

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN,

PROGRESS REPORT ON GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION IN AWEIL DIOCESE, SOUTH SUDAN 2014:

This School is going to be the first Girls High School not only for ECS but the whole Northern Bahr El Ghazal State which has a population of 720,898(2008).

Northern Bahr El Ghazal is one of the 10 states of South Sudan with predominantly Dinka and other Migrating tribes from Sudan such as Misseriya and Rezeigats.

It has an area of 30.543 km and is part of the Bahr El Ghazal region. It borders South Darfur to the north, Western Bahr El Ghazal to the west and south, and Warap and Abyei to the east. Aweil is the Capital of the State and head Quarter of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, Diocese of Aweil..

Because of its proximity to Kordofan and the presence of a railway lines through it to Wau it suffered extensively in the recently ended civil wars in southern Sudan. Northern Bahr El Ghazal and adjacent parts of Western Kordofan to the north are currently among the most politically sensitive regions in Sudan.

Misseriya Arabs from Kordofan have interacted with Dinka in Aweil over a long time. While relations during the colonial era were largely peaceful, the recent war saw an upsurge in hostilities. Government backing to the Misseriya gave them a decided advantage over local Dinka groups, raiding by *muralhileen* militias and other government backed groups including some Dinka militias in what was now, Northern Sudan, resulted in considerable loss of life, and widespread abduction of girls and boys. Girls were forced into becoming wives and boys became cattle keepers and farmers for Arabs who committed the pillaging of Dinka villages and so many other untold atrocities.

Therefore, Aweil ECS Girls High School will accommodate about 40-50 girls students as it is the only girls high school in Aweil State. Girls suffer from so many social, cultural and economic issues that have made it difficult for them to go to school. Sadly, even those who have gotten a chance to go to school did not finish their studies due to early marriages for economics purposes. Culture does not promote the education of girls and boys can disrupt the learning of girls in shared schools hence the environment sometime become unfavorable and not conducive for their learning. Aweil Diocese is responding to such huge need by constructing this vibrant project in the community as its commitment and dedication to holistic development that encompasses human needs.



These are burnt bricks which were transported to the project site. The gentlemen standing next to the bricks is the builder.



Burnt Bricks gathered at the project site.

Left to Right, Revd. Joseph Mamer Manot, Revd. James Akol Mawien, Angelo Azeber Athuai

The construction of this school started late because of the current conflict in South Sudan which delayed half the funds for the project to be wired by the donors. There were uncertainties about whether this project would really be implemented since the fighting was escalating and caused displacements and insecurity in South Sudan. We thank God that we walk forward by faith and, indeed, this vibrant project started despite enormous insecurity, and humanitarian challenges including untold deaths in South Sudan.

Before construction started, there was a formation of a small team to work with Revd. Joseph Mamer to assist him on overall work of school construction. Comprised of Revd. Stephen Mayuen Mou, who is the Diocesan administrative Secretary, Revd William Aguer Aguer, pastor in-charge of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Rural dean, James Akol Mawien, security guards Akuardit, and Revd. Joseph Mamer Manot who is the executive Secretary of Projects to spearhead construction. The construction began on 24th April 2014 but rain stopped the transportation of bricks for 2 weeks and the road to the project site became impassable as it was blocked by water.



Above is a heap of burned bricks which were transported to the project site in Riang-Makuei.



The builders have begun clearing the ground to lay foundation.



(Innovation- Water Container)

This was created because limited funds could not allow us to buy water containers to store water at the project site. In the picture above is a short well locally dug to store water for construction at the project site. This became necessary as a result of there being no fresh water sources close to the site. Some church members volunteered to transport water for the school constructions as their in-kind contribution towards this project.



These will become classrooms. You can see builders are very busy doing construction at the site.



The walls for the classrooms have been raised.



These will be offices for both teaching and non-teaching staff in the future.



Classrooms from the back view. One class can take 45-60 students. The only thing it needs now is a roof.



Classrooms from a back view. We are appealing for more funds for roofing and other parts.



Front View.



PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS:

These young girls are excited and waiting early to enroll at the school once it is finished. Most of these girls are in Primary 8 and one girl is in Senior One. She is in white and looks both happy and excited to enroll next year. They pray at Holy Trinity Church.



Josephina Ahok: She is a church choir member and is in Senior One. I asked her “Why do you like girls only schools?” She replied that “I like to study where there are no boys because boys disturb us. They say I love you, we do not get time to play, and when we play boys look at us. But when we have our school alone we shall be able to concentrate on education and distance ourselves from the boys and other social disturbances. We shall be able to read the Bible better since it is going to be a church school, unlike the mixed ones we currently have.”



Elisabeth Ayen Atak (smiling). Her father, Revd. Daniel Atak Atak, recently died of asthma in Cairo. She is now left with her unemployed mother who has placed her hope in the lord. Ayen said, “Although my dear and beloved father died, I pray to God to bless me with only school fees so that I can complete my Senior Four in this upcoming girls high school.” She holds some Dinka cultural values such as young people not looking adults in the eyes when talking as a sign of respect. She and her classmates were so excited to hear in the church today that there is going to be a girls high school built.



Teresa Angong Malong: Teresa, who is on the right side in black, was very keen and happy when she heard that a girls high school being started in the Diocese. She is one of the committed girls who came from the interior village to her uncle to study when she saw that the villages' schools were giving quality education as well as freedom from social disturbances to her peer group. She said the following words, "I'm happy today because I will be in a school that has Christian **values, principles** and **disciplines**. I'm sure and confident that I will finish my high school. I hope it is going to be an

environment peaceful and conducive for studies where there are fewer disturbances socially.”



One blessing counts,” last year we got this biggest church in the State, We are more than a blessed God’s children, we have a space to worship our true God in” as you can see at their back is their beautiful Cathedral, Holy Trinity Cathedral, ECS, Aweil Diocese. They have just come out from Dinka Service. Holy Trinity is not finished but most Christians members do rejoice and happy to have such an amazing church. We again blessed to have Girls High School where we shall definitely enroll next year God willing.

ST.JOSEPH CATHEDRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL (ECS MATHIANG)



LEARNING IN A SHADE OF THE CHURCH BUILDING (Potential children for girls high school as most of them here are girls)

In South Sudan many young children are hungry for an education despite the enormous challenges they face in yearning for that education. These children are learning in the shade of a church building because they lack a building for learning. They spend less than 3 hours a day in the class because of sun, hence students do not finish the syllabus which consistently results in poor performance by the students. They only need temporarily shelter for learning. Most of these children come from very poor families as it was hoped they would get better education with considerable school fee.



PRIMARY ONE LEARNING IN UN-OPEN SHADE:(Potential Girls among these children)

These primary one students are taking their classes in an open shade as you can see. This shade was covered by tents but got spoiled because of direct heat of the sun and now they are learning in an open classroom. One of the boys (Tong) told me that “we have not been able to take our lessons because of constant interruption of rain and sun and I do not know when we shall have lessons taught.” Their shelter was made by the community but now are unable to cover it because of poverty and exhausted of being covered every year.

Adut of St. Joseph School was also happy saying that she will soon join the girl’s high school at Riag Makuei.

It is not only the shade that they lack but they do not even have something to sit on in the class. You can see they normally take their classes on the floor but they look serious and attentive their only concern is for the rain and sun. The lacking of a bench or chair is a secondary issue to them.



**ABUK AJANG WHO IS A FAMILY TEACHER WITH HER COLLEAGUE
STANDING IN FRONT OF STUDENTS.**

She is telling me that the only serious challenge is a lack of shelter for learners. “You could see these young ones are seriously hungry of education but there are so many factors that do not allow them to learn. One of the challenges is lack of a conducive learning environment, they are always interrupted by rain and sun” We have hung up their blackboard because there is no class. We have qualified teachers but we do not have classes for our students to learn in. The school is under ECS church administration and the church does not have funds to support teaching and non-teaching staff.

GIRLS’ DORMITORY NOT STARTED YET:

We have gotten limited grants from Anglican Relief and Development Funds but those funds will not cover the costs of building classrooms, the administration block and the dormitory. Reasons are that there is insufficiency of those funds already received from ARDF and at the same time high inflation of construction items and high cost of everything in South Sudan has significantly impacted this project. The projected budget to complete the school is estimated to be roughly \$90,000-\$100,000, or even more depending on the peace and stability in South Sudan which we all hope to have it soon to pave ways for developmental activities.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. School land

School land has been identified and given by the community and state authority as an in-kind contribution to the girls high school. This land can be used to build a big dormitory, a library, a chapel, a kitchen dining hall and space for sports, games and many other activities.

2. Classes (Form 1–Form 4) this school is a high school which will only enroll girls from Form 1 to Form 4 with acceptable entry qualifications after open recruitment. Classes have ready been built, roofed as you could see them in the photo attached, windows and doors are also been fixed remaining plastering of floor and wall which needs more money to complete this.



Four classrooms and the administration block, Photo by Mamer

3. Administration block.

The school administration block has been built and roofed which will be used by the school administrator, school Head Master and teaching staff. It has a capacity of 5 tables.



Administration Block. Standing in front is Rev. William Aguer Aguer, a construction team member inspecting the building.



Administration Block



Fence: The school has a fenced wire with a big gate fixed





4. Student Chapel:

This is one of components of this project. One of the objectives was on the spiritual part of it. This chapel is still under thatching but will soon be finished. Currently, it has 150 members but the number keeps increasing each day. Many are being converted to Christ. We are glad to acknowledge the enormous and visible contribution made by our local church members and are very positive to continue their in-kind contribution to see this school is built and girls are enrolled yearly. Here is our grass-thatched chapel inside the school compound for students.



THE STUDENT CHAPEL

CHALLENGES:

1. CONFLICT, INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY IN SOUTH SUDAN:

- Current conflict in South Sudan had delayed the funds to be sent in advance when there was no rain. Because of rain prices, especially, construction and building materials have been raised double. As it has limited, many traders who bring goods from Sudan, East Africa such as Kenya, Uganda and hence encourage heavily pricing of limited resources available for until late or early next year.
- Unexpected high cost has been incurred and this has significantly and negatively impacted the construction as South Sudan depends on exported commodities and construction materials.

2. RAIN:

The project was started late due to current conflict in South Sudan, rain started soon after we began the project which also hindered our activities so much as some of roads became impassable.

3. LIMITED FUNDS FROM Anglican Relief and Development Funds (ARDF)

The third biggest challenge is that the funds we received from ARDF have been spent on buying the followings items.

1. bricks,
2. raising of wall,
3. labour,
4. purchasing of timbers
5. timbers for roofing,
6. nails, windbreakers,
7. cements
8. transportations
9. doors and windows and many other small essential materials of construction etc.

4. PLASTERING:

The school has not been plastered yet.

5. DORMITORY FOR GIRLS:

The dorm has not been built yet and we appeal to our partners and donors to help with any contribution- We shall send you BOQ specifically for dormitory with estimated budget of **395,375** South Sudanese Pounds equivalent to **\$ 49,421.875**. Girls will be accommodated in this dorm as a technical way of distancing them from social disturbances and those that hinder them from paying much attention to school.

PLANS:

The Diocese of Aweil under leadership of Bishop Abraham Yel and entire Education department/school administration plan to enroll students in Jan 2016 from Form1-Form 4 Girls only. The Diocese is currently working with our local churches to put benches and other essentials assets in place before the opening of school. The State Ministry of Education will soon be invited to inspect the school again for their final approval for opening next year.

Therefore we appeal to our friends and partners to support this viable project of completion of St. Mary Girls, High School which will not only help South Sudanese girls but also Sudan and other nationalities living in South Sudan.

Your generous support will be appreciated and a blessings to Aweil community.

Appeal For Relief:

The Diocese of Aweil has again been badly hit by another disaster. War on one side and hunger on the other. According to the media outlets,¹South Sudanese rebels have occupied several areas in Northern Bahr-el-gazal state at the borders of Sudan ready to launch their attacks on the government troops. The populations in rural areas of Aweil North, Aweil West, Aweil Center and Aweil East counties/districts are flowing into Northern Bahr-el-gazal state capital, Aweil for safety. They are however not safe due to food insecurity within Aweil town. The most affected are Aweil North County, Aweil West County, Aweil East County and Aweil Center County.

In Aweil town, food items are not available in the market for sale. It doesn't matter if you have money or not. Food items were coming from Sudan to Aweil but since Sudan government shut down the road that connect Aweil with Sudan during Sudan's general election, little food items which were in the market have already been exhausted by the huge population in the town.

The government has been overwhelmed by widespread of violent conflict in the country; the state government in this situation cannot provide enough food for the population given the national economic situation. Only International Organizations, Churches, individuals and well-wishers can arrest the situation in Aweil. It is an urgent appeal for help at this difficult moment.

The Diocese of Aweil cannot do anything without support from its friends, Organizations and individuals.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. As always, thank you for your supports. God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Rev'd. Joseph Mamer Manot

Project Coordinator and Executive Secretary.

Here below are our contacts you can use anytime.

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