

# OASIS OF PEACE AND LOVE

By Prisca Wani, HTPVK

## HOLY TRINITY PEACE VILLAGE KURON



September 2020

### EDITORIAL

As the month ends, everybody thinks of treasuring the cheerful spirit of a new month. The liveliness is always like a steaming kettle ready to whistle. However the most prominent event that comes to mind is an event that everyone has had at least once in his or her life. This event changed and shaped the lives of many people in Kuron and gave them a reason to respect life. On 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2020, the environment was quiet, no one spoke, laughed, giggled or chatted. There was just sorrow in the atmosphere on receiving the news that one of the staff, Mr Ernest Onguti, had developed a stroke two days before the end of August, and was called by the Lord to His eternal Glory two days later. On behalf of Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron, I wish to extend our heartfelt compassion to the families and friends of the late Ernest Onguti. A person that departs from this earth never truly leaves, for they are still alive in our hearts and minds, through us, they live on. **May his soul rest in eternal peace. Amen.**

Calamities do not come single handed. A flood disaster struck on 8th September stopping most of the usual activities. The two bridges were badly affected making movement to the Health Centre, airstrip, Vocational Training Centre and other northern areas very difficult. The bridge was the only link between Kapoeta and the greater Pibor area. Staff from all the departments and some community members had to sacrifice some of their activities to work on the vehicle bridge by clearing logs and tree branches which had covered the bridge and recovering metals and timbers swept by the overflowing river.

However, Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban in his message to the flood victims, said that; he was deeply shocked and saddened over the loss of properties and livelihoods of people from the devastating floods. He said, “No one can prepare for such a disaster; it comes like a swift wind. I know there is nothing we can do after such destruction but I want everyone in Kuron to know that they are in my thoughts and prayers. “

The staff and the community of Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron express their gratitude to all the partners and donors for their spiritual and moral support during the recent flood disaster. We continue to pray for one another as we give support to the needy.

**God bless you all as we move on.**

### OBITUARY

*Mr Ernest Onguti aged 79 years old was called to God's Glory on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2020 after a stroke. Ernest*



*Onguti joined Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron in 2018 to train the staff on cooperative society. He did his work very*

*well at the time he was in Holy Trinity Peace Village. He was a father and adviser to many of the staff who sought his guidance. He was indeed a delightful man, and will be missed dearly by all. He was a saintly man who never missed prayers and the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.*

**May his soul rest in eternal Peace**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	Page
Peace Building in Kuron	2
International Peace Day Message	3
Logistics	3
Livelihood	4
Community Management Support Group and Bonga (support for adolescent girls)	5
Health centre (KPHCC)	5
Vocational Training Centre	6
Infrastructure	6
Other stories	7

## PEACE BUILDING IN KURON

### FACING CHALLENGES ARISING FROM FLOODING

Following the recent heavy rains in August and September, there has been a lot of flooding that made field activities in Kuron very difficult. Given the scattered villages and kraals in the area, there is a challenge of mobility in the area worsened by the destruction of the bridges due to floods. Most of the Peace field activities have been pushed to be implemented later during the period of the dry season. This implies that schedules of activities will be crowded.



**A Peace Department staff risking a crossing on the Kuron bridge**



**A woman and child being escorted to pass**

Nevertheless the Peace Department was able to implement some activities, among these were the “Rapid Response Mechanisms”. This is an approach that involves immediate mobilization of the warring communities (Jie, Toposa, Kachipo and the Murle) in response to some of the threats to peace.

Since the beginning of the year, there has been minimal or even no raids between these warring communities. Two months ago was the last time. Then the Toposa kraals withdrew from the grazing areas neighbouring Boma in order to revenge five Toposa children abducted from Lokiding and Lolagam grazing areas between June and August 2020 by the Murle who justified their cattle raiding. In an attempt to avenge this transgression, the Toposa have been raiding the Murle for nearly a month. This has resulted in about thirteen Toposa youth losing their lives and greatly weakening the current relative peace being enjoyed by the different communities.

The Peace Department therefore took the initiative of holding meetings in the villages of Nabwelangakinei, Nachodokpele, Namenoï and Namorupus where the raiders reside. The aim of the meetings was to lobby the community to stop the youth from raiding the Murle. In the finding of these meetings it was stated that the youth had been raiding the Murle and this action was condemned by community members. However, they claimed that the Murle are the ones forcing them to raid when they abduct their children. The communities promised to sensitize the youth to stop raids. They urged the Peace Department to convey this information to the Murle as well as advise them to stop abducting their children.

**Below are the pictures representing the various meetings held in the four villages.**



**Meeting at Namenoï**



**Meeting at Namorupus**



**Meeting at Nabwelangakinei**



**Meeting at Nachodokpele**

## BISHOP PARIDE TABAN'S MESSAGE

### ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, sons and daughters of South Sudan, Peace be with you.

By the power of God's love, and grace that God has poured into our hearts, let us be ambassadors of peace, doers of justice and artisans of reconciliation. Peace does not only mean the absence of War, it means the Peaceful co-existence, to learn to cooperate with the inevitably of life's changes. (to live with what he/she cannot avoid and what he/she cannot change).

With great openness of mind and heart, let us turn away from violence, abandon conflict, put an end to war and live in unity, harmony, joy and prosperity. Let us build peace and friendship within us South Sudanese. We are the owners of our own peace. We should never relent in pursuing the path of reconciliation, justice and peace. In the heart of every human being, God created two lions, one very violent and the other very peaceful. Which one do you feed in your heart? If you feed the fierce and violent one, you will be a person of violence. But if you feed the calm and peaceful one, you will be a Peacemaker.

Therefore, go forth, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. Follow the path that God calls you to and heed the words of our Redeemer: "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*". For God is Love.

God bless you all.



**May God's spirit guide us through the year, "to follow the example of the father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure"**

## LOGISTICS DEPARTMENT



**Work in the compound after the flood**



**Continuous heavy rains have increased the cost of servicing and repairing vehicles due**

## LIVELIHOOD

In a quick visit to assess the effects of the flood on the farms in villages, the findings were that most of the crops were submerged in water forcing some farmers to prematurely harvest sorghum in fear of total loss.

Mrs Lobiding Lokale is one of the farmers who harvested her sorghum prematurely because of the floods. She worriedly stated that her family is going to experience a lot of hunger in the coming months and probably into next year. This due to the small harvest this year compared to the half ton (500 kg) of sorghum she used to harvest in the past years which could sustain her family for about five months. However she was hopeful that short term crops like okra, cowpeas, and collards would be of great help to reduce the predicted hunger and requested Peace Village to avail them with such seeds.



**Crops submerged in water**



**Prematurely harvested sorghum**

The occurrence of a disaster and its devastating effects are not always the end of life. Despite the floods, Holy Trinity Peace Village managed to support the local communities within Kuron with farm inputs such as seeds and tools through FAO and Cord Aid after establishing linkages with them. The beneficiaries of this program were four organised farmer groups consisting of 30 members each. This support included technical agronomical advise like establishing a group farm for food and household income, intercropping sorghum and growing other crop varieties like okra, cowpeas, and pumpkins to reduce total loss in case of adverse climate change effects.

With further rain expected in the coming days, most of the farmers were hesitant to buy the idea of group farms. However, they are now opening up new plots away from water logged areas to plant new crops hoping to get some vegetables by October and November.



**Distribution of tools and seeds to beneficiaries.**

## COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT SERVING GROUP (CMSG)

This programme kicked off with a meeting attended by seven women although eleven women were invited from the eleven villages, each representing one village. This could have been due to too much garden work that most women have to attend to. Issues shared in this meeting included how this programme runs and what the beneficiaries have to do. However effects of heavy rains are predicted to negatively affect the issues of group cultivation if it continues.



**Young adolescent girls attending a Bonga meeting and training at Kuron**

The “Bonga programme” is helping young girls to build self confidence and acquire knowledge about life especially knowing their rights in the communities, These rights include; right to health, good food, proper shelter and clean environment. It provides safe space for girls at risk to realize personal development.

## HEALTH CENTRE (KPHCC)

The occurrence of floods implies an increase in the amount of stagnant water and breeding for mosquitos. In this month there were a lot of cases of malaria, cough and cold due to increased moisture levels in the environment. However, other cases included fractures and snake bites. Since most of the families moved to the kraals due to an increase in the number of mosquitos as a result of the floods, accessing medical service became more of a challenge. The mothers and other patients can take days to reach the health centre. Others bring the sick on donkeys when they can't carry them on their backs.



A mother arrives at the health centre with two sick children on a donkey and on her back. She said that she spent three nights on the way. She came from Nachodokpele which is



A nurse applies healing balm to a patient in the Health Centre.

Cases such as fractures, acute appendicitis, dystocia and hernia among others that needs imaging and minor surgeries are referred to the nearest government hospital which is around 300 kilometres away. This is a challenge since HTPV Kuron does not have an ambulance. Often the Land cruiser is used which is not convenient for transportation of such patients.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

The Vocational Training Centre continues to train a few students who remained during the pandemic. They are working on practical skills especially on concrete building, Metal work and fabrication, carpentry and joinery. Most of the students who come to the centres are young between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Most of the Toposa young men are not interested in the training. They consider it as hard labour. They look after the family cattle or involve themselves in games of raiding where lives are lost.



## INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT

Heavy rains in September became a very big challenge to the road department and road users. Travellers still spend days and nights on the roads as the mud makes movement of vehicle difficult. Continuous rains have made working on the road very difficult, not only through destroying the roads but by also making difficult transportation of materials to the working sites. The airstrip at Kuron which the flight companies believed to be the best in Eastern Equatoria was also not spared.



**A vehicle stuck on the only road to Kuron**



**MAF aircraft gets stuck on the gravel airstrip due to soft bedding. 20 people and a tractor eventually pulled him out.**



**The roads department is struggling to repair the road as heavy rains continue to dam-**

**Transportation of materials to the site**



## OTHER STORIES

The Toposa people are richly talented in handicrafts. Their culture is actually engulfed in it. They make different handicrafts ranging from hand-carved wooden stools, serving spoons, and bowls to beaded leather (as traditional cloth), beaded necklaces, beaded wrist bands, waist beads and beaded belts. Despite admiration of these beaded items by many people from different parts of South Sudan, most of these beaded items do not hold high market value since they cannot be worn at all times and by everyone apart from it being common within the area of Toposa.



**A Toposa woman wearing beads**



**Beaded leather**



**Beaded cross Necklace**

In order to earn some income and make use of the abundant time due to the corona pandemic, a pupil at St. Thomas primary school used the traditional beading skills to come up with unique items that can be worn by a wide range of people regardless of tradition and or sex. Some of these beaded items include beaded wrist bands, beaded cross necklaces and earrings.



**Beaded Necklace and earrings**



**The pupil designing a cross**



**Beaded wrist band**

When interviewed she said that she needed to make something unique. The challenge was, she wasn't sure exactly until the idea of making a beaded cross came. She got the idea after seeing the rosary and cross being worn by men, children and women at all times. "It wasn't easy at first. I felt slow. I made mistakes and even sometimes got lost in the beading pattern which forced me to start afresh," she stated. She said she was so much encouraged and inspired by her friends. She said, discovering the joy of beading helped her to start creating more different designs.