



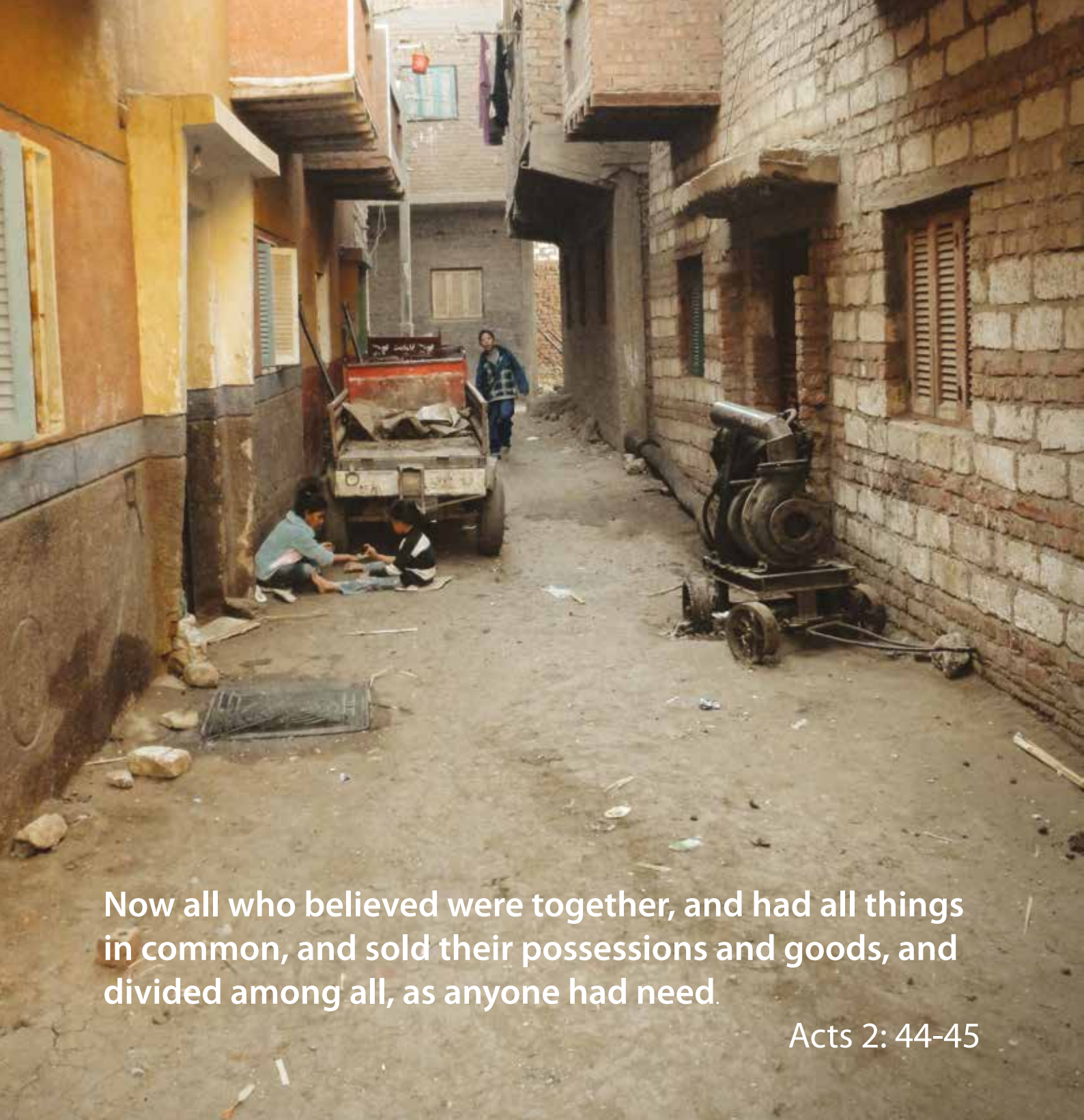
Annual report 2014/15

Making the impossible possible



St Mark Universal Copts Care





Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided among all, as anyone had need.

Acts 2: 44-45



[www.stmarkuniversalcopticcare.org](http://www.stmarkuniversalcopticcare.org)  
*Making the impossible possible*

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# Chairman's report

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It is a great privilege to be reporting on the activities of the first year of St Mark Universal Copts Care's operation.

Already, it has been an incredible journey to bring together young people to serve in this mission to relieve poverty in Egypt and Sudan.

It is a journey which has brought the privilege of meeting so many incredible people.

Firstly, there have been the young people in our community who have come forward to serve their brothers and sisters abroad: the charity now has 84 registered youth volunteers.

## **Working to combat poverty**

Secondly, there have been those with whom we work to combat poverty – ministers in the papal office of Pope Tawadros II, across all its dioceses and our partners in the many charities which already exist to support Copts who face the challenges of poverty, persecution and ill health.

Above all, though, it has been a privilege to meet those we are seeking to support. There have been so many incredibly moving experiences as we have got on the ground to quantify needs and begun our work to put strategies and plans in place to address them. We are humbled daily by the lives of those people and their optimism in the face of often dire circumstances.

## **Founded in the belief that real change is possible**

St Mark Universal Copts Care is founded in the absolute belief that we will be able to bring about real change and break the cycle of poverty for the millions of Copts living in Egypt and Sudan.

The key for us is our commitment to taking a universal approach. It is universal in a number of senses.

Firstly, our approach is 'universal' in that we aim to look at the bigger picture, to assess the whole need; as it is only by gaining a complete and accurate overview of what is required that we will be able to respond appropriately.

Secondly, it is universal in that we are not looking to achieve this on our own but, by sharing this information with charities that already exist to support Copts, we are finding that we are able to channel support more effectively and ensure seamless services rather than a piecemeal approach.

## **A universal approach based on a vision of unity**

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, our universal approach is founded on a vision of unity; of people acting as one body in Christ to help all members in that body, and act as the church did in its earliest days, supporting one another to ensure that no one went in need.



In our first year, we have found that as we have taken the first steps on this journey, we have been blessed with support that has enabled us to make significant progress towards our vision. We have completed and published the first comprehensive assessment of needs across Coptic dioceses; we have established partnerships with a number of Coptic charities; and, perhaps most significantly, we have founded and launched St Mark Universal Copts Care.

The 'Unity' event which formally launched the charity in April 2015 allowed us to reach out to the wider community and we trust this will prove the start of significant awareness-raising and fundraising efforts.

### **Healthcare - a key area**

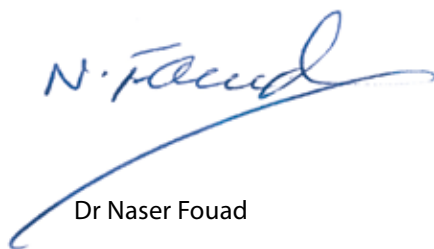
Through our work so far, we have identified a key area where support is lacking and where we can make a difference: in the vital aspect of healthcare.

Our research has shown that health issues, compounded by lack of education, are reinforcing a downwards spiral of ill health and poverty. Many conditions, which are treatable or preventable, are hampering people's ability to secure employment and quality of life, simply because there isn't the awareness or safe treatments available.

In its first year, St Mark has commenced work to implement a healthcare strategy that is seeing new and modern healthcare facilities established, people trained in providing safe treatment and a centralised procurement system to purchase medicines and reduce costs across all Coptic dioceses.

It is our vision that our efforts, both through direct appeals and strategic coordination, will begin to make real inroads into establishing a modern healthcare service that is accessible to all.

We are still at the beginning of this journey, but the first steps have been taken, and we hope that you will agree that much progress has been made, and that you will feel inspired to support us to build on these foundations in the years ahead.



Dr Naser Fouad

Chairman





# Objectives

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St Mark Universal Copts Care is a UK based charity with a mission to relieve poverty, focusing initially in Egypt and Sudan.

Three categories have been prioritised as the most urgent areas of need, as follows:

## Healthcare Development



**The charity has developed an innovative healthcare strategy, working in conjunction with our partners, to provide high quality care in a cost-effective manner.**

## Economic Development



**We are working to reduce unemployment by supporting small and medium sized projects that create sustainable livelihoods.**

## Social Development



**We provide new families in deprived areas with basic utilities, facilitating a brighter future.**

## Governance

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St Mark Universal Copts Care is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 24 October 2013. It is a charity registered with the Charity Commission on 23 January 2014.

The charity is governed by a board of trustees, responsible for setting the strategic direction and policies of the organisation and ensuring it meets its legal and contractual obligations.





# How we work

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St Mark Universal Copts Care was established to fill a number of gaps identified in the provision of support to Christians in Egypt and Sudan. These have informed the way the charity works and some of its distinctive features.

## 1. Strategic approach

One of the challenges identified early on by the founders of St Mark Universal Copts Care was the lack of information in terms of quantifying people's needs and gaining an overall picture of what help is needed where. It was recognised that this is essential in order for the charity to achieve its vision of providing high quality, integrated and seamless services.

Extensive groundwork was therefore undertaken to research and quantify this need and the results of this inform the way St Mark Universal Copts Care works today.

In collaboration with the papal office of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, St Mark Universal Copts Care conducted a survey of all dioceses and identified ten categories of need.

Dioceses collaborated to quantify needs and prioritise the three most urgent for their people. This exercise has formed the basis of St Mark Universal Copts Care's strategy, projects and appeals.

## 2. The charity for all Coptic charities

Having established an overall picture of people's needs, St Mark Universal Copts Care went on to establish links and partnerships with existing Coptic charities, discussing ways in which they could work together to provide effective support.

The objective has been to ensure that St Mark Universal Copts Care is able to use its comprehensive database to channel resources effectively and co-ordinate with other charities. This ensures efforts are not duplicated and that help reaches people where it is needed most.

The appeals and projects directly co-ordinated by St Mark Universal Copts Care therefore focus on the three areas which were found to be lacking support and where the skills and contacts of the charity's founders could be most effectively applied: healthcare, economic and social development.

## 3. Harnessing the energy of the young

The achievements of St Mark Universal Copts Care to date have been brought about by channelling the talents and energies of young Copts in the UK to serve in the mission of relieving poverty in Egypt and Sudan.

This approach provides great hope for the future, ensuring that current and future generations keep sight of the plight of their brothers and sisters abroad and adhering to the principles of the early church, which met the needs of its members.



# Year One Highlights

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St Mark Universal Copts Care has made significant progress in its first year in a number of key areas:

## **Medicine management strategy**

One simple area where St Mark Universal Copts Care quickly recognised it could make a difference was that of medicine management. It was clear that by ordering medicine separately from the various dioceses, the church was unable to create an economy of scale and take advantage of cost reductions that could be negotiated by ordering as a single entity.

St Mark Universal Copts Care has acted to address this by negotiating a bulk rate with pharmaceutical wholesalers. To complement this, it has implemented a central software system across the various dioceses and providing training so that each one can enter the details of medicines needed each month.

By ordering in bulk on a monthly basis, St Mark Universal Copts Care is able to secure a wholesale price, which translates into a saving of 25-30%. The medicine bill for 27 dioceses is LE 26 million (Egyptian pounds), which reduces to LE 15 million when bought at the wholesale price. St Mark Universal Copts Care is contributing 50% of the funding for medicines, with a budget of LE 7.5 million, reducing the bill further to just LE 7.5 million.

As well as taking advantage of this bulk buying power, the new system ensures that each diocese claims Government funding where people are entitled to it, such as for chronic illnesses. Previously, this was rarely claimed as people did not believe it would be provided.

Initially, this software has been implemented in five dioceses, where co-ordinators have been employed to enter prescriptions onto the system. The intention is to deploy the system in more dioceses and realise the full potential of savings.

## **Mapping healthcare needs**

A second key area of the work of St Mark Universal Copts Care has been to draw up a map of all existing and developing healthcare centres and hospitals, and the facilities available at those centres. This information has been used to help ensure that the charity focuses on complementary health services rather than replicating ones that already exist.

The aim is to equip hospitals with modern technology and a solid framework to produce efficient, self-sufficient hospitals, which serve the local community through vital healthcare treatments and care. A three phase programme is in place to implement this.

Initially, the charity is working to gather information on who has what, undertaking surveys and feasibility studies to report on the hospital infrastructure that already exists, the specialisms provided and services needed. This process results in detailed designs for the healthcare infrastructure changes required in each area.



To this end, a specialist hospital survey contractor has been employed to assess 34 proposed projects. From this, seven locations were selected to establish long term healthcare projects. These are Aswan, Nakada, Der Mawas, Maghagha, Giza, Elbehera and Marakez- El-Shaquia.

A healthcare group is therefore beginning to be formed in Egypt, working towards consistent objectives for standard healthcare management. Training in healthcare management is also being provided, as well as training for lead nurses. These will then cascade training to other nurses recruited to ensure safe, effective care is provided.

### **Online database of needs**

St Mark Universal Copts Care has carried out a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the dioceses in Egypt and Sudan and published this on its website: [www.stmarkuniversalcoptsicare.org.uk](http://www.stmarkuniversalcoptsicare.org.uk)

This database is one of the most frequently visited sections of the website, attracting around 2,000 unique visitors per month. It is the first survey of its kind to be undertaken, providing a unique and comprehensive overview of the scale and categories of support needed in the different dioceses.

### **Partnership with other charities**

As part of its approach to become the 'charity for all Coptic charities', St Mark Universal Copts Care makes its data available to other charities and works in partnership with them to coordinate resources effectively.

It is working closely with three charities, through whom it channels funds. These are: Copts In Need, St Kyril in the UK and St Mina Charity in Egypt.

### **Economic development: micro business loans**

St Mark Universal Copts Care runs a programme to enable people to establish small businesses and the dignity of becoming able to support themselves.

The programme works by providing two to three-year interest-free loans to business projects that will provide long term livelihoods. Individuals are required to demonstrate the feasibility of their proposals and that they have the ability to see the project through. Examples include bakeries and dairy projects, which provide employment and food, and support young people to have the means to be able to start a family

These projects are key to helping people to escape the cycle of poverty. They also fulfil a key aspect of the charity's vision to support people to live in dignity, beyond meeting their physical needs.





# Projects

Projects supported in St Mark Universal Copt Care's first year:

## Monthly support is given to:

- Elbehera (healthcare)
- Elhagana (healthcare)
- Old Cairo (healthcare and social development)
- Der Mawas (healthcare, economic and social development)
- Khartoum (healthcare)

## Healthcare projects:

The charity has begun preparation for a major project to develop four international hospitals and three medical centres. This is expected to take three to four years, with an estimated cost of LE 170 million Egyptian pounds and a further LE 80-90 million for equipment. Locations are:

- Elbehera General Hospital
- Nakada General Hospital
- North Giza General Hospital
- Maghagha General Hospital
- Der Mawas Medical Centre
- Marakez El Sharkia Medical Centre
- Aswan Medical Centre

St Mark Universal Copts Care has also supported the refurbishment of a new biochemistry laboratory for the diocese of Beba's Hospital, purchased a new ambulance for the diocese of Aswan and funded fully the fees for the American University Diploma in Hospital Management for the diocese of Elbehera.

## Education projects:

- In conjunction with the charity, Copts in Need, we have funded the building of two purpose-built nurseries in El-Noba, Sudan
- In conjunction with St Kyril's charity, we fund annually the cost of living for 20 university students
- In conjunction with St Mina charity, we fund students' tuition fees for the diocese of Old Cairo

## Socio-economic projects:

- Der Mawas (bakery project)
- 27 dairy projects have been established, with further projects being funded at a rate of three per month
- 85 newly wed couples provided with white goods to help establish a new home (in Old Cairo, Marakez Alsharkia and Der Mawas)

## Ambulance for Aswan



*In Aswan, it was reported that one of the causes of deaths was people not being able to reach appropriate hospitals in a timely fashion.*

*With a high incidence of road traffic accidents and significant distances involved in travelling to the city's largest hospitals, simply reaching hospital was a significant challenge for people with limited means.*

*An ambulance was proposed as a solution for this and St Mark Universal Copts Care made this happen, providing an ambulance which is now servicing the whole diocese and generating a modest income by implementing a minimal charge for those who can afford it.*

*This simple project is seeing many lives saved.*



# The year in numbers



2507

prescriptions funded



342

operations funded



27

dairy/cattle  
start-ups funded



85

newly-wed couples  
helped to set up home



10

co-ordinators employed  
by St Mark Universal  
Copts Care across  
five dioceses

## Bakery start-ups



£200 will fund a stove that enables people to set up a bakery business. This is what we did for Marina in Elhagana. Widowed, with a young child to support, the loan to fund this stove gave her a vital lifeline to start her own business, selling bread and confectionery. She was no longer dependent on the church for food, and more importantly, she had the income to support herself and her child. In Der Mawas, a loan of £3,000 was provided to establish a larger bakery business, which now employs 11 people, providing income for a number of families. Moreover, once the three year loan has been repaid, it is anticipated that the bakery's income will increase further.

## Cattle/dairy projects:

A number of further projects have been established, whereby the charity funds the purchase of a cow, which is enough to provide a sustainable living for its owner. By producing milk and cheese, a small dairy business is established and, once the cow gives birth, it can be sold for meat, while the calf goes on to provide the dairy income.



# Accounts

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
Donations	284,755	29,020
Investment income	21	-
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>284,776</b>	<b>29,020</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Charitable activities		
- Overseas aid	201,761	-
- UK charitable contributions	16,250	-
- Wages and salaries	16,191	-
- Fundraising and events	7,828	9,600
- Operating costs	37,383	19,420
Governance costs	1,236	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>280,649</b>	<b>29,020</b>
Net movement in funds	4,127	-
Fund balance at 1 April 2014	-	-
<b>Fund balance at 31 March 2015</b>	<b>4,127</b>	<b>-</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year.

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

