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## LETTER TO FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

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*"All our small acts of friendship are like many tiny jewels. Like a diamond, they are forged from fire trial, cutting and polishing. Like a diamond, they are eternal."*

Dear Friends,

**In South Sudan, the measures provided for in the agreements signed last summer to ensure a return to peace are far from being implemented.** The disarmament of armed groups has been much delayed, and the list of their cantonment sites was only fixed in March. The former belligerents put forward the lack of means to justify these procrastination. In a statement issued on 28 February in Juba, the country's Catholic bishops make an irrevocable statement: *"While the level of open conflict has reduced, the Cessation of Hostilities agreement is not holding"*. According to the prelates, *"all parties are involved either in active fighting or preparations for war"* and are not *"addressing the root causes of the conflicts"*. In fact, since September, no incidents have occurred between Kiir's forces and those of his main opponent Machar. There is fighting in Yei, 130 km southwest of the capital, between the regular army and another rebel group.

That being so, the development programs that we are funding are continuing in the capital and respond appropriately and effectively to a fundamental need of the populations: *"The greatest tragedy of these people is the lack of perspective for the future"* said in January Father Gandolfi, missionary of the Friars Minor in Juba, in an interview with Fides Agency. This is evidenced by **the record number of applications for registration at the current session of the 7 vocational training offered in our Lologo Center: 939 for 380 places available!**

Earlier this year, before the start of this eleventh session, **eight teachers from the Center were given intensive fifteen days training in Cairo** at the Al Mofid Association for Training and Development.

On the picture opposite, one of the groups who benefited from a microcredit in March 2018. These 2017 graduates of agricultural training are cultivating land





close to the river near Rajaf, the village where the BIH program for street children is located. The micro-credit of 1750\$ enabled them to contribute to the purchase of a small generator, a pump and pipes to allow, from the nearby river, a constant irrigation, and sufficient water to extend the cultivated area. Previously, they used to carry water by hand. They have also been able to buy seeds, to hire a dozen people (half of them men), and to rent motorbikes to transport the crops to the Rajaf and Juba markets!

As for the income-generating programs, **a new employee has just been hired to develop the sales of the six activities.**

**The poultry unit was able to restart at the beginning of the year.** The first broilers have just been sold and the layers hens will start laying in a month.

But the **pilot farm project faces many difficulties.** The latest was the drying of the river near the field during two months earlier this year. The irrigation system envisaged for the development of the project this year was based on pumping from this river. The impact of global warming is clear: during the last three years, the rains have decreased. Yet ASASE and its French partner Operation Orange continue to support this project to farm the large land in Nyarjwa (80 ha, of which nearly 60 are fenced). First, given the context, this project is decisive for ensuring the food security of local populations. With one third of the population displaced by the war, the country's needs are immense: according to the World Food Program, the 2018 crop has been the lowest ever recorded since independence in 2011. The cultivated areas have been halved in one year. In addition, this pilot farm will help improve the financial autonomy of our local partner, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Juba (SVDP). 40 ha of corn will be grown during the rainy season, but the goal this year is to set up an irrigation solution that will enable to have two crops every year.

SVDP has also experienced customs harassment when importing agricultural equipment from Uganda and Kenya, as well as for all the equipment for the construction of the large storage building. SVDP's tax exemption had been suddenly canceled. Betram had to struggle to fix the problem.

**In Haiti, another country where the social climate has been very tense in recent months, Jean Claude François, the program director, is still doing a good job.**

**The Phyto-Cosmos laboratory, which manufactures medicinal products from medicinal plants cultivated on the large plot where it is located, has started since January to produce medicines in the form of capsules** (and no longer syrup), including a drug against diabetes, which is highly anticipated

in the Central Plateau where one in seven adults is diabetic. Mrs Anne-Laure Cavin trained five people in this new packaging process. Assigned by the Antenna Foundation of Geneva, she came at Hinche last summer with small capsules production machines, and unfortunately caught dengue fever during her stay!

In January, doctors, nurses and the 28 health auxiliaries of the Cosmos Foundation dispensaries followed a one-week training in homeopathy provided by Dr. Guy Loutan from Geneva

and Dr. Pascale Daubie from Brussels. Another training week is planned next summer and two more weeks in 2020. Our laboratory of medicinal plants could ultimately also produce homeopathic medicines.



Jean-Claude and two students trainees prepare homeopathic medicines for distribution to the trainees.

**We wish you a very happy Easter  
and thank you warmly for your support!**

**Patrick Bittar  
Director**