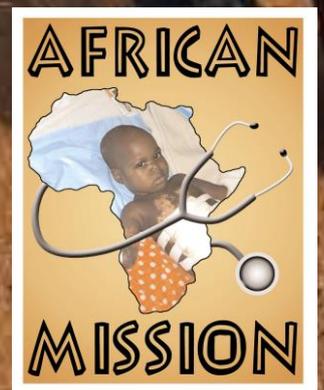
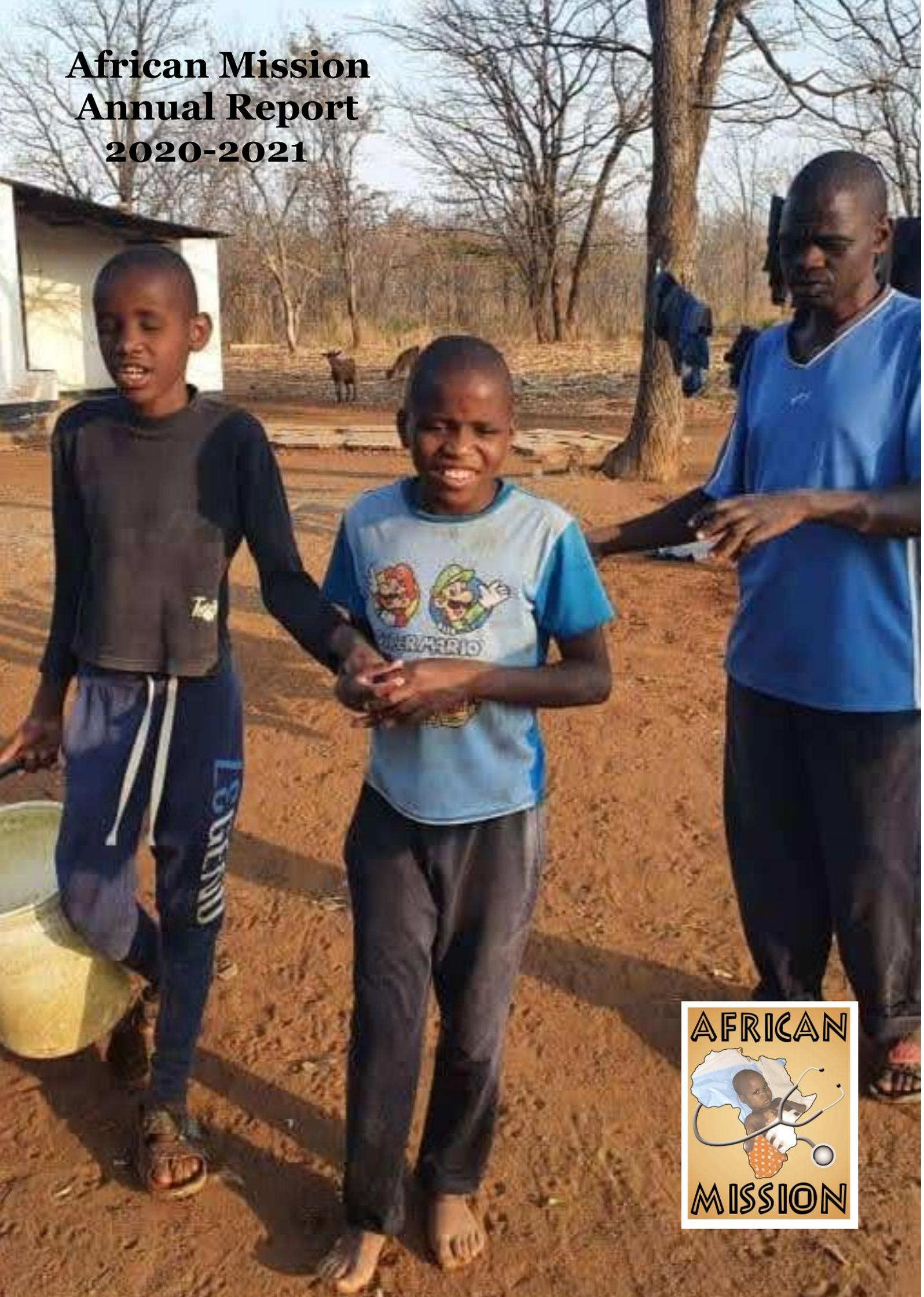


# African Mission Annual Report 2020-2021

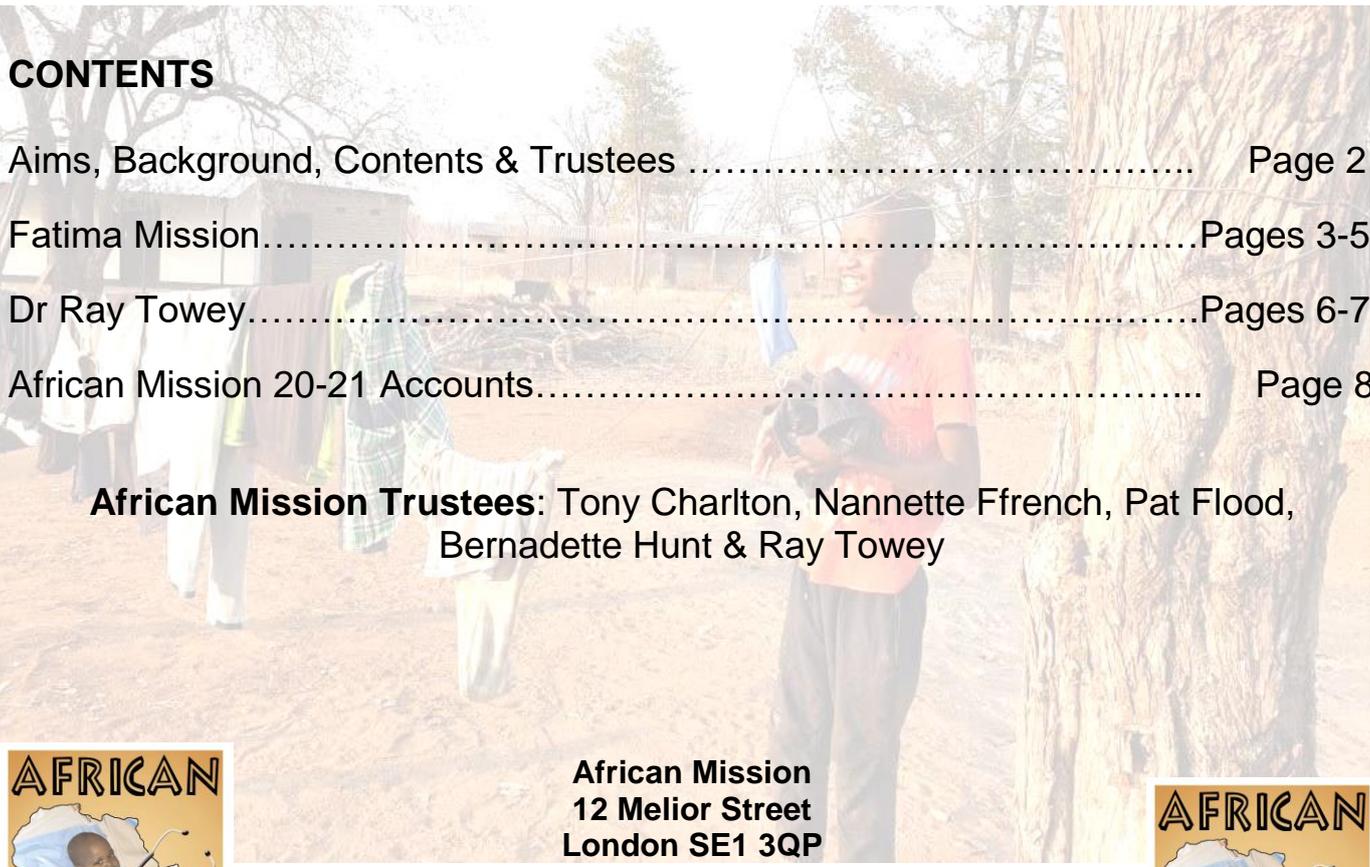


The Aim of African Mission is “To fight disease and poverty in Africa by supporting educational & medical projects”.

**Background:** African Mission began in 2003 to support the work of Dr Ray Towey MB ChB FRCA. Dr Towey left his post as a Consultant Anaesthetist in Guys Hospital, London to work in Africa and since 1993 has dedicated his life to the improvement of health care for the poor in Africa. He has worked as an Anaesthetist in rural hospitals in Nigeria and Tanzania and since 2002 in St Mary’s Hospital, Gulu, Uganda.

In Uganda Dr Towey has been involved in the training of anaesthetic officers, nurses, and medical students over that time. He is now a part time volunteer and is focusing in the development of the intensive care ward, measuring the outcomes of specific diseases amenable to intensive care in rural Africa, sustaining the equipment for respiratory support, working to improve intensive care nursing and researching the data to indicate the effectiveness and sustainability of appropriate inexpensive intensive care in rural sub-Saharan Africa.

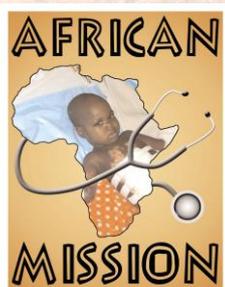
In July 2009 following a visit to Zimbabwe by Nannette & Dr Towey, African Mission decided to expand its work to include supporting projects based in Zimbabwe. The main Zimbabwean project supported is Fatima Mission. Fatima Mission is a very large mission (600 sq miles in size) based in rural Zimbabwe, approximately 130 miles north of Bulawayo and a similar distance south of Victoria Falls. Practically everyone living within Fatima Mission’s boundaries are poor subsistence farmers. It has 16 primary schools, 5 secondary schools, a clinic and a project for disabled children within its boundaries.



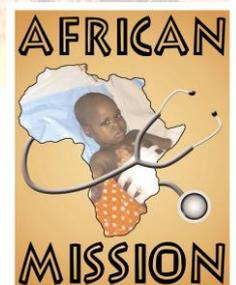
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**African Mission Trustees:** Tony Charlton, Nannette Ffrench, Pat Flood, Bernadette Hunt & Ray Towey



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# Fatima Mission

Fatima Mission is a very large mission (900 sq kms in size) based in rural Zimbabwe. The majority of those living within its boundaries are poor subsistence farmers reliant on Maize, Chomolia (a green vegetable) and a few cows, goats or chickens as their only source of food. The mission is run by a Roman Catholic order of Franciscan priests known as The Order of Friars Minor Capuchin or Capuchins for short. It has a church, a pastoral centre, a number of primary and secondary schools, a clinic and a project for disabled young people within its boundaries. Fr Jeya Muthusami is the Priest-in-Charge of Fatima Mission.



The most isolated group living within Fatima Mission were those young people who had a disability. By and large they were regarded as a burden, with a very bleak future ahead of them. Fr Jeya felt that an education, even a basic one, would improve their life chances. In 2011, with the help of African Mission, he set up a residential project where this could be achieved. The project which began with 6 disabled young people in 2011 has now grown to accommodate 17 young people and 2 blind adults this year. Of the 17 young people, 10 have hearing impairments, 6 are visually impaired and 1 is physically handicapped. Many of the young people were being looked after by a single parent or a relative, many of whom are in poor health and living in poverty.

They live at the project during term time and attend a nearby school. However, due to Coronavirus restrictions they were unable to attend the project from March to September 2020 and although they returned in October they were sent home again in January 2021, when Zimbabwe went into another lockdown. Thankfully the young people were able to return on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. The school is the only school in the province offering a specific education for blind and mute young people. In addition to their academic education they also learn skills to help them live and prosper with their disabilities. Thanks to the education they are receiving and the fact that they are living in community with others, their confidence and ability to relate with others is growing.

At the end of the school day however there was no activities to occupy the young people so Fr Jeya decided to rectify this by building an activities centre – see photo below. The centre



consists of a large room with three smaller rooms behind this large room. The large room is used as a dining room and a sports room. One of the three smaller rooms will be used as a library, a second as a music room and the third as a computer room. As can be seen from the above photo the external part of the building is now complete.

To date we have raised the £10,033 needed to cover the furniture costs for the library and musical instruments for the music room. We are in the process of raising the £7,776 needed to furnish the computer room.

Even more importantly than the funds for the activities centre; thanks to our supporters we have been able to cover the school fees and living costs for the 17 young people and 2 blind adults living at the project in the last 12 months. It costs £510 per year to cover the costs of one young person's school fees and living costs.

**It costs £510 per year to cover the costs of one young person's school fees and living costs.**

Fr. Gabriel has been working alongside Fr Jeya at Fatima Mission for the last 15 months.

### **Fr. Gabriel writes FATIMA'S SPECIAL CHILDREN**



It has been said that it is better to give than to receive. African Mission is giving and you are in the best position. We are really grateful for the help and care you have provided for these special children. If not for you, these disabled children wouldn't have been in this wonderful situation. Therefore, on behalf of these children, I would like to extend my immense gratitude and moreover, I wish you the blessings from God.

Through your help, we have been able to have a borehole with plenty of water at the site of the Pastoral Centre of the Mission. We erected two water tanks containing 10,000 litres each. Recently, we have installed a solar pumping system and it is working well. On the other hand, we are working on, for the development of the library, computer and musical instruments.

#### **Brief report about our special children in Fatima Mission (April 2020-March 2021):**

As we have all experienced with the Covid 19 pandemic, the life and studying of these children has not been stable. Due to the statutory lockdowns and reopenings, there has been a lot of toing and froing between home and the Mission for the children this year. Therefore, it has affected so much of their studies and community life. According to their experiences; during brief stays at home, their lives have been boring and difficult. For example, this is how one of the visually impaired boys whose name is Oskar expressed his sentiments: 'I missed my friends, I wanted to be with them, because together we can chat and entertain one another, I can hear and learn something from them. Now, I am at home and I am alone, I feel lonely and bored and have nothing to hear or to learn'. Many other children expressed similar feelings. That is how important it is for them to be in community; they desired so much to commune with their friends. This leads us to see how joyful and healthy it is for these children, being together and interact with one another in community life.

The last lockdown has now been lifted and this allowed all the children to return to the Mission in September 2021. During the lockdowns and lockdown easings, we tried our best to reach some of the most vulnerable children in their homes; taking them to their families and bringing them back to the Mission and sometimes assisting them financially.

Although, sometimes the lockdowns were eased, the schools were not functioning fully. However, we created an environment whereby they can be busy learning something and learning through entertainment. For example: we arranged teachers for the hearing and visually impaired children to teach them braille and to weave baskets at the Pastoral Centre. We also provided radios for some and keyboards and guitars for those who wished to learn these.



On the other hand, we thank very much Mr. Ken Lee who donated musical instruments (Marimba) and arranged teachers to teach the children – see photo on left. This both delighted and amazed the children. Almost all of the children, including the hearing and visually impaired were so quick and fast to learn how to play the Marimba and to sing and dance. It was really a surprise for us to see the harmony of music and dance among the children who have different challenges. We also have a teacher who has volunteered to teach the blind adults too. On our part, we Friars also assist them in giving extra lessons in addition to their regular curriculum; beside checking their exercise books, we also assist them to have a good spiritual and moral life.

I have come recently to Fatima Mission as an assistant Parish Priest to Fr Jeya who is the priest in charge. He is a man of great heart who devotes himself to the service of others. He has a particular love for these disabled children. He tries every means to make them happy and prosper. On the other hand, I was also impressed by the standard life and manner of these children; they are ready to listen and cooperate in any activities. I came to Fatima Mission fifteen months ago and although it is my first time working with physically challenged children, for me It is very touching and interesting. I have grown to love them and have been moved by them also. I look forward to continue to be with them and to assist and help them.



# Dr Ray Towey



Dr Towey has volunteered at St Mary's Hospital Lacor, Gulu, Uganda since 2002 (part time since 2008).

He had previously been in Tanzania for 8 years. St Mary's is a not for profit, church supported, general hospital of 476 beds in northern Uganda which is a very deprived post conflict zone. For many years it had a small four-bed Intensive Care Unit (ICU) near the operating theatre, which was upgraded to an eight-bed unit.

Since 2002 Dr Towey has been involved in the training of anaesthetic officers, nurses, and medical students. He is now a part time volunteer and is focusing in the development of the intensive care ward.

## Dr Towey writes:

The dominating reality for everyone in Uganda over the last 12 months, and I am writing this in September 2021, is of course the Covid-19 pandemic. As one of the poorest countries in the world the Covid-19 pandemic is now the cruellest of realities for the people of rural Uganda. In United Kingdom we have seen that the pandemic has accentuated the inequalities of society and that has been the reality on a global scale especially in Africa.



In 2020 it seemed that rural Africa might avoid some of the worst effects of this terrible virus but now in its second wave in 2021 we have seen that Uganda has been severely affected. The statistics in rural Africa are always difficult to obtain because the health infrastructure remains very frail but so far it seems that in Uganda the total number of Covid-19 cases is around 120,000 with about 3,000 deaths. This is most likely an underestimate. In St.Mary's Hospital Lacor the statistics are more secure with 305 cases reported and 103 deaths. It is sad to report that one member of staff, Brother Elio, died of Covid-19 in 2020. He had been a key worker in the engineering department for many years and his presence in the hospital will be sadly missed. He was instrumental with his team in setting up the intensive care unit as it now is in its modern open plan Nightingale ward design.

Covid-19 is a viral disease which in its initial stages was regarded as a viral pneumonia but it soon became evident that this virus affects many systems besides the lungs. The kidneys, the clotting systems of the blood and the heart can be affected as well as the lungs. As the virus

is a multisystem disease the limitations of intensive care possibilities in rural Africa becomes more evident but there is still much that can be done for a Covid-19 patient even in remote rural Africa. The supportive treatments of oxygen at high flow using non-rebreathing masks, fluid management and steroids and with antibiotics when indicated for added bacterial infection can save many lives and offer hope.

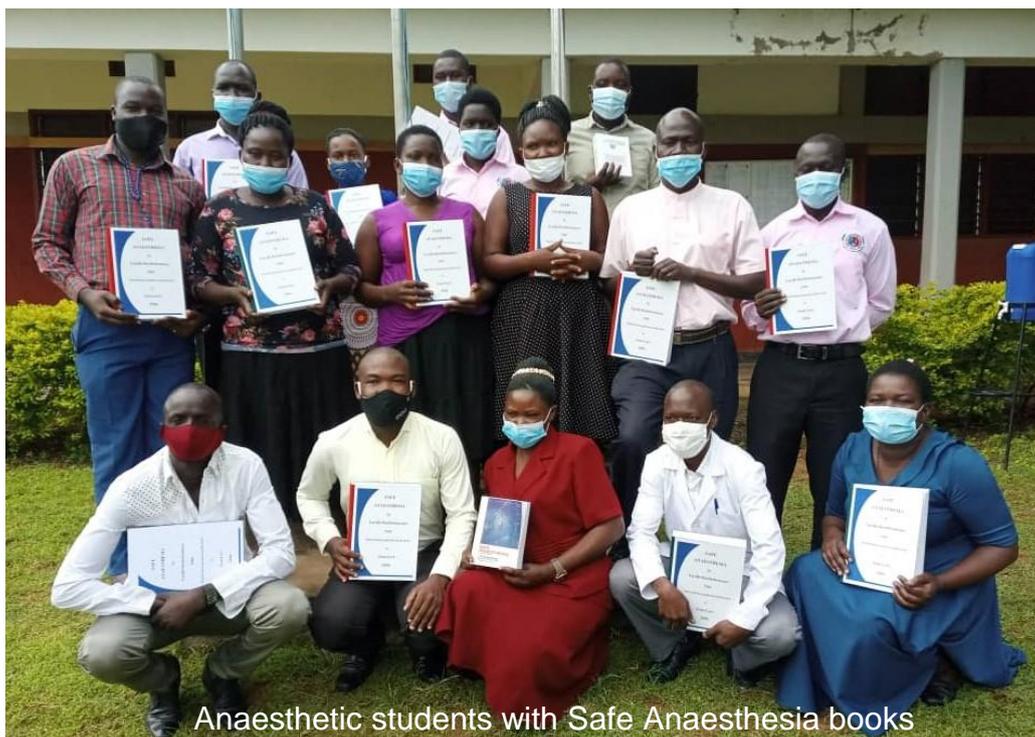
African Mission has done its best over the last year to support the hospital in these vital areas of care. We thank all our donors who have allowed us to be an active support to the hospital in these areas of capacity building.

On the other hand the possibilities of getting a vaccine for the ordinary person in Uganda at this time is virtually nil. The staff of all hospitals have been offered a vaccine and teachers and law enforcement personnel are the next priority but there is little hope for the remaining Ugandan citizens. The population of Uganda is about 45 million and to-date Uganda has received approximately 1.5 million doses from a variety of international sources. The UK gave only 196,000 doses. It is sad to write that the international response to getting Covid-19 vaccines to Africa is scandalously inadequate. African Mission continues to do its best to support our sisters and brothers in Uganda that face this terrible virus and the worsening poverty that it is producing.



In the 20-21 financial year African Mission has assisted Dr Towey and St Mary's Hospital in the following ways:

- By purchasing medical equipment which included oxygen masks, high concentration oxygen mask, oximeters, ventilator filters, neonatal oxygen cannula and forehead thermometers and catheters (£2,843 including shipping costs)
- By paying the course fees and living costs for one nurse (£833)
- The printing & purchasing of 'Safe Anaesthesia' books for first year students (£551)



Anaesthetic students with Safe Anaesthesia books

## AFRICAN MISSION 20-21 ACCOUNTS

	Year ended 31st March 2021	Year ended 31st March 2020
<b>Receipts</b>		
Donations	60719	45427
Interest received	0	0
	-----	-----
<b>Total Receipts</b>	60719	45427
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Medical/educational		
Uganda	5806	9009
Zimbabwe	38624	29775
	-----	-----
	44430	38784
Administration		
Office costs	1210	119
Fundraising	171	477
Salaries	7950	7130
Travel	0	0
	-----	-----
	9331	7726
<b>Total expenditure</b>	53761	46510
<b>Receipts less expenditure</b>	6958	-1083
	Year ended 31st March 2021	Year ended 31st March 2020
Cash at bank	10442	2932
Debtors		
	-----	-----
	10442	2932
Liabilities	603	51
	-----	-----
	9839	2881
Reserves	2881	3964
Surplus/ deficit for year	6958	-1083
	-----	-----
	9839	2881