



# Vincentian Solidarity Office

## February 2020 Bulletin

### Bricks, Books and Bibles: Three New Classrooms for School in Chad

The Vincentian missionaries, teachers, and students of the Lycée Collège St. Jean-Baptiste de Bebalem offer their deepest gratitude to the partners and donors of the VSO. Fr. Kenneth Eze, C.M. the director of the college thanks his benefactors, "The children regard you as God's instruments. You help those whom you do not see. The teachers, children and I are very happy for your generosity. Your sacrifices are the source of our happiness. Our joy is enough to shower you with blessings. Bountiful blessings God bestows upon you."

In anticipation of the three new classrooms, the school's enrolment increased from 235 students in 2018 to 332 students in 2019. This 41% increase in students happened before the construction was even completed! According to Fr. Eze, next year the school will have two classes for each academic grade level. The classrooms are important for two reasons, (1) the space is conducive for study and, (2) the new students provide economic sustainability for the school. The teachers' salaries are one of the highest operating expenses; the more pupils that can enroll in each class, the more money that is contributed to each teacher's salary.

The project serves children between the ages of 11 and 22 from poor families of the Ngambaye tribe. Many of the students are from Catholic families. The families support themselves through farming corn and rice mostly. Every Monday, Fr. Eze, celebrates morning Mass for the teachers and students. He impresses upon the students that they are the future. Fr. Eze states, "The religious values of the school

form a positive character in the young people who feel they want to make the country better. These students will help change the future of Chad. They will improve the reality of their country and create a future that will be better for the next generation." The new classrooms will allow even more children to hear this message and work to create a stronger, brighter future in Chad.

Fr. Eze and his staff are committed to providing excellent education for the students of Lycée Collège St. Jean-Baptiste de Bebalem. The goal of the Vincentian mission is to develop a piece of land for a senior secondary school for those 17-23 years of age.



*New classroom block*



*First day in new classroom*



*Under construction*

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## Sustainable Electrical Power for San José Parish, Puerto Lampiras, Honduras

For several years the Spanish Vincentians have served the Parish of San José, Puerto Lampiras. Recently they remodeled the parish office and popular library. However, the parish lacked reliable electricity for the office equipment and the computers in the library. They dreamed of providing the primary and secondary students access to computers powered by uninterrupted electricity in order to conduct research and to complete assignments. Renewable solar electricity offered a reliable and clean alternative to the deficient local electric supply and the diesel generator which was continuously in use by the parish during working hours. Hence, the parish turned to

the VSO for help to secure solar panels and related equipment for delivering electricity for work and study. During the daily office hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., the parish staff and students now work uninterrupted on their tasks. To their delight, the Vincentian confreres have placed new possibilities for learning and growth in the hands of the 2,000 student beneficiaries and 1,500 adult users, too.



*Library powered by new solar panels and LED lighting*

## Library for St. Vincent Secondary School, Democratic Republic of the Congo

St. Vincent Secondary School educates approximately a thousand local youth from the peripheral communities outside of the Congolese Capital of Kinshasa. The VSO helped with a building block of four rooms: a conference room, a computer lab, a science laboratory, and a library. In particu-



*Students studying in new library*

lar, the library project procured furniture and books for the school library. Although there may be schools in the area, youth are easily distracted or discouraged in their studies because of inadequate academic resources. Lacking a supportive environment for learning, parents themselves may lose interest in instilling a habit of reading in their children. In light of the challenges, the Vincentian administrators adopted a holistic approach of engagement. They instructed parents in the value of education and encouraged them to read themselves and to support their children. In order to maximize the impact of the library resources, the library is open to teachers, students of St. Vincent's School, and even students from neighboring schools and interested adults. In this poor neighborhood, education anchors youth in positive activities as defense against ignorance and vice. This library is alive and well because more people are reading and think critically about the future. The atmosphere at St. Vincent's School supports success and forms future leaders for God and society. In a word, the Vincentians teach, model and create a community of learning.

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**Our goal:** To assist the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for its evangelization and service of the poor.

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