

Wessex connections with South Sudan

Even before independence, there have been links with Sudan, the Salisbury Diocese link going back decades. A medical link was made in 2007 between St Mary's Hospital on the Isle of Wight and the main hospital in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. As a result of initiatives by Dr Eluzai Hakim at St Mary's, further hospital links developed, which included

- [The Poole Africa Link with Wau](#)
- [The Winchester link with Yei](#)
- [Discussions between Dorchester Hospital and Rumbek](#)
- [Vision 20:20 supported by ophthalmologists in Poole](#)

Other links, some of which have been longstanding, included

- [Brickworks and Yei](#)
- [Salisbury Sudan Medical Link](#)
- [Healthcare South Sudan with Kajo-Keji](#)
- [CRESS-UK and Kajo-Keji](#)
- [Medical training link that involved the Royal College of Physicians](#)
- [South Sudan Medical Journal](#)

What has happened to these links?

Visits to South Sudan were made and partnerships strengthened, but civil unrest and attacks on aid workers eventually made it too dangerous for Wessex partners to visit South Sudan. COVID has now prevented travel. Fundraising continues and training at the KajoKeji Health Training Institute is being undertaken, with support now being given through remote learning.

What are the health needs in South Sudan?

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Relief's June, 2021, report says

- The people are facing their highest levels of food insecurity since independence 10 years ago
- The impact of a lean season this year is expected to be the worst on record

- Conflict, displacement, flooding, loss of livelihoods, COVID-19 and an inability to reach health care and schools have created urgent humanitarian and protection need, especially for women and children.
- Attacks against communities, humanitarian workers and assets are on the rise.

In 2021

- 8.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance
- 7.2 million people will face severe acute food insecurity between April and July
- 3.9 million people remain displaced inside and outside the country
- 1.4 million children under 5 years are expected to be acutely malnourished

Only 30% of the \$1.68 billion funding required has been made available.

What next?

The health and wellbeing of ordinary people in South Sudan have suffered from decades of high level political power struggles. Until there is a political solution this will not change and there are no signs at the moment of this happening. As a consequence, the welfare of ordinary people will rely on humanitarian aid and, therefore, the willingness of wealthy countries to continue to provide this. Wessex partnerships with South Sudan colleagues will continue to be important.

If you would like to enquire about becoming involved in work to support South Sudan, then click on any of the partnership links above to find out more.

More information

- [UN OCHA Report on South Sudan, June 2021](#)
- [Information from MSF on current health needs](#)

Item from the 23 July 2021 newsletter of the Wessex & South West Global Health, UK. To receive the newsletter email john.acres@winchester.ac.uk