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LETTER TO FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

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*« Even if I saw a man hating me, I would
love him.
O Father God, help me, Father!
Even if I saw a man hating me, I would
love him. »*

(Dinka Prayer*)

*The Dinka are one of the tribes of South
Sudan.

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you in good physical shape and moral condition during this time of never-ending health crisis.

Not surprisingly, this crisis had an impact on the individual donations received by ASASE last year and we have transferred more to our local partners than we have received.

With the first quarter of this year still showing **a significant drop in donations, we take the liberty of starting this letter with an appeal to your generosity.** We are well aware that this is a difficult time for everyone, but every donation counts and has a direct impact: **95% is allocated to the programs** we are supporting in two of the poorest countries in the world... which are also suffering the effects of the pandemic.

In South Sudan, Betram, our local partner's Programs Coordinator, **caught Covid** in February (through one of his nephews who is accommodated in his house) and was quarantined for two weeks. He suffered from fevers, coughs and migraines, but came out without any particular problems. **Then it was the turn of his deputy Wilson**, who was asymptomatic. This obviously did not make their work easier in this particularly busy period, with the annual reports to be provided to the various donors of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Juba (SVDP).

The good news is that the Lologo Vocational Training Center was able to avoid the closure that was again decreed at the beginning of February by the government for all educational institutions, as part of the fight against Covid. SVDP went to plead its case to the concerned ministry saying that they were at the end of the sessions, that there would be exams soon etc. And it worked!

Insecurity is still prevailing in the capital, and last December, an administrative employee of SVDP, Moses L. Liban (see photo), bore the consequences of it. He was in a café in Lologo one evening when three armed men suddenly came in to rob the customers. As Moses tried to hide his cell phone, he was pulled outside. *"Then one man hit me in the head with a rifle butt and another one shot me and broke my leg. I was taken to the military hospital where I underwent two operations."*



Moses crouching on the right, during my visit to Juba in 2019

In addition, in the context of scuffles between two clans of the Mundari tribe around Nyarjwa, men came twice (in late November and late December) to threaten the staff of the farm and of the Saint Vincent Health Care Center, which, on the recommendation of the authorities, had to be evacuated for a period of four weeks, leaving only the guards on site.

However, an important step forward for the development and security of the capital is the implementation of an electricity network since last summer. More than 10,000 homes, 3,600 companies and 200 government institutions were connected by the end of 2020. At night, residents can gather in the streets under streetlights, where *boda-bodas* are settling (motorcycle cabs) as well as women selling tea.

Since the connection to the grid is at the expense of the inhabitants and those of the Lologo slum are among the poorest, the SVDP Center is still using its generators until the connection work can be completed. This would require funding for three pylons outside the Center and one inside.

In any case, **this should provide job opportunities for our Electricity graduates!**

A follow-up survey conducted in the last quarter of 2020 on **165 graduates of the last eleven sessions of the Lologo Training Center** showed that:

- two out of three graduates had a job (even though the survey was conducted in the middle of the health crisis); all the graduates of the Sewing and Household (agriculture) trainings were working (compared to, for example, 20% for First Aid, or 50% for Computer)!
- 90% who had a job were working in a field related to their training;
- half of the graduates who were working were self-employed, 12% had casual jobs and 38% were employed by an organization (9% by an NGO).



Two graduates from Electricity. September 2018, Juba.

Also, despite a year disrupted by Covid, the Income Generating Programs (IGPs) had their best year ever: they earned over \$113,000 in 2020 (+83%), and their net profit¹ (over \$39,000) enabled to fund 7.5% of training costs.

This is despite the fact that some IGPs, such as the Truck rental or the Guest house, were fully impacted by the epidemic.

The profitability of both the Garment and the Wooden Furniture IGPs has been significantly improved since the remunerations of their staff is no longer fixed, but depend on sales.

In Haiti, President Jovenel Moïse, who is clinging to power, is provoking the wrath of the population. "*I returned from Haiti at the beginning of February,*" says Jean Claude François. "*I was able to narrowly escape: with all the demonstrations, public transport was paralyzed and I had to take a motorcycle cab.*" 727 liters of medicine were produced by the laboratory Phyto Cosmos last year, which represents more than 5300 treatments.

A special production of 57 liters of a concoction to fight the Covid epidemic was distributed in the countryside, through our dispensaries. It is a mixture of garlic, aloe, ginger, cloves, cumin, eucalyptus leaves and lime, to be boiled, and of which it is advised to drink a cup four times a day. Very few cases of infection have been reported in the Hinche area.

We thank you warmly for your donation, and we wish you a verry happy Easter!

Patrick Bittar
Director of ASASE

¹ After allocation of overheads but before investments.