



Association suisse des Amis
de Sœur 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



LETTERS TO FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

N°131

EASTER 2017

"When I was young, I thought that life was only joy. Through my education, I learned that life was service. And now that I've grown up, I know that service is joy "

(Indian Proverb)

Dear friends,

I am back from Juba where I could measure, in a decaying country, the importance of faithfulness and continuity in our support to the poorest inhabitants.

While the July fighting was still on everyone's mind and has left traces in the bodies of some victims, my short presence seemed to be particularly appreciated: probably did it modestly help reduce, for the people I've met, the feeling of abandonment that prevails in a state that has been failing for years, and is currently in bankruptcy.

While we are on the subject, I met the Jubek State Minister of education, gender and social welfare. The office premises in disrepair spoke a lot about the lack of means... which was confirmed during our meeting. Their budget does not even enable them to pay regularly their officers. By the way, several employees of our local partner, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) Juba, told me they felt lucky enough to receive a regular salary, that is also frequently increased to keep up with the crazy inflation (600 %) affecting all products, including basic food.

This confirms the importance of the work done by ASASE to ensure regular provision of liquidity to SVDP, despite the difficulties in the bank transfers.

In my visit reports, you can soon learn more about **some young graduates and employees of the Lologo Vocational Training Center, whose fates have been disrupted by the civil war.**

Like for instance these cousins (opposite), who graduated in 2015 in masonry. They both are 24 years old and live in a residential area of Juba. On July 11, Samuel received a phone call informing him that Benjamin had been shot. He had to wait until the fighting cooled down in the district, and the following day he found Benjamin in a coma. He took him to the hospital. Benjamin and his younger brother had taken cover under a table. They had been shot at from the outside. Benjamin has lost an eye; he still has a bullet in the leg and one of his hands is handicapped.





There is no electricity in the streets (all solar panels have been stolen). The only fire truck in the city is out of service. Petrol is only available on the black market. The water tanks selling the water from the Nile have consequently become scarce, and the inhabitants can sometimes be thirsty... (temperatures reached 42°C during my stay!). Those who are lucky enough to eat every day are satisfied with one sole meal, usually beans. I was struck by the courage with which the people are still forging

ahead; like **these four ladies who graduated in 2016 in sewing training: they joined together to rent a shop (above) in the Lologo slum, and are offering their services, armed with the sewing machines offered by SVDP.**

Many NGOs have closed their offices after the July fighting, for security reasons and the resulting increased costs of expatriates. On top of that, the government has decided to tax foreign workers. Not to mention the recent requirement notified to the few airlines companies that ensure connections with Juba: the landing fees will be multiplied by five. Hence the reactions of the companies: Ethiopian Airlines stopped its flights the day before I left, and FlyDubai the day after!

The Japanese will soon withdraw with their contingent of peacekeepers. They drop the construction of the bridge, right next to our Lologo training center, that was to be completed in 2018. They were also working on city infrastructure, like the roads and the electricity network.

Many hotels and restaurants have closed. The roads are not safe.

Today more than ever, the programs implemented by SVDP Juba are an exception in the country. They are functioning, and what's more, they are working properly! The Lologo training center has been evaluated as the one matching at best the criteria (in terms of logistics, security, link with the local population) **defined by the World Food Program and the NGO World Vision** for the establishment of a program aiming the elderly and the disabled. The first day of my arrival corresponded with the start of this operation, with SVDP's lending the Center facilities as a complimentary contribution: applicants flocked to register in the hope of receiving a small monthly allocation.

I have met the operation manager in Juba of The Leprosy Mission, an international Christian charity. The doctor has expressed his gratitude to SVDP that is currently training 16 children of lepers within its Lologo program.

I saw the people of Nyarjwa, hired by the Ugandan engineer in charge of the work, erecting the first fence poles on the western side of the agricultural land. They will need to work hard to make up for lost time: to register the land boundaries, SVDP had to wait for the sole GPS governmental device available; and they also had to argue with the new representatives of the local community, who thought that they could take advantage of the opportunity to get some baksheesh! The objective is to have the 120ha fenced before the rainy season.

Be sure that I reminded to all the people I met during my stay that the ASASE support is the fruit of **a chain of solidarity, of which you, dear friends, are an essential part!**

Please receive my heartfelt thanks
and my wish for a happy Easter!

Patrick Bittar, Director