

# Maata Kuron



## News from the Holy Trinity Peace Village, South Sudan

### Farmers receive Seeds and Tools

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of July hundreds of mainly women gathered outside the Kuron Main compound. They had come to receive tools and seeds for farming. The distribution is part of a project that is aimed to improve the livelihood of the people from the villages

around Kuron. Villages were visited and asked to select the best farmers and register them with the outreach staff from the Agriculture Department supported by staff of the Community Development & Peace Building Department. Due to the early rains it had not been easy to bring the seeds and tools to Kuron, but through the logistical support of Catholic Relief Services they arrived in time. Part of the goods came by road, another part had to be flown in

by a DC3 plane because the roads were already impassable.

Farming among the Toposa is almost

exclusively done by the women.

Some women had started planting as early as the beginning of Mai. Other thought the early rains would not be steady and were just about to prepare



their gardens, mainly to plant sorghum. Though sorghum is well adapted to the area here, it is a very labour intensive crop. Once it is approaching harvest, it has to be guarded the whole day against swarms of birds. Many a disappointed farmer just gives up and leaves his field to the birds.

After the women representatives of the various villages had selected the best farmers they were registered and received seeds of serena sorghum (a



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faster growing type), ground nuts, maize, green grams and egg plants. The demonstration on how to plant the new varieties and how to use tools like a rake or a fork hoe has been done in the gardens of the women by agricultural officers Michael Byamukama and John Milla. Follow up visits check up on the efforts and the progress the women made. Over the years, so John Milla

reports, one can increasingly see men assisting their women working on the fields. We are optimistic that the Farmers will plant most of the seeds, while being realistic, we know that a part of the seeds will be planted where it will not bear fruits: Inside the stomach.

## Introducing the Staff of the HTPVK

In this issue we want to present to you the **Teachers of the St. Thomas Primary School Kuron**. It is their commitment that will make the students of Kuron the future leaders of the country.

### Christopher Lokai

Lokai is an Akenyan Turkana by tribe was born in 1973 he obtained a secondary certificate in Talau secondary school after successful period of 4 years. In 1999 he joined the teaching profession after completing teachers training college at Machakos. He worked in the Kenyan Teachers Service Commission which is responsible to employ teachers for 10 years. He started teaching in Peace Village in 2006. He is currently the head teacher of St. Thomas Primary School.

Sebit, the deputy head teacher, was born in 1977 in Katire, Magwi county, Sudan in 1993 he received primary certificate in Agujo South Primary Adjumani, Uganda in 1997 he received a certificate of O level in Bala Secondary School and his 'A' level certificate in Kampala secondary school. In 2001 Sebit completed a certificate in Public Administration and Management in Masiindi Institute of



### Atanga Mark Sebit

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Management. He gained experience as a teacher from 2002-2006 and was a youth leader in the church of Kiryandongo camp Uganda. He joined peace village in 2009, where he lives with his wife and his two sons.

## **Chandia Prisca**

Prisca is a South Sudanese, born in Nimule 1986 and a Madi by tribe. She went for her primary education in Uganda and then came to teach in Kuron from 2006 to 2009. She obtained a Diploma in Early Childhood Development returned to Kuron in 2011. She is currently heading the Kindergarten and pre- unit section of the St. Thomas Primary School.

## **Lochoromoi Luka Peter**

Lochorimoi was born in 1978. He is South Sudanese Didinga. Being a refugee in Kenya, he completed his primary and secondary School education in Kakuma. In 2007 he obtained his Grade '3' certificate at Arapi Teachers Training Institute. He began teaching in St. Thomas Primary School in June 2012.

## **Irene Nekesa Wanyonyi**

Irene was born in Kimilili, near Kitale in 1986. In 2000 she received her primary certificate of education and in 2004 her Certificate of Secondary Education. In 2010 she worked as a teacher at Rev. Okere Education Centre – Kimilili and then gained experience in computer usage. She came to Peace Village in

2010. She is the teacher in charge of Liturgy in School preparing the students for the Sunday services.

## **Lokuju Simon**

Lokuju was born in 1990, in Lorema Boma, Lotukei payam in Didinga land. The South Sudanese completed his primary education in Lomukura primary school. Having completed his secondary school in Karenga in Kaabong district, Uganda he attended Kotido Primary Teacher's college from 2009-2010 being awarded a grade '3' teachers certificate. He gained his first teaching experience at Mary Mother of God primary school Kotido in 2012. He offered his services to the Holy Trinity Peace Village in 2012 as a teacher.

## **Aran Sarah**

Sarah was born in 1987. The South Sudanese Madi completed her primary level exams in Uganda in 2001 and finished her secondary education in 2007 with an advanced level form '6' in Uganda and topped up a computer course certificate in 2009. 2012 she came to Holy Trinity Peace Village and is the second women in the Kindergarten and Pre-unit of St. Thomas school.

## **Dewamoi Daniel Lawrence**

Dewamoi was born in 1986 at Lorema Boma, Budi County. He obtained Kenya certificate of primary education in 2002. In 2003 he went to Katilu secondary school receiving a certificate in 2006. In



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2007 he attended St. Mary's Teachers Training College in Mombasa. After that, in 2010, he worked with the SPLM youth league in Torit. In September 2010 he reinforced the teaching staff in the Peace Village.

## **Castro Agole**

Castro was born in 1980 and is from Nimule, South Sudan. He attended

primary and secondary school in Moyo District, Uganda. Afterwards he decided to go for a Grade Three Teachers Certificate at Lodonga Core P.T.C.. From 2004 to 2011 Castro was following his vocation as a teacher at Homing Dove International Primary School, Adjumani. In 2012 he decided to teach in his home country and choose the HTPVK's St. Thomas School.

## **The Nyakicha Theatre Group**

In May of this year a selected group of Students from the St. Thomas primary school was trained by a semi-professional forum theatre group in the methods of participative Theatre. They are between the age of 13 and 22 and have since performed in the villages around Kuron educating the people. Their Plays are based on their own stories and experiences and deal with social problems from their surroundings: ongoing cattle raiding and its effects, the resistance among the people to send

their children to school and alcohol abuse. They have given themselves the name Nyakicha, which means Light in the local Toposa language. They are determined to enlighten their people. Here is a letter from the group telling you about their experience.



The Rafiki Theatre Group from Kampala and the newly formed Nyakicha Theatre group after the Training.



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Dear All,  
We are confident enough to tell you that we are from Nyakicha theater group. We are dwelling in the Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron in Kauto Payam, Kapoeta East County. At this point we wished to u know about our main ambitions and the uniqueness of our Nyakicha Theater Group. We want to educate people for non-violence and encourage parents to send their children to school.

Some time ago we did not know anything about the power of theatre. We just used to perform some drama in school for entertainment. One morning in May, we get astonished when we found ourselves in this training, being trained and doing some exercises in St. Thomas primary school hall. The trainers from the Rafiki Theatre Group were amicable and they were as playful as

**Participatory theatre** is a special form of theatre aimed at enhancing dialogue in communities. This method is increasingly being used after realizing it as a speeding agent in driving people to open up. Theatre is a unique way of blaming somebody without that person getting offended and in this method we believe that it's possible for conflicts or problems to be solved peacefully. We don't give solutions-they have to come from the people themselves. This is possible because at the end of a stage play, the audience is driven through a discussion session chaired by a moderator to reflect on the issues raised in the play. The play or part of the play is then restaged and audience members are then given chance to replace actors and correct or act out a solution to a problem that was presented.

Before actors move out to the communities to act and change their people, we believe that they must be changed themselves in order to cause social change elsewhere. For that reason, participatory trainings/rehearsals are unusual – our rehearsals contain natural healing for both body & soul and have also been used to heal people with trauma or with long histories of mental depression. We involve most forms of art – poetry, music, dance, playback theatre, personal experiences, etc. Most elements used in conventional theatre are eliminated, no curtains, scripts.

There is no stage: the problems and situations that we act are just happening everywhere; in our personal lives, in our families, villages, etc.

kittens. They went as far as performing tree times for us and other people within Kuron to show us a new kind of drama.

Off course we enjoyed watching them acting perfectly and we were carried away. Then the wish grew in us to act like them one time. They really taught us a lot: Body messaging to prepare for acting, forming images and freezing on the stage. It was our first time to experience such things in





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our lives. We really enjoyed the training. We also learned how to interact with the audience. At first most of the things in the training seemed very strange to us and some of them were not easy to grasp for us at first. Gradually we understood a lot about this new kind of theatre. Through the theatre training we learned that drama is an important tool to educate our people who are pastoralists, so that they can understand many things better. We hope that through our drama performances, we will be able to change the attitudes and values of our people, so that the warriors will stop involving themselves in cattle raiding and ethnic conflict. Rather, the cattle keepers can embrace a more peaceful co-existence with their neighbours. The Toposa, the Murle and Jie in South Sudan, the Turkana in Kenya and the Karamojong in Uganda, who are all fighting each other because of cattle. Our people should instead opt for development and education.

We are happy because through this theatre we have been empowered and we are now able to stand before the public confidently and with determination. Before we used to be shy and often broke into laughter before speaking openly. After this training, which we appreciated very much, we want to give our sincere thanks to the Rafiki Theatre Group from Kampala and we pray for them to reach back to their



homes safely. They have given us their knowledge and skills; a really unique experience. So at this moment we wish to give our sincere thanks to Mr. Uli Thum and the Peace Team for having brought this idea of the community theatre here to Kuron. They have managed to form us into a team and they really treated us very well. Also we thank the IFA for their support.

At last we will not forget to give thanks to our Lord Bishop Paride Taban who founded the Holy Trinity Peace Village, which has now become the centre of peace in Eastern Equatoria State of South Sudan. With his dream to build peace among the pastoralist people, he is a real agent of peace and this is why we, the Nyakicha theatre group, want to follow his footsteps.

Thank you,  
May God bless our work!  
The Nyakicha Theatre Group



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## Our Up Hill battle against Cattle Raiding

“You can come to our land for grazing but leave your women and children at home”. That was the message that repeatedly came from the Murle community in Boma in October last year. The Toposa had raided up to 270 cattle over the last year and only 35 cattle was recovered and handed back by the Kuron

Peace village Team. As the dry season came closer, there were a lot of worries within the Toposa community around Kuron. Where would they get water and pasture for grazing

when it gets dry. The Message from the Murle was very clear to the Toposa. It meant that if you come to our grazing territory we will fight. Also smaller raids between the Toposa and the neighbouring Toposa had spoiled the relative Peace that had been enjoyed in the previous years. Due to the raids conducted by some Toposa youths the whole community would have to suffer.

The Peace and security committee members trained by Kuron had been involved in trying to recover cattle for some time, but the culprits had disappeared or internal tribal politics did not allow them to follow further. A kind of deadlock had been reached where there was a real threat that this conflict

would be solved through the barrel of a gun. The animosities between Jie and Toposa had resulted in many deaths already. During 2011 reports reached the peace Village



that about nineteen people from both Toposa and Jie lost their lives and six sustained injuries. The numbers of animals raided added up to four hundred and ninety one and two children were abducted. Out of raided animals only seventy five were recovered. The Toposa chiefs found the situation worsening when they were attacked by both Jie and the Murle in different ways. On the other hand the weather could not allow the



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Toposa herdsmen to graze their cattle within their own territory. The peace committees, which were set up in different parts of Kauto payam had high expectations from Kuron Peace village Team to assist them in meeting with the authorities in Boma, the Jie and the Murle Chiefs to start dialogue. In January the peace team from Kuron peace village together with peace committee members and Chiefs visited Boma administration, Jie and the Murle Chiefs.

A Peace meeting was planned and conducted in Peace Village Kuron on 8th-11th February 2012 to find the way forward to avoid any further violence. Peace village peace team took the initiative to reconcile the four Communities. Sixty participants from the four communities, youth leaders, kraal leaders, Chiefs, Payam Administrators and partner NGOs' were invited to attend the gathering. At the end of the

meeting the four communities came up with regulations and signed a comprehensive Peace agreement sending a clear message to peace spoilers. In the months after the meeting the relations between the communities visibly improved until in May 2012 a one-sided disarmament was conducted north of Kuron. While disarmament is principally the right way to go, if conducted in one place and not the neighbouring area, it can

seriously affect the stability of a region by destroying the balance of power. By partly disarming the Jie and the Murle, but not the Toposa to the South, the Jie and Murle became very vulnerable to raids and attacks by their neighbours. In the second half of the year, incidences of raids increased because the armed Toposa Community took the advantage of the defenceless Jie of Jonglei State. In the month of August and September 2012 the Toposa community attacked the the Jie four times, but all the animals have been recovered and handed over to the owners. The Community policing Committees, the Peace Committee, Chiefs and Kraal leaders with the help of the Commissioners and MPs of both Kapoeta East and North managed to safe the situation for now. In future, something needs to be done about the still widely available guns here in Eastern Equatoria.