

Children's Educational Program Sacred Heart Church

Serving Sudanese Refugee, Asylum-Seeking and
Displaced Children in Cairo, Egypt.

2006/2007 School Year
Narrative and Financial Report



Sacred Heart Church

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Sacred Heart Church's Educational Centres

St. Lwanga Centre for Basic Education

St. Joseph's Centre for Basic Education

Canossian Educational and Social Centre

Fr. Philip Sina Centre for Secondary Education

Table of contents:

1. Sacred Heart Church's work with refugees	p.3
2. Justification of Educational Program	p.3
3. Sacred Heart Church's Educational Program	p.4
4. Donors of the children's Educational Program	p.7
5. Effectiveness of Children's Educational Program	p.7
6. Educational Program Goals for 2005/2006 School Year	p.8
7. Financial Information	p.10
8. How to Donate to our Educational Programs	p.13



1. Sacred Heart Church's Work with Sudanese Refugees

The Sacred Heart Church is a Roman Catholic Church belonging to the Latin Vicariate of Egypt. It has been serving the Sudanese refugee community in Cairo since 1984. Presently, four Comboni priests minister it. The church is located near the city centre in the district of Abbassya where a large number of Sudanese reside. Regular worship services in Arabic, English and French, and Christian educational programs for all age groups are available for the Christians of the refugee community to attend. Additionally, the church implements relief, health, educational, income generation, and social and cultural activities that can be accessed by the wider refugee community from all faiths.



In order to meet the continuing flow of refugees coming from Sudan to Egypt in recent years, two other Christian communities have been established in Cairo in the last six years; the Holy Family Church in the district of Maadi, and the Salesian Church in the district of Zeitun. A church council, comprising of the Parish Priest and eight Sudanese congregational members meets once a month at each of the three church centres to coordinate the work of the communities.

The aims of the Sacred Heart Church are to:

- Create a welcoming environment for the Sudanese community.
- Encourage the spiritual growth of its members.
- Help preserve Sudanese cultural heritage.
- Provide emergency assistance to the most vulnerable members of the community.
- Provide educational and skills training to the community so that upon resettlement or repatriation their opportunities for successful integration will be enhanced.
- Empower the community through training, decision making, and community participation in all church activities.

The Sacred Heart Church coordinates with the following organizations in order to share ideas, resources, expertise and minimize duplication of work:

- The Refugee Inter-Agency Committee, which includes representatives from UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, the International Committee of the Red Cross, embassies of resettlement, and other refugee serving NGOs. The committee meets bi-monthly and acts as a forum for information sharing on refugee matters and services.
- The Ecumenical Coordination Committee for Uprooted People in Egypt (ECCOUPE), a body of churches in Egypt serving refugees that meets throughout the year to coordinate the various refugee programs run by the different churches.
- The Inter-Church Educational Committee which is made up of representatives from five different churches, all of whom run children's educational programs for African refugee children in Cairo. The committee organises joint teacher training and an annual summer school for refugee children.

2. Justification of Educational Program for Refugee Children in Egypt

As of August 31 2007, there were 27,656 recognized refugees and around 14,051 asylum seekers registered with the UNHCR office in Cairo. About 59 percent of those recognized as refugees and of the asylum seekers are Sudanese, with a male to female ratio of 64:35 percent. Some 35 percent of the refugee population is made of children under the age of 18. More than 80 percent of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt are Christian southerners.

The majority of refugees in Egypt live in rented apartments dispersed throughout the poor quarters of Cairo where they join the urban poor in competing for limited resources and jobs. However, refugees are unable to access subsistence, work, state education, and national health care on the same basis as nationals because of Egypt's reservation to the 1951 Refugee Convention. While Egypt has placed a reservation on Article 22 (1) of the 1951 Convention regarding access to public education, its ratification of a number of other international and regional instruments guaranteeing the right to education for all children have rendered the reservation moot. Furthermore, in 2000 the Egyptian government announced that all refugee children would be granted access to state schools. However, the realities of extreme overcrowding in Egyptian public schools, linguistic and cultural differences, and bureaucratic constraints have prevented the majority from doing so.

As a result of these barriers, a number of local churches opened learning centres to provide educational opportunities for refugee and displaced children. Currently, around 4,000 refugee children are registered in one of these centres, Sacred Heart Church being the biggest educational service provider with a total of 1,140 students enrolled in its four learning centres. Presently, the refugee learning centres are operating at maximum capacity. Even where places are available, many children are not attending school because their parents cannot afford the costs (transportation, school fees, food, materials, etc), or they need to stay at home to look after their younger siblings while their parents go out to work. It is estimated that 2,000 refugee children are not in school.



Attending school brings stability and security back to the lives of refugee children as education is crucial for their psychological, spiritual, and social development. Thus, Sacred Heart Church sees the lack of educational opportunities for refugee children in Cairo as one of the community's most pressing needs, as these formative years are often wasted with no structured learning. This will hinder the developmental prospects of their countries of origin when they return, or place the children at further disadvantage if resettled to a third country. Furthermore, in a large urban metropolis, going to school helps protect refugee children from the dangers of being on the streets in a city, where they may be prone to child labour, drugs, racial taunting, and physical and sexual abuse.

The signing of the comprehensive peace agreement between the Sudanese government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in January 2005 has brought greater prospects of repatriation. However, the rate of return from Egypt to Sudan at present is very small given that there is still no infrastructure or sustainable livelihood opportunities for them in southern Sudan. It will take some time to redevelop and rehabilitate southern Sudan to a level that will encourage large numbers of Sudanese in exile to return. In the meantime, Sacred Heart church will continue to maintain its role in supporting the refugee community in Cairo through the Children's Educational Program for several years to come.

3. Sacred Heart Church's Educational Program

The **St. Lwanga Centre for Basic Education**, a school for Sudanese refugee and displaced children has been operating at the Sacred Heart Church since 1990. 760 children enrolled in the school last year. The school employed 28 Sudanese teachers, 5 workers and a doctor. It follows the first 10 grades of the Egyptian national curriculum which is taught in Arabic. Its main aim is to contribute to the improvement of the educational levels and to encourage the personal growth and healthy development of its students.

In order to meet the continuing influx and needs of the refugee community, Sacred Heart Church has established four new educational centres in Cairo over the past few years; **St. Joseph's Centre for Basic Education** opened in 2001 in the district of Maadi. It served 175 students and employed 18 refugee teachers and three workers last year; the **Canossian Educational and Social Centre** opened in 2004 in the district of Zeitun, which provided education to 150 children at the kindergarten (90) and grade 1 (60) levels and employed 6 refugee teachers; and the **Fr. Philip Sina Secondary School** established in 2003 to provide secondary education to Sudanese refugee children who had completed the intermediate level and who could not access Egyptian secondary schools. 55 students enrolled in the secondary school program taught by 12 Sudanese teachers.

Description of Beneficiaries

In the 2006-2007 school year, a total of 1,140 school children and 67 staff working in the four schools directly benefited from the Children's Educational Program of Sacred Heart Church. The students were of Sudanese origin from different tribal, cultural and religious backgrounds. About 935, 82 percent, were from Christian/traditional religious backgrounds, and 18 percent were Muslim. The ratio of male to female students was 51:49 percent. The age of the students ranged between 4-19 years.

Program Implementation

At the end of August 2006, the school administration and teachers developed the school year and term activity plans, designed the school timetables, registered the old and new students, compiled class lists, distributed school books, and purchased educational materials and supplies. The school year opened on September 17, 2006. Each school site implemented two school terms; the fall term which ran from September 2006 until January 2007, and the spring term which ran from February until June 2007.

Since the beginning of the school year, a joint committee made up of representatives from the Sacred Heart Church, the school teachers, the UNHCR, and the Ministry of Education for South Sudan in Cairo has been advocating for Sudanese children to sit for the official Egyptian national examinations and thus receive official accreditation for their studies. As a result, in January 2007, the Egyptian Ministry of Education wrote an official letter stating that all Sudanese refugee children registered in Cairo were allowed to sit for a placement exam test, and at the end of the school year, to sit for regular school exams. Extra lessons on the national curriculum and Egyptian examination methods were organized to help bring the level of the students up to national standard and also prepare them on how to take exams. Twenty percent of the students of St. Lwanga and Philip Sina were eligible to sit for the exams. Half of those who sat for the exams



passed and this should be seen as a major achievement given that many Sudanese children in Cairo have had very long periods of interrupted education often being in and out of school for several years whilst they were in displaced camps in Khartoum and also on arrival to Cairo where they were unable to attend school due to household poverty or lack of space in the informal schools.

During the fall and spring terms the schools opened from 8am till 4.30pm, and included a morning shift which ran from 8am till 1pm, and an afternoon shift from 1.30-4.30pm for the children of Primary 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The average class number was 36. The educational coordinator met with the school administrations of all four centres each month to discuss issues related to the management and running of the schools and to revisit and modify the school year plan if necessary. Recommendations from students, teachers and parents were taken into consideration when planning and amending school plans, curriculum and activities. The inter-church summer school project ran for 4 weeks in July 2007.

Health Care Program

Many of the children who attend our learning centres are in poor health due to the long term effects of poor living conditions and malnutrition that have resulted in a significant rise in communicable diseases and infections. Thus, a medical clinic, run by a Sudanese doctor operates inside the Sacred Heart Church compound five days per week to deliver first aid service for minor injuries, distribute essential drugs for common childhood illnesses to school children, and conduct hygiene and health promotion activities for staff from all four schools. More serious medical cases are referred to the nearby hospitals for treatment.

Professional Development of Teachers

Before the beginning of the school year, a 3-day teacher training course for the 67 Sudanese teachers from the four educational centres was organised with the Secretariat for the Catholic Schools in Cairo and involved Egyptian trainers and teachers and utilised the local plan for teachers formation. Activities included team building, problem solving and student evaluation and pedagogical techniques. Both presentation and participatory methods were used in the training sessions. In addition, subject specific training sessions for the teachers were implemented regularly throughout the

school year for Maths, Science, Arabic, Social Studies, Religion and Kindergarten teachers. The rationale of involving the Secretariat for Catholic Schools and using the local plan for teachers' formation was to encourage and promote tolerance, respect and integration between Egyptian and Sudanese teachers.

School Breakfast Feeding

Many refugee children are suffering from chronic hunger and malnutrition. Some of the symptoms observed by school teachers, and health professionals in the clinics, include children falling asleep in class, difficulty in concentrating, difficulty in remembering or learning new information, headaches and stomach aches, and erratic attendance and school drop out.

To combat this problem, and to support the millennium goal of providing primary education to all children, within the context of Cairo's considerable population of refugee children, a school breakfast feeding project at all four learning centre has been running since the 2004-2005 scholastic year.



The project was funded by a UNHCR grant and private donations. Each day the school children received a sandwich with a healthy filling and a piece of fruit twice per week. The breakfast feeding project had huge benefits for the children in terms of improving their capacity to concentrate and assimilate information by relieving short-term hunger, and helped maintain attendance and performance levels. We hope to be able to procure enough funds to implement the feeding program for the whole of the forthcoming school year.



Inter-Church Educational Committee Meeting and Activities

A consortium of refugee schools run by different churches in Cairo formed the Inter -School Committee in 1998 to address common concerns. In 2006-2007, the educational coordinator and the headmasters from each learning centre continued to attend the monthly inter-school committee meetings to share ideas and plan joint activities. For the ninth consecutive year, the Inter- School Committee implemented a month long educational and recreational summer school for 337 refugees and asylum seeking children from the different refugee educational programs. The main objectives of the summer school are: acquisition of English language skills, and to give the children an opportunity to explore their individual cultural heritage and to express it through visual and performing arts in order to improve the children's self-esteem and to build their self –confidence.

School Ceremonies, Outings and Cultural Events

Christmas and Mother's Day were celebrated in the four schools. During these events the children, teachers and parents are given the opportunity to express and preserve their cultural heritage through performing traditional African dance, music and drama. All centres held end of term spring, fall and summer school closing ceremonies.

In addition, the school-children visited Wanderland Park, Ghiza Zoo and had a school picnic. The teachers also had the opportunity to have a picnic without the students and to have an outing on their own to the beach. It was a meaningful opportunity to strengthen links of friendship and know each other out of the work atmosphere.



Inter-Cultural Educational Program

In order to combat prejudice and enhance prospects for positive interactions between refugee and Egyptian children, St Lwanga in collaboration with a local Egyptian school run by the Comboni Sisters and Fathers conducted five cross-cultural encounters and joint inter-cultural educational and social events for refugee and Egyptian school children. During the 2006-2007 school year, this inter-cultural educational programme has been developed within some of the school subjects, trying to raise sense of appreciation for the “other” culture through specific topics and activities. For the year 2007-2008, the cooperation among Comboni schools will be enriched by a common reflection and activities about the specific value of “Acceptance of others in one’s life”, a journey suggested for teachers and students both Sudanese and Egyptian.



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4. Donors of the Children's Educational Program

The Children’s Educational Program of the Sacred Heart Church is carried out with the support of numerous organizations and individuals. Donors who kindly support the four learning centres are as follows:

- St. Lwanga and Canossian Centre: AVSI (Italy), Middle East Council of Churches (Lebanon), CRS - Catholic Relief Services (Egypt), UNHCR (Egypt), CCA-Centro Comboni Africa (Italy), The Tresillian Trust (UK) ,
- St. Joseph Centre: CRS - Catholic Relief Services (Egypt), UNHCR (Egypt), CCA-Centro Comboni Africa (Italy);
- Fr. Sina Centre: CCA-Centro Comboni Africa (Italy);

The following organizations donated funds for the breakfast feeding: UNHCR (Egypt), The Brooksville Fund, Inc. (UK), Catholic Church - Olgiate, Como (Italy); Private Donors from Como (Italy), Dhahran Hills School (Saudi Arabia), St. Vincent Maadi (Cairo), Choir – Cairo American College.

In addition to the financial donations listed above, the Sacred Heart Church provides the church site to St. Lwanga Centre free of charge, and also covers some costs related to the running and maintenance of the school buildings. As compensated staff and volunteers, the Sudanese community contributes a tremendous amount of time and effort to the church’s various activities, including the Children’s Educational Program.

5. Evaluation of Children's Educational Program

The Educational Coordinator and school administrators from the four learning centres monitored and evaluated the Children’s Educational Program using both quantitative and qualitative techniques in the evaluation process. Teachers and students attendance levels, observations made by the school administrators, focus group discussions with teachers, parents and students were the different methods used to evaluate the educational program.

Monthly exams, which were similar to the Egyptian monthly examinations were added to the school curriculum in order to train the students according to the Egyptian method of examination. The teachers felt that joint planning and good teamwork in and between the learning centres had a positive impact on the management of the overall program.

The sharing of resources, knowledge, and expertise between the four centres improved the quality and allowed a more diverse program to take place. Relationships between the different educational centres were further enhanced as a result of working together to meet the overall objective of the children’s educational program.



The school plan was revisited at the monthly staff meeting to ensure that tasks were being carried out and to change or add activities and duties as necessary. Payroll records, a detailed account of general expenses, and receipts were retained.

From the human perspective, it has been noticed a weak sense of identity in the young generation of Sudanese refugees. Displacement, resettlement to the West and now repatriation has led to the breaking down of cultural identity and values, which has resulted in generational conflicts within families. Looking at the need to deepen the sense of identity of refugee children, the Arabic and Social Studies programme will be expanded to integrate extra lessons about Sudanese Literature, History and Geography in the forthcoming school year.

The teacher training workshops attained a 100% attendance level. The teachers took an active part in the training. The teachers indicated that the workshops were well organized, their length adequate, the quality of the speakers good, and the content of the lectures appropriate and relevant to their needs. Nevertheless they recommended having more sessions about the contents of the different subjects and increasing the training sessions for the following year.

The four school sites used by the Sacred Heart Church were considered adequate. However, the teachers highlighted that due to constant use of the facilities, the schools needed regular repair and decoration. The students indicated the teachers were generally well-planned and competent instructors. It was recognised the importance of intercultural activities with Egyptian schools. Nevertheless, they expressed the need for more cooperation among Egyptian and Sudanese teachers; and thus the teachers suggested to raise the awareness of the students and parents about the educational aims of the Intercultural programme.

Fortunately, some funds were raised to allow the breakfast feeding component of the program to be implemented for the school year. Many of the teachers commented that the provision of breakfast was beneficial in helping the children remain focused and concentrated in class. The students said breakfast provided them with the energy to participate fully in sports and games. The parents were particularly appreciative of the breakfast program as it relieved them of some of the financial burden related to sending their children to school.



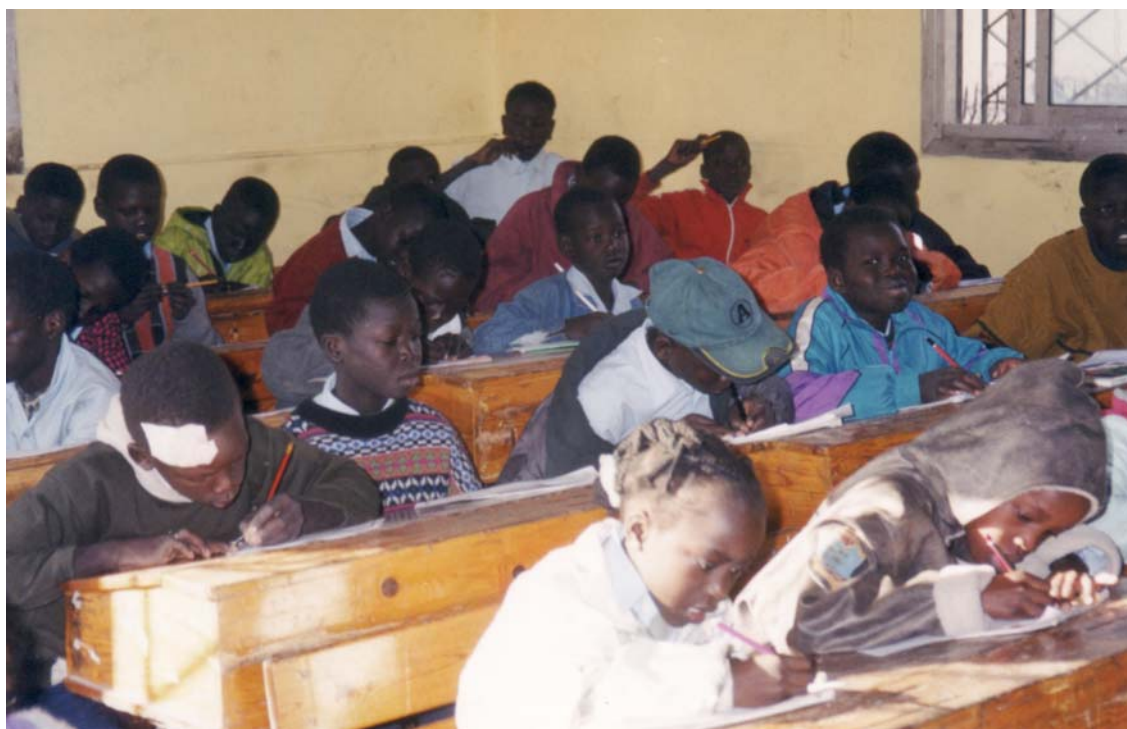
6. Educational Program Goals for 2007/2008 School Year

In the 2007/2008 scholastic year, the Sacred Heart Church aims to:

- Concentrate on raising the standard of education at its four learning centres through a plan of ongoing professional development for teachers through classroom observation, team teaching, training workshops and formal end of year evaluation and career development objective setting.
- Continue to implement visual and performing arts, music, drama and sports as extra-curricular activities.
- A psycho-educational committee will be working in the St. Lwanga Center to provide counselling to the students and to follow up on family problems which impact the learning process of the students.
- English and Computer courses will be held for teachers through out the school year.
- Continue to work collaboratively with other churches running refugee learning centres through attendance and participation in the inter-church committee meetings and implementation of joint teacher training workshops and the annual summer school.
- To continue to develop the intercultural educational programme within the curricula of some subjects. A committee of Sudanese and Egyptian teachers with the coordinator will plan the year's activities and chose topics.

Improved cooperation between Egyptian and Sudanese teachers will help to achieve more effectively the aims of the programme for the students' human growth.

- Continue to implement social and cultural celebrations to help preserve Sudanese cultural heritage, integrating the subjects of Arabic and Social Studies developing issues from the Sudanese perspective.
- Implement the intermediate education curriculum at St. Joseph's Learning Center



7. Financial Information

1) St. Lwanga Centre *

Income

Balance 2005-2006	33,564.48
The Tresillian Trust (2.000)	20,000.00
School Fees	26,892.50
CCA - Verona (€ 42.000)	303,600.00
MECC (\$ 4.500)	166,408.00
Crs - UNHCR	48,500.00
UN Art Contest	2,800.00
Total Income	601,764.98

Expenditure

Salary	259,537.50
Material and Books	77,621.75
Administration	15,714.75
Maintenance	46,318.25
Activities	12,357.00
Medical Care	24,962.20
Services	2,680.00
Total Expenditure	439,191.45

Balance St. Lwanga Centre - Le. 162.573,53

The Canossian Educational and Social Centre is run jointly by Sacred Heart Church and the Canossian Sisters. Sacred Heart Church raises funds for the salaries of the teachers and school books. All other expenses related to the running of the school are covered by the Canossian Sisters. Salaries and Books Expenses for the Canossian Centre are included in the St. Lwanga Centre's financial report.



2) St. Joseph Centre

Income

Balance 2005-2006	53,582.37
School Fees	5,443.00
CCA - Verona (€ 20.000)	146,000.00
Crs - UNHCR	8,800.00
Total Income	213,825.37

Expenditure

Salary	125,520.00
Material and Books	19,026.55
Administration	5,564.50
Maintenance	2,055.00
Activities	4,166.40
Medical Care	1,603.50
Services	43,013.30
Total Expenditure	200,949.25

Balance St. Joseph - Le. 12,876.12

3) Fr. Philip Sina Centre

Income

Balance 2005-2006	11,267.60
School Fees	2,280.00
CCA - Verona (€ 13.700)	98,480.00
Total Income	112,027.60

Expenditure

Salary	78,412.50
Material and Books	19,800.15
Administration	3,502.00
Maintenance	238.00
Activities	1,680.00
Medical Care	4,516.00
Total Expenditure	108,148.65

Balance Fr. Philip Sina Centre - Le. 3,878.12

4) School Feeding Program

Income

Balance 2005-2006	85,397.06
UNHCR	77,079.00
Como Fans Club (€ 600)	4,500.00
Fam. Negretti - Olgiate (€ 500)	3,750.00
Parish Olgiate (€ 900)	6,750.00
Brooksville Fund (Us\$ 2.500)	14,250.00
Choir - Cairo American College	3,380.00
Private donation	1,145.00
Christ Church - Georgetown (Us\$ 1.775)	10,117.00
Dhahran Hills School (Us \$ 2.618)	14,910.00
St. Vincent - Maadi	1,065.00
Holy Family Church Maadi	35,000.00
Total	257,343.06

Expenditure

Food Purchase	150,174.80
Salaries	15,240.00
Administration Fees	3,400.00
Total	168,814.80

Balance School Feeding Program- Le. 88,528.26



8. How to donate to the Sacred Heart Church's Educational Programs

You can donate to our Educational Programs by:

(1) Sending a check directly to:

Sacred Heart Church

72 Ahmed Said Street
Abbyssia – 11381
Cairo-Egypt

Please make your check payable to **Sacred Heart Church**.

(2) Make a bank transfer directly to our bank account:

Mission De L'Afrique Central

Banque du Caire et de Paris

3, Latin America Street,
Garden city
Cairo, Egypt
A/C Number 0045009
Swift Code: BNPAEGCXXXX

If you send a check or make a bank transfer please send a covering letter and/or e-mail the Parish Priest stating which centre and activity you wish the funds to be directed to.

**“ Set aside the first fruits of all the produce of the soil
raised by you in your country, given you by Yahweh your God
and present them to the temple
so that they maybe given for the foreigner,
the orphan and the widow”
(Deuteronomy, 8:3, 26:12)**