

A Report

Initiatives by CMS-Africa Local Partners to alleviate the effects of the *covid-19* pandemic on communities.

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Background to the Local Partners

CMS-Africa has 17 Local Partners drawn from 8 African countries. They comprise 14 men and 3 women: two of them are a married couple. These beloved servants of God are indigenous, high-impact mission champions who are developing leaders, making disciples for Christ and engaged in efforts to holistically transform local communities. The tenure of a Local Partner is three years, with the possibility of renewing it once.

When the covid-19 crisis landed on the continent and began to be felt in every sector of society, vulnerable populations would of course be hardest hit. The Local Pastors approached CMS-Africa for whatever support could be garnered to help the most needy families. As friends and partners, staff and other stakeholders responded to the appeal, these funds were directed to the LPs.

We remain indebted in the enduring debt of love to you, brethren of St. James Church by the Park. We thank God for the opportunity to collaborate for the sake of expanding the Kingdom of God by doing the works of Christ.

Below are their stories, showing how they have responded to crises that occur in their local context.

1. Bisoke Balikenga in Bunia, in the Democratic Republic of Congo



Bisoke reports: "Of the £350 you sent, we used it to purchase fabric, cloth elastic and a few other materials needed to make face masks for distribution to the children in the school and community. This went a long way to promote safety and hygiene in the young people. This will help them to realise that the covid-19 is not just something for parents and adults to worry about, but that they also have a key role to play to reduce infections."



The first photo is Birungi in the left and Dorica in the right. Both of them have been abused by the rebels allied to the CODECO group. We helped to treat them in the hospital, plus counselling work.

For the second photo is Masika in the left and love Ndjalega. All of them are widows, both husbands have been killed in the war, they benefit the money. Now they are selling kaunga in the market of Rwampara.

2. Jean Bosco in Lubumbashi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo

On 1st August, 23 families with a total of 172 members were provided with foodstuff including corn flour, small boxes of fish, and sanitary items like hand sanitiser, soaps and face-masks. This is in the town of Lubumbashi, where Jean Bosco runs a ministry called Kimbilio which rehabilitates homeless young people, trains them with vocational skills and sometimes reunites them with their families.

Jean Bosco had been hospitalised with blood pressure just shortly after the food distribution, but is recovered.



A testimony from one lady: she said with much joy that she had wonders what she was going to do when the covid-19 crisis hit. She felt powerless and wondered, where would her help come from? The good news of food gifts was announced and she can now rejoice at the provisions and supplies. The Lord has come! It is miracle! Truly God is good. She and her colleagues in the fellowship have never seen such blessings. She exhorted her fellow women to keep their eyes on Jesus who had come through for them in ways they would not have imagined or expected. She challenged her fellow women that since God had come through for them, they should now commit themselves to prayer and intercession not just for their families' needs but for their country Congo and their leaders like Jean Bosco. That God would heal it of its various challenges and problems.

3. Rachel Karanja in Limuru, Kenya

Rose is one of the beneficiaries who got food and a mattress for her niece who suffers celebra palsy. We realized that she was in dire need.



Helen a mother of four taking her daughter who

On 30th July, Rachel and her organisation, the ARK of Transformation ministry through the support from CMS-Africa were able to minister to about 15 families. Care givers/parents represented 15 families living with children living experiencing diverse challenges which includes, autism, cerebral palsy. This initiative come about as we were doing food distribution and noted that parents of such children are always stressed.

A testimony was shared by Hellen, the chairlady of Manjiri, Disability Self-Help Group: *“Maintaining a child with condition especially at this moment of Covid19 is a big challenge. As a parent or a caregiver, we are expected to take care of these children throughout starting from feeding bathing, medication, diet etc. Most of the time you are expected to do all that and provide food on the table. Sometimes it becomes very hard to get somebody to be left for with this child while we go casual work. Some of us were disowned by our husbands. However, we encourage ourselves because God gave us these children with a purpose to become their steward.*



Fifteen persons living with diverse challenges of blindness, physical disability, widows, widowers and victims of the Kenya’s 2007/08 post-election violence who were displaced from their residence and currently hosted by close relatives in Kerwa location benefited the timely support. There were about 15 households represented but the actual total number of beneficiaries were 81.

4. Paul Kibona in Dodoma, Tanzania



These two women received the funds to build up the capacity of their businesses. This has also brought of goodwill from churches and make the church to be seen as a provider of solutions.

5. Jeff Sikabwe, Local Partner and Country Coordinator based in Kinshasa, in DR Congo



Jeff used the funds to purchase food for 20 needy families residing in the informal settlements where he has conducted training. He also provided food for 18 children at the OCHE orphanage.



A woman from Uvira, DR Congo, expresses gratitude to God for CMS-Africa through which her and her neighbours received food packages just after losing lives and a lot of property as a result of the floods.

6. Ven. Dismas Ngendabanga from Byumba Diocese in Rwanda

Incidentally, there was a challenge in effecting the funds transfer for Ven. Dismas, so that the funds reached him on 8th August. The £350 was exchanged in for RwF 418,250. Ven. Dismas organised to purchase the food which was then repacked- the identified community members received the food aid on 13th August, and took place in Bisika Parish. Nineteen families **benefited**, with a total number of 86 beneficiaries.

Testimonies



This very old lady who has difficult for sight is so thankful for this help. “N’ubwo ntashobara kubitegereza neza ngo mbabone, ndabashimiye cyane ku bw’inkunga muduhaye muri ibi bihe, kubera ko ntacyo kurya twari dufite. Imana ibahe umugisha” (Even if I am not able to see you clearly, I thank you for this help, you have given us in such difficult time, because we have nothing to eat. May God bless you).

Above: Ven. Dismas and the Subdean of St Paul Cathedral distributing rice, maize flour and beans



Some of those who received charitable donation: Ven Dismas is in the foreground

7. Hassan James in Kadugli, in the Republic of Sudan

Bishop James reports, “we implemented the project on 2nd of September, reaching a total number of 19 families, representing 70 people. Other breakdown is 1-(8) widowers, 2-(4) Orphans, 3 (7) poor people. We purchased 4 sacks of sorghum, 75 kg of sugar, 30litres of cooking oil and 2 cartons of beans. The beneficiaries were very happy and thanked the church for such effort.



Food packages before distribution; and women who have just received their food packs.

8. Rev. Salvator Nkorerimana from Burundi

Rev. Salvator is from Burundi and currently studying for a degree in theology. While in Kenya, he identified the needs for food that were being experienced by a group of students from Burundi and DR Congo based in both the *Africa International University* and the *St. Paul’s University*. He purchased shopping vouchers for the students and distributed to them.



photo on the left: students from DR Congo

After getting that support, Angelos Nzanu Muviswa, one of the students from DRC, gave us a small testimony:

“We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to CMS-Africa for your love to us, through your donation. It was a miracle, to get something in this time of corona when we had no one to turn to for help. Thank you for allowing God to use you as His vessel to encourage our hearts. Your love and compassion have ignited hope again to trust God for His provision. You have been encouraged us to believe that God is working and is with us in the journey of faith even when we do not feel it.

It has truly touched our hearts and what you are doing is not in vain, God will reward you in accordance with divine richness. Thank you and shalom.”



Photo on the left: students from Burundi and their families

Akimana Canisius, a student from Burundi also adds: “Surely, CMS –AFRICA came on time, and we needed food, due to the closure of activities. It helped us to run a little bit, in expectation to see the reopening of all activities. It was little but helped a lot to survive (if I can use that term) because it is not easy to live in a foreign land without support. The presence of CMS’s support and your gesture came at the right time.

9. Joseph Noel: Local Partner and Country Coordinator of South Sudan



Joseph Noel handing over a food package in Juba.



Joseph led the church community to repair the houses of some Christians which were damaged by heavy rain. He also led the food distribution to vulnerable families.

10. Meshack Okumu, Local Partner and Country Coordinator in Kenya

Rev. Meshack was burdened by the situation of pastors and their families, who were also adversely affected by the reality of covid-19 and its effects like travel restrictions, economic slowdown and shutdown of churches, from where pastors earn their livelihood. The pastors fellowship of which Meshack is a part of brings together churches of different denominations, but bound by the love of Christ.

Meshack provided food packages for 21 pastors (the list had initially identified 20 pastors, but on the day of distribution, an extra lady pastor showed up, and with the compassion of Christ, she got a food package).

What was inspiring with this particular ministry was that these pastors had prioritised the covid-19 relief support for the Christians who attend their churches, and not included their own needy families in the distribution lists. A total of 129 people in the pastors' families were fed.

A testimony from James Parken, pastor of Zion Pentecostal Church in Kibiku, Ngong region

Pastor James is married to one wife and has been blessed with 8 children. His church has like 30 people and during normal times, he gets at least KSh 2, 000 per month in offerings and tithes from members of the church (that is about £16). But since Corvid-19 started, there has been no income and life has become even more tight not just for the pastor's family but some of his church members. "I have nevertheless learnt to live by faith and we trust in God for provision. Today he has done it for me and I praise him," says Pastor James who is a native Maasai pastor in Kibiku area. Pastor James is full of thanks to those who have given the food donations to the pastor's families in Ngong.

11. Rev. Capt. Paul Lueth, Local Partner from South Sudan

Activities

On 19-22 2020, my first step was to meet with local pastors to discuss how the relief would reach the really vulnerable community and neighbour. I spent two days making registration per household identified exactly most effected community as well vulnerable people. After I finished with registration, I called them together for briefly fellowship sharing God's word and pray together in the church compound. After fellowship I explains what God has plan for them for sending relief to them. On 26 they came together as 14 head of households, and started giving food items finds attached photos.

A word of thanks from Beneficiaries community



Abuk Bol Yor, a mother of two twins said " I am very happy for this blessed gift from God, it is miracle to me and my other 6 children to get this food, getting 4 kgs/malwa of dura, oil and 5 kgs of sugar it is great blesses and it is our first time to receive this gift from Church we wouldn't know that church is cares her vulnerable nightbours I called this gift as survived food because it God food will push us with my family into next month. Government has isolated us no support or relief we are stayed at home no movement, but church has heard our crying we are much appreciated for what you have done to us, may God bless you all, I am happy and thanks."

Mangok Ajak Lual," father with 7 children, is blind man, said" what shall I said if people of God visited me today with my children, that what Dinka proverbs says "stomach is plate of God" so look I was worry these two days thinking what will my children eat? And now

God heard my inner grieving, He sent you here with these relief. This love that you have shown to me I will join the church, and give my life to Jesus, because Jesus community they have really love of God who always worry vulnerable people like me I am blindman. Thank you for what you have done to me and my children now you have rescued me with my family".

My observation for this relief it is way of getting people into Kingdom of God because the Bible says in Matthew 25:36" *I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.*" But CMS-Africa has visited her vulnerable communities with this gift. My great thanks go to CMS-Africa for building trust in us down here in the field for sending relief to our people. Thank you Karobia for entire work you have coordinated the whole Africa thank you very much for your quick response. Great Thanks to Almighty God for this blessed gift that has joined our hearts to serve the community with love of God.
little

12. Regina Lueth from Gogrial in South Sudan



Regina Lueth had targeted to support 15 households with food. These were people drawn from the South Sudanese community but living in her neighbourhood of Nakuru in Kenya and a few Kenyan indigenous communities. She herself had been on maternity leave in Kenya when the covid-19 disaster struck.

At the end of the exercise, she had fed over 55 people.

13. Kenneth Ambani in Kenya

Kenneth reports: "I managed to work with 8 lead farmers who distributed local vegetable seeds like nightshade, spider plants and cowpeas to local households. The seedbank is

meant to increase the farmers control over the production of seeds which leads to increased access to quality seeds and hence yields. It enhances farmers' skills in seed selection and preservation for the future.

10 Kgs of cowpeas, 30 nightshade and 30 spider plant sachets of seeds were distributed through the 8 local lead farmers. 46 households benefitted in round one of the distributions (see seed distribution list attached). I wrote another proposal to CMS-Africa for many did not get in Matagalu village form the first round. Because of the hard situation that many families were facing, I proposed we have some 7 bags of maize accompanying the vegetable seeds for families that had been hit hard by the tough situation. I bought more seeds from Kenya seed Company Ltd Kitale on 23/07/20 worth Ksh 11,501. I bought *Amaranthus*, night shade, spider plant and cowpeas seeds. They were distributed by the lead farmers too in their neighbourhoods.

The 8 bags of maize were bought on 22/07/2020 and distributed on 23/07/2020 at St Jacob's Bible Institute in Matagalu. 60 households benefitted. Approximately 180 people put food on their table on that day. We had already identified and listed the very needy in the community. From the seeds I bought with the funds that came through CMS-Africa, over 104 farmers benefitted.

14. Sam Malish from Yei Diocese of South Sudan (now in exile in Northern Uganda)

The project we named 'Feed My Lambs' initiative was launched with the purchase of three loud speakers. These are being used to spread the message of community sanitisation, use of face masks and the Good News of Jesus Christ in this season of covid-19. This is happening in three camps within the Rhino Refugee Settlement area in northern Uganda., where Sam has a ministry.



photo on the left: one of the loud speakers

He has continued to train children ministry workers who serve in the refugee camps. In this season of restricted movement and very few public gatherings, the Sunday School teachers they have developed have been moving from home to home, reaching and discipling children to be followers of Jesus Christ.

15. Judith Murungi, Local Partner and Country Coordinator of Uganda

Judith distributed food packages to 26 households in her community, with a total number of 149 people. She had initially targeted 23 families, but managed to stretch the available resources to cater for the higher number of families. Praise God!



Left photo: woman and her child receive a food pack

right photo: a woman, smiling thankfully, signs a register to confirm that she received a food pack.



16. Nkusi Josias, Local Partner and Country Coordinator of Rwanda



Food distribution for several households in Kigali

Rev. Nkusi is an Anglican priest in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. He intended to distribute food packs to 15 households, and provide clothes to 4 people. The number of households that he ended up assisting was 28, with over 100 beneficiaries in those homes. Praise the Lord!

17. Michael Aban, Local Partner in South Sudan

Michael Aban Obat is an ordained ministry with the Presbyterian Church and is a lecturer at the Nile Theological College. He is a trainer for CMS-Africa programmes and a big-hearted missionary. He has been serving as a senior pastor of a congregation in a suburb of Juba, a congregation that has grown fast with a good population of younger people. It is in this church that he identified families that were highly affected by the effects of the covid-19 pandemic. Juba had just experienced very heavy rain that caused flooding and damage to homes and property. Part of his intended ministry activity was to repair the fence for a family that lives next to the church.