

sudan sunrise

Preparing for COVID 19 with no cell coverage or newspapers

"Where is this coming from? Has someone made this to kill us? Has God cursed us?" questioned a mother at the community gathering. Good information is hard to come by in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan where very few people have internet connections, and there are no cell phone connections or newspapers.

Now in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, one hears the periodic beating of drums and clanging of metal pots. This is to drive away the coming curse. Fires are being lit to drive away the evil spirits.

110 nursing students at Kush State University have been on a COVID 19 preparation mission in four surrounding counties. *"Making noise and lighting fires doesn't help. Wash your hands frequently, keep your distance and cough into your arm,"* explains a KSU student from Darfur. *"This is caused by something so small you can't even see it,"* says Ismail Dabura, the head of the nursing school and one of the four nursing instructors.

By volunteering for the region's COVID response, KSU's students know they are putting themselves at risk, and have signed releases documenting that. They know that when they begin treating COVID the glove supply is limited and they will not have protective clothing.

There are 110 nurses who would like to cover as much of the Nuba Mountains, and Blue Nile as possible. But they are asking us for special funding to help them respond to the COVID crisis.

One key focus of the COVID teams is to promote the planting of the Moringa tree, and the consumption of its leaves which are rich in vitamins and minerals. Although not a cure for COVID, this is a strategic way to address the widespread malnutrition, and help everyone strengthen their immune systems.

The two hospitals in the region have invited the other 80 nurses (who are in their third year) to help respond to the expected influx of patients. KSU is very pleased the Dr. Tom Catena of Mother of Mercy Hospital (and the subject of the film, "The Heart of Nuba") is happy to have the KSU students and is pleased with their good work.

So far there are three patients at Dr. Tom's hospital who may have COVID 19. They are being treated in a special tent to isolate them from the other patients. No one knows for sure if they have COVID, as testing is not available.

One wonderful and unplanned benefit is that KSU's COVID 19 teams demonstrate widely the value of Muslims and Christians and others working together. Earlier this year in the Blue Nile region [churches were burned](#). Last month leaders in the Blue Nile asked if they could send ten students to study at KSU. Once there, they will learn the value of Muslims and Christians working together. Not only is KSU empowering young Nubans to bring health to the marginalized, but they are also helping to heal the damage done by decades of oppressive leadership that stayed in power through divide and rule, exploiting religious differences.



COVID isolation tent at Mother Mercy Hospital



COVID community meeting in Nuba Mountains

Future Generation School: So many great things happening at the Future Generation Primary School in Rumbek! Thanks to the Catholic Diocese of Rumbek, the school is in the process of building two more primary school classrooms. The classrooms will give the school some much needed extra space to accomodate their ever-growing student roster. In addition to their growth, every student enrolled in the primary eight class passed their national exams as well as many of the students enrolled in other grades!



Manute Bol School: Thanks to John Akot for reaching out to the Norwegian Refugee Council. The NRC has built a new building on their campus in Turalei.



Stay well!



Tom Prichard
Executive Director

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