



Newsletter July 2023

Our brothers and sisters in South Sudan continue to find life to be very tough. For those in the refugee settlements in Uganda, the food ration has been reduced again so that those with needs receive only 4kgs of maize per person per month while those who are able have had their ration cut altogether.

The Bishop of Morobo (a diocese adjacent to Yei) was hijacked on the main road between the Ugandan border and his Diocesan HQ just 10 miles to the north. This is a well-used road that we have travelled many times. Normally church leaders are not attacked or robbed but on this occasion those who robbed the Bishop accused the church of supporting the government forces. They then set fire to his brand new vehicle and stole all his possessions including all his Bishop's robes and equipment. The Brickworks set up a fund to help replace some of his items, including a pectoral cross that Bishops normally wear.



High inflation is affecting everyone in South Sudan. Since January, prices have risen by 50%. According to the World Bank 82% of the population live on less than \$1.90 a day and the increased price of food and other basic items causes hunger and leads to increased levels of malnutrition. Insecurity prevents people in the towns from travelling to cultivate their land in the rural villages. Greater demands are being placed on the church-run clinic in Yei but people's ability to pay for medicines has reduced.

The Brickworks recently received an appeal for help from a young man who is in his final year of nurse training. His mother and father were murdered in a shooting so his uncle took over responsibility for paying his college fees. Last year, the uncle died suddenly. He now has no relative able to support the payment of his fees and he cannot graduate if he has not paid them. All this has been verified by the College. Sadly situations such as this are all too common and even where the parents are alive, there can be a big struggle to pay school or college fees.

Despite these examples of how difficult life is for people whether living in South Sudan or as refugees in Uganda, our programmes continue. This week more than sixty pastors from the BidiBidi refugee settlement in northern Uganda are gathering for a week of training and encouragement funded by The Brickworks. The pastors come from 12 different Christian denominations and love getting to know one another and learning together as the body of Christ. Some will not have received any formal training but this week they will learn about the Old and New Testament, how to interpret Scripture and practical pastoring. They will also be trained on trauma healing and peace building.

Our health, education and teacher training programmes continue, and we are now planning our next visit to Yei which will be from 27th September to 3rd October. Two doctors – Katharine Lowndes and Ben Sharpe – will travel with us to give support and refresher training to the staff at the health clinic and to trainee nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians at the Yei Health Training Institute. Please do pray for our preparations as well as for some of the other situations that we have featured in this newsletter.

Thank you for your continued interest, prayers and support.

John and Poppy Spens and the Trustees.



The Bishop's car being inspected after the attack.



Pastors attending one of the previous training weeks in the refugee settlement.

Food on sale in the local market in Yei.

