**Report on the training in leadership and management of church schools for Diocesan Education Coordinators (DECs) carried out in Yei from 27th -31st May 2013.**

**Introduction.**

This is the first time that the education committee of the Salisbury-Sudan Link has undertaken this kind of work using trainers from the diocese. The idea was first discussed between John Foster and Emmanuel Lomoro (Secretary to the Education Commission). The members of the team were John and Anne Foster and Ian Pinder, who between them have a wide variety of experience to offer in the field of leadership and management in schools. It was particularly important to have a female member of the team as we were specifically asked to include education for girls in our programme. Funding for the team of trainers was generously provided by The Jerusalem Trust. Initially ECS Education had money promised to bring the delegates together and host the course but at the last minute The Salisbury Link had to supply some funds.

**Planning and preparation.**

The course was written in England by the trainers as there was no precedent for this kind of training. One request was that the course should include good practice from the UK to set beside what is already happening in the Sudans. The main challenge was to provide practical content which could be used within the existing system in the schools as well as offering ideas on what might be possible in some schools now or in the future. All arrangements in South Sudan were made by Stephen Lubari the ECS Education Training Manager.

We spent 4 days in Juba before going to Yei for the course. During those days we visited three schools, met two DECs, spent time with the ECS education staff to clarify our roles, and adjusted our planning in the light of what we had learnt. We were also asked to call on the Central Equatoria State Director of Education to explain what we were doing. This was important for the ECS Education department as they try to work closely with the State and National education departments. The Director thanked us for doing this work.

**Training Centre and location.**

We travelled the 105 miles from Juba to Yei to run the course—1 3 people in a Land Rover! The journey took over 6 hours by road as the rains had started. Yei has a more pleasant climate than Juba, the accommodation is better and there is a good hall for the conference with electricity all day (Juba currently has no electricity at all unless you have a private generator).

All meals were provided by the guest house. They were well cooked but almost always the same for lunch and dinner each day (rice, maize meal, a cabbage or green of some sort, and very small amounts of meat).

**Delegates.**

27 people attended for the whole time. 24 were DECs or representatives from their diocese—23 from South Sudan and one (Kadugli Diocese) from Sudan. This represented a very good turnout. Three more were Christian Religious Education trainers/inspectors. We took the opportunity to talk to them about the partnership between Salisbury and the two countries.

**Course outline.**

The overall title was leadership and management in church schools. The content of the course was as follows:-

The distinctiveness of church schools; delivering the national curriculum; learning styles-how children learn; what good teaching looks like; ways of improving teaching and learning; monitoring and recording pupils’ standards; assessment techniques; how DECs can obtain an accurate picture of standards in their schools; headteachers as school leaders; how DECs can support headteachers when visiting schools; role play of a visit to a school.

**Delivering the course.**

There were challenges for both ourselves and the delegates to overcome in order to make the course a success. Language was the obvious one especially for those whose first language was Arabic. We found ourselves constantly looking for more than one way to put things across. Many of the concepts were new to them so time was needed to absorb the ideas. We were very impressed with how quickly the majority coped with new ideas and took on board what we were trying to describe. We deliberately, and at the request of the E CS trainers, used methods of working with which many of them were not familiar so extra time was needed just to arrange ways of working. We were rewarded by the number of people who said that they would adopt that method in their work, or adapt it to their circumstances.

The day always began with worship which brought us all together as a family. E ach morning someone was deputed to find out the news (local and national) which often led to some good drama! The days were long in the heat but delegates kept going very well. The training team had to spend quite a bit of time at the end of each day reorganising the programme for the next day in the light of what we had learnt. One morning we adjusted the programme so that we could all visit Yei Teacher Training College which was nearby. It is probably the best in South Sudan—very impressive staff and buildings, and a real sense of purpose about the whole palace. It also takes students from Uganda and has its course validated by a university in Uganda. Last year it beat all the Ugandan colleges with its results.

**Evaluation and outcomes.**

All delegates were invited to complete an evaluation questionnaire at the end. Only 3 failed to do so which might have been down to the unfamiliarity of the form. Of the 24 who replied a very high proportion gave every question one of the top two scores (excellent or good). There were some questions for wider comments which provided positive and helpful responses for ourselves and the Training Manager.

**Official recognition.**

One thing which we were surprised about was the official recognition given to the course in the form of both an opening and a closing ceremony.

Bishop Hilary of Yei attended both, and the Director for Quality Promotion and Innovation for Central Equatoria attended the closing ceremony, as did the Acting Principal of Yei TTC, the Yei County Director of Education, and the local radio.

The certificates for each of the delegates were signed by both the State and the National education ministries as well as the Salisbury-Sudan Link.

**Conclusion.**

We came away quietly confident that the course had been a success. We based this on the responses of the delegates, and the enthusiasm with which Stephen Lubari, Training Manager, thanked us. It was important for us to be seen to be working closely with the ECS education department, and, at the same time, addressing issues which are important to education in all schools, not just church schools. The importance of cooperation between the State and National Education Ministries and ECS education was reinforced by the Director in his closing speech, and he was gracious enough to thank us for the part we had played in that.

**John Foster 6th June 2013.**