of the diocese have exploded).

Rent and maintenance costs have increased by 42%. This is mainly due to the finishing of the new farm Dar Juan Mata and to the renovation of the Haj Youssif farm.

Last but not least, wage accounted for 9% of total program costs. The increase is partly attributable to particularly high severance pay, in accordance with Sudanese law (6 months salary). In addition, savings on the salaries of the foster parents of the two closed homes have been effective only a few months, where as the opening of the new farm has required the hiring of two new social workers, which meant an additional expense throughout the year.

Finally, the annual cost of the program per child, all inclusive, has been 1425 € (2280 CHF), 29% higher than in 2007.

The yearly cost of primary education per child is 174 € (278 CHF), which represents an increase of 64% in two years. **One year in secondary school cost 128 € (205 CHF) in 2008,** which is 35% more than two years ago.

With 550 € (880 CHF), we provide food and accommodation for an orphan during one year (-2% compared to 2007) ... which is less than € 46 (CHF 73) per month...

In 2009, the number of children supported in the program will be reduced to about 500. Fifty children have already left the program in April and another fifty will follow this summer.

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In March 2009, many Western NGOs working in these camps and in Darfur had to pack up and leave the country within 24 hours. Thank God, it did not happen to our local partner SVDP, a 100% Sudanese NGO, which we have chosen to cooperate with for 23 years.

Please find enclosed a postal check. The members of the Committee and myself thank you in advance for your support that enables us to keep on our aid to women, men and children who still live in very difficult conditions.

Michel Bittar
President