

**ESSENTIAL LIFE SAVING SKILLS FOR AFRICA
CHAIRPERSONS REPORT YEAR 2021-2022
DR PAUL WEIR**

The last 2 years have been dominated by the COVID SARS 2 pandemic which has affected all our lives and activities; and from the point of view of ELSSA there was no possibility of organising EONC projects in Africa during 2021-22.

ESSENTIAL OBSTETRIC (MATERNAL) AND NEWBORN CARE COURSES (EONC)

To date the ELSSA teams have EONC trained some 372 Health care staff in South Sudan; comprising:- 205 Midwives; 153 Doctors and Associate specialists and 14 Midwifery Tutors (from JCONAM). In addition, some progress has been made on the sustainability of EONC training with the initial training of 4 South Sudanese facilitators.

The 'Helping Babies Breathe' project has trained 192 midwives in HBB techniques and distributed 165 resuscitators in South Sudan. A local audit suggests that these Newborn 'bag and mask' resuscitators are being valued and used.

In my opinion, all future courses should have a major focus on developing sustainability of training e.g. Training the Trainers activity in order to increase the sustainability of EONC training

The current understanding of the efficacy of vaccination and the now widespread exposure to the infection with COVID in the UK, with currently low morbidity and the relaxation of air travel restrictions; suggests that it is now possible to consider taking an EONC training team to Africa. Clearly the low rates of vaccination in most African countries is an adverse factor as is the lack of reliable population infection data.

Essentially all the travelling team must be fully vaccinated and there may well have to be some form of screening of attendees e.g. antigen /lateral flow tests; and or to adopt various social distancing and barrier precautions although these are relatively impractical in the 'hands-on' teaching environment.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

The current status of governance in Africa and in particular South Sudan must give rise to concern for future courses. In my view, the fact that there are now two ruling parties vying for power in Juba has increased the potential risks. A sudden unpredictable deterioration in the security situation remains possible, and could be prompted by a number of factors including developments in the fragile economy or the ongoing peace process. Certainly, travel outside Juba cannot be contemplated except in an extreme emergency.

This risk profile will need to be kept under constant scrutiny prior to departure. Any planned courses would have to be prepared to cancel at short notice if circumstances change. As always, each member of the ELSSA team would have to carefully consider how such an event would affect them. ELSSA will have to develop an exit plan in case of an emergency and explore alternative exit routes.

**EONC IN SOUTH SUDAN AND THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS POSTGRADUATE CENTER;
JUBA TEACHING HOSPITAL.**

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Dr Frederick Khamis Tawad.

Dr Fred was a general surgeon and was the Director of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Post Graduate Centre (PGC). He was our main contact in Juba with a warm smile and helpful co-operation

and was fundamental to the success of the EONC project in recent years. Strategically he facilitated links between ELSSA and the then Minister of Health, Dr Riek. He was instrumental in the development and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between ELSSA and the RSS Ministry of Health and the PGC. On a practical level He facilitated the team's access through the vagaries of the Juba airport/immigration. He also ensured services in the PGC as well as the team transport.

Prior to his involvement, the ELSSA EONC project the project was struggling to establish itself and network with the Medical and Midwifery authorities both at hospital level and nationally. His loss is a major setback in the EONC project in South Sudan which ultimately could threaten its viability.

Essentially this means that the partnership that had been developed has largely dissipated and so ELSSA will have to seek to develop new contacts and relationships within the College of Physicians and Surgeons of South Sudan and The College of Midwives South Sudan

EONC EQUIPMENT

Some of the teaching equipment and mannequins need to be replaced and some additional equipment would be needed if it was decided to run EONC courses in other countries or regions. This would mean that we would need to acquire or purchase equipment. I would appeal to our supporters that if you are aware of teaching equipment being replaced or disposed of that you would consider suggesting that it would be donated to ELSSA. If you are planning a fund-raising project consider the purchase of pieces of equipment as a primary fundraising goal.

The Helping Babies Breathe project has been very successful and virtually all of the equipment purchased (185 resuscitators) has now been distributed. Possibly 15 Resuscitators and 3 NeoNatalie Training kits remaining.

It is estimated that a further order of 200 upright resuscitators, and new training Mannequins would cost approx. £6300.

FUNDING

Obviously, it was not possible to carry out the usual fund-raising activities during 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. As the situation continues to clarify I would encourage all our supporters to consider funding raising activities during the latter half of this year. We will need to raise in the order of £22,000.

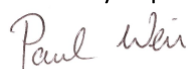
The Trustees continue to attempt to identify sources of funding and will keep you informed if there are ways in which you can help,

We have had to move our donation platform to Enthuse as VMG has discontinued its charity support. Enthuse facilitates donating and fund-raising projects and it facilitates the GiftAid process. One drawback has arisen, the site 'requests' a 'contribution or tip' to Enthuse, and suggests 12%. I am in the process of placing a warning on our donation page to warn donors that this 'contribution' is not necessary.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The ELSSA internet site, Facebook Page and Twitter account all of which were somewhat underutilised. I would encourage you to get involved with these media and actively use them to promote your interest in ELSSA and any fund-raising activities that you plan.

I sincerely hope that 2022 will see the re-establishment of Essential Skills Training in Africa.



Dr Paul Weir
Chairperson; May 2022