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LETTER TO FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

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*“Start by doing what is necessary,
then what is possible, and you will
end up achieving the impossible
without even noticing it.”*

Saint Francis of Assisi

Dear Friends,

How do they manage to work in such conditions? This is a question that I often ask myself when thinking of our local partners in South Sudan and in Haiti.

Last July, **David Shearer, Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**, declared in an interview to the Guardian: *“No one quite realizes the logistical hassles of this place. You can’t even move around. Travelling 600 miles ... takes two and a half weeks. In the wet season the roads are just impassable. There are 220 kilometres of tarmac roads in a country the size of France.”*

A few months later, **the same David Shearer visited the “Be in Hope” home for street children**, while on a security situation analysis in Juba and its outskirts.

M. Shearer was accompanied by several officials from UNMISS, government representatives and Nepalese peacekeepers.

He was extremely impressed and congratulated our local partner, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Juba (SVDP) for the good work done. According to him, such actions should be reported to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Duly noted.

Despite great difficulties to travel around the country, SVDP social workers took back to their relatives 5 boys who left the program, as planned: these 5 beneficiaries had reached or passed 19 years old.

A small sum of money and practical supplies were offered to each one of them, as a departure gift.

But their most valuable *viaticum* is invisible: one of the five boys, Philip, wrote in February to one of the program donators, very much involved in the project: *“You and my brothers from Be In Hope will forever be in my heart.”*

As early as January, 10 new street boys joined the program (see photo), bringing the number of beneficiaries to twenty. All the new beneficiaries are 9 or 10 years old, and half of them are orphans.



How does one work in a country where the bank system is jeopardized by some warlords embezzling currencies from oil revenues and by the sanctions of the “international community”?

In February, as a money transfer from ASASE seemed not to make it to the SVDP bank in Juba, our President took action alongside SVDP so as to pinpoint and solve the problem. To tell briefly a story that

lasted six weeks, funds transferred in \$ go through several corresponding banks. And as a matter of fact, one of them, located in Uganda, received the order from the United States to stop sending funds to South Sudan. SVDP subsequently contacted another bank in Juba, working with the Citibank (a prerequisite to receive \$ funds), and opened an account there.

How does one communicate with one's partners, suppliers, donators, when the internet connection is hazardous and slow, when the telephone network is deficient and postal service completely inexistent? I could ramble on all the obstacles that the teams on the ground have confronted on a daily basis for more than four years, but the space here is missing...

I much prefer letting you know that the Lologo Vocational Training Centre has become so renowned that **the number of applicants for the 7 trainings has been growing every year**. For the current and 10th session since the Center's birth, SVDP received 828 applications for the 360 seats available!

Our friends of SVDP Juba do not rest on their laurels: they ceaselessly try and improve the trainings' curricula to answer new needs.

Thus, the Car repairing course has introduced electronics to respond to the local garages requirements.

Masonry has integrated plumbing notions to its core courses so as to prevent epidemics provoked by bad drain of used waters during the raining season.

In Electricity, electric panels have replaced old wooden planks.

In Sewing, equipment has been improved.

The computer science training now spans over a longer period of time.

As to the Health awareness / First aid training, this year, in addition to the usual seminars in the civil and military hospitals of Juba, practical workshops are planned in our Saint Vincent Health Care Center in Nyarjwa.

A Microcredit scheme for graduates has also started this year. The 100 preselected candidates followed a one-week training program in January and were then gathered in groups of 5, depending on their professions, interests and acquaintances.

The Comity has created a system of solidary commitment, with one referent per group. In March, the first loans began (6 months, maximum 9 months) and were granted to 3 groups of 5 graduates, whose business-plans had been previously approved by the SVDP Comity. Other loans will follow.

Last but not least, **SVDP pursues its ongoing efforts on the income generating program**, aimed at improving the viability of its development programs. This year's big challenge is preparing the agricultural project in Nyarjwa: now that the site is secure and the well finally functional, a true pilot-farm will be developed over the course of three years. In 2018, significant investments will go towards developing an irrigated agriculture in the enclosed 60ha. A training for male and female local farmers should open as early as 2020 so as to introduce them to modern and eco-friendly farming methods.

Needless to say, dear Friends, that all these projects require important funds and that we highly need your support for them to succeed!

As the saying goes, (and as the ones leading the fratricidal war in the country very well know), money is the sinew of war: we THANK YOU for helping us leading this fight, at however modest a scale, against poverty, dependence and despair.



Patrick Bittar
Director

