



# Vincentian Solidarity Office

February 2023 Bulletin

## Paving the Way to a Child-Friendly Environment in Ethiopia

The ever-growing Dawn of Hope School in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia now has over 500 students ages 4 to 16. It started as a daycare and feeding program for children from impoverished families. It now provides a quality education to all these children who have no other options for schooling.

One obstacle to education remained until recently. The playground area was unpaved. In the summer the grounds were dusty and in the winter they were muddy. The mud and dust were dragged from the outside into and all over the school. The puddles in rainy season attracted mosquitoes which spread malaria. When the staff and students get sick, they miss school days. Heavy rains sometimes even flooded classrooms, which also meant missed class time.

So, the VSO helped to secure funds for paving the playground area. Both play areas and learning areas are benefitting from the pavement outside. The pavement has improved life at the school in many ways. There are less days missed due to illness or flooding. Sanitation and cleanliness of the of the school are much improved. There are no longer bad smells caused by the floods. The school's appearance has been enhanced inside and outside. And we imagine play time is more fun. All of this helps keep the children attending and attracts new students to the school. We expect Dawn of Hope School is not done growing yet.



*Right: finished paving of the playground.*

*Below: opening day was celebrated by the entire school with ceremony, song and dance*



### Fr. Joel's Solidarity Notes

Revitalizing Vincentian Identity in Solidarity with the Poor

From a solidarity perspective, the envisioned revitalization of our Vincentian identity and mission cannot be complete without solidarity with the poor.

Some tactical steps forward

Advancing Development Impact and Systemic perspectives → Development Initiatives for the vulnerable serve as 'catalyst projects' that can challenge the status quo, demand social accountability, influence structural reforms and build up the transformative impact towards achieving a systemic level of change.

Reinvigorating Solidarity in regional contexts → Regional collaboration on shared social justice and development agenda that affect the very poor makes sense for building regional support and brokering partnership with International Development Agencies in line with their geographical and thematic development priorities.

Building up social impact not just infrastructures → Extending the benefits to the poor of invested infrastructures serves to integrate a sense of solidarity and social relevance in construction projects, while also helping to revitalize the waning chances for accessing even the diminishing resources.

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Our goal: To assist the Congregation of the Mission with mobilizing resources for its evangelization and service of the poor.

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Vincentian Solidarity Office

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## Becoming Fishers of Development in Cameroon

We've all heard it many times. "Give a man a fish, he eats for a day; teach a man to fish, he eats for a lifetime." The confreres of Yaounde, Cameroon have taken this a step farther. They have built a fish farm on the seminary grounds. With it, they will feed the seminary, their city and the surrounding areas for years to come. With the help of a local aquaculture expert, the confreres built 3 large concrete tanks on the premises of the Yaounde Seminary. Their plans include several species of freshwater fish. They hope to produce 6 tons of fish per year.

All of Africa is coming to the realization that fish farming

can provide food security and affordable nutrition. Many nutrition experts think fish is a healthier protein source than red meat. In Cameroon in particular, freshwater fish has become very popular since almost anyone can afford it and it is easily transported.

In addition to making the seminary food secure, jobs have been created in the community to maintain the fish farm. The confreres have also partnered with local women who will smoke the fish and bring it to market, generating income for them and their families and contributing to the local economy of Yaounde.



*New tanks are inspected*



*Showing off the catch of the day*

## Enhancing the Medium and the Message in Honduras

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Puerto Cortés, Honduras and Santiago Apóstol Parish in Cuyamel, Omaso, Honduras are in very remote rural areas that have little **infrastructure**. Some areas don't have any electricity or telephones. For several years confreres and their lay partners have been maintaining a radio station here. Fr. Ángel María Echaide, CM is the Radio Director. He tells us that the station provides information, training, and entertainment to this isolated population with few resources. It serves both pastoral and practical

needs of the people in these parishes. They use it to broadcast religious programming and local news and weather, national emergencies and impending natural disasters.

The antenna used to broadcast the station's signal had grown old and needed to be replaced, too much rust had accumulated to keep it up. The VSO was able to secure funds for the new antenna so that the station could continue to provide these valuable services to the parishes.



*The new antenna reaches for the sky*

The VSO is grateful to the donors and agencies that make our work possible, including:

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