



Report on a visit to Sudan November 2017

By

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I express my grateful thanks to Helen, our new National President for her support and Vincentian friendship and providing a "listening ear" to what sometimes appear to be insurmountable problems faced by our members in Sudan. A big thank you to Dr Peter Tadros, National President of the SVP in Sudan, and Emile Mikhariz, Secretary General, staff and members who made our visit smooth and by their efforts removed most of the stress which we have suffered in visits over the last 19 years. Our members and our staff will always have my undying respect for their efforts in helping relieve the suffering of some of the poorest people in the world.

....and of course to my wife Ruth, who (against her better judgement) continues to allow me to visit Sudan whenever possible.

i Introduction – by Helen O’Shea, National President, SVP (England & Wales)

I was delighted to be able to accompany Ian on the visit to Sudan. This opportunity was very important for several reasons. From a governance and reporting aspect it gave us the opportunity to meet the local SVDP members, to visit projects, to review actions plans and budgets and to fully understand the reach and impact of the projects funded by SVP England and Wales.



We were able to offer our support and a listening ear to the local staff and Trustees who have been struggling heroically over the last difficult years to keep their mission active.

Conversely, they were able to express their thanks to our members and supporters for their continued support when other agencies pulled out.

There is no doubt that our funding has been essential in keeping vital life-saving projects operating. The renewal of the NGO licence is a very good sign, although the relationship with the government will have to be nurtured, and the local workers were feeling positive and were drafting plans to expand their projects. There is so much acute poverty in Sudan that expansion is very necessary. However, the infrastructure and capacity of the SVDP Sudan is woefully inadequate and really has to be addressed before the work can be developed and spread its reach.

I express my thanks to Ian for his commitment and tireless work, to the Twinnage Committee, Twinnage officers and to all our members and supporters for their generosity. I have seen at first hand the difference it makes to the poorest of communities.

Helen O’Shea
National President
St Vincent de Paul Society (England & Wales)

ii Executive summary -

What went wrong 4 years ago? – After nearly 50 years of strong leadership and clear direction the SVDP (Sudan) suffered when Kamal Tadros decided to retire and join his family in Australia. He had previously identified and trained his successor, John Ugo who became Secretary General. It would appear that John Ugo didn't understand (or didn't consider a priority) the needs of donors for regular, detailed and accurate reporting. In addition each donor required reports in different formats. Efforts by the then National President Dr Nasri Morgos (who visited the office regularly) failed to motivate John and the situation deteriorated. At the same time former employees and advisers who had been dismissed by the SVDP took revenge by falsely accusing the Society of wrong doing. This in part resulted in the imprisonment of Dr Nasri for a short term. At the same time the Human Aid Commission (HAC) removed the permit to operate from over 30 NGO's, the SVP being one of them. At this point ASASE (*The Swiss Association of the Friends of Sister Emmanuelle – see later notes*) and the donors who contributed through them withdrew their support in favour of SVDP in Juba. This had a disastrous effect on the SVDP as ASASE had started all the major programmes.

At this time SVP (England & Wales) took the view that we would continue our support as Vincentian brothers and sisters with limited support for some programmes which could be operated by members and volunteers, low key and without the need for the huge numbers of staff (believed to be 186 at the highest point). Staff numbers had by that time been reduced to 32. The support continues and other than the SVP in South Tyrol who provide infrequent donations of between €5K & €15K the SVP(E&W) are the only providers of funding for the SVDP in Khartoum

Where are we now? As in the rest of the world the members in the Khartoum area work one-to-one with those in need. We have 151 Twinned Conferences in Sudan. However, the country is beset with problems caused by 60 years of civil war and the displacement of millions of people. As a result some major programmes have been developed including medical centres, water distribution, baby feeding, foster homes for street children, and vocational training. The last two programmes (foster homes and VT) were costly, labour intensive and difficult to manage and have now been closed. At the moment medical clinics are limited to the men's and women's prisons, 13 of the previous 16 baby feeding centres are operational and the water programme is running at reduced capacity due to shortage of funds and technical problems.

What is working well & what needs fixing? The existing programmes are all bringing benefit to huge numbers of people. Key issues which need to be addressed are believed to be:

- Vehicles are likely to fall apart soon
- Permit to operate is only for one year with a promise that it will be renewed if we behave!
- SVP (E&W) are the main provider of funding
- Management succession planning and training
- Low staff remuneration
- Working conditions for staff and the office needs refurbishment
- Previous donors have withdrawn support because of poor communications and reporting
- Recent need to reduce number of BBF Centres through lack of funds
- Long term expansion plans based on a vision but unclear in practical terms
- Some staff lack understanding of Vincentian values and international structure

Where do we go from here? The commitment and hard work of the members and staff in Khartoum is without question and they are entitled to our support as Vincentians. The question of money needs to be addressed to ensure sustainability in the long term. We need help in accessing funds from grant making bodies and in developing income generating projects such as the Gebel Awlia Farm. Our target must surely be to reduce reliance on the generosity of our members and parishioners.



1 Issues identified

STRENGTHS

Commitment and loyalty of staff and members
Leadership - Dr Peter is hands on and meets the staff every Tuesday
Established for decades
Experience in established programmes

WEAKNESSES

Low staff remuneration
Working conditions for staff
Office needs refurbishment
Previous donors have withdrawn support because of poor communications and reporting
Recent need to reduce number of BBF Centres through lack of funds
Long term planning unclear
Staff lack of understanding of Vincentian values and international structure

OPPORTUNITIES

Improved relationship with HAC
Reopening of Gebel Awlia farm for growing crops and income generation
Provision of training for boys living in government homes
Possible grants for capital equipment and capacity building
Staff training and development (use external advisers)
Community leaders are asking for BBF Centres and Development Centres to be opened in other areas
Reopening of VT Centres at El Bashir, Gabarona and Gebel Awlia – working in partnership with government
Maintain staff morale by providing social benefits (e.g. health care and sickness payments)

THREATS

HAC
Vehicles are likely to fall apart soon
Permit to operate is only for one year
SVP (E&W) are the main provider of funding
Management succession

2 The recent history of the SVDP in Khartoum leading to today's situation

The SVDP was formed in Khartoum in 1982 and the Tadros family have been involved since then. Dr Tadros Tadros was National President and Kamal Tadros the Secretary General for many years. The relationship between the SVDP and "The Friends of Sister Emmanuelle" in both Switzerland (ASASE) and France started in 1986 when, at the request of ASASE's President, a native of Khartoum, Sr Emmanuelle went to Sudan and returned shocked: the poverty of the displaced victims of the longest civil war of the twentieth century.

ASASE has focused its support on the creation and development of various aid programs to the needy population. ASASE has always been supported by the public authorities (State of Geneva, City of Geneva, and many municipalities), by other European associations of Friends of Sister Emmanuelle and by various international charities such as Operation Orange, Hilfswerk, SIT Spain, Caritas Graz and others.

It was the objective of ASASE to slowly phase out of the Street Children programme but this was accelerated because of a reduction in funds available. Just as important in this decision was the fact that SVDP had not obtained the renewal of the license from the State of Khartoum since October 2013 and there was doubt in ASASE that it would ever be renewed. The impact of the loss of licence that was critical: It meant that donors would not be able to easily obtain visas, and would not be allowed to visit the farms

and homes which was essential for donors to ensure correct governance in their own organisations. Taking all these facts into consideration as well as the needs of other programs, ASASE advised SVDP of their irrevocable decision to stop the funding of the programmes as from January 2015.

In the year prior to this it had become increasingly difficult for anyone to communicate with the team in Khartoum, emails from Michel Bittar, President of ASASE remained unanswered for long periods of time – if ever. There was a substantial deterioration in relationships between funding partners and the SVDP in Khartoum. At the same time the SVDP in Juba was gaining strength under the guidance of Betram Kuol who had moved from Khartoum to Juba.

At this time SVP (England & Wales) took the view that through the international organisation that binds us we would continue with limited support for some programmes which could be operated by members and volunteers, low key and without the need for the huge numbers of staff (believed to be 186 at the highest point). Numbers have now been reduced to 32

A form of self-monitoring was introduced in 2014 and regular 6 monthly reports have been received to the satisfaction of the Board of Trustees, SVP (E&W) and our auditors.

During my visit in January 2013 I identified the following issues needing attention:

1. Financial recording, reporting and monitoring against agreed budgets
2. General management structure, methods, roles, responsibilities and delegation
3. Quality and frequency of reporting
4. Staffing levels
5. I.T Security
6. The difference in the roles, responsibilities. authority and accountability between volunteers, elected officers and employees

Most of these issues have been addressed to a large degree and ongoing work which has been identified in action plans prepared by the SVDP are included (in considerable detail) in the appendices of the extended report prepared for the National Twinnage Committee and Trustees.



The latest development is the reinstatement of the permit by HAC which enabled our visit to take place. The first appointment on the first morning of our visit was a meeting in the office of the Director General of the Humanitarian Aid Commission. HAC exercise substantial control over the movement and operation of all NGO's in Sudan and it is vital that we work closely with them. However, the SVDP should ensure that HAC clearly understand the way in which the Society operates and in particular Vincentian Values. It is not

clear that they do. I took the opportunity to remind the Director that it is our policy to plan for long term support rather than a “sticking plaster” solution. Helen also emphasised that our support for the poor is given without thought for age, gender, religion or ethnic background. Although the permit issued recently is only for 1 year the Director (In conversation) accepted that we need long term planning and strategy and that our operation should not be seen as a “sticking plaster”.

3 Existing Programmes

The latest self-monitoring report for the period 6 months to July 2017 is included as an appendix to the full/detailed report. The benefits and costs of the programmes are summarised as follows:

Baby feeding programme	Number of Centres: 13 centres	Location of Centres: 12 in Omdurman and 1 in Khartoum	
Target Number of babies / children fed	Actual number of babies / children fed	UK Budget cost €	Total actual cost €
6,000	6,700	82,500	19,398

Street Children Programme (including Vocational Training)	Number of Centres: 2 Houses + 2 farms	Location of Centres: Mayo, Yarmouk (house) + 2 farms in Gebel Aulia & Soba	
Target Number of children in cared	Actual number of children in cared	Budget cost €	Total actual cost €
0	0	5,000	1,187

- Reasons for over or under performance:
- Lack of funds in the first months of the year.
 - Registration certificate problems.

THIS PROGRAMME IS NOW CLOSED

Medical programme	Number of Centres: 2 centres	Location of Centres: Ladies & Men Prisons, Omdurman	
Target Number of consultations	Actual number of consultations	Budget cost €	Total actual cost €
7,000	3,500	20,000	4,751

Water programme	Number of Centres: 1 Water Station	Location of Centre: Gabarona, West Omdurman,	
Target Number of Served Citizens	Actual number of Served Citizens	Budget cost €	Total actual cost €
35,000	11,000	12,500	2,771



The Governor of the Women's prison



Outside a feeding Centre



The collapsed well at Gebel Awlia



Helen feeding the babies



The water well and tanker



Dr Peter, Emile, the staff and guests

4 Identifying needs and priorities

Improving ongoing relationship with the Human Aid Commission (HAC)

The comments made at our meeting need to be reiterated and reemphasized at every opportunity. We were accompanied by a security man from HAC all week in our visits to different programmes. Other opportunities could be identified to demonstrate our impartiality when addressing the needs of the poor.

Communications – both internally and with donors.

The quality of written communications are now much improved but face-to-face conversations are better. The use of Skype or other media methods would be a considerable advantage. These methods would need an upgrade of I.T. equipment and improve band width on the broadband connection.

Staff costs

The issues of low remuneration were discussed at our meeting with the managers. Subsequent to our visit the following information on staff remuneration has been provided by the Secretary General, Emile:

Staffing & Salaries/Incentives

Staff Group	No. of Staff in Group	Monthly Cost(Euro)	Average (Euro)	Social Fund
Senior/ Dept. managers	6	2,067	345	
Office support workers	4	745	186	
Project managers	-	-	-	-
BBF Centre staff	13	606	47	
Water project	4	394	99	
Medical Staff	2	105	53	
Street Children staff	3	365	122	
TOTAL	32	4,282	134	

Remarks :

1. During the past 3 years where SVDP had no registration certificate, we were trying to keep some staff as temporary workers until we get certificate or otherwise.
2. The monthly incentive paid to staff (in office or different projects) is too far less than that paid to their counterparts in similar humanitarian organizations.
3. We want to make payroll table that depends on paying reasonable salary to keep our staff live good standard of living, have job satisfaction and have loyalty to SVDP.
4. As from the beginning of the year 2018 there will be salary & incentives table.

Comparison of living costs: Khartoum v London (Source: www.expatisitan.com/cost-of-living/comparison/london/khartoum)

Food	- 61%	Personal Care	- 17%
Housing	- 80%	Entertainment	- 55%
Clothes	- 14%	TOTAL	- 64%
Transportation	- 61%		

According to <http://www.mylifeelsewhere.com/cost-of-living/united-kingdom/sudan> United Kingdom is 33% cheaper than Sudan.

If we apply the average of 64% to the salaries above it would mean that the highest paid employee would earn the UK equivalent of roughly £530 per month or £6,360 a year.

Management and staff training / Management succession

It is encouraging that this issue was raised in the meeting with staff before we could raise it. There is a thirst for knowledge which is exemplary. It was suggested by members of staff that an external adviser could be useful in assisting with the clarification of roles, identification of training needs and personal development planning. Please see para 5 of appendix 7 which has been suggested by the staff and refers to *“Adoption of SVDP management system according to the international humanitarian work standards”*



Employees understanding of Vincentian values

There is substantial evidence to suggest that some members of staff (or even members) don't know much about how the SVP was formed and how it works. Some Muslim members of staff (and others) see us as another NGO providing a service to the poor and don't understand that we are an international member based organisation and as such our Vincentian Values bind us together. Our Conference meetings are vitally important as also are our Festival Meetings. Festival meetings held twice a year include the celebration of Mass, a meal and an opportunity to meet other members. It is reported that one member of staff objected to money being spent on a Festival Meeting. I recommend that in addition to normal Twinnage payments and project funding that funds should be provided for the spiritual development of the members and that these funds should be identified separately and restricted for that purpose.

5 Funding requirements

The proposal to reopen the farm at Gebel Awlia will again provide an opportunity for young people to develop skills to enable them to look after themselves and eventually their families. Plans include the training of young people at present cared for at a government run home for abandoned children. It is also proposed that the land be used for growing crops which could generate local income. These plans will require substantial capital investment. The old farm was funded through the International Grants Programme of the UK Community Fund at a cost of £316K.

Before considering any expansion and further development of existing programmes it is essential that we eliminate any risk to existing programmes. Risk areas are identified as:

- i. Replacement of equipment which is beyond its normal life – the only 2 vehicles left: minibus and water tanker. The cost of replacing these vehicles (new and locally sourced) is estimated at: Tanker £85,000, Car £23,000 and Double cab Pick-up (4 wheel drive) £34,000. Options should be investigated for sourcing these at a competitive price and identifying opportunities for capital grants. For example it may be possible to buy a used tanker in the UK and export it to Sudan.
- ii. Refurbishment of inadequate office facilities and renewal of office equipment and improved sanitary arrangements for staff (yet to be costed)
- iii. Staff remuneration – this has already been addressed and quarterly payments increased.

6 Present contributions from SVP (E&W):

2016 Actual Expenditure				SVDP Request 2017		2017 Proposed			
	€	£	SDG	£	SDG	Total funds available:	\$	£	SDG
Sudan (actual exp)									
Baby feeding	94,500	80,085	667,372	293,331	2,444,429	Baby feeding	106,425	82,500	710,325
Medical	15,800	13,390	111,585	25,861	215,511	Medical	25,800	20,000	172,200
Water	12,389	10,500	87,496	14,546	121,215	Water	16,125	12,500	107,625
Street children *	34,047	28,853	240,444	15,142	126,183	Street children	6,450	5,000	43,050
Admin & Overheads	48,477	41,082	342,354	51,619	430,157	Admin & Overheads	64,500	50,000	430,500
Total for Sudan	205,214	173,910	1,449,251	400,499	3,337,495	Total for Sudan	219,300	170,000	1,463,700
* Street children never approved									
South Sudan (budget)	€					South Sudan	\$	£	
Vocational Training	108,728	91,332				Lulugu	90,300	70,000	
Be in hope	22,500	18,900				Be in hope children	38,700	30,000	
IDP	50,000	42,000				IDP	96,750	75,000	
Misc	12,460	10,466				Micro-credit (one off)	19,350	15,000	
TOTAL for South Sudan	193,688	162,698				TOTAL for South Sudan	245,100	190,000	
TOTAL	398,902	336,608	1,449,251			TOTAL	464,400	360,000	
						SHORTFALL	96,750	75,000	

Note on shortfall: Over the years we have (as a general rule) committed the donations received in the last year to funding programmes in the coming year. In the current year it was agreed that we depart from the norm by drawing on reserves to fund the shortfall which has resulted from changing priorities and recent events.

7 Factors influencing decisions

- The request for funding from Khartoum in the current year was more than twice the amount provided last year. At £170K the amount given was the same as in the previous year.
- At £190K the amount given to Juba represented a 17% increase on the previous year. However, this included an increase of £33K for IDP support and a one off payment of £15K for the micro-credit scheme.

8 The possible way forward

There are a number of issues and options to consider:

Organisations which are either funding (or previously funded) the SVP in Juba through ASASE include: Hilfswerk, Caritas Graz, Caritas Monaco, Geneva State, Geneva Town, Municipalities, CIAD, Prosudan, Fondation Lovioz, Banque Pictet, Missio, Miva and Opération Orange.

The total budget for South Sudan last year was €957,608.

Other than the SVP in South Tyrol who provide infrequent donations of between €5K & €15K the SVP(E&W) are the only providers of funding for the SVP in Khartoum.

OPTION 1 –

- Redress the balance between funds to Khartoum and Juba
- Ask ASASE and their contributors to reconsider their decision to withdraw funding from Khartoum

OPTION 2 - Potential sources of external grant funding identified by SVP (E&W) National Office

Trust	Project	Amount
Bay Tree Charitable Trust	Overseas development	£5,000-£10,000
The Allen Trust	Overseas aid, Sudan	£5,000-£10,000
Allen and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust	Education, Human rights	£10,000-£20,000
SDL Foundation	Education	£5,000-£10,000
Norton Rose Fulbright Trust	Overseas aid, disaster relief	£5,000-£15,000
Dromintee Trust	Overseas aid, disaster relief	£5,000-£10,000
Apax Foundation	Social enterprise, education	£5,000-£10,000
Shroeder Charitable Trust	Local poverty	£5,000
Waterloo Foundation	Education/ water sanitation	up to £100,000
Genesis Charitable Trust	Education, India	£5,000-£10,000
Roddick Foundation	Human rights	
Innocent Foundation	Local poverty, disaster relief	
Vodafone Foundation	Overseas aid, development	£20,000-£30,000
Freshfield Foundation	Overseas aid	
WF Southall Trust	Overseas development	£1,000-£3,000
Bloom Foundation	Overseas aid	£5,000-£15,000

The SVDP has previously been supported by Survive-Miva in the purchase of a vehicle. This could be another potential source of funding.

APPENDIX 1 Country Profile *Source: BBC*

Sudan, once the largest and one of the most geographically diverse states in Africa, split into two countries in July 2011 after the people of the south voted for independence. The government of Sudan gave its blessing for an independent South Sudan, where the mainly Christian and Animist people had for decades been struggling against rule by the Arab Muslim north. However, various outstanding secession issues - especially the question of shared oil revenues and the exact border demarcation - have continued to create tensions between the two successor states.

Sudan has long been beset by conflict. Two rounds of north-south civil war cost the lives of 1.5 million people, and a continuing conflict in the western region of Darfur has driven two million people from their homes and killed more than 200,000. Sudan's centuries of association with Egypt formally ended in 1956, when joint British-Egyptian rule over the country ended.

Independence was rapidly overshadowed by unresolved constitutional tensions with the south, which flared up into full-scale civil war that the coup-prone central government was ill-equipped to suppress. The military-led government of President Jaafar Numeiri agreed to autonomy for the south in 1972, but fighting broke out again in 1983. After two years of bargaining, the rebels signed a comprehensive peace deal with the government to end the civil war in January 2005. The accord provided for a high degree of autonomy for the south, and an option for it to secede. South Sudan seceded in July 2011, following a vote. However, the grievances of the northern states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile remain unaddressed, as provisions laid out for them in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement were never fully implemented.

In Darfur, in western Sudan, the United Nations has accused pro-government Arab militias of a campaign of ethnic cleansing against non-Arab locals. The conflict has strained relations between Sudan and Chad, to the west. Both countries have accused each other of cross-border incursions. There have been fears that the Darfur conflict could lead to a regional war. The economic dividends of eventual peace could be great. Sudan has large areas of cultivatable land, as well as gold and cotton. Its oil reserves are ripe for further exploitation.