

NEWS REVIEW

The Annual Newsletter of International Refugee Trust



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Primary Education – 24 classrooms and still building

The Primary Education project, based in Gulu, was one of the largest projects supported by us in the last twelve months and it has made a huge contribution to the rebuilding of the education system in the area.

The rejuvenation of Northern Uganda, after years of violence by the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army, is a wonderful thing. It is no longer the no-go area it was for many years and progress continues apace. The Comboni Samaritans of Gulu are making a major contribution, not only with their primary education programme but also in healthcare and the care of child-headed families.



A class in progress at Orapwoyo School, the classroom building and the benches paid for by IRT donors. You may wonder why such old children are at primary school and the reason is that many children missed out on schooling during the LRA rebel years.



Sr. Dorina Tadiello, on the left, has recently taken over from Sr. Fernanda Pellizzer as the Comboni Samaritans' mentor and guide. We would like to thank Sr. Fernanda for all she has done and wish her well in her new post elsewhere in Uganda. Sr. Dorina was one of the Sisters who first established the Comboni Samaritans in 1995 and we welcome her back to Gulu. Also in the picture are Florence Aol Okech, the director of the Samaritans, and Masimo Opiyo, the deputy director.

Since the project started three years ago, six schools in Gulu, Amuru and Nwoya Districts now have between them, funded by IRT:

24 classrooms
48 latrines
4 teachers' accommodation units
434 benches to seat 1,736 children

A great achievement! We hope to complete this project by the end of 2012.

Healthcare

Once again we have ensured that the Comboni Samaritans are able to keep their ambulance on the road by paying for its running costs. It is a very necessary vehicle and is used for taking sick people from outlying areas to hospital.



A woman is helped into the ambulance. She was being taken to Lacor Hospital in Gulu.



The new classroom blocks at Orapwoyo.



Orphans in Northern Uganda

Redeemer Children's Home

Sr. Pasqua Binen-Anena remains in charge and she has ensured that the 65 children living at the home continue to be nurtured wonderfully well by her and her fellow Sacred Heart Sisters. Some of the older children are Sudanese, who became refugees and orphans during the Sudanese civil war. Others are Ugandan, who were uprooted from their homes during the LRA rebel years and whose parents died.

The children are doing well at school while the older ones, who have left school, continue with their skills training, such as nursing and plumbing, so that they can get jobs when they leave the home. Agricultural production is thriving, as is the home's shop. This is good news as the prices of goods in Uganda keep rising. We were also able to ensure the home's water supply with the installation of a solar powered pump.



The children and the Sisters help out in the fields in their spare time. Here they are weeding a field of ground nuts. Agriculture is going really well and Sr. Pasqua is always looking for new markets. Recently a 2.5 ton consignment of cassava flour was sold across the border into South Sudan.



Sr. Pasqua with three of the children living at the home.

Moyo Babies' Home

The Babies' Home remains a place of safety and loving care, where the Sacred Heart Sisters and the lay care assistants do all they can for 67 orphaned babies and toddlers. In January donors responded magnificently to Adrian's appeal for the home. Many of the buildings were in a bad state after a very severe rainy season and, thanks to our donors, the repair work will be starting soon and the home's running costs are assured.



Some of the older children having a lovely time on their new climbing frame, one of the new items of playground equipment that donors funded during the year.



This photo shows Sr. Maureen Kojoo with some of the children by one of the four new rainwater storage tanks that went in this year. A much better pump was also installed.



Community Action for Agriculture

Two community agricultural enterprises in Northern Uganda are gathering pace and growing ever larger and more successful. We are really proud to be continuing to support these two groups.

Obaya Community Association

Honey is produced and citrus trees are nurtured by this group

in Lira District. In the last twelve months IRT donors paid for the training in bee keeping of 90 new members, three bee hives each, protective clothing as well as twenty citrus seedlings each. They were also trained in hygiene, to ensure the highest standards in the honey production process as well as in their lives in general. This resulted in the community building new latrines, simple hand washing facilities, rubbish pits and drying racks for crockery. Over 500 kilos of honey were produced in the last twelve months and the association is hoping to increase this to over 2,000 kilos this year.



One of the honey gatherers being kitted out with his bee-proof clothing, which IRT donors paid for.



Jars of honey produced by members of the Obaya Community Association. It is now being sold across a wide area.

A new approach to benefit all aspects of life

Most of the projects which IRT supports involve the granting of money so that projects can buy specific items. We are planning to move towards looking at projects in a more holistic way, by which we mean concentrating not just on one part of a need, but viewing that need in the context of the whole problem.

It was when visiting the Obaya project that Adrian became particularly aware that such an approach would hugely benefit the community. For two years we have been funding the provision of bee keeping equipment and citrus tree seedlings and this has helped the association's members to acquire some much needed income. Adrian saw, however, that in other areas of their lives they were struggling. Principally

their problems revolve around lack of knowledge of sanitation, of financial management and nutrition. He also saw the problems in families as a result of men not shouldering their responsibilities to their wives and children, and the resulting knock-on effect on family life.

While visiting the Sacred Heart Sisters in the town Arua on his way to Moyo, Adrian met Sr. Lilian Maryektho, who told him about the training she was running for people in Arua district. She took him to see some of the families who have benefited and Adrian was immediately struck by their obvious better living conditions and family cohesion. Sr. Lilian and her organisation, Participatory Rural Development Agency, have now started helping the leading

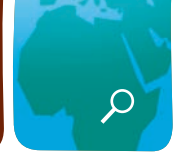
members of the Obaya Association to start a pilot project in Lira district.

This is, of course, a long-term process. Communities don't change overnight, but we are making a start and intend that more projects should adopt this approach.



Sr. Lilian Maryektho, who runs the Participatory Rural Development Agency, in the centre, with trustees, staff members and community members of the Obaya Community Association who had come together for training.

PROJECTS Uganda



Amuru Community Association

After investing for three years in ploughs for the Association, and oxen to pull them, this year we turned our attention to oxcarts and a storage building. The Association has been very successful in producing crops and wanted to be in a position to sell crops out of season, in order to obtain higher prices. To do this, some dry storage space was needed and we funded the building of two stores, together with the purchase of eleven oxcarts for transporting produce. Fr. David Kolo continues to be the driving force behind the Association which has now reached 1,900 people. Last year 232 tons of cereal crops were produced.



One of the new oxcarts unloading bricks for the building of the crop store. We are hoping to be able to fund the building of one more store this coming year.

PROJECTS Sudan



Sudan – What Next?

On 9 July Sudan was officially divided into two nation states, following the almost unanimous decision of the Southern Sudanese people to split from the North. This was a momentous day, which many thought would never come. The split hasn't been without its problems, and there have been violent skirmishes in and around the contested border area of Abyei.

At the time of this Newsletter going to press the situation is that the people of South Sudan are rejoicing although there are tensions because some people feel that the Dinka tribe have too much power in the army and government.

We have to hope that a lasting peace will be achieved. Sudan has had way more than its fair share of civil strife over the last fifty years, most of it in the South. This caused millions to flee their homes and become refugees. IRT supported some of these refugees when they were in Uganda and Northern Sudan and we continue to support them now that they have returned home.

Things are by no means easy and it will take much time, money and determination for South Sudan to be a fully functioning, self-sufficient country. IRT will continue to support the returnees in small projects in the towns of Wau, Nzara and Yambio.

The flag of peace – we hope so



The flag of South Sudan. Black to represent the people, red to represent the people who have died in South Sudan's struggles, green for the land, blue for the waters of the River Nile, the star, the Star of Bethlehem to represent unity in this predominantly Christian nation and, last but by no means least, white, to represent peace. How we must hope and pray that peace can be kept.



Caring and Courageous Combonis

For many years we have had a wonderful link with the Comboni Missionary Sisters. Over the years we have supported many of their projects and have seen the immense courage and commitment that they bring to their work. They continue to work in and around the town of **Nzara**, in South Sudan close to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We are supporting the Women's Centre where women come together for education and mutual support. We funded the salaries of a trainer, two watchmen and a cook as well as the building of a kitchen and a watchman's hut. Sr. Giovanna has told us that the women would dearly like to borrow small amounts of money to buy equipment to establish small enterprises in order to make a bit of much needed money, and we are happy that we have just started providing this.



The Women's Centre in Nzara has been playing a dual role for nearly three years. It is an important place for many women where they come together for mutual support and to learn vital skills. The Sisters also use it as a distribution centre for emergency provisions for the people fleeing the LRA. This photo shows ground nuts being bagged up for a woman.

The rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (see the shaded box opposite) continue to do their worst and refugees continue to arrive in South Sudan from Congo. The Sisters carry on helping as many as they can and we have funded the provision of vital foodstuffs, medicines and blankets. We also continue to fund the purchase of seeds and tools so

that the refugees can grow their own food.

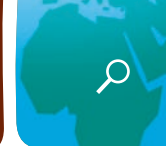
The Congolese are too frightened to go home, because they never know when the LRA will attack again. In February a Sister was murdered in Congo by the rebels. Meanwhile in the Central African Republic the LRA are continuing to train abducted children to become soldiers.

From two wheels to four

One of the obstacles to the Sisters in **Nzara** being able to work as efficiently as possible was the lack of transport. It was a common sight to see Sr. Giovanna travelling around on the back of a motorbike. But in 2009 she fell off and was quite badly hurt. On hearing about this we were determined to try and help secure a decent vehicle. Thanks to our generous donors we have been able to help the Sisters buy a new, four wheel drive vehicle which is making a great difference to where and how fast the Sisters can travel.



Here is Sr. Giovanna Calabria standing by the new vehicle with some of the children from the Sisters' primary school. We are pleased that we are also able to support the school with a contribution to the salaries of the teachers.



Help for HIV sufferers

HIV/AIDS continues to blight the lives of millions of people in Africa. In 2009, the most recent year for which there are published statistics, 22.5 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were HIV positive and 1.9 million people died of AIDS. The Christian Brothers in the town of **Yambio** continue to help as many affected people as they can. Their support group employs two counsellors who give advice to members of a sewing group as well as those in the wider community. The sewing group is a good way to bring women together so they can discuss their problems while at the same time



Two members of the Christian Brothers' sewing group making items to sell in order to make a little income to support their families.

creating items which they sell to gain some income.

We paid the salaries of the two

counsellors as well as the costs of the sewing group, including the rental of two rooms and the purchase of sewing materials.

LRA Rebels, President Obama, Jane Bussmann and Walking Barefoot

It's more than a year since President Obama announced the passing of legislation committing the USA to tackle the Lord's Resistance Army once and for all. A year ago we said that we hoped that words could be translated into deeds. We are still waiting.

Who is Jane Bussmann and what has she got to do with the LRA, and IRT for that matter? She is a Londoner and a comedy writer, performer and author, who a few years ago found herself in Uganda and learnt about the atrocities which the LRA rebels had been perpetrating for years in Northern Uganda. Since then she has been a passionate activist, lobbying anyone she thinks could be useful in getting rid of this scourge, which has now moved its activities from Uganda into the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan.



Jane Bussmann speaking out passionately against the LRA, something she is committed to doing. If you would like to see more about what Jane is doing you can visit her website at www.janebussmann.com. If you want to do something yourself, then please write to your MP.

IRT staff member, Marijn van de Geer, met Jane last year and together they worked on the Barefoot Peace Walk, in central London in September. Walks were also held in Gulu and Lira in Uganda. While the movers and shakers in the world continue

to have such apparent difficulty getting rid of a comparatively small, yet lethal, force it is vital that the subject should not slip from public view.



Some of the Barefoot Peace Walkers walk past a familiar landmark. If you would like to take part in this year's walk it's going to be on Saturday 24 September and you can find details on our website, www.irt.org.uk. By the way, walking barefoot isn't compulsory!



Wau Hospital up and running

Like most building projects anyone has ever known, they always take longer than originally planned. Last year we were unable to show you a photo of the finished building of the Outpatients Department at the St Daniel Comboni Hospital in the town of **Wau**. But now the department has been operational for nine months and, as we knew it would be, it is being extremely well used. The care given to the local people by Sr. (and Dr.) Maria Martinelli and her team is superb. We are contributing to the salaries of the staff.



The new building of the hospital's Outpatients Department completed thanks to our donors.

Nurses for South Sudan

We are continuing to support the nurse training scheme, based

at the hospital. Sudan is crying out for trained nurses and when they have finished their course they will be a huge asset. We are very happy that, thanks to our donors, we can continue to support the costs of the poorest students.



One of the student nurses taking down some history from a patient.

Training for Sisters

Midwife Sr. Joyce

We first heard of Sr. Joyce Ajio when we were contacted by Sr. Josephine Tresoldi, who for many years has helped Sudanese refugees in Uganda to be trained in vital skills. Sr. Josephine asked if we could pay for the midwifery training of Sr. Joyce, which we were more than happy to do. There is a chronic shortage of midwives in South Sudan and we knew our donors' money would be very well spent. So it has turned out to be, for Sr. Joyce is now working at the hospital in Wau.

Sr. Joyce Ajio, whose midwifery training was funded by IRT and who is now head nurse at the hospital in Wau. An important part of the clinic's work is the Mother and Child Clinic, with antenatal patients to be seen, so Sr. Joyce is making a very valuable contribution to the hospital's work.

And Headmistress, Sr. Theresina

Similarly, we paid for Sr. Theresina Nakosa's Diploma in Nursery School Teaching. For some time she had been the headmistress of the kindergarten in Yambio and Sr. Josephine knew that she would be able to enhance her skills and knowledge further if she obtained this diploma.



Sr. Theresina on the day she received her Nursery School Teaching Diploma. She did extremely well in her final exams and she is now headmistress at the newly opened kindergarten in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.



Sr. Theresina with the children at the kindergarten in Juba.



Fuel efficient cooking stoves

It is a shocking statistic that worldwide 1.9 million people die every year from illnesses caused by hazardous and inefficient cooking stoves. Last year we funded improved stoves for 1,000 households and, depending on raising sufficient funds, we hope we will be funding more this year.

Like many other sub-Saharan countries, Eritrea has had its fair share of suffering in recent years. Eritrea and Ethiopia conducted a brutal war and, although the war is finished, there remains a border dispute. The Eritrean people, especially those living near the border, have had a bad time of it, first being uprooted from their homes and then being sent back to them by the government. Eritrea's other problem is deforestation – it has lost vast



This photo shows one of the new stoves in use. It is in the house of the woman at the back of the picture. In front of her is one of the women who has been trained to train women to make and use them. The man on the right is the inventor of the stoves, Debesai Ghebrehiwet. He is Eritrean and has won many awards for his work. We are very pleased that we are able to help this vitally needed project and hope that we will be able to fund more stoves during the coming year.

swathes of its trees because people needed wood to fuel their cooking stoves. The new stoves use 50% less wood.

Now there is fire without smoke for those households who have

benefited from the installation of a fuel-efficient cooking stove because they have far more efficient chimneys than traditional ones. This means that families' respiratory health is becoming much better.

Burmese refugees still fleeing from oppression

Adrian visited northern Thailand in January and witnessed for himself the aggression by the Burmese army against the Karen, one of the ethnic groups fighting for their independence. He could hear the constant bombardment of the Karen positions just across the border in Burma. The Karen, and other groups, have been violently oppressed by the Burmese military dictatorship for decades.

PROJECTS Thailand



In the last twelve months we have continued to help another of the ethnic groups, the Shan. Our support has included the running costs of three orphanages, home for 120 Shan refugee orphans, as well as a contribution to a primary school and a medical outreach programme.

Thank you to those donors who generously responded to Adrian's appeal in the Spring. We will now be able to expand our support over the coming year, particularly in the area of income-generating programmes and skills training.



These are some of the refugee orphans from Burma who are beautifully cared for in three orphanages supported by IRT.



PROJECTS Jordan

Italian Hospitals in Amman and Karak

Jordan is geographically placed in an extraordinarily difficult position. Nearly all its neighbours have had or continue to have political problems. Jordan itself this year has not been without its challenges. This has resulted in a population many of whom are Palestinian refugees who have lived there for decades, and others who are Iraqi refugees who still don't want to return to Iraq. Many of these refugees are very poor and can't afford to pay the



This baby, child of Palestinian refugees, developed neo-natal jaundice and had to be treated with phototherapy, so he is wearing a mask to protect his eyes. His mother had no money to pay for care, which was urgently needed, so the Sisters at the hospital in Amman came to the rescue and the baby made a full recovery.

fees charged in other hospitals. We have been sending money for many years to the two Italian

Hospitals, one in Amman and the other in Karak, to pay for some of the refugees' care.



PROJECTS Colombia

This is another country racked with problems, mostly to do with the drugs trade, which has had dire consequences for many of its people. Five million Colombians have been forced from their homes either because they were caught in the crossfire of the drugs barons' wars, or their crops and wells have been ruined by the badly aimed poisoning which the government meant for the coca crops (from which cocaine is made).

Children's Day Care

During the year we continued our partnership with the local community organisation, Cigarra, which works with a community of 300 displaced families, all of them living in appalling conditions outside the capital, Bogotá. Many of the families are headed



These are some of the children who attend the Day Care Centre near Bogotá. The centre is hugely valuable and means that the children's mothers can go out to work to earn some much needed money to keep their families.

by single mothers and Cigarra currently has a day-care centre for 140 children aged 6 months to 5 years, and before and after school programmes for children up to 12. This is so their mothers can go

into the city to undertake some menial work to provide an income. We were very pleased to be able to help when Cigarra appealed to us for the running of the centre this year.



Fundraising

Times are hard, interest rates remain almost invisible, but still donors were very generous throughout the year. People continue to respond magnificently to Adrian's appeals, parishes also raise substantial sums and charitable trusts respond generously. We have recently received two wonderful legacies from donors who had sadly died, but their memory lives on in their generosity.

We also receive some lovely letters from donors, which are such a great encouragement.

If ever you want to organise an event, of whatever size, to raise money for us please remember that EVERY PENNY you raise goes to the project of your choice.

Sell your car for IRT!

Probably the most novel fundraising idea of the year was from one of our donors in Belfast. She decided to sell her car and very kindly gave all the proceeds to us. She was interested in the Home for the Blind in Wau, Sudan, which we have supported over the years and every penny went there. Many thanks to her.

Once again a team took to the London streets for the British 10K London Run and once again they all looked absolutely fine when they had finished! Well done and thanks to all our runners.



Schools learning and fundraising

Marijn van de Geer, our Fundraising & Education Officer, has recently embarked on a schools programme, with two aims – to educate UK school children about the plight of refugees and to raise some money for them. During Refugee Week in June she visited two schools in London to talk to pupils. These were St Joseph's in Hendon and St George's in Maida Vale. The children welcomed her enthusiastically and were really interested in what she had to tell them. Marijn focussed on telling

them about refugee children and just how different their lives are to their own.

Marijn has also developed some material on our website which can be used by schools. Here teachers and pupils can find out about the countries where we support projects, as well as what being a refugee means. It also covers human rights and racism.

If you know of any school, or youth group, who would be interested in learning about refugee issues please do point them in the direction of our website, www.irt.org.uk, or suggest they call Marijn.



This is the library at Toloro Primary School in Moyo, Uganda...



...This is the library at St Joseph's Primary School in Hendon, north London.

St Joseph's School to fundraise

When Adrian was in Uganda in April he visited Toloro Primary School in Moyo. This is where many of the children from the Redeemer Children's Home are pupils. The pupils wrote letters to give to UK school children to tell them about their lives, and you can see

Adrian being handed some letters in his report on the next page. In exchange the pupils at St Joseph's have written some letters for the Toloro children.

What a difference between the library shelves at Toloro and at St Joseph's. The children at St Joseph's will be doing some fundraising later in the year so that Toloro can improve its facilities.

Adrian Hatch, Chief Executive

Looks back

Another year of progress for IRT, progress which couldn't have been made without the truly wonderful support of our donors. However hard economic times become, donors continue to be hugely generous. They have ensured the safety of our "old" projects and have allowed us to support new elements of them.

I am glad that we have been able to secure the water supply at both the Redeemer Children's Home and Moyo Babies' Home, with the installation at both of much better water pumps. A new project I am particularly pleased about is the contribution we have been able to make to the Student Nurse Training Fund in South Sudan, because there is such a chronic shortage of trained nurses in Sudan.

THANK YOU
for everything you helped
us to achieve in the last
year.

And looks forward South Sudan

We must all hope and pray that the situation stabilises in South Sudan, following its split from Northern Sudan. Whatever happens, the people will continue to need our help. One thing is not in doubt – the Sisters who run the projects will work on through thick and thin.



Rebuilding Lives Overseas

A new approach

You will see on page 4 a piece about a more all-encompassing approach we are starting to develop in one of the projects, which we hope we will be able to replicate in other projects. Traditionally we have tended to give our support to certain elements of projects, which has been of great value and use, but which didn't look at the **whole** problem faced by the beneficiaries.

On my visit to Uganda late last year I saw in a project, run by the Sacred Heart Sisters, just what a difference can be made to communities if their problems are looked at as a whole. It's fine to send money for new ploughs to a project, but if the people don't have knowledge of matters such as sanitation, nutrition and financial management, yes they will be able to plough their fields, but they will still have many other difficulties.

In Africa there remains huge inequality between men

and women. The women are downtrodden by their husbands, yet it is the women who do all the work. The Sisters have successfully, through training, been able to transform a community and create more cohesion in families through changing attitudes. Gradually men are starting to share responsibility for looking after the children, cooking and farming.

Our first project to benefit from this Participatory Development Approach is the Obaya Community Association and in June their staff members finished their training with the Sisters. Their next task will be to pass their newly acquired knowledge on to their members.

This will be a long-term process and I will look forward to reporting back to you on it in future years.

If there is anything which isn't clear to you or you would like more information about any of our projects please do call. It's always a pleasure to hear from our donors.



Here is Adrian at Toloro Primary School in Moyo, Northern Uganda. Many of the children at the Redeemer Children's Home attend this school. The girl is handing letters from the children to give to the children at St Joseph's Primary School in London, see page 11.

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