This note contains updates on projects supported by the 2016 Poverty and Hope Appeal

Poverty and Hope Appeal: February 2017 update from Argentina

Supporting marginalised people and protecting the land on which they live and depend

Partnered with CMS, supported by Poverty and Hope since 2014.

Andrew and Maria Leake are supporting indigenous and campesino (criollo) communities in Chaco region of northern Argentina. A key part of their ministry is helping these marginalized people stand up to the powerful business interests that are driving poor people off the land and destroying the forests to make way for cattle ranching.

August tied with July 2016 for the warmest month ever recorded. The temperature was 0.16 degrees Celsius warmer than the previous warmest August (2014). It was also 0.98 degrees Celsius warmer than the mean August temperature from 1951-1980.

Climate action
Climate change increasingly dominates our work agenda. We are working with Bishops in Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Chile and Uruguay to look at what Anglicans can do concerning climate change in this region of the world. It’s not an easy challenge as most people are not really aware of the issues and the threats, or what the Church might or should be doing. Each Diocese is naming an environmental rep, and we aim to start meetings with them in the coming months, ready for a formal meeting with Bishops in 2017.

Greenpeace Argentina has reported that the area affected by deforestation in northern Argentina during 2016 was 50% lower than the annual average prior to 2007, the year in which a national forest protection law was
enacted. We are, so to speak not out of the woods, as we expect corporate interests to push back on current legislation (a la Trump), so we must remain vigilant. This caveat aside, the news is still encouraging, as it does in part reflect on the effect of our work (supported by the church) alongside many others in our contribution towards caring for God’s gift of creation.

Earlier this month Bishop Drayson (also a member of ACEN - the Anglican Communion Environmental Network) was invited to address a pre COP22 seminar in Buenos Aires, to speak on indigenous perceptions on climate and justice. The event, hosted by UNESCO, forms part of the consultations leading up to the 22nd United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference to be held in Marrakesh (November). The keynote speaker was Susan George – her presentation is well worth reading.

Fundación KAIROS (Buenos Aires) has invited Andrew to give a presentation next week on climate change and the role of local churches. He will be joining a group of evangelicals who in various ways are engaged in creation care across Argentina.

As part of a broader study, Andrew will also be asking indigenous church leaders over the coming weeks how they perceive climate change and its effects in the already hot and dry Chaco region. One of the topics looked at will be people’s views on deforestation. We hope that the results will help Diocesan leadership to define how the church can best engage in enabling congregations to cope with the effects of a rapidly changing climate.

We are carrying out another important piece of work, documenting how indigenous peoples across the Diocese are perceiving climate variability (change), and how they are responding and adapting. It’s a huge undertaking, but ultimately important, as results will enable the Diocese to better understand how it might help local congregations as they progressively have to deal with a changing climate in the already hot and dry Chaco.

Engaging government

A Rocha International has recently put us in touch with Argentina’s Minister for the Environment, Rabbi Sergio Bergman. We hope that the link, forged at the recent IUCN Congress held in Hawaii, may serve to a) allow us to provide the Minster with a critical overview of deforestation, and b) engage him in challenging churches to actively engage in caring for creation.

We have continued to participate in consultations with the Salta government on its land use policies. Discussions have been erratic and tense. At times we sense we are being taken for a ride whilst the serious decisions are being made elsewhere and higher up in the system.

We have also led a process through which some local NGOs and academics made a critical review of Salta’s application of the national forest law. Findings were presented to and well received by the National Audit Office, which is currently reviewing the law’s implementation. We have also been liaising with Greenpeace which is currently running a national campaign to make deforestation a criminal offence.
Deforestation study

Andrew (with Ceci’s assistance) has finished his report on the past decade of deforestation in Salta. This research and other similar work is central to our ministry, as the data allows us to enable affected communities to respond to the threats and consequences of deforestation. It also enables us to be effective in terms of impact.

The findings do not paint a pretty picture. Between 2004 and 2015, Salta’s government processed permits affecting a gross area of 1.25 million hectares (over 3 million acres) of native forests.

Results reveal, however, that there has been a decrease in processed applications (measured through the number of public hearings) for deforestation permits relative to 2007.

Whilst it is not possible for us to attribute this to any specific cause, it does coincide with the year in which indigenous communities and national and provincial environmental organisations, including Land4Life, embarked on challenging the issue of deforestation. As a result of those actions, the Supreme Court imposed a temporary ban on deforestation in 2008 in the area we have been monitoring.

Prayer Pointers

- Pray for the ongoing dialogue with the provincial government concerning potential changes in policies that regulate deforestation. There is a strong push by cattle ranchers and corporate interests to ease regulations on forest clearance.

/ more below.........
Improving food security in Burkina Faso

*Partnered with Christian Aid, supported by Poverty and Hope since 2015.*

Thanks to your support and the work of our partner ODE, the exodus from parts of rural Burkina Faso has been halted. People can now feed and support their families while remaining in their home communities, able to thrive there now and in the future.

**Unlocking potential**

Sankara Saaga’s story is testimony to the transformation you have helped communities to achieve in northern Burkina Faso. Before the Food for Change project started, Sankara was like many people who struggled to earn an income or grow food during the dry season.

Many of the men in his community had to go to other countries, such as the Ivory Coast, to find work and provide for their families. However, thanks to your amazing support, ODE (Office de Développement des Eglises Evangéliques – the development wing of the evangelical churches in Burkina Faso) has supported women to have a say in their communities and earn an income, and has helped families to transform their lives.

More people are now able to grow crops all year round in their market gardens or have been able to find other kinds of work in the dry season, enabling them to earn enough money to buy tools, seeds and livestock to cultivate crops during the rainy season. Families are no longer split apart by work. And the exciting new income is making such a difference: there is more money available for school fees, medicines, nutritious food, and even, in some cases, to pay people to work with them.

**Providing for his family**

Sankara says that the project has really helped him and his family by providing them with training and support. He no longer needs to spend precious, hard-to-come-by money on food for his family because they can grow plenty of nutritious crops on their plot. In the rainy season, they grow sorghum, millet and sometimes maize. In the dry season, they grow seeds more suited to the difficult growing conditions of the area, and they also keep poultry. ‘*We thank you and hope that God will bless you. We want you to know we carry you in our hearts.*’

Now Sankara is able to grow enough to feed his family all year round.

Sankara no longer has problems paying his children’s school fees – their education and their future is secure. He’s been able to buy a motorcycle, so the family can travel to town and market more easily, and he can also
look after his family’s health expenses. ‘I fell ill myself and I was able to pay all of the health care costs,’ he explains. Thank you: none of this would have been possible without your support!

**Sankara’s dreams for the future**

Sankara has high hopes for the future. His ambition is that he and the other farmers will be able to organise themselves collectively to make the most of market opportunities. Sankara is very grateful for your support and asked us to pass on this message: ‘We thank you and hope that God will bless you. We want you to know we carry you in our hearts’.

**Pauline’s story**

After her husband died, Pauline Kabre struggled to provide for their six children, especially as some of them are still at school. ‘Life is difficult here, even for most normal families. But it is even more difficult for us widows’. However, thanks to the project, she now has a plot to grow rice, and she has also received seeds, fertiliser and tools.

Like Sankara, Pauline says that she no longer buys all of her food in the market because her family are able to eat the rice that they have grown themselves. Last season was the first time Pauline had grown rice, but even though she was still learning what to do, she still harvested approximately 250kg. She says this year her crop is doing well and the harvest looks more promising.

![Pauline proudly shows off her promising rice crop.](image)

Pauline hopes that she will have fully mastered the technique of rice production in two to three years, and then she wants to be able to help other people whose lives are difficult. ‘My hope is to grow good crops in order to help other people whose living conditions are difficult’.

She says: ‘I sincerely thank all of you who support the project because you are good to us. May God reward your kindness. God bless you and help you to prosper in everything you do. May you be able to continue to help other people in difficult situations.’

The project has already changed the lives of many families across northern Burkina Faso. Thank you so much for partnering with us to continue this work.

**Please pray with us for:**

- a good crop this year, and for lasting peace in the Sahel
- the hard work of our partners, so that more families can stay together and more lives will be changed for the better
- for all the amazing fundraising events planned by supporters across the UK in support of families like Sankara’s and Pauline’s in Burkina Faso.

For every £1 you raise for this project, the European Union contributes £5. Christian Aid uses 85% of the funds raised through Community Partnerships to support the projects, and 15% to support the work of all of our teams based both in the UK and overseas. This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Christian Aid and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union. This information first appeared in a Community Partnership update resource created by Christian Aid in 2016, and is reproduced with its permission.
Improving food security in Burkina Faso

*Partnered with Christian Aid, supported by Poverty and Hope since 2015.*

**Your gifts are bearing fruit**

Our partner ODE, the development wing of the evangelical Churches of Burkina Faso, is working with people in poor communities to help them grow enough food to eat, even when severe drought or unpredictable weather strikes. ODE’s Food for Change project, which is in its second year, is seeing some impressive results. ‘I am personally very impressed with the contribution of the women’s empowerment project’ says Jean Bazie, ODE programme officer.

ODE provides communities with help such as training, loans, good-quality seeds and plots of land. With ODE’s support, targeted communities have produced nearly 13,000kg of seeds – a mixture of sorghum, millet and cowpea. They’ve also grown an additional 430 tonnes of fruit and veg, including onions, aubergine, tomatoes, cabbage, okra and pepper.

The farmers involved are now earning more and are able to sell their higher-quality crops at better prices. For example, those involved in onion production have been able to increase the average value of their crop by more than 250%.

And thanks to your support, the project has been able to do even more than this:
- ODE’s credit unions have granted 30,105,000 FCFA (£36,300) to 12 farmers’ groups.
- ODE has developed community action plans for reducing disaster risks in each village.
- More than 1,500 pregnant and breast-feeding women have been trained in slurry preparation skills, helping to grow more food in order to prevent child malnutrition.

Jean Bazie, programme officer for ODE, says that these results demonstrate how important the project is for the people they support. He says: ‘I am personally very impressed with the contribution of the women’s empowerment project [part of Food for Change], especially through market gardening, where over 80 per cent of those who benefit are women.’

With the income earned through the project, families can pay for necessities such as food, medical expenses and children’s school fees. Thank you for everything you’ve done to make this possible.

*Pauline with her flourishing crops.*

Poverty has made Pauline’s life very difficult. Poor soil and unpredictable rain means it is hard for her to grow decent crops. But after ODE identified her as one of the poorest in the community, she was invited to join its market garden work and her life started to turn around.
‘Thank you very much for what the project is doing for us. God bless you’ says Pauline Zoundi.

Transforming lives...with a humble onion
The market garden was set up by ODE so that villagers could grow crops even in the dry season. Pauline helped clean up the site and was given her own plot, along with seeds and tools. She trained in production techniques, and project staff stayed in touch with her during the year to make sure her harvest is successful.

Most of her plot is used for growing onions, which are now almost ready. The income from selling these will help her meet her family’s needs. Not only will she be able to buy enough food, but she’ll also be able to send her children to school. Pauline is growing a small amount of sorrel for her family, meaning she’s able to consume fresh vegetables in the dry season. She hopes to earn enough to buy a motorcycle in a couple of years. She says: ‘Thank you very much for what the project is doing for us. God bless you.’

Growing more than food
Issaka Sinon has also found life in his village of Samba very difficult. He says there are always food shortages, poverty and disease. This brings much uncertainty and makes it difficult for him to support his family of six children. Weather is erratic: during some years, it rains so much that fields are destroyed, while other years are beset with drought. ‘With the support of the project, there is hope’ says Issaka Sinon.

Last year’s heavy rains meant crops were poor. But with support from ODE, Issaka has been able to produce enough rice to compensate for these losses. With training, good quality seeds and fertiliser, he’s been able to harvest more than 300kg of paddy rice.

Issaka says this should mean he can feed his family better, and he hopes that in the next few years he’ll also be able to buy sheep and cattle. He thanks ODE and Christian Aid, as well as all those who have supported this project. According to Issaka, ODE is not just helping to grow food. ‘With the support of the project, there is hope,’ he says.

Prayer points: Project staff have asked that we pray for safety and a good harvest. Please join us.

- Pray for the country of Burkina Faso, where 90 per cent of the population are engaged in subsistence farming, and severe droughts have made it very difficult for communities to grow enough food.
- Give thanks for the work of ODE and the support it is able to give people like Pauline and Issaka. Praise God for the transformation and hope he’s bringing to the people of Samba.
- Pray that the next harvest is a good one, and that local people may be blessed with safety and security.

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Poverty and Hope Appeal
August 2016 update from India

Women’s empowerment work in Delhi

*Partnered with Us (USPG), supported by Poverty and Hope since 2015.*

**Delhi Brotherhood Society helpline for violence against women**
The DBS-run women’s helpline continues to respond to distress calls from across the north, central and New Delhi areas. The helpline seeks to stop violence against women by offering an anonymous listening service and then follows-up calls with support activities such as community councils, rights education, livelihood support and legal and financial assistance.

During the first quarter of 2016, the Delhi Brotherhood Society has found that it is not only women making distress calls, but also men seeking support when at risk of violence from their families. Although the numbers are less than the number of women calling, men are coming forward, sharing their problems and seeking help. This has led to new perspectives on issues in the community, and help and services from the DBS-helpline are offered to men as well.

Distressed callers to the helpline are encouraged to seek telephone-based counselling from 9am-5pm Monday-Saturday. If needed, a project team of outreach workers and counsellors visit callers in their homes to provide support.

The helpline continues to attend between 20-25 calls per day. Calls taken relate to issues including physical and mental harassment by family, marriage discord and divorce, child custody and maintenance, harassment by neighbours, rape, abuse and emotional distress.

In total, during the first quarter of 2016, nearly 600 calls were received and attended to. Counselling was given in each of these cases and, where further intervention was needed, referred to the community women’s councils.

**Panchayat (women’s council) meetings**
The Panchayat meetings discuss and attempt to resolve very serious issues, but also take time to celebrate national and religious festivals together with community members. Sweets are shared and the community greet one another. In March 2016, the Panchayat members – together with staff from DBS and community members – celebrated International Women’s Day. The guest of honour was from the Delhi Commission for Women, and festivities included a cultural celebration by the community women.

**Ritu’s story (name changed)**
Ritu and her husband married approximately a year ago. Things immediately became difficult when Ritu could not contribute a vehicle in her dowry. Firstly, her husband’s family began to criticise Ritu’s family; but before long this changed to violence and beatings, as they demanded Ritu bring more money from her parents. In addition, Ritu was not given proper food or opportunity to rest. One day, she was so badly beaten up that Ritu called her mother and told her all that had been going on. On hearing this, her mother and brother came and took Ritu home.
Ritu’s mother knew about the helpline and called to register her daughter’s case. The case was taken up by a counsellor who then brought the case to the Panchayat (women’s council). Notice was sent to Ritu’s husband’s family, and both families attended the council hearing.

After 4 hearings, through which Ritu was supported financially, the case was settled. Her husband and his family submitted a written apology and committed to take Ritu back and look after her properly.

To follow up, the Panchayat members and the DBS helpline team visited Ritu and her husband a further three times. They found Ritu to be happy and not fearful any longer. Ritu’s parents are happy with the outcome of the case, and are now raising awareness of the helpline in their local area of Delhi. An image of a women’s council meeting in Delhi.

The Delhi Brotherhood Society continues to reach out to disadvantaged people within the communities it serves, and is deeply grateful to the Rochester Diocese Poverty and Hope Appeal for their continued partnership and generous support.

**Points for continued prayer**

- Praise God for Delhi Brotherhood Society’s Women’s Helpline in Delhi which has helped several women who have suffered domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape.
- Special prayers for Pooja (name changed) a rape victim that she may be completely healed and live confidently with her family.
- Pray for Simran (name changed) who was repeatedly bitten up by her in-laws, rescued and rehabilitated by the support from DBS Women’s helpline. May God once again bring joy to her and that she may integrate into the wider society.
- Pray particularly for protection, wisdom and strength to DBS staff as they often risk their lives through this work.
Poverty and Hope Appeal: 2016 update from the Democratic Republic of Congo

Accountable Governance in the DRC
Partnered with Christian Aid, supported by Poverty and Hope since 2016

As the first few months of the project come to a close, exciting change is beginning to take place in the DRC, all thanks to the innovative work of our partner the Episcopal Justice and Peace Committee (EJPC). In our update from across the province of Maniema, we share stories of people empowered, raising their voices to help bring about real change.

Working towards trust In the DRC, many people have been too scared to speak out for their most basic human rights, such as clean drinking water, education and democracy. They’re scared of being punished, or scared simply that their voices will not be heard by corrupt politicians at every level of government. Two long wars have left the country in a state of instability and fear, where there has been a constant threat of violence, and women have been too scared to enter public spaces alone for fear of sexual abuse or abduction.

Father-of-two Mushabah Saleh Baudouin thinks that bad governance is the worst part of living in the DRC, one of the poorest countries in the world. He wanted to use the skills he learned training to be a lawyer to make a difference to the lives of those most in need, empowering people to help themselves.

Saleh wants to help the people of the DRC to find their voice and end bad governance.

As part of the project, Saleh is working in the position of Supervisor of the CLPP, which is the Provincial Parliamentary Liaison Committee for the whole of the Maniema province. The CLPP works together with local organisations to make politicians accountable for their actions, and ensure that they are serving the needs of the people and not just themselves. He wants to help the local population to realise the potential they have to influence local policy, working together in a community of trust, rather than of fear.

Part of Saleh’s role has been to train people in grassroots organisations – groups that work from the ground up, bringing people together in the local community to make change happen – and give them the tools they need to better communicate with the local authorities. Better communication and understanding of how advocacy works has brought diverse groups together, and working together as a network has given them greater power to influence the decisions made by local authority representatives. As a result, new policies take into account the community’s needs.

‘Bad governance is the worst part of living in the DRC’

Thanks to Saleh’s training, local groups are more aware of how to raise the concerns of the population. They know how to create a constructive dialogue between the people and the politicians, making sure every voice is heard. Already, there is less resentment and more transparency in the Maniema government, and the people have secured life-changing wins!
The most important thing for Saleh has been that people are working together to create change, allowing trust to grow between the politicians and the people, creating a safer society for everyone.

‘Before this project started, I felt I could not trust any of the politicians here in the DRC, and particularly the local that they are thieves, that they are liars and criminals. But the project has already allowed me to see this isn’t true, and that thinking so negatively doesn’t help make change in favour of the citizens.’

**Change spreads far and wide**

In Kailo, one of the seven territories that make up Maniema, the people have already succeeded in releasing funds to pay for the maintenance of drinking water sources. Clean, safe water is now secure for more people, all because of the dedication of the local group.

*This project will change the lives of residents through the Maniema province.*

But more exciting still, the lobbying of government has meant the local authorities are rethinking their attitudes towards women across the entirety of the province. This has led to increased access for women to be able to enter public spaces, something that was unthinkable in the previous climate of fear. Thanks to this project, the women of the DRC – who are hit hardest by poverty – are claiming their rights, stepping out in dignity.

‘*Working with this project has allowed me to see that we can all work together to make change that benefits us all*’

In the town of Kasuku, the local mayor has been convinced of the importance of participatory government. Participatory government means making sure democracy is working as it should, and that all members of the population have the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to decision making. He has instructed the politician who is responsible for rural development in Kasuku to attend all the meetings held by the local grassroots group, and to participate in all activities. Now, a direct line of communication between the population and the government has been opened up, a partnership which is full of exciting potential for the years to come.

*A local group learns about communication channels between governance groups.*

The mayor of Mikelenge has given the local group their own meeting room in the government offices, giving the group a base from which they communicate both with the local people and with the authorities. Having this space within the local government building also means the mayor is able to attend the meetings of the group, allowing the group an opportunity to influence the decisions made by the mayor concerning the community.

In the city of Kindu, which is the most densely populated area of the Maniema province, the Honorable Ngumbu (one of the city’s elected officials) has organised a public forum for the people, meaning that local politicians must be accountable for their actions. It offers local people a chance to have their say about the changes being made.

For a country like the DRC, the idea that communities could influence local policy, that politicians would have to be accountable to the people they represent, for a long time seemed unrealistic, even unthinkable. Now, thanks
to the work of the project, changes are beginning to take place, and the people in the Maniema province are beginning to trust their local authorities again.

**Looking to the future**

Saleh is ambitious, and hopes that the local groups will be able to use the media to continue to spread the word of the good work being done by the project throughout the province. With increased visibility the local grassroots organisations can continue to work with the people to support development activities and increase the quality of life throughout Maniema. Thank you for your continued support, which makes this transformation possible.

**Please join us in lifting this project up to God:**

- Pray for the women who are reclaiming their independence and dignity, as they step out into public spaces, learning to live without the constant fear of sexual violence.
- Pray for the local authorities across the Maniema Province, that they continue to listen to the needs of their people and be accountable for their actions.
- Give thanks for Saleh, and to all the project staff, who are working hard to ensure that the local authorities and the local people have the tools they need to work together towards peace.
Poverty and Hope Appeal: November: 2016 update from Chemba, Tanzania

Making bricks for a better future

Building the Chemba Vocational Centre. Partnered with the Rochester Diocese Partnership Group, supported by Poverty and Hope since 2013.

A fundamental principle in the building of the Chemba Vocational Centre, in the Kondoa diocese in Tanzania is to empower young people to improve their quality of life by increasing access to vocational training and secondary education.

Aided by resources and support from the Poverty & Hope Appeal, the hardworking team in Chemba have made a further 7500 bricks this year. The business plan has been finalised, bills of quantities for all the buildings have been prepared and meetings with various government officials have ensured that all the required building conditions have been met.

Using funds from the Poverty & Hope appeal, building work on the first classrooms is scheduled to start soon. This will bring the young people of Chemba a step closer towards gaining educational, practical and marketable skills that will enable them to generate an income, support their families and ease their dependency on subsistence farming in the future.

We pray that everything will be in place so that construction work on the vocational centre can start imminently. We pray too for Bishop Given and the staff in the Diocesan office in Kondoa that they might have both the human and financial resources to manage this project.

Photos: making bricks for the Chemba Vocational Centre - Sabrina Derham