



cress *sowing seeds for life*

Christian Relief and Education in South Sudan

Summer Newsletter

May 2017

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Welcome!

In January, I travelled to South Sudan to participate in the consecration and enthronement of Reverend Emmanuel Murye as Bishop of Kajo Keji. It was a truly wonderful experience, a service of all services lasting over seven hours with a mixture of liturgy, joy, noise, drama, singing, speeches, communion and the longest litany of confession I have ever heard. The Bishops looked magnificent in their red robes – some had special hats, there was a hooter that kept going off at exciting moments and members of the congregation shouted out the odd words of praise. The church was packed with over 2,000 people and many more outside.

The trip provided me opportunity to meet with the CRESS team and reflect how far we have come and the changes that have occurred over the past seven years. Sadly, I was also struck by the deserted towns and villages, reminded how very tiring life is for the South Sudanese people and the impact of the environment on our team members.



Since my departure and over the past few months our team in South Sudan have been challenged greater than ever before. This is because the whole community of Kajo Keji has fled to Uganda and are now refugees. Your prayers and support have been invaluable to our continued commitment to the people and country.

Caroline Lamb
Founder & CEO



CRESS infrastructure

In the last week of January (2017) the CRESS office and clinic closed and all equipment was removed. It was a sad time for all concerned and finding new premises was a priority. Joseph also began the task of locating our sponsored children many of whom had been removed from school in South Sudan by their families and taken to 'safety'. All children have now been located and are being schooled in Uganda and as a charity we shall need to find additional funds for school fees which are more expensive here!

Premises for the office have been found in Arua with good Wifi, solar power and fit for purpose. Sadly, since relocating the agriculture programme has been put on hold.

The staff have all be deeply affected by the need to leave the original premises, close the clinic and evacuate their own families. Daily life is a struggle, the heat, lack of food and safe drinking water a constant – these challenges have increased since January for all. We can report that Joseph, Fred and Emmanuel have all found accommodation in Arua with their families. CRESS is paying their rent and has provided them with water filters. They have access to solar power in their homes which is wonderful.

While the country remains in turmoil the staff in Arua, Uganda are rebuilding the infrastructure needed to support the people still in South Sudan. We are thrilled to tell you that a clinic in Mijale, about 15km south of Lowolo and with plans to open in early June, will provide health care for refugees. This is thanks to your support and the tireless efforts of the team on the ground.

Please help CRESS to make a difference

You can support any of our projects by making a donation online by following the links on our website or send a cheque to:

Cress UK, Knighton Manor, Broad Chalke, Salisbury SP5 5EB

If you are a UK tax payer please don't forget to complete a **Gift Aid** form – available to download from the website or contact us and we will post one to you.



Facebook. Please visit and 'like' our Facebook page for all the latest news as it happens. Please comment and share our posts so we might reach the largest audience possible. **You can also sign up to receive our monthly email by simply clicking on the sign up tab and submitting your details.**

Life in a refugee camp – how is CRESS helping?



Back in December you helped provide funds for a better Christmas in Rhino Camp for the refugees who reside there. This was an initiative of Fred Taban's who with his own family spent Christmas in the camp. The money raised was used to provide clothes for over 700 children, food and insecticide treated mosquito nets for pregnant mothers and children under 5 years.

The situation in refugee camps remains dire with people walking or cycling many miles to bathe and do laundry due to restricted access to water supplies. There is little or no shelter, schools set up in camps are filled to capacity and older children are not provided for leading to anti-social behaviour. In addition, no land has been allocated to the people for growing crops and what is available is not suitable. To help, CRESS sent money for the Church leaders so that they might buy and distribute food.

"Thank you once again for the refugees funds that has greatly help our people. 26 leaders were able to benefit on \$2000 you graciously send for us. They were great testimonies from these men of God. That is the first of its kind in the history of our church that they are remembered in such a way in their suffering. Most of them used the money for food, medicines for the children, building materials for their houses, schools among others. They are all overjoyed and thankful indeed for the support. Well done for work of love in serving us in our difficult time. May God bless you all more abundantly." **Fred Taban**



Advocacy

Joseph Aba and Bishop Emmanuel Murye have been advocating for the safety and welfare of South Sudanese people by meeting relevant authorities in Uganda and in refugee settlements. They have met the leaders of IO in Yei River state. South Sudan Ambassador for Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the President's Adviser on economic planning and finance, Kajo Keji Army commander and his team and commissioners of greater Kajo Keji. As yet, these meetings have not resulted in government peace but in all rebel controlled areas civilians are respected and protected.



Joseph's latest report asks that we pray for initiatives that are critical not only for now but for the future of South Sudan, including the provision of food, water, shelter, health services and education and eventually resettlement. A focus on change of mind-set and belief system of the refugees through provision of hope, and psychosocial support is much needed to address the issues being seen, including suicide, drug abuse, murder and moral decay throughout the camps.

Love, hope, unity, forgiveness and reconciliation are possible through leadership and women and youth conferences/workshops – activity that CRESS has always advocated and been involved in.

Joseph also asks that we make deliberate efforts to identify, develop and mentor potential leaders for tomorrow who will lead with integrity. Thereby, providing a solution to ensure history does not repeat itself in the future.

We thank you for your support

It would not have been possible to relocate and support staff, reopen the office or the new clinic without your support. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has fundraised on our behalf over the past few months. Events have included classical music concert, a CrowdFunder campaign and young Humphrey Rose running the Barcelona Marathon. The funds raised have been vital to rebuilding the charity now located in Uganda, to meeting rising costs in providing services and ensuring the staff are taken care of, so they can do their best work for the South Sudanese people.

We must also thank Pauline Cullis who is a long term supporter of the charity and recently held her annual sale, raising £2,000 that will provide medicines for the clinic.

This year we were also the beneficiary of the **Heart of the Chase Bluebell Ride 2017** a horse ride through the heart of Cranborne Chase which raised £3,000.

We thank you all for your continued support, prayers and activity making our work possible in war torn Sudan.



Photo: Rachel Bragg, Sweet-Images Photography.
www.sweet-images.co.uk

Please pray for the tens of thousands who have undergone and are still undergoing the most horrendous suffering: living in refugee camps with little hope and very little food.