

“...Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

-- Matthew 25:40 (NRSV)



Episcopal
Relief & Development

Healing a hurting world

ERD Now

A Publication of Episcopal Relief & Development - June 2009

The MDG
Inspiration
Fund heals
a hurting
world!

Together
we support:

Insecticide-
treated bed nets



Prenatal care



Infant vaccines



Smokeless
stoves



Community
wells



HIV/AIDS
prevention
education



Community
health workers

Mothers Unite to Save Lives in Angola

Drive six hours from Angola's capital, Luanda, and at the end of the road you'll reach Mucaba Municipality in Uige Province. Here, you'll find little to no infrastructure. A major bridge damaged during Angola's 27-year civil war was never rebuilt. Far worse, there are few trained health workers or clinical facilities, though the area is suffering from appalling rates of child mortality.

But in this remote area you will find the Anglican Diocese of Angola. The largest denomination in Mucaba, the Church has 20 parishes and the only real infrastructure in the municipality. It also has an active Mothers' Union, through which women are mobilizing to save the lives of their children and grandchildren. That is why the Church is optimally suited to effectively implement an integrated program for child survival spearheaded by Episcopal Relief & Development.

This initiative is urgently needed because one of every four Angolan children dies before reaching five years of age. In Africa, only Sierra Leone has a higher child mortality rate. Three in five child deaths are due to malaria, pneumonia and diarrheal diseases. Maternal mortality is also dismal, with 17 women dying for every 1,000 live births. One reason is that less than two percent of all births are attended by a skilled health worker.

In recent years, the Church and its Mothers' Union have been enthusiastic participants in *NetsforLife*®, distributing more than 73,000 nets and training 605 health activists in Mucaba and four other districts in Uige Province. But too often, their joy in reducing malaria deaths has turned to grief as children succumb to other preventable diseases. They are eager to take the tools gained through their training and deploy them in a scaled-up campaign to address all the causes of child mortality.



Insecticide-treated nets help mothers in Angola protect their families from malaria.

That is exactly what Episcopal Relief & Development is empowering them to do.

The first area of action is to ensure the safe delivery of babies by training birth attendants to provide hygienic conditions and needed medication. Volunteers are also being mobilized to promote breastfeeding, treat infections with antibiotics, and provide nutritional supplements (a two-cent Vitamin A capsule given two to three times a year can prevent blindness and death).

In addition, a program of extended immunizations is being implemented, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, to put children beyond the reach of common, but deadly diseases such as measles, polio, diphtheria and tuberculosis.

Another action item is the training of volunteers to help parents recognize the symptoms of the most common life-threatening childhood illnesses, provide needed medicines, and make referrals to health facilities when necessary. This is being accompanied by community education to raise awareness and change behaviors in hygiene, sanitation and nutrition.

The goal — to cut child and maternal mortality in half — will not be easy to reach. But with the support of Episcopal Relief & Development, the infrastructure and leadership of the Anglican Diocese of Angola and the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of the Mothers' Union, young lives will be saved!



Children will benefit greatly from our health care initiative in Angola.





PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

INSPIRING HOPE THE WORLD OVER

During the two years since its inception, you have probably read at least one of my frequent updates on the Millennium Development Goals Inspiration Fund, our joint initiative to raise \$3 million in three years to fight malaria and other preventable diseases in Africa and Asia and to fight disease and provide basic health care in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Nothing has inspired me more in all my years at Episcopal Relief & Development than to see the astonishing outpouring of generosity and support for the Fund from dioceses, churches and Episcopalians across the country.

We have many people to thank — far too many to list in this short column. But let me just mention an effort that has humbled and amazed me. The Diocese of Puerto Rico donated \$300,000 to the Fund — the largest gift ever received from a diocese in Episcopal Relief & Development's history. The fact that this came at a time when so many of us are struggling with the impact of the recession makes their unprecedented generosity all the more remarkable. This is also a testament to the leadership of Bishop Alvarez.

Throughout the campaign, we have seen similar efforts on a smaller yet no less impressive scale, driven by enormous grassroots energy to raise both money and public awareness about Episcopal Relief & Development's mission.

Two-thirds of the Inspiration Fund's budget is supporting *NetsforLife*®, Episcopal Relief & Development's program partnership in sub-Saharan Africa that has already distributed one million insecticide-treated nets, protecting as many as three million people — especially children — from deadly malaria. The remaining third is being allocated to health-related programs in Latin America and the Caribbean, in partnership with Jubilee Ministries, focused on preventing water-borne diseases, respiratory ailments and HIV/AIDS.

Proud as I am of the progress the Fund makes possible, I am most proud of the way the friends of Episcopal Relief & Development have come together around this great cause and gained inspiration in the process. We are answering Jesus' call to serve those who suffer, we are doing more to save the lives of millions, and we are inspiring hope in Africa and Latin America for a healthier future!

Robert W. Radtke
President

Collaborating to Fight Climate Change

For the people of the Ontong Java Atoll in the Solomon Islands of the South Pacific, global warming is not a looming problem — it's already there. Rising sea levels and higher tides are destroying their food supply, as salt water intrudes on taro swamps, and many islands are becoming submerged. Relocation of the Atoll's 2,000 residents is likely in the near future.



Encroaching salt water destroys a coconut plantation in the Loh Island Torres Group of Vanuatu.

Episcopal Relief & Development recently took a leadership role in forging a coordinated, proactive response to global warming in the Asia/Pacific region. We recognize climate change poses an imminent threat on a range of fronts to our mission of healing a hurting world. At a landmark meeting in Hong Kong, co-hosted by the Anglican Church in Hong Kong, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, Episcopal Relief & Development and its partner organizations agreed on a three-part strategy of adaptation, education and policy change.

On the adaptation front, climate change is disproportionately harming people living in poverty in the developing world. It is creating refugees, escalating disease outbreaks, increasing natural disasters, harming sanitation and agriculture, causing economic displacement and fueling tensions that could result in conflict and even war. It puts every Millennium Development Goal in jeopardy.

That is why the participants in the Hong Kong meeting are moving aggressively to help those suffering the most. On the vulnerable islands of the region, that will mean helping people find homes and livelihoods in a new place. In the Philippines, it will mean helping farmers preserve their fruit, adjust irrigation techniques

(continued on next page)

The Special Role of Episcopal Relief & Development



Bonnie Anderson (center) joins in the *NetsforLife*® celebration in Livingstone, Zambia.

Bonnie Anderson, President of the House of Deputies, is a friend and supporter of Episcopal Relief & Development and our mission to heal a hurting world. We asked her to share her reflections on why the work of Episcopal Relief & Development is so important.

Episcopal Relief & Development is unique because it is Episcopal, and that directly informs the way it works. Episcopal Relief & Development helps us, as Episcopalians, make our baptismal promise to “respect the dignity of every human being” come to life. It is our relief and development agency.

What helps make Episcopal Relief & Development so effective is that it works directly in partnership with dioceses, churches, NGOs and donors. Like many other agencies of its kind, Episcopal Relief & Development sets goals and measures outcomes. But Episcopal Relief & Development does more than that. Its work goes to the core of a person’s soul, where dignity resides.

Unlike quantifiable goals and objectives, a person’s dignity is difficult to measure. Dignity is that elusive quality baptized Episcopalians are called to respect in every human being. The way Episcopal Relief & Development does its work respects the dignity of every human being.

I saw firsthand the impact our work can have when I traveled to

Livingstone, Zambia for the roll out of the *NetsforLife*® initiative. The village’s Anglican churches had organized a celebration of the program in the local community center which had been built with the support of Episcopal Relief & Development. We spent the day parading with the villagers, and participating in dances and skits about malaria prevention. It was hot and dusty and joyous, colorful and wonderful. Over 1,500 insecticide-treated mosquito nets were distributed to people who were so glad to have them. The sense of pride and hope was palpable. It was a remarkable day for me.

Episcopal Relief & Development’s programs focus on sustainable development, which is often defined as work that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. But for us, as Episcopalians, I think it goes a bit deeper. Like the Xhosa word *ubuntu* (loosely translated to mean “I am because you are”), sustainable development encourages interdependence as a way of life. Solutions to social, economic and environmental problems become the work of a diverse culture of people coming together in community, building sustainable relationships through unity of purpose and common effort. That is unique...and precious.

(CLIMATE CHANGE continued from page 2)

and plant new crops better suited to new weather patterns. In Myanmar, it will mean taking steps to prevent hillside erosion.

On the education front, Anglican churches in industrialized Asian countries that are contributing to global warming, such as Japan and South Korea, are informing congregants about what they can do to shrink their carbon footprint and assist those who are being harmed.

And looking at the big picture, Episcopal Relief & Development recognizes that climate change has social justice implications, because the wealthiest countries have largely caused the problem while the poorest are bearing its burdens. As a result, Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting efforts to shrink



Homes are vulnerable to rising sea levels in Ontong Java Solomon Islands.

carbon dioxide emissions in the United States and other industrialized nations, as well as the fast-growing economies of India and China. Putting policy into practice at the local level, Episcopal Relief & Development, in partnership with the Amity Foundation, is supporting an innovative pilot project to provide solar power to 400 homes and three schools in Qinghai Province, which is north of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (Tibet).

As a human-caused problem unprecedented in scope, climate change requires closely coordinated, strategically-focused action by every development organization. The Hong Kong meeting helped launch Episcopal Relief & Development and its partners toward this goal, to the benefit of people living on Ontong Java Atoll and throughout the region.

The Power of Partnerships – The Episcopal Diocese of Haiti

Nowhere is the power of partnerships more vividly illustrated than in Haiti, a country plagued by poverty, social strife and environmental degradation. Though the country has no functioning public health or educational system, and its economy is in tatters, there are institutions that make a real difference as they work to create opportunity, rebuild infrastructure and restore the land.

A leading force in these efforts is the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti, Episcopal Relief & Development's principle program partner in the country. Our partnership focuses on supporting education and alleviating hunger, including an innovative school canteen program that ensures students receive at least one good meal a day. These programs, along with our shared support of micro-finance projects that assist local communities in identifying needs and implementing small development projects, touch thousands of lives each year.

Episcopal Relief & Development also partners with Haiti Fund, Inc. to support the Comprehensive Development Project (CODEP), which is working to alleviate hunger by implementing reforestation and training programs that teach the fundamentals of sound agricultural and water management to local farmers.

The stamina and resources of our partners were tested last summer when four major hurricanes hit Haiti in the space of

one month. Due in part to widespread deforestation, the destruction around the country was devastating. An already weak infrastructure was taxed beyond repair, entire communities were stranded, and harvests were obliterated, interrupting the flow of an already stressed society.

The priests and development officers working to implement our programs suffered greatly during the storms. Many lost their own homes and spent their time coordinating relief efforts while assisting their own families as they struggled to recover.

Yet, even under these dire circumstances, our partners in Haiti see reason for hope. They are still engaged, adapting, pushing forward and touching more lives. For example, the Haitian Development Initiative recently refocused its program on hunger alleviation to respond to the growing food crisis and added a water and sanitation component to repair the water systems destroyed by storms. Because the level of environmental destruction in Haiti is directly related to deforestation, CODEP

scaled-up its reforestation program and planted one million trees in 2008.

Here at Episcopal Relief & Development, we're proud to help make these life-saving programs possible. To learn more about our partnerships with churches and organizations around the globe go to www.er-d.org/Power_of_Partnerships.



Ensuring access to clean water is one of our most critical program goals.



Hurricane Season is on the Way

If last year's summer season is any indication, hurricane preparedness is vital in the months to come. In 2008, eight major storms formed in the Atlantic, and five of them were classified as major hurricanes that caused significant damage. In addition to developing local preparedness plans, we're continuing to help vulnerable communities shore up infrastructure and alleviate problems like deforestation and the destruction of mangrove swamps that can make communities more defenseless to a storm's extreme force. Please visit our website at www.er-d.org/Respond_Disasters to learn more about the critical assistance we provide when disasters strike.