

# NEWSLETTER

## HOLY TRINITY PEACE VILLAGE KURON



January.2021

### NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW HOPES AND NEW PLANS

New Year greetings to all supporters and donors to the Peace Village. We have prayed for all of you and ask Our Loving Father to bless and protect you this 2021. We sincerely appreciate your constant support and generosity toward the poor with whom we are entrusted. May you and your families enjoy a fruitful year of joy, happiness, and deeper faith.

#### INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

After 20 years what are some of the positive changes that have been seen in Kuron Region? Although there is little in the way of baseline data, long serving staff and the Toposa people have seen positive changes to the culture and lifestyle.

The goals stated 20 years ago were for a more peaceful environment between all ethnic groups. Although, cattle rustling continues and deaths occur there is a general feeling, especially amongst the Toposa, that the presence of Kuron Peace Village has served as a calming and mitigated influence. Comments have come from the Toposa chiefs and people that HTPVK has been a great assistance to them in their struggles to endure a challenging lifestyle.

Without any base line data from years ago, we cannot say with any statistics that the level of inter-communal violence has decreased. However, the transformation of Kuron from a battle field many years ago into a centre for peace where children from the conflicting communities can now study together, play together, and also worship one God together. We do receive comments that there are fewer conflicts and more negotiation rather than revenge attacks.

#### Other Indicators of Progress:

- Most Toposa are eating more than one meal per day, especially children.
- Many Toposa are now consuming greens and fruits and selling as a source of income which they had not done 20 years ago.
- Child health has increased greatly as nutritional surveys confirm.
- Many Toposa have surplus produce or are growing varieties of vegetables which are sold for cash. Bananas are a case in point, sold for cash income.
- Men are helping cultivate private gardens which they had not done previously.
- Women are bringing their babies to the Health Centre more often and earlier.
- Some Toposa are avoiding the Witch Doctors as they seek the Clinic help as more viable and dependable for the health of their families.
- More females express an interest in attending school and more household heads are allowing them to enroll, although this is still a VERY contentious issue amongst the men.
- Although, NOT acceptable, bananas and maize are being stolen from the HTPVK Plantation which at least shows an appreciation for this type of crop. Toposa are consuming more fruit and grains than in years past.

### NEW LEADERSHIP



*Fr. Henry Gidudu, Ugandan, has been with HTPVK since March.2020 serving as the Executive Director.*



*Mr. Edward Okot, South Sudanese, has been with HTPVK since June.2020 serving as Program Manager on behalf of Norwegian Church Aid*



*Saint Martin DePorres Brothers join the HTPVK staff. Br. Francis Xavier (Lt.) will be working in the Secondary School while Br. John Ogenda will be working in the Vocational Training Centre. Both Brothers are from Uganda and will be working in Kuron for the next 3 years.*

welcome  
TO THE TEAM

### Staff Return to Work

Staff returned to Kuron Peace Village in January as the Holiday Season came to an end. Many were traveling for days from Uganda and Kenya.

One employee brought his entire family back with him to settle in the Kuron area.



Challenges proceeding from the world-wide pandemic have led to funding difficulties for the new year. Several generous donors have offered help with the bridges. However, not all normal programming funds have been approved yet. This slows the start of the planned activities and programs. We pray to God Almighty that all necessary funds can be found soon.



### PEACE BUILDING IN KURON

Pope Francis in Fratelli Tutti writes: “Unlike disagreement and conflict, persistent and courageous dialogue does not make headlines, but quietly helps the world to live much better than we imagine. “ This is the reality of the Peace Department of HTPVK.

2021 started in an auspicious way with two reported conflicts in the area. Several Jie and Toposa were killed and two Toposa were wounded. There is no information on the number of Jie killed or wounded. The cattle were recovered but tensions between the two groups remain. Peace Department staff are working hard on mediating the differences.

Mr. Eliah Lokii has assumed duties as Program Manager after the completion of Mr. Romano Longule’s contract. Lokii is working on his degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from Rwanda University. There are also two Peace Dept. Representatives in Boma dealing with Jie.



### PRIMARY SCHOOL

Twenty one (3 female ) students are studying for the P8 exams. The date for the EXAM was just announced first week of February and ACROSS will administer the exam for the P8.

ACROSS delivered and assembled 58 desks ( 60 were promised). AVSI sent various supplies like: female care products, pack packs, Teacher Manuals, and other useful items for students.

Headmaster, Mr. Sebit was interviewed by Ms. Sam Merick, International Journalist, for education in South Sudan.

### HEALTH CENTRE (KPHCC)

A Team from CMM visited on 07.January.2021 to check the Kalazar testing kits and medicine supply. They said they would send the things as soon as possible. On 19.January, the Director of Kalazar programs who is working in the Ministry of Health in Juba came to visit. He promised follow-up on the Kalazar training and why the medicines have not been delivered to the Health Centre.

January Nut. Assessments found 7 severely malnourished >5 out of 50 families.

Alia Beatrice, midwife, attended a Health Practise meeting in Narus sponsored by WFP and CCM ( Italian NGO ) From Nov. to Dec. 2020 the centre attended close to 2,000 outpatient with over almost 500 inpatient ( ave. 5 nights per person ) .

Jan.2021 has become even busier since due to insecurity most Toposa families are staying closer to this area and so they come to the centre. We find more and more come to KPHCC because they say the service is better than other places.

Some come from as far as 50 kilometres.

To date there are no confirmed C19 cases in this region.



*Nurse Rebecca tends to mother and child*

## PASTORAL



*Bishop Baptizes Children and Adults during Christmas Mass*

Christmas was celebrated with a Vigil Mass attended by hundreds of Toposa and staff. The choir was outstanding and the Toposa entertained with dancing and singing.

On Christmas day there were eighteen Baptisms, ten First Communicants, and three for First Penance.



*Toposa Women Dressed for Christmas Day with Br. Francis*

New Year also had a vigil followed by as many bells and noisemakers as could be found ringing in the year. After the mass children received candies. New Year Day Mass was attended by splendidly decked out Toposa Women who arrived in their finest New Clothes for the New Year. A large gathering was attended after mass with snacks and drinks.

All 13 Catechists from the area were in attendance for a meeting and the Holiday celebrations.

## INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT

After a Peace Village Employee meeting, it was decided to upgrade the communal latrine and fix the drainage area which was contaminating the area. With the repair of the JBC Backhoe this was started in January and will be finished in February.



## LOGISTICS DEPARTMENT

Keeping the vehicle fleet operating on the terrible road conditions is a constant and necessary aspect of all HTPVK programs. The new tipper truck has been a welcome addition to the logistics of Kuron Peace Village.



*Stephen Okello uses plastic and fire to repair a hole in the radiator of the green UniMog Tipper Lorry.*



The JBC is a work horse for HTPVK. It has needed repairs and had been waiting a long time for the spare parts to arrive. With everything now on site, the machine can easily be repaired for road works and other projects requiring heavy machinery.

Working with road repair and hauling of materials it also has also been used to transport large groups of people between Kapoeta and Kuron as needed.

The problem with the large tipper truck is the high fuel consumption. As a result, it is only used as needed.



## CHALLENGES ARISING

As the dry season arrives more and more traffic is seen on the Narus to Boma road. Under normal circumstances this is a welcome development for the local economy. However, due to the damaged bridge from the past floods, Kuron Peace Village is not allowing any large lorries to cross the bridge. The timbers are too fragile, many of the metal grates were missing, and the bridge integrity is damaged. Smaller and lighter vehicles are allowed. However, there are always those who refuse to listen. On 01.January.2021, a private lorry decided to cross even after being told not to go on the bridge with the heavy and wide lorry. The result was that he got stuck half way across effectively blocking all other traffic. It was a miracle of God that after 24 hours of feverish work he was able to back off the bridge and that only a few timbers were damaged. This driver returned shamefaced to Kapoeta after receiving instructions from the Logistics Department to inform future lorry drivers of the problem.



*Large Lorry Stuck on bridge where grates are missing.*



*Bridge during floods showing missing grates.*

Word is out in Kapoeta that only small vehicles are allowed to cross. Proposals have been forwarded asking for assistance to repair or rebuild the bridge. We are waiting to see what will happen. One elderly Toposa man actually fell through the bridge gaps and survived a crash into the water below unharmed! A goat was slaughtered at the site in thanks for the miracle!

In the meantime, several logistics staff spent two nights sleeping in the bush near an old, defunct bridge and recovered the grates after long, tedious work. 12 Grates were transported back to Kuron Village and these grates were then placed in those areas where the grates had been washed away. This was very hard work and the men did an outstanding job. At least the bridge is safer than previously when there were gaps in the bottom structure. Hopefully, no more falling through the gaps!



*Digging out grates from old, buried bridge*



*Replacing metal grates on damaged Kuron River Bridge*