



OASIS OF PEACE AND LOVE

EDITORIAL

What a miracle, for us who are still breathing. Just like having been selected by Noah to board the ark although there are clear signs that more screening will be done even for selected members. The year of the virus (20 20), as described by many, was an unprecedented year. In Kuron and some parts of South Sudan, it all started by the invasion of desert locusts that devastatingly destroyed hectors of farm land, followed by the pandemic and later the floods. COVID 19 first seemed not as serious as it was told in stories and news. However, when the lockdown came then things changed. The days became longer than the nights, each morning was worse as going to face a charge in the court for a crime committed. Reading biblical scripture, meditations, receiving text messages, watching news and movies and misunderstanding in families became the order of the day. It is just a life threatening year that blunders from one crises to another.

Our gratitude to God for keeping us till date and to the government for opening churches and schools.

To our partners in development, thank you for journeying with us in the year 2020, one of the most challenging years in our times that globally humanity will live to remember.

We wish to thank you for your material and moral support in our struggle to realise our vision for Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron. It is your support that enabled us to navigate through the storms of COVID-19, the flood of September 2020 and the successful implementation of our programs planned for 2020.

May the Peace of Advent bring to us an everlasting peace we yearn for especially in South Sudan.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2021.

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THE PEACE PROGRAM

Following a cattle raid where fourteen Toposa youth lost their lives, the Peace Department did follow-up meetings to lobby the community in the villages of Nabwelangakinei, Nachodokpele, Namenoi and Namoruputh to stop the youth from raiding other tribes. On the note, the community of Nabwelangakinei invited all the Toposa communities, the neighboring Jie, Murle, Kachipo and the Government of South Sudan, to join them to celebrate the Nyeboli event. The objectives of this event were to establish peace between the Toposa and Boma communities. They hoped that in this way, there would be no more bloodshed among themselves and they will continue to share the common water points and grazing land.

TOPOSA PEACE AND CULTURAL CEREMONY



An indicator of progress towards peace and reconciliation was that the Toposa chiefs planned a Peace Cultural Event for the weekend of 05/06. December on their own initiative. With the organizational assistance and some financial and logistical support from the Kuron Peace Dept., the event hosted over 7,000 people from many clans. Also in attendance were: the Governor of Eastern Equatoria, the Minister of Parliament from this region, the General Secretary of the SPLM -Torit, and Bishop Paride Taban. This event was attended by Chiefs and Elders from Murle, Jie, Kachipo and Nygatom ethnic groups.

The flysheet with the theme of the day

The “Nyeboli” celebration is a cultural heritage that tends to be a thanks giving. The symbol of it is an antelope skin decorated with various bead art and symbols that have deeper meaning to the Toposa community. Interestingly the different signs designed and decorated on the skin mean nothing to non-Toposa. The meanings are purely expressed in symbols that are expressed in art on the skin carefully sewn by experienced women and men who are well versed with Toposa sign language and totems unique to the eleven (11) Toposa clans



The Toposa Cultural Heritage “Nyeboli”



There were about seven thousand people at the celebration





Toposa men listening to speeches



Elders addressing the Governor and the team of visitors



The governor addresses the occasion



Bishop Paride Taban addresses the crowd

The event allowed space not only for traditional singing, dancing, and eating together, but also for sharing opinions and suggestions on how to bring peace and stability to the local communities.

Several Toposa elders were very direct and forward with their opinions and comments. They urged the government to build and repair roads, they need more Schools and Health centres because the only functional schools and health centre are in Kuron. Some seriously ill ends on the way before reaching the health centre because of the distance. We need government intervention in cattle raiding and child abduction from the neighbouring communities they said.

The governor of the state expressed his gratitude and thanks for all that HTPV Kuron has done not only for this Peace and Cultural Event but for all the past activities and development programs especially the schools, and the Health Clinic which are the first ones in this area. One Toposa Chief expressed the importance of such activities to bring Peace and reconciliation amongst the ethnic groups.

Finally Bishop Paride Taban spoke of his 20 years of his knowledge and wisdom living with these people. He knew the issue and the challenges and the on-going tensions. He emphasized on peace, reconciliation and co-existence among the ethnic communities. ***“Peace Starts with You”*** Bishop said. He too encouraged the government to engage more fully and actively in supporting Peace, Education, Health and infrastructure.

The celebration was concluded with prayer and blessings by His Lordship Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban.

Agroforestry



Demonstrating how to plant banana suckers

Thirteen (13) local farmers received a one-day training on how to plant and maintain varieties of banana plants. Topics were: preparing proper root depth, watering and harvesting techniques and health benefits. However, the agriculture team has to do continuous follow up with the local farmers on the progress.

There is always strength gained after a fall. The farmers around Kuron felt it important to make use of the rain by adopting new crops. One of the crops being varieties of bananas which are difficult to find in such dry areas. Though Kuron Peace Village lies within the semi-arid region, planting of trees like teak has improved the vegetation around Kuron. Bananas are found to be one of the fruit trees which has picked up within the past few years. This has encouraged the local farmers to adapt bananas among other fruit trees.



Beneficiaries receive banana suckers

Apiculture



Participants making local beehive

They were trained on various aspects of bee management. This encouraged general participation by all the groups. The participants were trained on how to use local materials and ten (10) beehives were made using available local materials. Finally, the beehives made were distributed to the participants who were advised to make use of the knowledge gained in the workshop.

Bee Keeping is one of the activities carried out by the people around the area. This prompted the Socio-Economic Department to hold a four-day workshop on Honey Production. The workshop was conducted for 30 beneficiaries (16 men and 14 women) who came from 5 of the 11 villages surrounding the HTPVK coverage area.



Distribution of beehives to the trained beneficiaries.

EDUCATION



Primary Eight pupils attending lessons

As the government opens schools in the country for candidate classes, twenty (20) Primary Eight Pupils arrived in November to continue with classes and prepare for the Primary Leaving Examinations due early next year 2021. This is not the same number of registered at the beginning of 2020. Some students dropped out during the challenging months of the pandemic when they were at home with their parents/guardians.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Care Education has three nursery sites within Kuron. During the long lockdown, teachers went out to the villages for mobile teaching. It has been a challenge for those children who are very far since it is difficult for the teachers to reach such distant villages on foot. The head teacher, Ms. Prisca Chandia, had a workshop for Baba Mama Club to make toys and games for children. Those who participated had very good ideas and skills in making things from local materials. The hope is that the idea will catch on.



The Head teacher addresses the parents and introducing the topics for the workshop



Parents made costumes for Music Dance and Drama from woven sacks and hoop rings from local materials

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Though the year 2020 had its challenges on all activities because of COVID 19, a fifteen days in-service training was conducted by ACROSS in Kauto County for untrained teachers held at St. Thomas Primary School in Kuron. Topics discussed were: Responsibilities of Teachers, Lesson Plan and Scheme of Work, Child Safeguarding, Teachers as Mentors and Role Models, Psycho-Socio Methods, and Positive Discipline.



In-service training for teachers of Kauto.



The HTPVK staff had a seminar on 28.Nov.2020 as an on-going staff development activity. The Program Manager led a day long session designed to improve reporting and project management. There were presentations on Excel and PowerPoint, Reporting, Communication, Planning and Documentation.

INFRASTRUCTURE



Road and communication remains the biggest challenge in Kapoeta East and Kapoeta in general. Vehicles travel for days to get merchandise from Kapoeta town which is the nearest town to Kuron. Although only 350 km, it can take two to four days to reach Kapoeta. In most cases, the tractor has to move with the Lorry so as to support the Lorry when stuck. With the continuous rain, the tractor also often breaks down due to wear and tear of the tyres. This has been one of the most expensive years in recent times in Kuron.



The tractor aids the lorry where it is impassable

The bad roads contribute to high cost of vehicle maintenance

The unusual heavy rain patterns this year have caused the Kuron River to flood on several occasions. This has caused repeated damage to buildings and to the bridge. At the moment, the bridge is in serious need of repair or outright re-construction. No large Lorries are able to cross this bridge on the way to Boma which has hurt that town's economy



Constant rain in and around the area keeps on affecting the bridge and the compound

Socio-Economic Empowerment

Mr. Milla held several meetings with ten (10) women for income generation and business. They went to Kapoeta on a study trip in November. They brought back many things for sale in the Napil market. The idea is to build up their capacity to earn cash and start business in the local area.



A one-day workshop for youth was conducted by the Socio-Economic Department. The issues discussed were Human Rights, Gender Base Violence, Counselling and Guidance.



Primary Health Care Centre



Patients wait for consultation

Due to the recurring rain and continuous stagnant water, the Health Clinic registered a lot of cases of malaria and snake bites in the period of October and December. The clinic is averaging around 60 patients per day which is mainly malaria in adults and pneumonia among young children and babies.

Gratitude to the Ministry of Health through the County Health Department/CCM for supplies of medicine at this critical time of need.

Kuron Primary Health Care Centre being the only Health facility covering a vast area of 80 km² the quarterly medicine supplied often lasts two months because of the population of the people.



Consultation with the Clinical Officer



Distribution of Nutritional feeding to the malnourished children, pregnant mothers and lactating mothers

We also appreciate the effort of World Food Program through ANDREA FOOD South Sudan for supporting the nutritional needs of the malnourished children, the aged, pregnant and lactating mothers. Without these support, things would have not been the same.

SUCCESS STORIES

BONGA

I am Maria Napeyo; 15 years old from Kalacha, Kapoeta East County. The life I experience in the village is different from what I got in Kuron Peace Village. My brother who is a businessman brought me to Kuron to take care of his children and sell alcohol to boost his business. The introduction of Bonga by Peace Village became an added advantage to me. I became aware of how to help myself, especially with hygiene. I used to milk cows in the village without washing my hands but now I know the importance of washing hands before touching any food. Coupling with COVID 19, my family members at home have learned to wash hands every time before and after eating any food. My future plan is to have a small business to help my family. I am so thankful to have been introduced to this program of Bonga.

