‘Great Things are possible’

Notes
on a Visit to South Sudan



In March 2019, Brother Amilcare Boccuccia, the executive director of the *Fondazione de La Salle: International Solidarity*, met with the Sudanese firm *SAIDAR Construction Company* to discuss the details of the installations needed to support the teaching activities in the new school. This included the construction of prefabricated units, the sanitary facilities, septic tanks, the construction of kitchens and dining room, etc.…

The
start of the new school year took place precisely in March, and there were 186 candidates
for the 40 places. Even though there were written and oral admission exams, deciding
between applicants was not an easy task for the headteacher, Brother Joseph Alak.



Eventually, 45 children were
selected. The others will try again next year. In order to get into a school of high quality, they are prepared to lose a full academic year. All the pupils

think that it is a big privilege to attend *La Salle School*, and that it offers them a great opportunity to turn a new page.

There are so many stories about boys and girls who see a school education as the way to overcome the inherited conviction that “violence is a sign of virility and the means to establish justice”, in the words of James, one of the boys of the school whom Brother Amilcare met.



Eighteen years old Mary (not her real name) often told Brother Amilcare how she missed out on most of her school years because her family made her work in the *cattle camps (*living out in the open with the cows).

“Cattle thieves frequently turned up, and sometimes that led to somebody getting killed, which in turn set in progress a chain of vendettas”. Her family wanted her to marry a former priest about fifty years old, and they stopped her returning to school after her holidays at home. She was being held prisoner. Once she escaped but was captured and imprisoned again, and now she cannot leave the school premises for fear of being abducted and held captive. “When I came back to the school, my parents, aunts, uncles and cousins all came in a group to take me away. The Sisters took the risk of preventing them […] and made a strong stand for me”.



“I am convinced that this mentality can be slowly changed only by education. […] I would like to complete school and then go on to university. I want to be a doctor, but university costs a lot, so I hope someone will help me”.

We wish Mary and James all the best in the world in realising their goals and their dreams in areas in which they are particularly disadvantaged.

“Maybe this is what teaching is all about: making every lesson lead to a moment of awakening”.

(Daniel Pennac)



Ref.: Text based on an original which was initially published in *Lasalliani in Italia* (September 2019, pp. 17-19) modified and reworked by Ilaria Iadeluca, Director of Communications, Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Rome.



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Solidarity with South Sudan
