



## **Brief History**

### **A Toposa Village - Napil**

Written by  
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*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Colossians 3:23*

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Figure 1 Napil Village and Market in November.2022

When Dr. John Garang visited the newly formed Kuron Peace Village in 2003, he said in a speech that this area would become a major trading and urban area in the years to come. His prophetic words seem to be coming to fruition.

In the early years of Holy Trinity Peace Village, when the first staff arrived here, there were not very many people living in the present Kuron area. The only village, Nyakwanaris, was located in the hills above and behind the present location of the Peace Village. The reason they lived there was safety for their animals and lack of mosquitoes due to more wind.

After HTPVK staff started living in the current area at the base of the hill, they soon realized that all the human refuse from Nyakwanaris above them, was draining down the hill with the rain. This foul liquid spread through the compound and the smells were terrible. In 2007, after discussions, Holy Trinity Peace Village received “House Hold Kits” (**right**) from Norwegian Church Aid and passed them out to the Nyakwanaris villagers who then voluntarily relocated to other places.



Today, the open, flat place on the hill where the village used to be is still visible. There is still one family living on the hill above Kuron Peace Village. Some of the Toposa moved to a place called Naweyatirr which is located to the west along the River Kuron. Some of those Toposa crossed the river and settled in the first village on the northern side of the Kuron River called Naweyapeta.

The settlers along the river found that it was too muddy and susceptible to flooding so they moved away from the river to the current Napil location. The area where Napil is today used to be a football field for HTPVK staff. The locals called the place “Pil” as they mis-pronounced the word for “field”. Napil can be translated to mean roughly: “In the field” So Napil market centre was born.

There were very few Toposa in the area. In those days, near the present day Peace Village Health Centre in Matara, Namaton village had not yet been inhabited. Previously, the lack of a bridge across the Kuron River limited movement of people and animals. Boma County, north of the river and Kauta County, south of the river remained relatively isolated from each other.



Figure 2 Water Hand Pump in Napil Market

**Comments by Marino shop owner:**

*Sometimes all the businesses join together to go and bring supplies back. It costs a lot of money to transport goods from Kapoeta to here.*

The original Kuron Peace Village did not extend past the current Guest House area. The area beyond was inhabited by some local Toposa who had been living there when HTPVK staff arrived. Over time, they moved to other locations and the Holy Trinity Village expanded north to its present size.

However, the construction of a one-lane metal Bailey bridge capable of allowing heavy loads to cross has changed the flavor of the area. Napil started to grow as Toposa people began to see the advantages of not only being close to the river and bridge, but also the employment and business opportunities found within Kuron Peace Village. Today, one can find more than twenty household plots in Napil. Two additional plots lie empty as of 2022. Using an estimate of eight people per household, the total population of Napil would be over 160 people in 2023.

In 2022, there are currently about 9 businesses in the Napil Market area. One can always find many people coming and going. These businesses are introducing new products, new foods and new ways of doing things. A cash economy is slowly developing.

The major buyers in the area are the staff of the Kuron Peace Village. Meat, eggs, chickens, fish, and a certain amount of vegetables and fruits are easily sold to the Peace Village residents which caters to its own staff and many visitors throughout the year.



A grinding mill was set up by HTPVK in 2008/2009. It lasted many years and served both HTPVK and local Toposa needs. A new grinding machine was purchased in 2018 and again had good service.

In June/July of 2021, a local Toposa set up a grinding mill in Napil. His business is thriving. It is fuel operated and this is not only expensive but limits his operating hours. Mr. Zachariah is thinking of getting solar power to operate his mill. In order to avoid competition and encourage the local businesses of Napil, the HTPVK grinding machine was moved to Matara to serve the Secondary School, the Health Centre and the VTC. When that grinding machine broke, HTPVK set up a new grinding mill in the current Food Security area.

**Comments by Zechariah grinding mill operator:**

*I operate the grinding machine for the locals around here and for the HTPVK Primary School. I still have the boda boda ( motorcycle ) for transport but the business is not so much. People prefer to walk.*



Figure 3 Local Shop in Napil



After the construction of a MTN cell phone tower just near the Napil market, several connecting businesses sprang up. Two were charging stations. Another was the sale of phones and SIM cards. Several individuals in the community sell air time. Within a very short two or three months, the cell phone has become a common site amongst the Toposa. Mostly this is youth, and they use the phone more for listening to music and radio. However, slowly the people are realizing the advantages to

using the phones for communication.

**Note:** One of the most successful businessmen in Napil actually attended HTPVK Primary School to Class 4. He married a local woman and started his business.

Animal rustling and child abductions are quickly communicated to other villagers and everyone is on alert much faster than previously. Already several crimes have been prevented or the stolen items recovered due to the use of a network of phones within the area.



HTPVK has worked with a local women's group trying to kick start businesses. In June.2019, a market structure was built (**below right**). In spite of many community meetings and HTPVK suggestions to place this building in a more central location, it was constructed on the outskirts of the village. The people actually agreed to this type of idea. However, it came out after the building was built that they thought it would be a sort of warehouse of supplies from which they could purchase items for resell at a

profit in the local markets. The donors, on the other hand, thought this would be an actual market area.

Due to this inconvenient location, not many of the marketeers use the structure. They know that the market is in Kuron Peace Village or in the central area of their village. They cannot sit and wait all day for someone to come to them. Rather, they know who are the best prospects for purchasing and simply take their items to



that person Today, the Peace Market Building stands idle as a testament to poor communication between the donor and the NGO on the ground.

At the moment, there are several homesteads in Napil. (left) One of them has a modern latrine which many others



would like to construct but don't have the ready cash. Some have planted

**Merchants comments about the Market building:** *A good idea but the problem now is no customers come from far away. So the sellers, they don't go up there because no one will see them. They have food not supplies. They take that stuff to the people to buy.*





*Figure 4 Napil Village market from the air Oct.2022*  
Jenny Davies - MAF

gardens, mango trees, papaya, and banana trees. Across the road from Napil are huge sorghum fields which are quite productive. This area actually sells quite a bit of surplus sorghum to transporters traveling through the area.

Napil is certain to continue to grow and develop over the next few years. More and more Toposa are settling in the area and many have the ideas of starting businesses or other income generating schemes. Only the future will tell how Napil develops.

( written by Gabe Hurrish : 20.Jan.2023 )