



Dear Friends

August 2012

We have exciting news about our own future, and good news about our school in Malek, South Sudan!

First the news about South Sudan and the school ...

You may have read of trouble on the border between Sudan and South Sudan since the Easter period. As a result of a lot of negotiation the tension has now been reduced, and the two countries are working on an agreement to reopen the oil pipeline from South Sudan. This will enable both countries to benefit again from the oil income that is so important to their development.

Our Ayok Anei girls school is less than 100 miles from the border. We are glad that this area has remained stable, but our school community mourns the loss of Francis, one of our teachers. In June he went to cultivate his land near the border and was murdered by raiders from Sudan. He was only 20 years old and leaves behind his wife with three small children. UTS is helping his family financially, but that will never compensate for the loss of a dear person and wonderful teacher.

The recent very heavy rains have flooded areas around Aweil and Wau, Malek hasn't been that badly affected as the soil drains more easily. But for many their crops have been destroyed. This adds more hardship for people to the already soaring prices due to the recent closure of the border to the North.

Hopefully as the border has now opened again, and the oil revenues should be coming in, this situation will improve.

We are well into the fourth year of the school's life, and the school as before is full of 6-15 year old girls, and again the nursery is full of their little brothers and sisters. A new development this year is that we are beginning to teach at secondary level, to meet the needs of those girls who are already 15 and who would otherwise have had to leave school.



Computer lessons



future Olympic runners ?

We have a new member of staff to teach the girls sewing, as part of our aim to give the girls vocational qualifications. Some of the girls are also learning to use computers and Angelo, who has been helping the school on a voluntary basis will be employed to take Francis' place. He has good computer skills.

We are getting on with establishing the livestock farm that will eventually bring money into the school and teach agricultural techniques.

We have two new basketball courts in operation as part of the sporting life of the school; and the new kitchen and dining building is virtually ready for use.



Andy Stanton from one of our churches in Kidderminster visited Malek in June. He brought carpentry tools to Richard Bojo, who has been our carpenter since the beginning of our school. And Andy brought all sorts of other things including the metal baskets for the basketball court!

A chapel has been built in the school compound by the local people, this is mainly being funded by our friends in Switzerland. The congregation is already over 500, and so we need a big chapel – people are calling it “Malek cathedral”! What is different from a church building site in Malek compared to here is that even though it has not been all finished, it is already being used!



And the exciting news about us ...

Joseph has been asked by the President of South Sudan to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and he has been made an Ambassador. Since the start of the summer he has been working in Juba and travelling abroad being involved in strategic work to build up the new country. It is vital to both Sudan and South Sudan to live peacefully as neighbours, if not both countries suffer. Both countries also need to look into other income revenues instead of relying mainly on oil.

He expects shortly to be assigned to head one of South Sudan’s new embassies, but we do not know which one yet. This will involve a move for our family including Nellie, our dog (not the chicken and guinea pigs, they go across the road to friends!). There are always the two sides – the sadness of leaving a dear place and the excitement of what lies ahead. But it is wonderful that Joseph can contribute so directly now to the creation and development of South Sudan.

The school will go on!

Despite the changes we continue to work hard on managing the school, with our faithful band of supporters of the Under Tree Schools charity. We are so grateful to you and all our supporters for the way you have enabled us to make the school such a going concern! We look back and are so thankful for what has been possible to establish and achieve in the face of many challenges.

As we have said in an earlier newsletter a priority for us now is to make the school financially secure. Its running costs are about £16,000 a quarter, to cover wages, maintenance of the buildings, school supplies, transport and so on. While we are fortunate to have many generous donations each year, virtually all are one-off payments and we cannot of course assume that they will be repeated. What we need is the assurance of the continuing income that will be vital to maintain the school.

It would be marvelous if you could help us here. Could you please consider offering the school a modest regular donation? Perhaps you might feel able to convert the amount you already give us into an equivalent periodic commitment? A standing order per month or per quarter would be hugely helpful to us.

If you can Gift Aid your regular donation we can claim the extra 25% from the Government. You can also donate online or download our forms: <http://www.undertreeschools.org/regular-donations.html>

Or you might want to sponsor Konrad Nofer walking the full length of the 225 miles of the Severn Way Walk? Or walk yourself some of it? More details here: <http://www.undertreeschools.org/events.html>

Do go to our website www.undertreeschools.org and see a lot of photos of how the school looks now. We will keep the site up to date with our news.

Thank you for thinking of us and we thank you for all your support. I hope we can tell you our new address in our next newsletter!

God's blessings

Joseph and Karin



UNDER TREE SCHOOLS
SCHULEN UNTER BÄUMEN

Rev. Joseph and Mrs Karin Ayok-Loewenberg

38 Comberton Avenue | Kidderminster
Worc. DY10 3EG | England

Tel: 0044 (0) 1562 637 645

Mail: ayokloewenberg@fastmail.fm

Web: www.undertreeschools.org