



Newsletter

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In this issue:

Editorial	1
Word of the Superior General ...	2
LDO's: an emergency!	4
LDO Gabon/ Equatorial Guinea ..	5
LDO Uganda.....	6
LDO Cameroon	7
LDO Kenya/South Sudan.....	9
SDO Lisbon	11
SDO Houston	12
SDO Brussels.....	14
DCC Volunteers	16
Testimony of Victorien	18

Editorial

In our first newsletter, we looked at what the Central Development Office (Spiritan International) had achieved in its first few months of existence... Quite a positive assessment!

Today, with this second letter, we would like to focus on the two essential poles on which the entire development policy of the Congregation is based: the Local Development Offices (LDO) and the Support Development Offices (SDO). This is the topic of our Superior General.

As Pope Francis reminds us in his encyclical *Laudato Si*, no. 144, "Even the notion of quality of life cannot be imposed, but must be conceived within the world of symbols and habits proper to each human group". For this reason, we want to give priority to setting up our Local Development Offices in the circumscriptions where we work, training the confreres and their collaborators so that they can become true agents of development where they are inserted, proclaiming the Gospel of the Father's Love for all his children. We will see what is already happening in some countries...

The Support Development Offices, essentially in the countries of the North, support development projects presented by confreres who are in the thick of the action at the grassroots and who never stop fighting for a better world! We will see their contribution with some examples as well.

Voluntary organisations can also support us in setting up our local offices by sharing their experience and know-how. Collaboration is most often a guarantee of success...

Finally, we will read the testimony of Victorien, a Spiritan volunteer sent by the Amos association (France) to Nouadhibou in Mauritania and who shares the life of migrants in search of a better future... Moving!

I wish you a good reading! And don't hesitate to share your impressions and feelings with us: this is what makes us grow...

Philippe

The word of the superior general

Evangelization and Integral Human Development

“From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization.”(Evangelii Gaudium 178)

Today the Church understands its mission of evangelization as intrinsically linked to the integral human development of people. Obviously It would be unreasonable to expect that Francis Libermann, in a different era with a different understanding of mission, shared a similarly holistic view of evangelization. However, he saw clearly that the evangelization of the poor necessarily involved the promotion of their material welfare in addition to the preaching of the Gospel. While he admitted that his own thinking evolved in this regard, soon after founding the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, he came to realize that ‘it is wholly the duty of the missionary to work...also at the intellectual and physical aspects (of civilization), i.e., in education, agricultural and trades” [1846 Memorandum to Propaganda Fide, N.D. 8, 248]. He stressed that it was not enough simply to teach the poor how to work but they should be introduced into the “theory of things” so that they are not indefinitely dependent on missionaries but can be self-reliant when they are no longer present (loc.cit).

While his Society was originally envisaged for the black race, whom he considered to be the poorest and most abandoned of his times, Libermann quickly realized that there were poor and abandoned people on his own doorstep – sailors, soldiers, prisoners, beggars, impoverished workers..- and that it was necessary to extend his missionary outreach to such people in Bordeaux and elsewhere [N.D. IX, 288]. Here again he stressed the need to improve their material welfare [N.D. IX, 314]. In the Rule of 1849, he emphasized that education and other social services provided by missionaries should not be confined to those who accept the Christian faith but should be extended with similar care and dedication to those who were hostile to the Gospel [N.D. X, 515-516]. In the same Rule, he challenged us to be the “advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them” [N.D. X, 517] anticipating a more contemporary view of mission with a text that is of perennial relevance.

Inspired by the vision of Libermann, successive generations of Spiritan missionaries sought in a variety of ways to better the material situation of those to whom they were sent, offering them new dignity and new possibilities for their future. Libermann’s immediate successor, Fr. Schwindenhammer, opened a total of 31 colleges during his mandate, only one of which was reserved for future members of the Congregation itself, and established 15 trade and agricultural schools across the globe. Education continued to be a primary focus of Spiritan evangelization in the years that followed – primary and secondary schools, agricultural and trade schools, teacher training colleges etc.- which opened up a new future for countless people, enabling them to develop their talents, take their rightful place in society and shape the future of their country. By way of example, the Onitsha vicariate in Nigeria counted some 4000 mission schools in 1932 and by 1960 the four Spiritan districts of Onitsha, Owerri, Otukpo and Kabba had 83 colleges, teacher-training centres and technical schools [Koren, Essays on the Spiritan Charism, 1990, p. 146-7]. In addition, many individual Spiritans initiated creative projects over the years – in the areas of medical care, water provision and purification, crop production, forestry, animal husbandry, micro credit services etc. – thus enhancing and transforming the livelihood of countless poor and marginalized people.





Mansard of Father Libermann—Rome

The Spiritan Rule of Life points out that, as a Congregation dedicated to the evangelization of the poor, we are committed to the “integral liberation” of people, which includes the work of development (SRL 14). Recent General Chapters have helped to clarify what this commitment means in our contemporary context: a serious effort to analyse and interpret the situations within which we live (Maynooth 2.1 and Torre d’Aguilha 1.14); a practical solidarity with people, especially the most poor, the vulnerable and the excluded (Maynooth 2.2); collaboration with other institutes, other religions, with NGOs and other development agencies (Maynooth 5.9, 5.10 and 5.12; Torre d’Aguilha 3.4); a renewed commitment to education (Maynooth 2.13; Bagamoyo 1.4), particular attention to the role of women, to refugees and migrants (Maynooth 2.20, 2.22), to young people in difficulty (Bagamoyo 1.3) and to the protection of the natural environment (Bagamoyo 1.26).

Work for development is not peripheral to Spiritan mission but is at the very heart of what it means to be true to the spirit of our founders in the contemporary world. At the same time, it is a complex reality today, demanding the acquisition of particular skills in regard to the analysis of local social, political and economic situations, the discernment of viable projects, the art of project writing, the submission of regular professional reports to donor agencies in a spirit of accountability and transparency. While the Central Development Office in Rome is there to assist, to facilitate, to empower and to help in capacity building, the effectiveness of our mission, as always, lies with those who share the lives of people at the local level, who are familiar with their culture, their joys and their struggles to create a more dignified life for themselves and their families. Libermann’s profoundly inspiring words capture both the spirit that should animate us as his followers and the enormous potential we have at our disposal if our heart is in the right place and we are to work with the poor in creating a better future:

“If you are fervent, if you have an ardent zeal, full of the love of God, you will be profoundly touched at the sight of the plight of the people among whom you find yourselves, it will be in your mind constantly, day and night...You will pray to God to enlighten you...You will look for and will find a thousand ways to benefit them.” (Règle Provisoire, Chap. X, art VIII)

John Fogarty, Cssp



Zacharie Guirane NDIONE, CSSp
Spiritan International, Rome

The existence of local development offices: an emergency in our circumscriptions...

The creation of Local Development Offices in our circumscriptions responds to the wishes of international donors and of the Congregation during its last Chapters and Assemblies.

Why this creation?

It will allow our development actions to be carried out with the populations concerned and to address their needs. Thus, each Local Development Office will be "empowered to plan, propose, access donor funding, implement, monitor and report according to best practice, with the support of the Central Development Office. "In this new development approach, it is rather the Local Development Office, which assumes responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the various projects formulated by a constituency. This promotes self-confidence and avoids dependency.

Unfortunately, this great challenge that the Congregation of the Holy Spirit would like to take up through its Central Development Office, is far from being realised by the districts. For example: of the 41 circumscriptions in Africa and Latin America, only seven circumscriptions have a functioning Local Development Office. The others continue with the old method: each Spiritan must ensure the development of his works according to his address book, his network of donors, his family, his friends and the special collection on Sundays and major feasts. Although this model has produced significant results, it can be improved and coordinated by the Local Development Office, which, through carefully thought-out strategies, mobilises and draws on local and international funding.

On the other hand, we note insufficient skills in many areas, including the project cycle, and financial management and accountability. This was the observation of the trainers at their meeting in Dakar in June-July 2019: "Some of our training communities have very little or nothing in their curriculum on financial management skills and leadership development projects". This is why the BCD team is often confronted with requests to correct, write up and guide the projects of confreres. However, with a minimum of organisation at local level, this initial work would be carried out by the members of the Local Development Office team who, in addition, would refine, orient and "sell the project" to the donors. Hence the urgency and interest in setting up LDBs for the design of our projects at local level.

Of course, we recognise the difficulty in finding staff, which prevents several constituencies from releasing a colleague for this mission. But it is not necessary that the members of a BLD be only Spiritans. We have the example of several provinces: Gabon-Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Democratic Congo, which have asked for a trained confrere, surrounded by a team of lay people or a co-operant, who do a remarkable job.

We hope that all these remarks and orientations will find a good echo with each Spiritan, in particular our Provincials and their advisers so that the needs of the poorest and most destitute is assured in the best possible way.



LDO: A time for exchange and planning of projects
of a circumscription



Together in the design and implementation
of our projects

The opening of a Development Office, an essential dynamic for Spiritan projects...



Martin Kehinde Alegbemi - Provincial bursar

The Development Office of the Province of Gabon and Guinea-Equatorial has been open since the arrival of Laure in March 2021. Laure is an international solidarity volunteer with the Spiritans in Libreville, Gabon.

The opening of this office has been essential to redefine each ongoing, pending or unfounded project, to have an expertise in dealing with them and a fresh eye on what the Congregation of the Holy Spirit is doing in terms of development. Laure's main tasks are fundraising and writing grant applications.



Development office team meeting

Every fortnight, Laure, the provincial bursar and a brother who is a civil engineer meet to review the progress of the projects and to exchange ideas on new avenues to be explored. During these meetings, the provincial bursar and the brother bring their

knowledge of the environment, local structures, the realisation of projects, and provide advice and opinions on the work carried out by Laure. Everyone expresses themselves and share their knowledge and skills. There is a real team dynamic.

The opening of this office was essential for the Gabonese Province of Equatorial Guinea, and also a real challenge for Laure! It is not always easy to arrive in an unknown continent, a new culture and to be the first volunteer on the job. Always concerned to meet her expectations, Laure was able to quickly integrate and put her skills at contribution. We are delighted to learn from each other and to move forward together!

The opening of the Development Office has allowed projects to be clearer, better defined and new ideas to emerge. Through her mission, Laure has already travelled around the provinces of Gabon to meet with Spiritan communities and to work on various projects.



Spiritan Mission of Lambaréné in Gabon

Meeting young people of the CEMI (Centre d'Espérance et de Mission d'Insertion), based in Port-Gentil, where we work on a number of projects





Damasius Kayemba

Libermann Children's Academy Namugongo – Ouganda

Uganda is witnessing to an increasing number of less privileged children evidenced through: street children, child labour, child abuse, school dropouts due to poverty, orphans and refugee children (Uganda is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa with the highest number of refugees). We expect the situation to get worse as result of the pandemic.

With this reality, the Spiritans in Uganda decided to answer our call of evangelization through education; which is one of our main tools of evangelization. This is how Libermann Children's academy was borne. The construction kicked off in 2018 with the main classroom block which is now complete. Construction of the dinning block, kitchen is underway. We are soliciting for funds to construct two dormitories, an administration block, a modern library and a play centre. Other projects are for water harvest and biogas.

These facilities will provide the children a favourable learning environment.

Libermann Children's Academy will provide affordable basic education, shelter, food, and

rehabilitation to the disadvantaged children and ensure that they can have a better future. The school, with a capacity of 800 pupils, is being constructed on the congregation's property at Jjanda, Namugongo, which is close to the Namugongo Martyrs' Shrine famous for hosting Martyrs' Day celebrations every year on 3rd June in Uganda.



Visit to the work site with the provincial team



All of the buildings today

Libermann Children Academy is a Catholic based school which aims to provide religious teachings to impact on the children's behaviors, actions and code of conduct, improve the literacy levels of the less privileged children, reduce on the number of street children within the urban centers of Uganda, reduce on literacy discrimination against all young boys and girls in Uganda and a generation built on religious norms among beneficiary communities.

We are very grateful to the donors who are helping us to realize this dream. May the Lord bless you all.



By Babissakana Louis Alexandre,
Lay Spiritan Associate, Director of DO-CAM,
CSSP Province of Cameroon - Yaoundé

Setting up the CSSp Province Development Office in Cameroon: Progress and prospects.

Having been informed by the General Council of the creation of the Central Development Office (CDO) of the Congregation on February 2, 2019 with Fr. Philippe Engel as its Director, and especially of the need to appoint a correspondent and set up a Local Development Office (LDO) for the Province of Cameroon, the Provincial Superior, Fr. Ndong Assamba Albert, appointed me for this mission on March 20, 2019. In this regard, this article gives a summary of the progress of the establishment of the LDO in our circumscription. It is structured in five points: (i) understanding the concept of LDO; (ii) defining the steps for the effective implementation of LDO; (iii) progress in the implementation of our LDO; (iv) difficulties encountered in this process; and (v) prospects for completing the implementation of LDO.

1. Understanding the LDO concept. In the framework of the UCSAC meeting held from 19 to 22 November 2019 in Brazzaville (Congo) at the Libermann House, we worked with Father Philippe on the strengthening or setting up of LDO in each province. With the help of the official documents regarding the CDO in Rome and the Spiritan Charter of Development, it is clear that the Development Office is a specific structure whose aim is to help each Spiritan, and each circumscription to put development at the centre of its mission of evangelisation in favour of the poorest and most abandoned of our fellow brothers and sisters. In this perspective, it has two essential missions, different but complementary: (i) animation, coordination and formation in the field of development on the one hand, and, (ii) support to the self-sufficiency projects of the circumscriptions of the Congregation on the other hand.



La Casba (provincial house of the Spiritans in Yaoundé)

2. Defining the steps for the effective implementation of LDO. From our feasibility analysis, it was defined that the effective establishment of the LDO can be summarised in three main steps. The first is the formal creation of the LDO by the Provincial Superior and his council with the appointment of the first leader. Secondly, the preparation and validation of the organisation and the selection and assignment of staff. Thirdly, the approval of the action plan and budget for the effective launching of the activities.

3. Progress in the implementation of the DO-CAM. It was with a view to a gradual and controlled implementation that the Cameroon Provincial Development Office, abbreviated as DO-CAM, was created by resolution of the Provincial Council on 28 January 2020 on the basis of the rationales outlined with particular reference to the CDO document and the Spiritan Charter for Development. I was appointed as Director of DO-CAM. Anticipating the holding of the General Chapter which had been initially programmed for June-July 2020, we worked on deepening our knowledge based on the experience of the other circumscriptions in view of this important meeting of the Congregation. However, the pandemic of COVID-19 disrupted our plan and forfeited this option based on the experience and lessons learned from others.

We accelerated the implementation of the resolution of the Provincial Council's resolution of 16 December 2020 by adopting the organisation chart of the DO-CAM with a management and two departments, namely: the development department in charge of activities aimed at achieving the objectives of animation, coordination and training in the field of development on one hand, and the projects and self-financing department in charge of activities aimed at achieving the objectives of conducting and accompanying works and self-financing projects of the Province on the other hand. Moreover, an action plan and a budget for the year 2021 were adopted by the Provincial Council on the same day. As part of the proper conduct of projects, the Provincial Council adopted on 16 December 2020, the Project Life Cycle of the Province as a procedural framework for the governance and management of projects within our circumscription. Furthermore, from an operational



The Development Office at La Casba in Yaoundé

perspective, the Council took note of the Terms of Reference of the feasibility study of the Project for the construction of a starch factory in Obout with a mandate to prepare the definition report of the said project.

With a view to the selection and appointment of the BD-CAM's additional core staff, two job descriptions (Head of Development Department and Head of Projects and Self-financing Department) were validated by the Provincial Council on Finance held from 22 to 24 March 2021. In addition, dedicated premises have been allocated to accommodate the DO-CAM team members and activities.

4. Difficulties encountered in the implementation process. The main difficulty concerns the selection and designation of core staff for the conduct of activities of each workstation of the DO-CAM, with the exception of the Director who is already in post. The job descriptions clearly define the tasks, duties and profile required for each department in terms of qualifications and experience. Another difficulty concerns the provision of adequate working logistic equipment for each post. This new structure dedicated to development also requires, under the supervision and authority of the Provincial Superior, an adequate provisions from the Provincial Bursar's office and the General Secretariat in order to feed the network of insertions and existing works of our Province.

5. Prospects for the completion of the establishment of the DO-CAM. As soon as these transitional difficulties are resolved, the BD-CAM will be able to complete its establishment through activities of introduction, information and training of those in charge on the organization and functioning of our office and its functional and accompanying relations with the BCD in Rome. In this perspective, the year 2022 is targeted as the year for commissioning an effective launch of the activities of the BD-CAM with its core team of three staff.



Ms Ruth Hamisi
Programme Coordinator
Kenya Spiritans Development Office (SDOK)



The Kenya Spiritan Development Office (SDOK)

The Spiritans Development Office Kenya (SDOK) is a focal and strategic unit in the overall implementation of the Congregation's objectives, aimed at fulfilling the Vision and Mission of the Holy Ghost Fathers. The activities of the Development Office are therefore supported by the Holy Ghost Fathers strategic plan. The office mandate extends in all the parishes/missions/institutions of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost to effectively facilitate the design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of projects as well as pastoral development. The parishes/missions/institutions are divided into extended communities as follows:

East Pokot Extended Community	Coast Extended Community	Eastern Extended Community	Nairobi Langata Extended Community	Nairobi Central Extended Community	South Sudan Extended Community
1. Marigat 2. Tangulbei • Tangulbei Divisional Medical Programme (TDMP) • St. Luke's Kasitet Primary School 3. Barpello • Barpello High School 4. Rotu 5. Claude Academy	1. Migombani • Immaculate Heart of Mary Nursery & Primary School • Holy Ghost Fathers Technical Training Institute 2. Wenje 3. Garsen 4. Our Lady of the Holy Rosary 5. Holy Ghost Fathers Rest House (St. Brendan's)	1. Katheka 2. St. Joseph the Worker -Sultan Hamud 3. Holy Ghost Schools – Sultan Hamud 4. Holy Ghost Fathers Technical Training Institute – Sultan Hamud 5. Kilimambogo 6. St. Mary's Mukuru • Liberman Academy 7. Christ the King Kamuwongo	1. St. John's the Evangelist 2. Spiritan home 3. Student community	1. Provincial PME 2. St. Austin's Parish 3. Kamiriithu 4. St. Mary's School 5. St. Francis – KITI	1. Good shepherd (Thon Aduel, Rumbek East) 2. St. Peter and Paul (Wulu) 3. Holy Cross (Rumbek Centre)

The Office has been striving to set up a central programme management function for the Holy Ghost Fathers in consultation with the Provincial Leadership Team in Nairobi and the leaders at each Extended Community. The office also facilitates the implementation of the existing strategic plan 2018 to 2022, review of the milestones covered, challenges and strategies to counter the challenges and lessons learnt to be included in the next five year strategic plan (2023-2027). This will enable us create development projects management function that coordinates and manages Holy Ghost Fathers projects in Kenya and South Sudan in order to optimize project cycle management activities, good development practices and results-based management.

The Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers assisted by SDOK has a considerable experience in projects design, implementation, monitoring and reporting. We have dedicated project implementers on the ground that have a direct link with the community on a day to day basis offering pastoral care through evangelization, participation and empowerment, integral development, capacity and institutional development and stewardship. In education – schools are not just centres of excellence in academics but also in holistic and values based education. We have an improved professionalism amongst key educational practitioners and stakeholders in order to have improved educational outcomes. In Health – provision of quality and affordable primary health care to the community is very key and improved livelihoods and conditions for the poor and vulnerable communities in which we work.



Difficulties faced:

1. Lack of funds for director expenditures and means of transport for the Development Office
2. Lack of financial resources for projects implementation
3. Lack of new partnerships in order to increase our donor base

Our current projects are:

1. Health – Provision of quality, affordable and reliable health care services
2. Agriculture - Agroecology for Sustainable Food Security Programme and empowerment and strengthening women groups in sustainable agricultural recovery
3. Education – Provision of quality education based on Christian values through ECD's, Primary and secondary level while setting trends in innovation, job creating and leadership in the Technical Training Institutes
4. Food aid interventions during droughts and floods
5. Pastoral and human development through evangelization and community mobilization
6. WASH interventions through rainwater harvesting, borehole drilling and sanitation training
7. Peace education





Inês Souta - Executive Director of Sol sem Fronteiras

Sol Sem Fronteiras (Solsef)

Sol Sem Fronteiras (Solsef) is a Portuguese NGDO (Non-Governmental Organization for Development), born in 1993 out of the experience of the Catholic youth movement Jovens sem Fronteiras (JSF) and inspired by the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit (Cssp).

Since then, Solsef has worked to promote the ideals of fraternity and solidarity among people, particularly young people from different countries, through four specific areas: Cooperation for Development, International Volunteering, Education for Citizenship and Inclusion.

Cooperation for Development is Solsef's main area of action. Solsef develops concrete actions that promote the sustained development of populations in developing countries - in particular, in Portuguese-speaking African Countries. In addition to seeking to meet the needs felt by the population, Solsef's projects have sustainability as a main factor. With a special focus on health and education, Solsef has already supported over 33 projects in 7 different countries (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Brazil, Paraguay and Haiti). These projects have directly benefited more than 20,000 people (60% women or girls). Solsef believes that it's through education that the poverty cycle can be broken, and that's why we want to provide underprivileged children and young adults with quality education. We work with missionaries and local institutions in order to improve their facilities, reinforce teachers' training and create scholarship programs so that it can be easier for families to decide to send their children to school.

Solsef has also supported over 56 volunteering projects carried out in 6 different countries by over 380 volunteers.

Solsef also actively intervenes in raising the awareness of Portuguese youth about solidarity through the implementation of different recreational, cultural and training activities with the aim of achieving a change in mentalities and behaviors through local action.

Additionally, in Portugal, Solsef develops Inclusion projects that are embodied in concrete actions that promote the inclusion of disadvantaged or vulnerable populations through the development of activities linked to the arts and entrepreneurship actions with a focus on the concept of social business.

At the moment, Solsef is working directly in 4 educational projects in Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Brazil, and 1 healthcare project in Guinea-Bissau, with the goal of fulfilling its motto: "Making the Sun Rise for All".



2020 - Notre-Dame Primary School Project - pupils from Notre-Dame Primary School (in Montagne La Voûte, Haiti) on new desks purchased as part of the project.



2018- 2020 - "Inclusive Learning" Project - Pupils from the Sister Valdelicia educational centre (Contuboel, Guinea-Bissau), in the refectory built as part of the project.



2020-2021 - "Pedagogical Innovation" project - Teachers from the São João de Deus community school (in the city of Nampula, Mozambique) with a certificate of participation in the training provided by the project.



John Gillespie - Director, Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement

Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement (SOMA)

Based in Houston, Texas, the **Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement (SOMA)**, supports the Congregation's public and charitable works of health, education, social services, and religious mission in the United States and throughout the world. In its fundraising capacity, SOMA solicits and receives grants, gifts, and other contributions for the Congregation; serves as a fiscal agent for Spiritan mission projects; and oversees the U.S. Province's participation in the Missionary Cooperation Plan, scheduling confreres to conduct annual mission appeals in U.S. parishes.

Our mission priorities generally fall under the following categories:

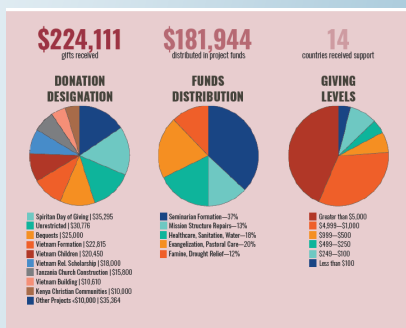
- Emergency Relief | Food and medical supplies during natural disasters or public health crises
- Evangelization | Catechesis; lay missionary religious training, missionary bicycles and teaching materials; church construction
- Education | School construction; student scholarships; desks and chairs; computer lab; training materials
- Economic & Community Development | Sustainable farming; women's sewing cooperative; parish bakeries; women's empowerment; technical skills training
- Health & Wellness | Supplemental food; emergency generators; electricity delivery; solar paneling; rain water catchment systems; boreholes; water tanks; toilet facilities; medical dispensary construction; medical equipment and supplies; supplemental feeding
- Priestly Formation | Seminarian tuition support; supplemental feeding; teaching aids
- Social Justice | Women's and men's rehabilitation center; cots for prison detainees; orphan care; refugee housing

The SOMA team is comprised of a director, development officer, mission projects coordinator, communications manager, missionary cooperation plan administrator, and bookkeeper. A volunteer advisory board meets quarterly, serving as a resource for best practices and trends in philanthropy and fundraising.

SOMA hosts the annual Spiritan Day of Giving online, as well as ad hoc in-person fundraising and friend-raising events to raise awareness of the Spiritan mission and generate donations.

Mission news and updates are shared with supporters in the Spiritan Mission Monthly (monthly email campaign), and the quarterly One Heart, One Spirit newsletter, as well as through the U.S. Province website and social media channels. Emergency fundraising campaigns are scheduled as needed in response to natural disasters such as cyclones, crop infestations, draughts, famines, and public health crises.

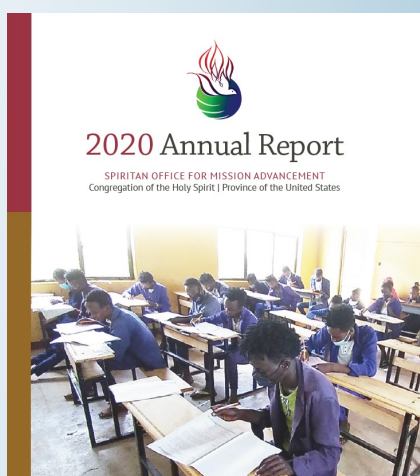
A Project Selection Committee meets twice annually to review grant applications and allocate funds. In 2020, SOMA distributed \$181,944 in project funds to 14 countries.



Some examples of recently-supported projects include:

- Funding for eight pit latrine toilets at the Spiritan School in Sultan Hamud, Kenya, ensuring good hygiene habits and creating a dignified study environment for the students and staff.
- Emergency food distribution in Fonte Boa, Brazil, to support mostly self-employed workers and their families who lost income due to COVID-19.
- Medicine and supplies for 6,000 patients at the Dhadim Medical Center in Ethiopia.
- Medical equipment for the Spiritan Hospital in Mgbidi, Nigeria.
- Tuition for 15 girls to attend school in Rembek, South Sudan.
- Seminary chapel roof in Nsukka, Nigeria.

In addition to its fundraising role, SOMA collaborates with the Office of Vocations in an integrated approach to reach out and engage others in the Spiritan mission. SOMA also offers technical support and advice to missionaries directing development projects overseas, and supports the special needs of the elderly, infirm, and disabled members of the Congregation.



Setting up of water reserves



Michael Begley - Executive Director of Kibanda

Kibanda - Solidarity in a Time of Transition

The European Spiritan Centre for Cooperation and Development (Kibanda) was officially registered on 25th March 2001 as a non-profit association (ASBL) under Belgium law with by Firmino Cachada, CSSp as its first Executive Director. Kibanda has its own Statutes and is governed by its Annual General Assembly and independent Board of Directors and presents an annual report to the General Assembly of the UCE Provincials. On behalf of the UCE Provincials, it also manages the European Spiritan Solidarity Fund (CESS) while operational services are delivered by three part-time staff and one full-time Director. This year, as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our founding, we are reminded of the primary purpose, achievements, and challenges which Kibanda faces in a time of transition.



Water tank in Kenya

The purpose of Kibanda is specified in Article 3 of its Statutes as follows: *"To promote the integral and sustainable development of disadvantaged peoples, especially in developing countries through supporting development programs managed by Spiritan missionaries. It seeks to participate in the defense of human rights to build peace and the reconstruction of social and material structures in countries affected by conflicts or natural disasters. It also contributes to European awareness raising for a healthy North/South cooperation that can lead to a real development of the most disadvantaged populations and to the reduction of social and economic inequalities at national, regional and international levels".* In practice, Kibanda offers technical support and an intermediation service with partner agencies for applicants as well as limited direct project funding.

One of the achievements is the quantum of funding sourced for projects. In the five-year period between 2016-2020, Kibanda and its partners provided €1,363,960 in developmental funding for 95 projects across 9 categories in 23 countries. Alongside this, CESS directly funded 34 projects in 15 countries during 2020 in the amount of €121,992 while an additional €153,630 was remitted through CESS by partner agencies for 16 projects in nine countries in 2020. Other achievements include the ongoing revamping of our website, the enhancement of our administrative procedures, the productive collaboration with SOMA in Houston and the CDO in Rome, the expansion of our partner agencies, and the continuation of our quarterly Kibanda Newsletter publication in four languages. This is widely circulated while increasingly it will be done electronically. Other achievements include the updating of our Statutes and organizational profile with the Belgium Monitor and the completion of the registration process entitling our benefactors to receive tax rebates for their donations.



Metal beds for prisoners in Ethiopia



Kibanda blows its twenty candles!

On the occasion of Kibanda's twentieth anniversary, its founder, Fr. Firmino Cachada, currently a missionary in Brazil, sent his greetings!

It was at the beginning of 1997 that I left Lisbon for Brussels to start the European Spiritan Centre for Development Cooperation (CSECD) at the request of the European Provincials. But it was not until 25 March 2001 that the constitutive General Assembly of the ASBL took place, presided over by the Provincial of Belgium, the late Father Remi Peeters. This allowed the official recognition of the international solidarity work of the CSECD, with the active participation of Belgian and other nationalities linked to the Spiritans. I am happy to see that, twenty years later, Kibanda is still alive and kicking. My congratulations and encouragement. Our Spiritan confreres in mission need this solidarity.

Firmino Cachada, CSSp, Brazil, Tefé – Amazonia, 13/05/2021



Latrine project in Pakistan

Like all other developmental NGO's, we too have had to adapt to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by embracing remote working and holding board and committee meetings through ZOOM and SKYPE Video conferencing. However, the most significant challenge that we currently face revolves around the recent decision to sell our property at Rue de Mérode in Brussels. The good news is that we have now secured a new location for our offices nearby while the relocation process will inevitably take a little time. The need to enhance the financial stability of Kibanda remains a challenge while we have already made good progress in producing separate and independent annual activity reports and annual financial statements for both CESS and Kibanda.

As the French philosopher and theologian, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, once observed: "The future belongs to those who provide future generations with reasons for hope". We too wish to offer our confreres in difficult developmental situations, reasons for such hope through ongoing solidarity into the future.

Michael Begley, CSSp, Executive Director



Equiptement d'un centre de santé au Kenya



Laure Métro-Savelli, director of the service:
"Partner and volunteer relations »

International solidarity volunteers, a lever for development...

In response to Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, which called for the development of all people, churches have chosen to contribute to solidarity between the countries of the South and the North by creating international volunteer organisations. The idea is to create bridges between Churches and cultures and to exchange professional expertise by sending and accompanying volunteers who put themselves at the service of a structure in the South for one or two years.

The Catholic Delegation for Cooperation (DCC), the Church's international volunteering service in France, is thus involved in some fifty countries in Africa, Asia and South America, with structures that work with the most disadvantaged.

"This collaboration allows an opening to international solidarity where the stakeholders work together in mutual respect", says Father Eric, DCC partner in Liberia.

What are the benefits for the local partners of hosting a solidarity volunteer, accompanied by a sending organisation such as the DCC:

- benefit from the long-term personal and selfless commitment of the volunteer; volunteers commit themselves fully to putting their skills at the service of a project, that of their partner.
- Improvement in the quality of the organisation's activities through an external viewpoint, a different perspective; each volunteer puts themselves at the service of the partner by contributing techniques or knowledge; these may not exist locally or may not be accessible to small organisations; with a fresh perspective, the volunteer will have more distance to develop new activities;
- Reinvigoration of local teams with the arrival of an outsider; a new colleague means a new way of working together; it gives a new impetus, motivates and



allows more transmission and exchange; through his or her distance from the organisation, the volunteer can also play a mediation role by contributing to the management of local conflicts;

- A volunteer can be a lever for development; through the diversity of the missions offered by the DCC (teaching, engineering, communication, project management, health), the partner and the volunteer work

together for a sustainable impact on development; they share a common goal: empowerment of people for greater independence.

- working with people from a different culture with a common goal; by working together, the volunteer and partner break down societal and cultural barriers; together they create cohesion between different cultures.
- participation in the global paradigm shift; indeed, the partnership nurtures a common concern for "integral ecology"; taking care of orphaned children, caring for and supporting the elderly, managing scarce resources such as water... cooperation thus encourages collective action and changes in attitude in the face of numerous global problems; partners and volunteers alike become actors in a fairer and more sustainable world;
- the volunteer highlights the actions implemented by the partner; volunteers act as multipliers: before, during and after their mission, they tell their friends and family or their network about what they are doing; this is a real boost for the partner, who could eventually benefit from new human or financial resources in order to carry out their project.

In this way, the collaboration between a local partner with a project, the volunteer (s) involved in the project and the DCC, which accompanies partners and volunteers with over 60 years of experience, contributes to integral development.





Victorien Grégoire-Volunteer AMOS
(Spiritan Association of Volunteers)



With Pierre

Dear all,

I am writing this letter to you, perched on an ancient coral reef, emerging from the ocean depths. The ground is covered with sand and shells, which have also emerged from the waves, like the whole of the Cap Blanc peninsula, where the port city of Nouadhibou is built. I am leaning against the church of the Catholic Mission, continuously beaten by the conflicting winds of the Atlantic and the Sahara. Immensities of water and dust.

Exiled, stuck between these two deserts, each thousands of kilometres away, the human colony survives against all odds. Chinese trawlers bellow their horns in the distance. The sea breeze carries away the muffled bellowing, with the smell of fishing and the taste of iodine in the air.

From the ocean, the white boat of a fisherman touches the shore, effortlessly, without a jolt, as lips touch lips...

The day ends. I look at the minarets, which the setting sun is turning the colour of blood red like fire. The throbbing complaints of the dogs straying in the rubbish-mingle in and form a single cry to heaven with the calls of the muezzin. All seems abandoned, fallen from the Creation and rejected on these shores at the very end of the world.

Finally, night falls. Everything sleeps. Everyone forgets the torments of this life, leaving room for the great silence and the magnificent uselessness of the stars.

Having arrived here as a Spiritan volunteer, I chose neither the country nor the mission. But the Spirit blows where he wills. In my home village, I always loved had a special affection for a former missionary from Mauritania, Father René. It is in his footsteps that I am walking.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is a vast country, populated by nomads, the Moors, and the descendants of their slaves. A land of Islam, now independent from France, this desert expanse is subject to a climate of extremes. The country remains, in its less sterile parts, dedicated to a poor vegetation which can only be suitable for animal breeding. The Sahara, in its still inhabitable territories, can only feed a population of shepherds and nomads, who follow the herds. The scenery has therefore remained static since the beginning of the world. The only trace of civilisation is Islamic. A religion founded in the burning sands of Arabia, which easily adapted to this environment and built its mosques.

The country's wealth comes from its rare infrastructure, inherited from the French influence: iron mines, fishing ports and gold deposits.

Leaving the chaos of Nouakchott the capital city, a sort of mixture between a beehive and a cauldron, buzzing with horns and bubbling with life, we set off northwards. Travelling to Nouadhibou, we navigate through five hundred kilometres of dust.

A long road through the desert. Under such skies, a whole new imagination takes hold of you.

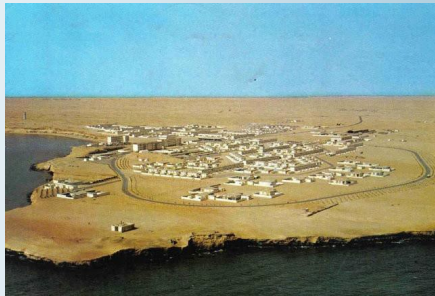
The forty years of wandering of the Jewish people, the flight of the Holy Family, the Desert Fathers and the anchorite hermits, the Crusades and St Louis, Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, Charles de Foucauld in the Hoggar, the columns of the French expeditionary corps, the Touareg caravans, the Mamelukes, Saint-Exupéry's airmail, Rommel's Afrikakorps and the glorious victory of Leclerc and his armoured division at Bir Hakeim.

Overlooking the dunes, there are no obstacle to block the horizon.

The desert spreads out its sandy sheets, dormant and limpid. The view is icy and melancholic. The atmosphere is clear. The blue distance merges with the dunes. Dromedaries move away in this improbable void. Mirages and optical effects surround us, the road disappears in a blur of heat. Whirlwinds fly away. The breeze rises on this western shore of the Sahara. We set off again when the sun goes down. "Space is great. In the immense desert, in the endless horizon that always begins again." Nonchalant palm trees sway softly in the burning air, on the outskirts of a camel oasis. I see an im-



"Blessed are the afflicted,
for they shall be comforted. "



Photograph of Cansado, French time, 1960s.



Visit to a home for young migrants.

mense railway, which rises in the middle of the sands. From the mines on the edge of the desert, it winds slowly to the shore of the ocean, to the port .

It is the peninsula of Cap Blanc. Vasco de Gama, and the Portuguese explorers of the first circumnavigations around Africa and the world, noted off this cape: "Nothing, absolutely nothing. Abundance of fish between the warm and cold waters. Seal colony at the end of the earth. "

You have to imagine an apocalyptic future, where the water of the seas has evaporated, leaving a buried, silted-up, dried-up and mummified world in the open air. We navigate on the dunes, between the reefs and the oceanic galleries that emerge from the sands. You have to be an oceanographer to find your way around here.

The vehicles also seem to be remnants of Atlantis. These rolling wrecks look as if they have just returned from a long stay under the sea, so gnawed and rusted by erosion. They came from the waves, like these scattered marine rocks, which constitute the only relief of our destination: Nouadhibou and its Catholic mission.

Mission is first of all prayer. The great heart to Heart. Crux, Hostia and Virgo. Lauds, masses, vespers and times of silence follow one another day after day. Adoration, rosary, prayer. A contemplative life in action, that is what a missionary is.

It is also fraternal life with the fathers and brothers, Congolese and Guinean. Taking care of the farmyard, of our plants. How happy we are to see life grow in this sand, even the weeds! On these solid foundations, we can serve. The heart of the local mission: helping migrants.

Charity is carried out with the means at hand. We are entirely dependent on the generosity of donors. And if resources are scarce, should we close our doors?

"I was hungry and you did not give me food; I was thirsty and you did not give me drink. Whenever you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." Welcoming and listening are always possible. It is sublime. May God have mercy on us who do so little! May He not curse us like that beautifully adorned fig tree, beautiful for the world, well presented, but which bore no fruit...

Migrants appear before me every day: war refugees, widows, orphans. No less than fourteen West African nationalities pass through the office. From Senegal and Mali, to Niger and Guinea-Bissau, via Togo, the Ivory Coast and Cameroon. Each country has as many peoples, dialects, cultures and religions: Peul, Bambara, Mandingo, Dogon, Kissi, Guerze... They seem to me to be countless. And with the Arab-Muslim world around us, we are moving into another dimension.

The faith and courage of the first missionaries of Africa is even more striking here. We understand how, through their prayer and their struggle, they moved mountains. We visited the prison, the hospital, the prostitutes. The last of the last. What training prepares you for this? What kind of performance will you be looking for? The only advice I get is: "Love what you do, you only understand things in love". We listen. Those who don't question are the most skillful comforters.

One night, the moon shines and lowers over the sea. Its rays fall on the mission cemetery. The white stones gleam faintly under the cold light. The night shadows stretch. Only the light and mysterious rustling of the palms can be heard...

In the silence and solitude, many things come to the surface of the consciousness.

The devil prowls like a lion; he approaches:

"If you were smart, you would take care of yourself. You can't do anything for anyone. You are running to a burning house from which no one can be saved. " "You can't change anything. One crazy person in the middle of all this madness. " "And if you die, it will be in vain. "

"An infant is old enough to die. You are dying. Do you see those birds? You know they will eat you alive? Where you're going, you won't come back. "

At the reception of the sick, at the sisters' dispensary, it's the court of miracles. Children suffer from scabies, and mothers suffer for their children. Sometimes a tiny, abandoned baby suffering from malnutrition is placed on my desk. Death. Does it have the last word? It laughs in my face... But we see the heavenly glory in it. Something that irradiates me.



Visit to the migrants in Guantanamo, with Pierre and Father Pachel.



The Parish Caritas Team: Father Pachel, Father George, Brothers Arthur and Norbert, Edwige and Pierre. And the sisters of Bethany.

"What then does this greed and impotence cry out to us, if not that there was once in man a true happiness, of which there now remains only the mark and trace all empty, and which he tries uselessly to fill with all that surrounds him, seeking from absent things the help he does not obtain from the present, but which are all incapable of it, because this infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and unchanging object, that is to say, by God himself. "

Blaise Pascal adds that; "All our misfortunes come from the fact that we do not know how to remain in peace in our rooms. "

The whole migration cohort is rushing into the clutches of the smugglers, the complicit authorities and the police. It is a human trade, a thousand-year-old trade that is perpetuated.

Migrants that we welcome, with whom we live, with whom we pray and sing in the choir. How can we imagine them on the sea? We forbid them illegal immigration, dug-out canoes, smugglers. These birds of prey and wolves, lulling them with words, telling them that the passage is safe. We show them the facts: the shipwrecks. We cannot leave them uncertain about the tragic outcome of these journeys. The uncertainty is still the hope of being able to pass.

And God knows that we cling to this hope, of a better life and happiness here below! Of an earthly paradise in France! As Christ said, the Kingdom is not of this world. In Europe too, people are unhappy and suffering. And I find so many beautiful things in Africa.

Sometimes terrible stories are shared with us. We have to collect these stories and these pains. Without ever rebelling against God. We must place the lives of these migrants in his hands with complete confidence. All human wisdom lies in these two words: wait and hope. In the silence of the desert, it is God or nothing.

What good can come out of Nouadhibou (Nazareth)? Simply the best. Prayer, care for others and hope in God.

The migrants are united. "Misery always gets along and helps each other. The dangers of the road have taught these men their weakness, and united their wishes. And Christians eagerly draw on the Gospel, the eternal help of the unfortunate and the enslaved.

This mission reminds me of my activities with the Drôme gendarmes. What does this have to do with Nouadhibou? In these two theatres, so different in brightness and darkness, the misfortunes of the human race are the same.

The immense difference is that in France, Heaven is nothing or almost nothing for my compatriots. But even if the French no longer address their wishes to Him, Heaven listens to the secret voice of our miseries: people suffer in my country, as people suffer in Nouadhibou, and our sufferings pray.

Like a drop of water in an ocean of sand and human misery, the Catholic Mission of Nouadhibou perfectly illustrates the parable of Christ: "You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth. "

In union of prayer with you, under the gaze of Our Lady of Mauritania; The Risen Christ accompanies you;



Work table for gutting fish.





A consumerist vision of human beings, encouraged by the mechanisms of today's globalized economy, has a levelling effect on cultures, diminishing the immense variety which is the heritage of all humanity. Attempts to resolve all problems through uniform regulations or technical interventions can lead to overlooking the complexities of local problems which demand the active participation of all members of the community. New processes taking shape cannot always fit into frameworks imported from outside; they need to be based in the local culture itself. As life and the world are dynamic realities, so our care for the world must also be flexible and dynamic. Merely technical solutions run the risk of addressing symptoms and not the more serious underlying problems. There is a need to respect the rights of peoples and cultures, and to appreciate that the development of a social group presupposes an historical process which takes place within a cultural context and demands the constant and active involvement of local people from within their proper culture. Nor can the notion of the quality of life be imposed from without, for quality of life must be understood within the world of symbols and customs proper to each human group. (Laudato Si n° 144)



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