

Canadian Samaritans for Africa

We believe that Africa needs solidarity and collaboration not pity and sympathy. We are determined to support asset based grass roots goals than needs-based interventionist approaches

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PRESIDENT Fr. Stan Chu Ilo

Building on the Assets of the African Women

January 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bending Down and Touching the Wounds of Others

Pope Francis in his recent encyclical, Fratelli Tutti, reflects on the parable of the Good Samaritan in chapter Two. He makes a distinction between those who “care for someone who is hurting and those who pass by; those who bend down to help and those who look the other way and hurry off.” The Good Samaritan is a model of social friendship, that is, a kind of love that is capable of transcending borders to see in the face of a person who is suffering my own face and the face of Jesus.

Through the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus calls forth the best of our humanity and encourages us as Pope Francis teaches to persevere in love, to go the extra mile for the sake of those who are abandoned on the road side of life, and to help give dignity to those who are suffering and thus build a better society. Indeed, each of us is truly a person when we are fully accepted and supported by our communities especially in those moments when we are down and out. Indeed, for the poor and the wounded of this world, the love of good and committed people and the solidarity we show to them are means through which God comes to them. I will propose that the only way we can preach God's love to the poor of this world is to make God's love concrete in their lives and social context through solidarity, charity, and fighting for a more just and equitable world.

We at Canadian Samaritans for Africa chose to follow the spirituality and solidarity modelled for us by the Good Samaritan. As companions with the poor, we wish to always bend down and touch the wounds of our women in Africa.

The ongoing COVID pandemic has deepened these painful wounds because as Paul Farmer, the founder of Partners in Health, often says, sickness has a preferential option for the poor.

The COVID pandemic is another layer of suffering imposed on the poor who are already dying from other social determinants of health like poor nutrition, lack of access to quality and affordable healthcare services, poor housing and general socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions.

Early in March, I received a distressing email from one of our Kenyan agents asking us to come to the help of the women in the slums of Kibera, where we support a micro-credit women and child community support agency, the Village of Love.

These women who received training and financial support to set up businesses ranging from agro-based mini marts, grocery shops, to skills-based income generating activities, have lost all their savings to the shutdown and could no longer provide food for their children. They needed food to stay alive because the government has offered them no support to cushion the effects of the shutdown. The situation of these Kenyan women is not unique. I have heard the same stories from our women groups in South Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Central African Republic.

CSA trustees and volunteers while carrying their own wounds and brokenness from this global pandemic were very active in 2020 raising funds to support women in our projects in South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso. The account of these fundraising efforts and how these efforts have contributed to alleviating the pains and weight of the COVID pandemic are reported in this current newsletter.

The future of humanity lies in global solidarity and social friendship. We are all tied in a common destiny. If the devastating impact of climate change has not succeeded in teaching humanity this lesson of a common home and a common destiny; COVID hopefully, will make it clearer to us that we are all in this together. We all need to commit ourselves to bending down and touching the wounds of others and doing all that we can to create a healthier, and more prosperous, and equitable world for everyone. When any woman's right is violated anywhere in the world, my own humanity is violated; when poverty damages the possibility of any little child in the world to live beyond five years, my own life is diminished.

Human security, global health, food security, international security and global peace, and prosperity and protection of our common home should become the responsibility of everyone. Every local problem should become a global problem, and every global problem has ramifications for every part of the world. Aware as I am of your support to the CSA and our women, I want to thank you for helping to change the world. I invite you to become a part of the mission of CSA this year to reach out to women in Africa as we build on their assets and support the removal of the social, economic and cultural barriers that they face so that they can flourish as God's children.

Changes in CSA

PRESIDENT

Fr. Stan Chu Ilo

Building on the Assets of the African Women

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Fr. Stan Chu Ilo

Vice President

Afam Ene

Executive Officer

Michelle Cheeseman

Secretary

After ten years of serving as the president of CSA, I am stepping down on January 1, 2021. It has been a privilege of a lifetime to have served in this capacity. God has blessed me and taught me many transformational lessons through my work with the poor. I have been privileged to work with very generous and kind board members who give their time and resources to the service of the board.

CSA has maintained a model of not having any paid staff. This is how we have been able to spend 95% of donations on supporting our women in Africa in ten sites of hope where we work in six African countries—Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Kenyan, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Uganda.

I am happy that this organization will now be led by an all-women's team for the first time. As an organization dedicated to supporting African women,

Sherryann Ambrose

**Treasurer /Project
Coordinator (East Africa)**

Ekwy Odozor

**Project Coordinator
(West Africa)**

Afam Ene

Members

Jody Burnie

Eric Osaru

Eremita Ribello

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Quice Digba

Rose Kantiano

Kirk Mark

CSA ADDRESS

174-99 Bristol Road East
Mississauga, ON, L4Z 3P4

CSA has been led since it was founded in 2003 by two past male presidents. Now, we have completed a major transition and shift which we hope and pray will lead to an expansion of our work and impact. While I will remain as a board member, working harder than I have worked before, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you the new leadership team of CSA:

Dr Ekwy Odozor was unanimously elected as the new president. Ekwy is a teacher by profession, wife and mother of four, and has served CSA as treasurer and member of our fund-raising team. She has also successfully initiated a women micro-credit group in Abia in Enugu State Nigeria. She is a woman with a passion for charity and a selfless humanitarian and a natural leader and motivator.

Susan Hookong-Taylor was unanimously elected as the new vice president. Susan is a teacher and mother of two, and an accomplished musician and songstress and a spiritual and pastoral leader who is nationally respected and acclaimed among her peers as a rare talent, and an inspirational and motivational speaker. Susan successfully led our virtual fundraising effort in 2020, composed the CSA hymn, The Face of Love, and will continue as CSA's spiritual animator in addition to fulfilling her role as Vice President.

Sherryann Ambrose has accepted to serve as CSA's Board Secretary. Sherryann is a school principal and a pathfinder in the field of educational leadership. A mother and a grandmother, Shery Ann spends her time mentoring young teachers and inspiring students to greater heights. She has volunteered for CSA for five years before joining the board. She also volunteers her time for her local parish and community and devotes her life to advancing the principles of Catholic social teaching in the world.

This leadership team will be anchored on the administrative leadership of **Michelle Cheeseman**, our Executive Director, whose leadership has helped CSA to develop a business plan, a strong administrative structure, and greater clarity on how to implement her policies and programs with a view to realizing her mission. Under her leadership, CSA rewrote her vision and mission statement and developed an annual fundraising plan that led to the successful fundraising effort in 2020 where we were able to raise more money in the year of the pandemic than we have done in the past.

ADU~ACHI WOMEN COOPERATIVE UNION

Executive Officer
Michelle Cheeseman

The Adu~Achi Women Cooperative Union in Oji~River Local Government Area of Enugu State in Nigeria, has about 50 active members.

The women originally comprised of 3 groups which focus on selling laundry soaps and detergents, a bakery unit, and a nylon production unit. Recently they acquired another Cooperative named MBAOGU Women's Cooperative. This group focuses on the procurement of gallons of red oil, bags of groundnuts, bags of cola nuts and bitter cola. The women store these items and resell them during scarcity to make profits.

Before now, or rather before the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, the women were collectively and respectively doing well making/producing as well as marketing their products to the neighbouring community, local markets, and retail outlets. Like the rest of the world, the negative/adverse consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the shutting down of Markets, Schools, Shops and Businesses and has adversely affected their internally generated revenue and circulating capital. During the lockdown there was no business again and their children were at home consuming a lot of food.

There was nowhere for the women to go and sell what they had produced, and production of new items equally stopped.

Consequently, they started living from hand to mouth and depended solely on the income generated prior to COVID and on their circulating capital for survival. CSA sent an emergency COVID payment earlier in the year to help the women acquire PPE and necessities for their families.

With COVID restrictions slowly being lifted, CSA has sent the Adu Achi Women Cooperative another grant to help the women acquire the products they need to start their businesses up again. Unfortunately, the cost of many of the supplies needed has gone up over 120% as there are no laws that prohibit price gauging.

Regardless of the challenges they continue to face, their happiness when receiving the funding is a testament to the Women and their strong desire to support each other and their families. The Canadian Samaritans for Africa is proud to support these women to reach their goal in being self sufficient and hope to continue supporting them with the help of your donations.

Photo #1 The MBAOGU Women's Cooperative receiving their cheque from Canadian Samaritans for Africa to purchase the supplies needed to start up their business again. They feel very blessed for the support through your donations.

Photo #2 – Supplies purchased for the various groups to run their businesses

WALK-A-THON



CSA was be on the move on Saturday, September 19, with a fundraising walk-a-thon for our charitable projects in Africa (Nigeria, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Central Republic of Africa, and South Sudan). The goal was to raise \$50,000.00. It is never too late to donate!



Thank you to all those who joined in the walk with your friends and family! All are asked to please go online at CanadaHelps.org to make a donation to Canadian Samaritans for Africa. 100% of all donations go towards helping women and children acquire life-changing skills that will enable them to become independent and successful in life.

All supports are asked to please stay tuned for upcoming information for 2021 CSA Walk-A-Thon! Please note that more information on the 2021 fundraising plans will be provided in our next newsletter.

Learn more about us and our projects by visiting our website



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ONE WORLD, ONE LOVE CONCERT SATURDAY AUGUST 8th, 2020

On the occasion of Fr. Stan Chu Ilo's 50th Birthday, we worked together to realize an important dream and birthday wish. Fr. Stan first asked for prayers for himself-- for wisdom to discern always the right things to do, and the courage to do those right things, in a spirit of humility and gratitude.

Then he went on to describe his dream, and hope for his birthday: "that the women in Africa, and women everywhere would have equal access to the good things of life; that the obstacles that have been placed by so

The One World, One Love Concert set about realizing this dream in part, by gathering artists, choirs, well-wishers from Canada, United States, Germany, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and many other places around the world to celebrate the assets and the resiliency of the African Woman. We had a virtual concert and celebration that was broadcast worldwide via YouTube and Facebook, and it was received well by all.

many social and institutional structures against women, not only in Africa but everywhere, even in our Church – that these obstacles be removed; that every human being would have access to all the beauties and blessings and gifts that life can offer, and they can use these gifts to serve God, serve their families and their communities and serve the world.”

The One World, One Love Concert set about realizing this dream in part, by gathering artists, choirs, well-wishers from Canada, United States, Germany, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and many other places around the world to celebrate the assets



Susan HooKong-Taylor

Through this virtual online concert many new people were introduced to the good work of Canadian Samaritans for Africa, and more importantly, they heard the stories of the women of Africa that receive CSA's support through the generosity of all CSA benefactors. Thank you once again to all of the wonderful performers and speakers for their support and thank you especially to Fr. Bonnie and Cherisse Banaag (St. Mother Teresa Catholic Academy) and Josh Rosedale of Rosedale Sound for all their help with production. You can view the concert here [One World, One Love International Concert](#) if you haven't had a chance to see it!

Links for images from the concert:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z2kuhvVDrhyPdjnSAdvSDQ6zc4ekcEuT/view?usp=sharing>

God bless and take care.

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PROJECT SUPPORTED BY CSA IN 2020



Thanks to our donors, Canadian Samaritans to Africa (CSA) gave out a total of **\$51,319.13** to support projects in various countries in Africa. Here is a breakdown, indicating the total amount sent to each project within the year 2020:

1. Watinooma (Burkina Faso) = \$6000
2. ESCA (Central African Republic) = \$1000
3. Triple C (Kenya) = \$1000
4. C.O.R.E. (Soroti) = \$1000
5. Adu Achi (Nigeria) = \$11,000
6. ATWEG (Nigeria) = \$8,000
7. CDTY Diocese of Yambio (South Sudan) = \$23,319.13

CANADIAN SAMARITANS FOR AFRICA T-SHIRT FUNDRAISING

Compliments for the season. I hope the season has been treating you well so far. We have been working on a T-shirt fundraising campaign. The T-shirts are quite beautiful. Through the link below, people can order the T-shirts from Coastalreign. Please copy the link and share with your contacts. The success of this fundraising will depend on how well our supporters and newsletter sub-scribers promote the fundraising event.

<https://stores.coastalreign.com/csawalkathon/shop/product-detail/1000845>

Please share the link above for the T-shirts with your contacts and assist in making this fundraising event a HUGE success.

My thanks to Jodi, Quice and Oge who helped me work on this project.

Happy New Year to you all.

Dr. Ekwy Odozor
Project Coordinator (East Africa)

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CANADIAN SAMARITIAN FOR AFRICA AT ST. ELIZABETH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

During the Fall of 2020, Staff, Parents and Students at St. Elizabeth learned about Canadian Samaritans for Africa and the work of the organization. Parents and staff were introduced to the organization during our staff and Catholic School Parent Council (CSPC) meetings. Students had an opportunity to view videos learning and seeing the work of the organization. During the month of November students participated in a Dress Down and raised a total of \$120.00 in support of the work of CSA. As a school, our goals for next steps is to connect with the women in Africa who are beneficiaries of CSA so that the students can get to know some of these women and build meaningful relationships with them.

Project Pictures

Supplies purchased for the various groups to run their businesses

ATWEG women showcasing outfits made by women of ATWEG who are training in tailoring



Your support would make a world of difference to women and children in Africa . Please click on the link below for access to the CSA GoFundMe site.
Thank you so much!

Dr. Ekwy Odozor
CSA East African Project
Coordinator

CSA GoFundMe Fundraising Drive

Please join efforts to support the Canadian Samaritans for Africa (CSA), a fully registered Canadian non-profit organization that helps women and children in various countries of Africa. CSA invests in African women by helping

[Click Here](#)



them acquire skills to become fully independent, and they can in turn provide for their children and other children in their care.

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