

Report from Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron June 2019



By Per Nordmark



14th June 2019

Introduction

This report is made on behalf of Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron (HTPVK) by board member Per Nordmark. The reporting is done based on information collected during a stay in South Sudan in the period 27th May till 15th June, - most of the time in Kuron.

The objective of the visit was to attend a board meeting and board training, and to collect information and produce a report which will give donors, partners, friends etc. of HTPVK an update on the situation, achievements and challenges.

The situation in South Sudan

According to the Peace Agreement of 12th September 2018, a transitional government should be established by 12th May 2019. Unfortunately, the agreed preparations for the establishment of the transitional government is much delayed, and the deadline is postponed till 12th November 2019.

The meeting in Rome in April where the two leaders; President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Riek Machar with their delegation met with Pope Francis gave hope. However, the expectations observed is scepticism when it comes to the effect.

President Salva Kiir, Riek Machar and Bishop Paride Taban in Rome during the meeting with Pope Francis



The change of leadership in Sudan will affect South Sudan and is now creating concern. The security situation in the country seems still challenging but without mayor known incidents and issues at the moment.

The situation in Kuron area

The dry season was warm and dry. Much of the people in Kuron area, and almost all the animals went to the cattle kraals, north from Kuron to find pasture and water, - and for the people to feed from the animals. The food situation is challenging. However, it has been raining frequently for the last couple of weeks, and people are now migrating south from the kraals, every day several people with their herds of animals are passing by Kuron.



Toposa villages not far from Kuron airstrip

Toposa migrating south, back from the kraals

All up to Kapoeta and beyond it could now be observed from the air that there is flooded areas and water in the rivers. The local Toposa people in the area surrounding Kuron are busy farming these days.

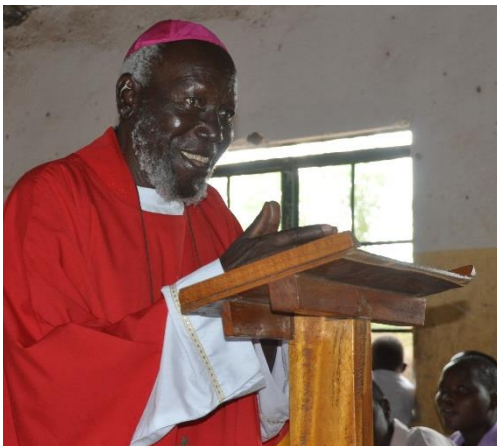
There are no reported incidents in the area related to the national conflict, however there are still the challenges of tension and incidents between the local tribes, mostly between Murle and Jie. Second of May 2019 a group of migrating Jie was reported to be attacked by Murle and a higher number of children were abducted in one incident. The children are still with the Murle, and the situation seems very difficult to solve, the government do not have capacity to interfere with the situation.

There have been some incidents between Jie and Toposa. However, these are described as done by some “criminals”, or some youth, but not supported by the tribes.

As it has been dry weather for long, access to the area by road has been fair, also to Boma. By using Landcruiser it has been possible to make day visits to Boma. However, due to the rain access to Boma will now be challenging as this part consist of black cotton soil.

Peace Village staff and activities are generally on good terms with the local community, and the relationship is developing positively.

Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban



Bishop Paride Taban (83) unfortunately got some serious health challenges May last year and had a longer period with consultations and treatment. However, he has got good help and medication, and these days he is active in HTPVK, as he also stays in Kuron. His role as a mentor and inspiration for staff and community is important.

As patron and chair of the board he was active throughout the June board meeting.

Bishop Paride Taban speaks to the school children and the congregation before ending the Mass on Sunday 9th June 2019

HTPVK administration

Since September 2018 Emmanuel Ira, who was also working in HTPVK 2005 -2009 was employed as program manager. The position as director was purposely left open to try to evaluate if there is a need for both a program manager and a director. Emmanuel Ira as program manager has covered both duties since his employment.

At present all staff positions are filled, except that there is a recommendation for two more teachers at St Thomas primary school. The position as peace coordinator is covered by Fr. Modi as acting peace coordinator.

The implementation of programs and to operate HTPVK organisation is still facing challenges. Both practical implementation, budgeting, finance and narrative reporting is challenging. The NCA/EU funding is setting a high standard on reporting and accountability. Gaps on these issues will affect a smooth running of the organisation and then the implementation of the programs and activities.

A USA lawyer, Mark A. Lindow has volunteered to Peace Village this year and assisted the management, among others on production of governing and policy documents. He also assisted as a consultant for Bishop Paride Taban.

There is a well-established management structure in HTPVK with Senior management meetings, short Head of department meetings Mondays and Fridays addressing planning and reporting. There are regular All staff meetings where relevant topics are presented and discussed.

The input by NCA/EU project to the management through funding and competence is significant.

*All staff meeting
3rd June in HTPVK*



Infrastructure and assets

An important improvement early 2019 is the upgrading of the internet capacity. This now allows good and efficient wireless access to Internet whenever there is electricity. Still there might be observed challenges as the number of users, especially on smartphones might overload the system. The access is controlled by password.



*The new disk for Internet,
located behind the office*

During the last months a dining shed is made in St. Thomas School. This is built mainly from local materials.



*Dining shed
(left) and
kitchen*

In the classrooms now light is available when the main generator in the compound is running; daily 1900 – 2200. This allow the pupils to read and do homework in the classrooms in the evenings. Still there is no light in the dormitories for the boys, - there is a need to do a re-cabling up to the dormitories. In the school offices there are electricity from solar - 24/7.

There is still needs for maintenance of St Thomas school, also of Fr. Haumann PHCU at Matara. For 2019 there are budgets for some maintenance of both.

The construction of buildings for Peace Academy is almost completed, however, there are needs to fulfil some of the work. Three new houses, - round ones, are constructed this year and almost completed in beginning of June. Electric power at Peace Academy must be provided from generator. Beds with mattresses are now installed in the self-contained houses.



The new houses under construction at Peace Academy



Rehabilitation of the two tukuls

During the last months strong wind blew off the roof of the building made for maternity ward

Major rehabilitation is now ongoing on the two tukuls next to the guesthouse, these are used for staff accommodation. The buildings will now be made permanent, in concrete with roofs of iron sheets.



JCB, tractors and Unimogs, - some are not in operational condition at the moment

Much of the vehicles of HTPVK are old and very well used under rough conditions. This makes challenges as it naturally will reduce availability and give high needs for repair and maintenance. This effect the implementation of programs and activities.

A new Landcruiser was donated to Peace Village by MIVA and arrived in HTPVK in May 2019, - an important input which was very much welcomed.



The new Landcruiser, here transporting board members and staff from the airstrip in Kuron



The two bridges are both in good conditions, and this seems also to be the situation when it comes to the gabions under the foundations.

Peace Bridge (foot bridge) to Peace Academy

The road from Kuron Bridge along the river on the west side down to Peace Academy is now well cleared and some spots are also filled up with stones to give good access.

HTPVK Finances

The finance management has been a challenge for Peace Village. This comes from the complexity in financial environment: Donors have different finance requirements, bank handling is needed both in Juba and Nairobi, purchase of equipment, construction material etc. and services have to be made from far; like Juba, Kapoeta, Uganda and Kenya.

It has also been the difficulties to maintain necessary financial competence and capacity in HTPVK.

The board requested in the November 2018-meeting to have a competent finance manager employed as soon as possible. Three candidates were shortlisted and interviewed in February 2019; Stromme, NCA and HTPV participated in the interview panel. A new finance manager was selected, employed and started the work in March. Margaret Keyi who was responsible for finance in HTPVK up till March is now holding the position as finance officer. This makes 2 full positions under finance, - in addition comes the contribution from NCA/EU.

A procurement and logistic officer is also employed and has been working in Kuron for approximately 3 months, - assisted by the former logistics staff; making now two positions under procurement and logistics.

The NCA/EU project is providing support to HTPVK finance administration, both by financing staff salaries and by providing training and allocating competent staff. Unfortunately, the NCA finance person who was assigned to assist HTPVK has left the position. However, a new qualified NCA staff is already allocated to HTPVK and have started the work.

The further development and implementation of Tangicloud, a cloud-based software for finance and management has got a setback with the change of staff in NCA and new finance manager in HTPVK, who are new to Tangicloud. Stromme Foundation and PAX are using Bush soft as their software and requires this for HTPVK reports.

Transfer of funds from donors in the first part of the year is not in correspondence with the requirements for payments to staff and implementation costs for programs and activities. Staff contracts and tax requirements etc. is binding HTPVK. As HTPVK doesn't have its own funds or credit to cover temporary gaps, this therefore gives challenges at the moment. However, the situation is expected to improve soon.

Due to the staff gap and resent employment of a new finance manager, the process of preparing the budget for 2019 has delayed. The board addressed the matter in the June meeting and required a balanced budget as the main steering tool for the organisation. Production of the budget is at present ongoing.

Donors are generally very supportive to Peace Village, and the total approved donations including NCA/EU for 2019 are higher than ever, however the ambitions and needs are also the highest ever. A European donor meeting is planned within a few months to support a holistic approach, probably in September in Norway.

PROGRAMS

Peace Program

There is no change in the staff of this program since November 2018. Peace program is led by Acting Head of Peace Program Fr Dario Modi, assisted by 3 staff in Kuron and 2 staff based in Boma field office. The peace program is supported by Community Peace Adviser Patrick Odinga. The program focuses on community meetings, conflict related meetings and collection of information on security and conflict issues.



Titus Lokwachuma, board member of HTPVK, finance minister of Kapoeta State and a respected member of the Toposa community speaks in the community meeting 9th June 2019

Community meetings are conducted regularly; once a month and is a fruitful arena to make people meet and address actual and relevant issues.

These meetings have a role in enlighten the communities on important matters in the line of governance, human rights, cultural issues and economic development. Focus is also on making the communities and the local people more involved in HTPVK and create ownership to the organisation and the services and inputs given.

Some participants in the community meeting are coming from far and a meal is served to the participants. Men and women group themselves and eat separated.



Food for the participants at the community meeting; Men and women from the villages and HTPVK staff

Peace Academy as a location for conferences and workshops are now established. In the period 1st – 5th June a group of 29 persons, organised by the INGO Humanity United came to Peace Village for a workshop. They were accommodated at Peace Academy where services were provided by HTPVK: Accommodation, food, electricity 24 hours, and access to internet in the compound. Flights in was provided through HTPVK, in-transport: MAF, (Caravan) and out-transport: Samaritan Purse (DC 3).



DC 3 is boarding at Kuron airstrip by 29 participants attending Humanity United workshop in Kuron

This was the first arrangement of this type in the new facilities at Peace Academy. It worked out well and the participants were very satisfied. The group had their own workshops and program, however including a session where Bishop Paride Taban spoke on the topic of peace and shared from his experiences. The group's feedback was that the green environment, the facilities and the peaceful atmosphere of Kuron area gave an enjoyable stay, and an efficient workshop.

Education

St Paul II Nursery School

The newly appointed Bishop of Diocese of Torit Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Ameyu Mulla visited Peace Village 27th -29th May for the first time. The bishop celebrated Mass, was presented to the various programs and met with the staff. The bishop visited also the nursery school. This year it is registered 98 children, 66 boys and 32 girls at the nursery school. The nursery



Eve and Katrin- teachers, Bishop Paride Taban and Bishop Stephen Ameyu outside nursery school.

Right: The watchman and some children at nursery early morning

New Nursery Schools. For 2019 it is planned to make the preparations for opening two new additional nursery schools; one near Matara, and one at Nabokoze. This will allow also children who live further from Kuron to get access to some education. By establishing these two schools, children can live at home and still go to school. There is for 2019 a small budget for establish simple facilities for the two nursery schools.

HTPVK plan to start teaching from first term 2020. Planning has started for the construction, and 4 local young men speaking Toposa, having partly secondary education will be trained to start the education. They are already recruited, and training have started.



The 4 recruited trainees – in the middle – their trainers (teachers) on the flanks

The people in the village are now motivated for giving children education. A motivating factor is also that children get a good meal at school. For both areas the village people have identified the actual locations and have already cleared the ground.

St Thomas primary school

The school has every day a parade in the mornings at 0730. This ceremony includes flying the flag, singing the national hymn and prayers.



From the morning parade at St Thomas



Athletics for the pupils: 4 x 400m

The number of school children in 2019 is the highest ever at St Thomas primary school; 428 registered for first term.

Statistics:

Year	Pupils total	Boys	Girls	Examns	Divisjon 1	Divisjon 2	Divisjon 3	Divisjon 4	Not passed
2005	49	41	8						
2006	96	60	36						
2007	60	53	7						
2008	59	57	2						
2009	59	48	11						
2010	112	93	19						
2011	115	91	24						
2012	143	119	24	8	3	5			
2013	108	86	22	14	4	7	1	2	
2014	143	111	24	24	2	6	10	4	2
2015	233	195	39	19	10	9			
2016	334	280	54	25	4	18	3		
2017	179	166	31	16	15	2			
2018	285	220	65	16	16				
2019	428	330	97						

In 2019 210 pupils are day scholars.



The situation when it comes to desks and chairs in the classrooms is not as it should be. There is a great need for renewal, and also for some maintenance of exciting furniture. The production of local desks was planned but is not implemented mainly due to delayed maintenance of equipment at VTS.

The school compound is tidy, and the boy's dormitories have improved since 2018, mainly due to better order and discipline. The electrical supply is sufficient, however not reaching boys dormitories where there is no light.

Secondary Education

In the Strategic Plan for 2020 -2024, approved by the board June 2019 HTPVK has the ambition to establish a secondary school in the area. This idea was also strongly supported in a donor meeting in Utrecht December 2018. The Board of Peace Village is aiming at establishing one class; secondary school class one from the beginning of 2020 school year. For further development the Board want to establish one class annually as the student's progress, - including constructing the building(s) and employing staff. This will give opportunities for local children to get further education without moving out of the area.

Apprentices: A new activity is established in Peace Village where 8 young illiterate local people are given a contract as apprentices. They will get some economical compensation and will follow and assist selected employees of HTPVK. The aim is for them to gain skills and competence.

Health

Previously American Refugee Council (ARC) were implementing Partner under Health Pooled Fund (HPF) and paid salaries for the staff at Matara. The funding came from (HPF) under the contract for Phase 2. The Top-up to health staff was paid by HTPVK financed by donors.

Health Pooled Fund is financed by: United Kingdom's Department for International Development (UFDI), Government of Canada, the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

HPF started its third phase in July 2018 and has funding until 2023. The HPF cooperate with Ministry of Health (MOH) in South Sudan. Kuron is within Lot 6: Including Kapoeta North, Kapoeta South, Kapoeta East. The maximum budget for the lot shall be 2 000 000 GBP, and the maximum overhead 600 000 GBP. ARC found that the funding was too small, withdrew and has left South Sudan.

Christian Mission for Development (CMD) applied for Lot 6 and accepted the budget which ARC refused. CMD has got the contract and took over as Implementing Partner. The final budget for HTPVK PHCU is not settled, and a MOU will be made and signed. However,

expectations are that less than 50 % of the costs will be covered and there will be needs of external funding. This funding is not yet covered.

The PHCU at Matara also receive an in-sufficient amount and variety of medicines. For more adequate treatment there is a strong wish for some additional drugs.

With the service of the 6 medical staff employed treatment is going on with the similar volume as before. There is no capacity for out-reach activities, an area where there is also a great need.

Bishop Stephen Ameyu Mulla is greeting Nurse Martha at Fr. Haumann PHCU at Matara



A couple who came to Matara for medical consultations



Livelihood and Economic Empowerment

The Peace Market building in Napil is completed. Official opening is planned for Saturday 15th June.



Board members and senior staff is inspecting the Peace Market, opened 15th June



It is now possible to observe some small signs of change of culture in the area. Sale of goats and sheep has increased, and some few people have brought “cashcrops” for sale.



A woman is bringing her crop of Okra for sale to Kuron Guesthouse. Okra is not traditionally cultivated in this area

Agriculture

The cultivation at the area near Peace Academy is ongoing. The bananas dried up during dry season even when watered. At present new banana-sprouts are growing well. The cultivated area is now well fenced. Various crops are grown and sold to Kuron Guesthouse and staff. Seedlings of Teak is ready to be planted out.



The fenced farm area near Peace Academy

Vocational Training Centre



Bishop Stephen is presented to the facilities and program.

The practical training at VTS is ongoing. There is a need for construction of a dormitory for the students/trainees. For 2019 there is a budget for such a building, and the construction work is expected to start soon.



Pastoral

Bishop Paride has a great concern for the pastoral work. Together with Fr. Modi he provides teaching and celebrate Mass in Kuron, but also in the villages.



*Mass at
Kuron
Chapel*

In Kuron Chapel there are Mass on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 1700, and Saturdays at 0730. Tuesday there is Mass at the school at 0800, Sundays normally at the school at 1000, however, sometimes Sunday Mass is celebrated at Peace Academy.



*Sunday Mass 9th June
at Peace Academy*

Board of Holy Trinity Peace Village Meeting



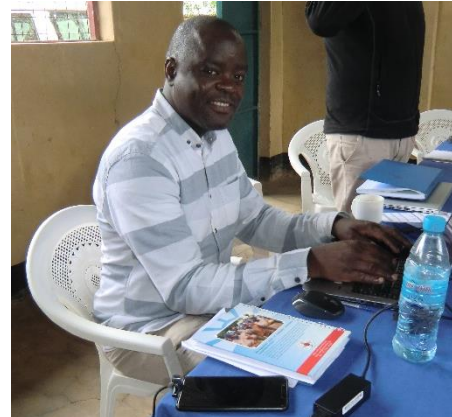
*Board of Peace Village,
Kuron, June 2019*

The Board of Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron, June 2019:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| ➤ Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban, Founder | Chair |
| ➤ H.E. Dep. Governor Torit State Dr. Margaret Itto | Vice Chair |
| ➤ Hon. Titus Lokwachuma, Minister of Finance, Kapoeta State | Treasurer |
| ➤ Fr. Dario Hakim, Palotaka, Diocese of Torit, | Member |
| ➤ Mr Per Nordmark, Chair Norwegian Friends of Peace Village | Member |
| The Executive Director is the secretary of the board | |

The Board attended a two days well organised and relevant training in structures, role and responsibilities for boards and board members. The planning and training of the workshop were done by Michael Ouko and Jonas Halvorsen, NCA.

Michael Ouko, NCA Training HTPVK board members in Kuron



The Board meeting started Saturday morning 08 June, continued Monday morning through Tuesday and ended Wednesday morning 12th June. The meeting addressed several important and demanding issues and documents. The board worked three long days till late evenings.

Some of the addressed important topics on the agenda:

- ✓ Minutes from the previous meeting in 22nd November 2018
- ✓ Update on programs and activities etc.
- ✓ Revising the Constitution of Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron
- ✓ Strategic plan for Peace Village 2020 -2024
- ✓ Staff Handbook
- ✓ Code of conduct
- ✓ HTPVK Policy on Anti-corruption
- ✓ HTPVK Policy on Sexual Harassment
- ✓ HTPVK Policy on Gender Equality
- ✓ Annual budget 2019
- ✓ Audit report on Stomme Foundation donation
- ✓ Audit report on PAX donation



Departure of the Board, arrival of supplies

There is a need to work more on the budget and activity plan. The distribution of funds is not quite corresponding with the planned activities and expenses.

On Tuesday evening the Board had dinner with the heads of department and some key staff. The board members appreciated the work, efforts

and sacrifices made by the staff for the benefit of the local population and Peace Village as an organization. The board also shared information and gave some advice to the management and staff. The Board members left Kuron by MAF flight to Kapoeta, Torit and Juba. Bishop Paride Taban remained in Kuron and welcomed Fr. Henry who arrived with the MAF flight. He is invited by Bishop Paride Taban to visit Kuron and possibly serv in the area.

The updated Vision and Mission of Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron

Vision:

A peaceful South Sudan inspired by Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron

Mission:

To be a holistic model where individuals and communities of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds are empowered to co-exist and interact peacefully

Values:

Courage Equality Accountability Integrity Dignity Ownership Love

