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Harambee 2002 takes its first steps

Linda Corbi, Coordinator of Project Harambee 2002, discusses the first results of the canonization year initiative to promote educational projects in Africa: the money collected, the grant applications received, and the new webpage with project updates (www.harambee2002.org).

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What has the reception of Harambee 2002 been like?

The reception has definitely been enthusiastic. On October 4, at the official presentation of the project in Rome, many people were impressed by the words of Léon Tshilolo, a doctor from the Democratic Republic of the Congo: "We Africans will be the ones who build our hospitals." Already many Africans have become drivers of development, and Harambee 2002 is born of them and with them, to multiply the efficacy of the work that they themselves are doing day after day. This approach reflects the fact that Josemaría Escrivá was a great educator, a teacher of teachers: for this reason Harambee 2002 proposes to support education, which is the key to development.

Project Harambee arose on the occasion of the canonization of Josemaría Escrivá. What has happened since October 6?

We are only beginning. We continue receiving contributions from people who want to participate in Harambee 2002: people who could not come to Rome on October 6 and people who have written us saying that they didn't have a chance to make a donation then and are sending us their contribution now. We are also receiving numerous proposals of projects needing financing from various countries in Africa.

How much money has been collected so far?

As of November 15, the total collected was 450,000 euros. At this time, a month later, we have already exceeded 550,000.

And where can information about the progress of the projects be found?

People can go online to the new page web of Harambee 2002:

www.harambee2002.org (link at right). It will be updated periodically, so that all the people who have contributed can follow the progress of the various projects that will be financed. We also wanted to collect some personal accounts about the meaning of Harambee 2002, so that the idea that all give and all receive can be truly reflected.

Where are you receiving grant applications from so far?

From various countries of sub-Saharan Africa: Mozambique, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Togo. All these projects will be analyzed and evaluated by a panel of experts, which will assign to each one the amount that they judge appropriate, to be delivered throughout 2003.

What is the predicted timetable?

Grant applications can be sent to the Office of the Secretary of Project Harambee 2002 up to December 31, 2002. The results of the evaluation will be published by April of 2003, and the projects will be able to start immediately. Details about all the technical information can be found on the webpage.

Can people still make contributions to Project Harambee 2002?

Yes, in fact initiatives of all types have been undertaken recently. Last week, for example, a group of people organized a concert in Pisa, here in Italy, to raise money for Harambee 2002. We also know of recently-married couples who have proposed that their wedding guests give a contribution to Project Harambee. We have recently received generous contributions from Ecuador and the Philippines. A university residence in

Granada, in Spain, has sent us three wire transfers, the result of various other fund raising efforts. To all we send our encouragement and above all our gratitude. In the webpage there is more information about ways of contributing.

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