



Asmae - Association Sœur Emmanuelle
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SUDAN: Asmae continues its commitment to street children

Since 1986, Asmae has been in Sudan to help refugee children of the war between the North and the South of the country. In 2005, peace accords put an end to more than twenty years of conflict. They plan to hold a referendum in 2010 to decide on the autonomy of the province of South Sudan. One year before the deadline, we take stock of our commitment to the country.

Asmae commits to 600 Sudanese children

In partnership with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul ruled by Kamal Tadros, Asmae acts on behalf of the refugee children in Khartoum. This local organization develops programs for health, water distribution, infant nutrition, vocational training and accommodation of street children. Sister Emmanuelle herself initiated this partnership in 1986. Asmae remains faithful to this commitment and supports the project called "Children of the Nile" - ruled by Vincensio Apieker - which offers comprehensive care to 600 street children. Asmae finances the proper functioning of 4 households and 3 farm homes up to 234,000 euros.

1.5 million displaced persons in Khartoum, capital of Sudan

Forty years of civil war tore Sudan between the people of North and South. The war between these two regions is now over, but 1.5 million refugees from the South still live in Khartoum in conditions of extreme poverty. Despite the desire to return to the South, no infrastructure exists to accommodate them: neither schools nor clinics. Everything was destroyed by the war. They are thus condemned to remain in Khartoum, in the North. Even though their situation is precarious, they can hope to find a job and their children go to school. More recently, the situation in Darfur brought another wave of refugee children.

Principal dates in the history of Sudan

1955 –1972: civil war between the North and the South

1956: independence of Sudan

1983: outbreak of the second civil war between the North and the South, following the imposition of Islamic law in the country

2003: beginning of the conflict in Darfur, western Sudan province

2005: signing of peace accords

2005 –2011: interim period with a provisional national government comprising 1/3 of southerners

2011: referendum for the independence of South Sudan



The Economist

Comprehensive care

The “Children of the Nile” project takes into care children left to themselves in the street. The children are taken into one of the four homes of the organization (three for boys and one for girls). Each home is run by a couple of parents who raise around twenty children with their own. They themselves are refugees from the South. The home allows the children to return to family harmony, a protective circle. The children begin to help each other.



From the age of 12 or 13 years, when they have finished middle school, the children sheltered in homes move into one of the organization’s three farms. Each one houses between 100 and 150 adolescents, supervised by a director, administrative personnel and social workers. The girls remain in the homes throughout their school years. The children also benefit from mobile health units. There is a medical office on each farm, the doctor passes twice a week to care for the residents. Some doctors are themselves former residents attached to the project who have completed their medical studies.

Providing a future for children

All children are registered for school up until they obtain their baccalaureate. Each child benefits from a complete education: academic, university and professional. The organization encourages children to pursue the studies that they wish and supports them throughout their academic careers.

On each farm, professional workshops are offered: agriculture, shoemaking, tailoring, electricity, traditional carpentry, refrigeration, etc. They have two objectives: to learn a trade and to fill the needs of all the children living on the farm (school uniforms and shoes, food). An agronomist provides assistance to young people to give them skills in agriculture. The instructors leading the professional workshops are themselves experts in the field. Again, some of them were residents of a home or a farm.

Finding the children’s origins and history

The goal of the organization Saint-Vincent de Paul is also to reunite families and to discover the children’s origins. All have a personal story: some fled the war, others are orphans, others still were bought and sold several times before escaping or were kidnapped. Often, they have lost track of their parents, their families. Thanks to tribal links, some will be able

to find an uncle, an aunt or a family member who can accommodate them for holidays. During their stay, children are accompanied by social workers, present on each farm and charged with collecting information in order to recreate the history of each child.

Diverse paths, great successes

The project has existed for almost 25 years. Many children have become adults. Some have returned to live in the South, where their skills can help in reconstruction. All are employed and earn their living. Those who followed professional training became masons, electricians or tailors. The university graduates are now executives with key positions and are doctors or engineers. That is the case of Henari, now responsible for the maintenance of the only electric central of Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Taken into care in 1995 on an organization farm, he is taking an electrician's course while continuing his schooling. In 2005, he graduated from university. After working as director of one of the organization's professional training centers, he decided to leave for the South to help in the reconstruction. Just like Henari, more than 500 children have now completed their studies, thanks to the help of the organization Saint-Vincent de Paul and the support of Asmae. 150 of them are university graduates.



Asmae renews its commitment

Faced with these tangible results, Asmae is committed more than ever to displaced children, still numerous in the streets of the Sudanese capital. At the dawn of an independent future for South Sudan, it is essential to give the displaced populations of the South the means to reconstruct their future country.

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