

Salisbury-Sudans Partnership Link Committee

Salisbury Diocese Support for ECS and ECSS Covid-19 Response

Robert Hayward

Introduction

1. From early May 2020 members of the Salisbury-Sudans Partnership Link Standing Committee were considering the best way of supporting the responses of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) and the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) to the arrival and spread of the coronavirus pandemic in their country. For Sudan ECS Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo was clear about the most urgent need. With the lockdown preventing poor “day-to-day workers” earning money to buy food, ECS needed support for food assistance even more than for face-masks and hygiene items such as hand sanitiser and soap - “*They (the people) feel they should rather die by corona-virus than die by hunger.*”
2. For South Sudan different options were discussed with the ECSS Covid-19 Task Force, the Sudan Medical Link, Christian Aid, Sherborne Deanery, Anglican Alliance and ECSS’s South Sudanese Development and Relief Agency (SSUDRA), which was going to be managing and implementing the ECSS Covid response. It was then agreed that Salisbury Diocese should support “The Emergency Task Force Funding Appeal for Covid”, as the Task Force could best judge where in the ECSS internal provinces and diocese the need was greatest. It was also that any money donated by Salisbury Diocese should be for the purchase and distribution of sanitiser, soap and “tippy” water containers within and by the ECSS dioceses. Along with Covid-19 awareness training, this would help prevent the spread of the virus.
3. Salisbury Diocese sent an initial quick-response £5,000 to each church early in June and Bishop Nicholas launched the Bishop of Salisbury’s Covid-19 Appeal for the Sudans on 1 July. Because of the financial effect the virus was having on household incomes in the UK, it was not easy to estimate how much the Appeal would raise but it was hoped that it might be between £25,000 and £50,000, to be shared equally between ECS and ECSS. However, supporters clearly heeded Bishop Nicholas’s “*Give what you can but be generous*” message and the Appeal raised £78,600 (£39,300 for ECS and £39,300 for ECSS) with another £4,979 received after the Appeal had closed.

Episcopal Church of Sudan

4. As Salisbury Diocese’s own bank cannot transfer money to Sudan, Leeds Diocese, whose bank can, kindly agrees to transfer Salisbury grants for ECS to the ECS Province bank account in Khartoum with its own grants and, even then, there are sometimes hitches and delays within the banking system. Salisbury’s £5,000 reached Khartoum with a Leeds grant for ECS Covid response on 4 August 2020. The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Anglican Communion Fund (ACF) also made a donation. ECS decided to keep the Salisbury £5,000 to be spent with whatever amount Salisbury was able to send from the Salisbury Appeal when that came, so it used the Leeds and ACF donations first, to distribute relief food within the ECS dioceses. The distributions were managed by the Mothers’ Union.

5. ECS's £39,300 share of the Salisbury Appeal was received in Khartoum on 15 October. By then the banks in Sudan were limiting the amount of money that could be drawn from accounts and ECS could not withdraw enough USD to change into Sudanese Pounds (SDG) and buy relief food until February 2021. ECS Province withdrew all the Salisbury money then and each diocese received an allocation. So far two of them, El Obeid and Port Sudan have reported that they have distributed food and have sent photographs. ECS's share of the donations Salisbury Diocese received after the Bishop of Salisbury's Covid Appeal had closed is being transferred to ECS. ECS will send a full report in due course.

6. Diocese of El Obeid

200 sacks of sorghum have been bought and distributed to 3,500 people from families of all faiths. Distribution is ongoing.



ECS Diocese of El Obeid food distribution

7. Diocese of Port Sudan



Bishop Abdu Elnur of Port Sudan with Mothers' Union distributors



Episcopal Church of South Sudan

8. Salisbury Diocese's initial £5,000 was transferred to ECSS SSUDRA on 7 June 2020. Up to October SSUDRA also received funding from Episcopal Relief & Development USA, the Anglican Communion Fund, St Andrews, Barnabas Trust and AFRECS and through JustGiving. ECSS carried out staff training and Covid-19 awareness campaigns through meetings, radio talk shows, youth drama, prayers and radio and YouTube preaching. The Mothers' Union made and distributed 10,000 face masks and soap, sanitiser and water containers were distributed to vulnerable households within the four most affected internal provinces and Juba Diocese.



Rev. Joseph El Hag, SSUDRA General Manager. Church-worker training



Distribution of Mothers' Union Covid face masks



Distribution of water containers

9. The first £19,300 of the Salisbury Appeal £39,300 income for ECSS was transferred to SSUDRA on 20 October. A narrative and financial report was received from SSUDRA on 19 January 2021. After checks, Salisbury then transferred £22,500 to SSUDRA on 2 February, the £20,000 balance of the Salisbury Appeal £39,300 plus £2,500 of the donations received after the Appeal had closed. SSUDRA will send a report on its use of the £22,500 in due course. Meanwhile the information and photographs below are from SSUDRA's January report, written by Patrick Mulu, SSUDRA's Programme Manager.

10. **Project Overall Goal:**

“Increased and enhanced access to essential sanitation services, knowledge and appropriate behaviours to practice good hygiene for prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 and WASH-related diseases.” (*WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene*)

11. **Distribution of WASH items to five Archdeaconries of Diocese of Juba**

The WASH items (tippy water containers, laundry soap and sanitiser) were distributed within the five archdeaconries in the Diocese of Juba, in order to help in hygiene and sanitation practice in the churches during the prayer services. The Diocese of Juba has fifty-five parishes in the five archdeaconries:

- Gabat Archdeaconry - 9 parishes
- Kator Archdeaconry - 10 parishes
- Korok Archdeaconry -11 parishes
- Munuki Archdeaconry -13 parishes
- Gudele Archdeaconry -12 parishes.



Arrival of WASH Items



Logistics Officer checks sanitiser and soap stocks at Gudele

12. Awareness Campaign in the Diocese of Juba for the Prevention of Covid-19

The ECSS Task Force and the ECSS Department of Mission and Evangelism (Rev. Francis Philip) ran a one-week post-Covid-19 Awareness/Entertainment campaign from 7 to 11 December 2020 in the following locations.

Konyokonyo Market for two days

Munuki, Libya Market for two days

Custom Market for one day

The entertainment campaign/preaching for post-Covid-19 covered the following topics:

Covid-19 awareness

Salvation

Forgiveness

Reconciliation

Peace



A young man demonstrates social distancing where people have gathered in the market



Covid-19 Sensitisation in Gudele Market



Preaching in Konyakonya Market

13. Distribution of Food Assistance

The Task Force also carried out an assessment and then registered and distributed relief food (*not funded by Salisbury Diocese*) to 1,000 households in dire need in the five Diocese of Juba archdeaconries and at All Saints Cathedral. The beneficiary selection criteria were: widows with at least 4 children, lactating mothers/breast feeding mothers, child-headed households/orphans, elderly, people with chronic diseases and people with disabilities. These categories of people are always badly affected by any catastrophe.



Relief Food Distribution, Juba Diocese



Post-Distribution Monitoring. Rev. Francis Philip checks on beneficiary satisfaction



An elderly woman praising God for His goodness
“I was thinking and asking myself, ‘How am I going to survive during this Christmas season?’ Our God is a good God. He has provided me with food.”

Conclusion

14. Both ECS and ECSS have said how very grateful they are for the support that Salisbury Diocese has sent them for their response to the Covid-19 pandemic in their country. As may be seen from this report, those many generous people who gave to the Bishop of Salisbury's Covid-19 Appeal for the Sudans may be assured that that support has been used and still is being used to good effect and is much appreciated.

Robert Hayward
Salisbury-Sudans Partnership Link Committee
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With the great help of:
The Most Reverend Ezekiel Kondo, ECS Archbishop and Primate, Khartoum, Sudan
Patrick Mulu, ECSS SSUDRA Programme Manager, Juba, South Sudan