



OCTOBER UPDATE

Back safely from Yei

On Thursday, our team returned from a very successful one week visit to Yei. The picture shows us standing with the MAF pilot, just before we took off from the Yei airstrip to fly to Juba. From left to right we have the pilot, Jess Mead, John and Poppy Spens, Iryna Melnykova and Iain Nash. All of us remained fit and well throughout our time in South Sudan and accomplished all the tasks that we had hoped to do. We know that many of you were praying for us throughout our time in South Sudan and we believe that this made a huge difference.



Find out more

If you'd like to know more about our visit, please join us on Thursday 17th October from 7.30 to 8.30pm to hear some of our stories and see photos and videos. This will be on Zoom and to obtain the Zoom link, please reply to this email and we will send you the link.

The team

The team we took to Yei this year was a bit different from previous years. Iryna is from Ukraine and studies journalism at Bournemouth University. We asked Iryna to film and interview various friends in Yei to capture their story. We hope to show you some of the footage on 17th October. Jess Mead is a newly qualified chiropractor and gave some talks to clinic staff and nursing and midwifery students on preventing and treating back pain, recommending various simple exercises that patients can undertake. Iain (right) is our church's Children and Families Minister, and he spent time visiting the Cathedral's Sunday School, some primary schools and pre-school nurseries to work out what links might be formed between schools in Yei and St Michael's Church, Stoke Gifford. Iain is also a qualified football coach, and he spent an afternoon coaching one of the primary school teams and another afternoon with the Mission FC team (photo).



How was it?

We cannot thank the amazing Diocesan Team in Yei enough for looking after us so well. Our programme was complex with team members all interested in different aspects of the Diocese's work, which involved ferrying us to many different locations such as the coffee project, Martha Clinic, Teacher Training College, Theological College, Health Training Institute, 4 different primary schools, an orphanage, the vocational

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training college and more. We were so well looked after, and we are very grateful to Bishop Levi and his team for their care and support. We were also very well cared for in Juba by staff from the Provincial Education Department, led by Lubari Stephen. We were also warmly welcomed by the Archbishop of South Sudan.

Discipleship Training

For several years, The Brickworks has invested in discipleship training for young people in the church. We have partnered with an organisation led by Mbaraza and Mary Emmanuel who deliver a programme that involves three weeks of residential training for 100 youths, followed by ongoing support from the pastors in their home church. The training is non-denominational and aims to build up the faith of young people so that they can serve within the local church. Normally our visits to Yei do not coincide with the training but this year it did and we witnessed the final week of training and the graduation celebration. As part of the graduation, each young person who had completed all three weeks of training was presented with a Good News Bible, kindly supplied by Christ Church, Winchester.



The team was asked to lead the final morning, starting with devotions and then the twin topics of “Running the Race” from Hebrews 12.1 and “The A to Z of a Happy Marriage”. All our team took part and we had a great morning, enthusiastically worshipping with the young people and doing our best to give biblical teaching on following Jesus and how to build strong and healthy marriages.

Inflation

As we mentioned last month, the rate of inflation in South Sudan is very high and the local currency, the South Sudan Pound, is very weak. To pay for our accommodation at the ECSS Guest House required a pile of notes, as can be seen from the photo. It makes a wallet redundant!



October prayer requests

- Please give thanks for the safe return of our team and that all our travel arrangements went well.
- Give thanks for all that the team achieved and pray for the follow up action that is now needed.
- Pray for the 100 young people who attended the discipleship training that they will continue to grow in the faith and serve in their churches.
- Pray for the teaching we gave on marriage. We received a request to return next year and to continue with this teaching, which is (we are told) badly needed, not just by the young people.
- Pray for our sponsored students, nurses and teachers, taking final exams in November.
- Pray for The Brickworks trustees as they consider next month what programmes to support in 2025.
- Pray for all the schools and colleges that we visited, who are suffering big financial challenges due to the high rate of inflation and inability of many students to afford the fees.
- Pray for the staff at the Martha Primary Health Care Centre and at the Martha Eye Clinic that God would enable them to continue to offer high quality services.
- Pray for peace in South Sudan, with elections now postponed for two years until December 2026.

John and Poppy Spens, on behalf of the trustees.