

Dear all

As some of you already know I have recently returned from a month in South Sudan most of which was spent in Yei working with the Kindergarten. Apologies if you have already heard or read this news as some of you may be on more than one mailing list.

Most of you will know our Headteacher Malish died in January so the focus of the trip was to work with the team in Yei to put in place new systems and processes as inevitably changes of leadership will need new ways of working. I arrived on May 7<sup>th</sup> and the new school year began May 9<sup>th</sup>. Normally the academic year starts the end of January or early February but Covid closures over the last two years have meant dates have been changed. The current Government plan seems to be to complete the academic year before Christmas to try and reset the timing.

During the last months of Malish's life some things had slipped as he had clearly been unwell for sometime. He was still trying to manage things and his style of leadership meant even senior staff were unaware of the situation. This meant that things such as school fees (all children in Africa pay school fees and part of the purpose of that is to pay staff salaries) had not been collected meaning there was no money to pay salaries or indeed feed the children.

Ferida who was the deputy is now head teacher and has done an amazing job keeping things going in what have been very difficult circumstances. She will ably lead the school into the next exciting stage of its development.

I helped with staff salaries and food for the children for the first few days in order to help get things moving in the right direction and allow the school to start with a clean sheet.

We have, through the donations some of you had given for use on this trip, been able to do some other things such as to refurbish the outdoor play items such as swings and roundabout and purchase balls and skipping ropes. We have repaired the strimmers to help keep the grass down (and reduce hiding places for snakes!!). I brought a new laptop with me and we have serviced the old ones plus the printers. We have also got the solar power system working well meaning printers, laptops etc can be used making the staffs life much easier.

The bookshop (thanks to a very generous donor) now has a fridge enabling cold drinks to be served as well as a photocopier. This will be a real money spinner as such services commercially are very expensive but we can still make a profit but keep prices low attracting business. The same donor provided a generator enabling the fridge and photocopier to be used regularly. The proceeds from the book shop are used to support the development of the school.

Alongside this the new classroom block is progressing well. Prices of construction materials have risen considerably since the original budget so things are taking longer than expected but the basic structure is complete and the roof is on. We hope to be able to install doors and windows and maybe plaster in the next few months so making the rooms useable for the start of the next academic year. Despite the rooms having no windows and doors, because our baby class has 120 children, we have already split it in half. I have purchased some mats and a chalk board and the delighted class teacher is using one of the new rooms!

The garden is thriving and maize and groundnuts will be ready for harvest for food for children in August.

Additionally, we now have 20 children accessing full day care and I was able to bring a few soft toys and other bits for their use.

The staff have appreciated the underwear I was able to send ahead as well as bringing some with me so thank you again for your donations.

Despite a very busy schedule I was, at the weekends able to attend several 'occasions' allowing me to spend time in different settings experiencing the joy and hope the people of Yei continue to have despite the security situation in the country making life very hard for many.

As ever I was well looked after, cared for and over fed!!! - it was hard to leave but hopefully I will return, once the building is ready for use, to take part in the official opening

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement  
Best wishes from Carolyn



The new building adjacent to the hall with our watchman showing off the strimmer.



Refurbished play equipment enjoyed by excited children.

Happy staff and children using the new classroom despite lack of doors and windows.



Staff and children in day care enjoying new toys and



Writing lesson in the top class.



Our amazing staff.



New photocopier in the bookshop.



Maize and groundnuts in the school garden.



Excited staff receiving new underwear.

