



Association suisse des Amis  
de Soeur Emmanuelle

19, rue du Rhône  
1204 Genève  
T: +41 (0)22 311 20 22  
F: + 41 (0)22 310 21 93  
info@asase.org  
www.asase.org

## LETTER TO THE FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

N° 99

SEPTEMBER 2007

Dear Friends,

Sister Emmanuelle will be 99 years old in November, and it causes me great joy to send this 99th letter, to you, dear donors from the early beginning, or more recently involved with us in the relief brought to the populations of Sudan and Haiti.

I have been assisting my father in ASASE for a year and a half now, particularly in the drafting of these newsletters that are connecting all the partners of our action: the voluntaries of the association, our donors from around the world (via our website), the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in Sudan, and Haiti Cosmos.

This time my father insisted on my signing the letter, thus indicating that all is made within ASASE to ensure on time the continuity of the work he started with Sister Emmanuelle and Kamal 28 years ago. I do wish to thank him, as well as the Committee members, for their trust: I consider it a privilege and an honour to address this letter to you.

However, as it is often the case in our newsletters, the signatory is not the sole writer, and you can read below the reports written by:

- Marie-Claire Ricou, our Vice-president, who reports on the events organized last spring in Geneva to celebrate the 20 years anniversary of our action in Sudan;
- Jean-Claude Francois, member of the Committee, who brings back from his stay in Haiti excellent news about the current programs.

In addition, you will find attached some graphs that bring out the importance of our action and that offer a synthetic view of how your donations are used.

The front page is about our Association in Geneva; the back concerns the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in Sudan, to which, as you will see, we still remain the main (as well as the oldest) contributor.

### NEWS FROM SUDAN

#### **Kamal and his team are bravely facing many difficulties**

Inflation is one of the difficulties Kamal is regularly facing in monitoring his budget. Since the beginning of the year, rents and certain foodstuffs have increased by 12%, and school fees by 10%...

Another customary complication is the relationship with the authorities. Kamal and his team are well experienced in this matter. This year, it is our farm in Haj Youssef that has undergone some alarming - though indirect- harassment. Inaugurated in 1997, this farm is accommodating 125 teenagers and is providing them with schooling and vocational training workshops.

Kamal knew that the land next to the farm had recently been sold to the government of Khartoum. But this summer, he has been much surprised to see workmen come and dig a 40m-large/10m-deep pit, where mountains of refuse were soon poured by tippers! Difficult to believe it is quite by chance that the government chose to dig this pit 45m away from our farm... The fact is that putrid fumes can be harmful to our teenagers and our staff. However, according to our latest news, the rubbish dump is not operating anymore. Kamal is keeping a close eye on the progress of this unfortunate issue.

Lastly, this summer again, the weather has been particularly disturbed in Khartoum: pouring rain has caused major floods. Our vocational training centre in Mayo (that delivered 322 certificates in 2006) has been strongly damaged. The repair work immediately undertaken in August has cost nearly 10000€.

## Drive and success of our vocational training program

In spite of these difficulties, our vocational training program is still having an excellent reputation:

- SVDP is about to sign a contract with a Dutch organization supporting displaced people; the object is to train nearly 150 adults in Soba (South of Khartoum).
- Save the Children (U.K.) officials have expressed their keen interest in the renewal of their training agreement (namely entrusting the training of 250 people to the care of SVDP). According to their own words, they regard SVDP as an *"outstanding partner"*! They have invited one of our social workers, Amot, and one of our ex-street-children, Hussein Harron, to join the "African Child Day" they organize in Nairobi.
- Next June, SVDP will send one of its young representatives to the International Working Days Gathering in Salamanca, Spain.

**Moreover, it seems that our project to create a vocational training centre in the South, in Juba, is likely to succeed!**

The French governmental organization we appealed to, via our French partner Operation Orange, in the beginning of the year, has sent us a provisional agreement that should be soon ratified. This agreement meets our requirements, both in terms of amount and duration (2 years). It should enable us to take up this challenge and to contemplate the project for a minimum of 5 years. The construction of the centre will start in 2008; it will then be furnished and equipped for the setting up of 3 training workshops for adults: electricity, masonry, carpentry.

Starting an action in the South of Sudan is a very significant step for SVDP. Yet there are many problems to settle and much effort in prospect. But the stakes are essential: the displaced populations living in the camps around Khartoum will be encouraged to return South, given the ability to reconstruct their region and to find their roots.

## Farms

Last year, we had to undertake heavy renovation and repair work in our two farms.

In Gebel Awlia, the whole wiring, which was old and unsafe, has been replaced: all the connections are now underground. The inner and external walls have been repainted; those among our donors who had visited this farm know that they really needed it. We also had to repair the roof that had been seriously damaged by fierce winds.

Lastly, in our two farms, we improved the irrigation system so that the whole land could be properly cultivated.

All this work cost nearly 46 000 € (71 000 CHF) and accounted for 9% of the total cost of the program in 2006.

The construction of our third farm "Dar Juan Mata" is about to be completed. As you know, it has been built in Gebel Awlia on a ground (bought by SVDP) close to the other farm, which will bring forth great synergies (training workshops, transport, etc). As of the end of the year, this new centre will be ready to accommodate 165 boys.

## An Austrian delegation in Khartoum

In July, Kamal and his team have exerted themselves to receive a 14 people delegation of Caritas Austria, one of our major and most regular donors, accompanied by a team of the Austrian television. According to Caritas' representatives, this stay has been extremely positive and invigorating, and their public relation campaign has been a great success, creating a real stir in the Austrian media, with several press articles and a film already broadcasted on the main channel of the country.

No doubt that this visit has consolidated the basis of our long-term partnership with Caritas Austria in Sudan; and it already has a happy outcome: a new Austrian individual donor is going to participate, in a substantial and regular way, to the financing of our home for boys in Mayo!

## NEWS FROM HAITI

During his stay in Hinche, in June and July 2007, Jean-Claude François was mainly concerned with the opening of the new laboratory Phyto Cosmos, while also supervising all the other ongoing activities there. He presented the following report:

### General news about the programmes

The summer session 2007 had a good start with 120 students attending the technical college (Polytec). The Ministry of National Education had finally recognized the Technical Accounting section of this school. The college offers two year training courses, which from now on will be rewarded by a State diploma. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July the Ministry of Education organized a first series of exams in our premises for all the students who had obtained one of our accounting diplomas. This practice will be renewed every year to determine which students holding one of our diplomas will be also eligible for a diploma from the Ministry of National Education.

The Primary School of Céramond begins the year with 190 students. This establishment, situated in the small village of Céramond, at approximately 15 kilometres from Hinche, hosts pupils between the ages of 5 and 16. Some of these pupils live two hours away from the school and they have to cover this distance on foot to reach their destination. We offer them a warm meal each day. A team of six teachers and one Director looks after the students.

We have presently 24 dispensaries in the Central Plateau. Each dispensary takes care of approximately 25.000 people. Some of the buildings are already 8 years old and they are a little damaged. We have already started, this summer, the necessary repair works for several of them. At the end of July the Ministry of Public Health contacted us suggesting a meeting in view of the possible recognition of the dispensaries by the Government.

### The laboratory Phyto Cosmos

The laboratory Phyto Cosmos is the outcome of a five-year old project: to process on its premises, from medicinal plants, basic medication for five of the most common diseases in the country, namely: malaria, mycoses, bronchitis, gastric disorders and diarrhoea. These medicines will be made available to our dispensaries.

A group of three pharmacists from the University and the Hospital of Geneva (Mr. Andrew Marston, Mrs. Maria Dobrinis and Mrs. Daphné Van Dirmen) arrived in Hinche towards the end of June to give theoretical training to all health assistants and practical training to staff charged with the production of the medication in the laboratory.

From the first week in June it was necessary to speed up the completion of the building. It was also necessary to acquire all the equipment, tools and raw material necessary to produce the medications.

For the first time in many years we were not too bothered by bandits. The social climate has distinctly improved with fewer burglaries, rapes and kidnappings.

When the pharmacists arrived to stay at Hinche for a month, they organized several meetings with the health assistants in order to determine: a) which ones were the most common diseases in the region, b) which local medicinal plants were available and utilized to cure these diseases, c) if these plants had actually been validated by Jacques Falquet and Bertrand Graz, as specified in the Tramil Report.

The theoretical training lasted three days and dealt with: a) classification and conditioning of medicinal plants (A. Marston), b) mode of extraction of the active element of the plants and how to create a herbarium (Mrs. Daphné Van Dimmen), c) the best methods of preparation of medications from medicinal plants (Mrs. Maria Dobrinas).

These training sessions were attended by 87 health assistants. After these sessions all participants had to take a 4 hour test. Only eleven people passed the test and we recruited four of them to join the workforce of chemists in charge of producing medication. These four people also received a complete technical training and as soon as the visiting pharmacists leave, they will be able to produce the 5 medications mentioned above.

The Phyto Cosmos laboratory is now in a position to produce these medicines for the inhabitants of the mountains of the Central Plateau of Haiti. The laboratory is run by a Director who supervises the work of the production manager, the agricultural chief (responsible for the plants) and the chief of security. In total there are 23 staff members.

According to an estimate from an enquiry carried out with the health assistants, the monthly production of medications necessary to satisfy the current needs of our 24 dispensaries is 105 gallons, which corresponds to 2100 doses. The first batch of medications was just delivered for the month of September. The medium price of one dose of treatment by ordinary medicines is Swiss Francs 1.85. From now on, utilizing our medications, it will be Swiss Francs 0.25. If we include the cost of staff salaries, the price would be Swiss Francs 1.10.

Finally the visiting pharmacists prepared a questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of the medications (clinical test). This questionnaire has to be completed by the health assistants and the patients for each treatment. This exercise will be carried out during the first three months of releasing these products and the statistical data collected will be sent to the pharmacists in Geneva for their analysis.

## Thanks

We thank Mr. Andrew Marston and Mrs. Daphné Van Dirmen of the Geneva University, as well as Mrs. Maria Dobrinas of the Geneva Cantonal Hospital, for the admirable work they carried out, to everyone's satisfaction, to set up the laboratory. We are also grateful to Professors Pascal Bonnabry and Kurt Hostettmann from the Geneva University, who, very generously, supported the activities of the three pharmacists and made it possible for them to execute this project.

We also thank the Geneva communal authorities, in particular the City of Geneva, the communes of Chêne-Bourg, Chêne-Bougeries and of Versoix for their long-term support of our Haiti programme.

We should also like to thank our friends Françoise and Louis Aebi, Mrs. Caroline Ferrero-Menu, Mr. Olivier Terretaz of the Coromandel Foundation, who contributed to the construction of the plants garden and of the building, to the Grangettes Foundation, which also contributed to the construction of the building and, in addition, put us in contact with the Geneva University and the Geneva Cantonal Hospital.

We wish to thank all the other donors who support us regularly. Finally we thank the Swiss Association of Friends of Sister Emmanuelle, in particular Hélène Mirlesse who introduced us to the Grangettes Foundation and Michel Bittar, the President, who is the tireless ambassador of the oppressed people of Haiti and the Sudan.

**Jean-Claude François**  
**Vice-President of Haiti-Cosmos**

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### Report on the events organized last spring to celebrate the 20 years anniversary of our action in Sudan

To celebrate properly the 20th anniversary of our action in Sudan, our association was pleased to organize several events during three days, as from the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, at the *Théâtre de l'Espérance*. The purpose was to invite our donors, and to give them some information on how their financial contribution is used; but we also wished to make our children aware of the living conditions of the Sudanese children, which are totally different from theirs.

Mr Cassaigno, the director of the theatre, gave us a very nice reception indeed, and we could install in the hall an exhibition of photos taken in Sudan, with texts on boards presenting the various programs that we are supporting. Of course, for the preparation of all the festivities, we benefited from the stay in Europe of the Secretary of SVDP, our friend Kamal Tadros.

It started on Wednesday afternoon with the screening of a short film directed by Patrick Bittar, "The Goose-Girl at the well", adapted from the brothers Grimm's fairy tale. The narrator, Marie-Luce Dayer, knew how to fascinate the audience, and children as well as adults were delighted to get her explanations on the numerous symbols of this tale. Then there was Noelle Darbellay's vivid testimony: this young college girl is devoting part of her holidays to a voluntary work in a Tanzanian orphanage. Then, three members of our French sister association "Operation Orange", -Madeleine Cuinet, Monique d'Hérouville and Madeleine Fourmaud-, presented slides showing the awful living conditions of the Sudanese people in the camps.

This first day ended up in a thanksgiving mass celebrated at Saint Joseph.

On Thursday afternoon, a hundred young pupils from *Florimont* were at the play « Vivre, à quoi ça sert? », an adaptation by Magalie Claustres from the book written by Sister Emmanuelle. The father Jean-Daniel Ballet introduced the play with a presentation of Sister Emmanuelle's life and of her spiritual mentor, the philosopher Blaise Pascal. On the same evening, both actresses Magalie Claustres and Evelyne Techer, who created the roles in Paris, interpreted this beautiful text with emotion and sincerity, to a very receptive audience.

We had contacted several private schools as well as the *Oecumenical Catechesis Centre*, as we wished to make the young people of our region more aware of the destitution of the Sudanese children. Thus, on Friday afternoon, the principal of *La Salésienne*, surrounded by the 320 pupils of her school, made a cordial reception to the representatives of "Operation Orange" -who came to show the slides of the actions carried out in this African country-, and to Noelle Darbellay, who shared her experience with the orphans in Tanzania. Convinced of the need to share, all the participants left with "Moneyboxes of the Sudanese child". Our warm thanks go to this school and to *Notre Dame du Lac*, both of which took a keen interest in this Moneybox operation.

The Friday evening theme was: "TO GIVE, WHAT FOR?". A large audience was much moved by the film "The children of the Nile", directed by Patrick Bittar and shot in the deserts around Khartoum, in the camps for displaced people. The audience could see the reality of the programs carried out in Sudan, an inspiring hope in the harsh life of this displaced people.

After the screening, there has been a debate animated by the well-known journalist Jean-Philippe Rapp. Around the table, were Michel Bittar, our always efficient and go-ahead president, Kamal Tadros, in charge for all our programs in Khartoum, Genevieve Brunet, a journalist at L'Hebdo, Simon Ashmore, an ICRC representative, Huub Verhagen, an MSF representative, and Mrs Emma Lord, translator. The audience, desirous to know more about the programs supported by our donors, took an active part in the fruitful and comforting debate.

STARTED 20 YEARS AGO, THIS SOLIDARITY CHAIN CANNOT STOP

During these 3 days of celebration, we were missing one person: SISTER EMMANUELLE, the corner stone of our association. I have had the joy to see her lately, and she appeared to me as opened as usual, always concerned about the latest news from Sudan and the rest of the world! She keeps on transmitting to us her belief in Man and her faith in God. Now, she spends her time in prayer.

Our sincere thanks go to the Saint Joseph parish, for their letting us use the Théâtre de l'Espérance for our performances.

We also thank all the people who took part in these events:

The members of "Operation Orange", Muriel and Salvatore from the Association ADE (a French sister-association), the actresses, the narrator, the college-girl, father Jean-Daniel Ballet, the journalists, Alain Dupraz from the press, Léman Bleu, that welcomed Michel Bittar in its show "Genève à chaud", the MSF and ICRC representatives, the translator, the minister Bruno Miquel from the Oecumenical Catechesis Centre, the Institut Florimont, the Salésienne and Notre-Dame du Lac schools, the Payot bookshop, the Mage conffectioner's and the Rivoire florist.

**Marie-Claire Ricou**  
**Vice-President of ASASE**

Let us also thank all the members of the Committee, and particularly our Vice-President Fabienne Lebedinsky, who exerted herself organizing the celebration!

### **The « Moneybox of the Sudanese child »**

In our Christmas letter were enclosed two "Moneyboxes of the Sudanese Child", and in our 97<sup>th</sup> letter you received a special postal check for this operation. First harvest time has come! We invite you to send us what you, together with your relatives, children or friends, could drop into these moneyboxes all through the year...

Remember: **each 2CHF coin is ensuring a daily meal to a Sudanese child during 10 days!** Your donations will be a present for the children in Sudan, **a life-giving present, in the spirit of Christmas!** We thank you in advance for your generosity: every donation is important, every drop is necessary...

**Patrick Bittar**

