

Report: On Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron

By: Director Per Nordmark

Introduction

The first director was engaged from June 1st and arrived Juba June 2nd, and Kuron by MAF flight on 6th June.

The director was introduced to the senior staff on Monday June 11th.

Friday June 15th all staff was called for a meeting at 4 pm. Here the new director was introduced and presented himself. In this meeting Bishop Paride Taban formally introduced the director from this date heading the organization.

The bishop will be available for advice and consultations, and as an adviser in personal matters.

He will now focus on fundraising, general peace activities etc.

All staff was instructed to follow the hierarchy of the organization. The director will have his office outside Bishops office.

The period from arrival in Juba up till 20th June, has been used to try to identify status of the organization and programs. In the following the findings and evaluation is presented.

Political, security and environmental status

Practically Kuron is cut off from the outside world for the moment. There has not been registered any activities in the area that effect security and make political implications on the activity. However the effect of the closing of oil production seems to have a general effect. The availability of foreign currency is a limiting factor, and has implications on payments and purchases. Prices in South Sudan are rising, and availability of fuel is reducing and prices rising as one of the results.

On the ground in Kuron security seems good and stable.

The nearest government representation is in Boma (90 km) and Narus (190 km).

Programs and Activities

Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron has the following ongoing programs:

Education

St Thomas School

This program contains St Thomas School, Kuron: Nursery School 3 levels, Primary school grade 1-8. Both are for both boys and girls.

The school is a boarding school. Second term started 28th May, however practical teaching started 11th June due to problems in transporting teachers and pupils back to school from up till Narus.

The school is set up with one teacher for each level, totally 11 teachers. At the moment staff is short with one teacher in Nursery school.

As the school is a boarding school food is requested from WFP. WFP has allocated food for the school, and Diocese of Torit (DoT) is the implementing partner when it comes to food distribution. Food for this year has not been provided. Some 15 bags of maize were all that is available of food for the school by the director's arrival. In the school's food store (container) some additional 20 bags of maize is stored. These are borrowed from the local community, however these have to be returned/repaid.

The food situation at the school at the director's arrival was estimated to last for about one month, and would give a poor diet. The term is 3 months. Then there is a holiday before the last term.

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As we are coming to the rainy season, transport on road might be very difficult, even impossible up till well into last term.

Food for the school was therefor made a high priority topic. Hoping to bring food before the roads became impassable.

Letters were written to Diocese of Torit and to The Commissioner of Kapoeta East, asking for food for the school. The headmaster and Fr. David Taban volunteered to go with a lorry on Sunday 10th June to Narus and Kapoeta to try to solve the problem of food. The journey was successful as 5 tons of maize is given by DoT and 5 tons + some cans of oil are given by the commissioner. The food is now taken to, and at present kept in HTPV store in Narus.

Transport is booked, but delays. At present heavy rain has made it impossible to drive between Narus and Kuron. At present we are hoping for a period of 7 – 10 days of dry weather, to let the ground dry up. Due to this action the Headmaster has not been able to come back to Kuron until 23rd June by plane. The deputy headmaster has been acting.

The school is in generally good condition. The floors needs repair, and this is planned for. Many chairs are destroyed. Some might be repaired but action has to be taken! A number of new chairs for nursery school is purchased in Nairobi, and is awaiting transport.

A new printer and copy paper is purchased for the school, however is still in Nairobi. This is a concern for the school as exams will be held early July. Some 1500 pages are estimated to be printed. The present printer can print only few pages. The school has one laptop.

The toilet facilities are not in acceptable condition for the pupils. A new pit is under construction. The slab (floor) is made, however progress is slow.

Water for the school is supplied by a hand pump in the school compound. There is a plan for installing an electrical pump replacing the hand pump, based on solar. The pump is in Kuron, however it is unknown still if the pump can be installed without further supply or support.

A water tank is at the school compound, and a water tower is under construction.

A new dormitory for Girls has been planned. No work is done on this till now. At present the girls use one of the classrooms as dormitory.

A meeting was held with all the teachers on Saturday 16th June. This identified a number of topics to be addressed, including teachers' quarter, contracts and payment.

Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)

A number of teachers were trained to teach in this program. However with the change of teachers, only one trained teacher remains at the moment. My understanding is that this program never reached out to the local people. It stopped after training the teachers.

Adult Learning

This program was started and had a number of participants. However the drop-out was great and fast, so after a short period the activity stopped.

Funder for Education is Strømme Fondation. I do not yet have the full picture of the other donors.

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Vocational Training School

This school should have been in operation by midyear 2012.

At present HTPV lorry is on its way to collect the last container with equipment in Mombasa to bring it in. It might have to delay in Narus until dry season; November.

At the VTS sight the floors under the dormitories and container (to be stores and offices) are ready. Some steel poles are in plays for carrying the roof construction, which also will rest on the containers. Steel for the construction is on the ground. Also Iron sheets and cement is said to be available with HTPV here in Kuron.

Sand and stones for the concrete has to be collected and transported to the ground. Stones seem to be collected in heaps around the site. Sand will have to be transported from the river by the compound.

At present we have been able to get ready some sand, however more is needed, and the collection will continue when the river is low. Sand is collected by paying a bottle of cooking oil for 10 full wheelbarrows of sand. Money is here of less interest. As oil is running short pangas will be used, quantity of work have to be defined.

At present the construction staffs are out on leave so there is no practical construction work going on at the VTS. However this will be followed up as soon as the staff is back.

Donor: Strømme Fondation

Agriculture

Agriculture in HTPV is production of various crops, vegetables and fruits as a demonstration for the local Toposa. It has also the objective to demonstrate good agricultural practices and motivate for surplus production and improvement of livelihood by income generating activities.

This year an agricultural extension program is planned and has funding by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). This includes activities at demonstration farm at Peace Village, and an extension program in the villages in the area. Seeds and tools for agriculture are to be distributed to 200 households and the farmers followed up during cultivation period.

CRS have done procurement on the seeds, and organized transport. Some items came by road to Kuron on Friday 9th June; the rest came by plane from Juba on Saturday 16th, by a DC3!

Preparations were not done as scheduled on the ground in Kuron when it comes to identification of farmers.

The Director held a meeting with agriculture program staff on Friday 15th. A plan was made for registration and distribution, starting registration on Monday 18th June, and distribution as soon as possible after this. The seeds **should** be in the prepared soil around 1st July, due to the expected rainy season lasting till late September.

The selected villages in the area were visited during Monday and Tuesday. Women leaders and chiefs informed and selected people informed to come to Peace Village on Wednesday for registration and distribution.

A high number of women came to register on Wednesday morning. Registration was done in an organized way under trees by the river. The selected farmers (women) were given a "coupon" with their name, and were let into the Peace Village compound village by village. Her they were distributed the planned amount of seeds: Sorghum, Maize, beans, green gram, groundnuts, okra and eggplant. The tools were: Hoe, fork hoe, rake and slasher.

A panga is also to be included. These will be distributed later, and some contribution as work will be demanded.

175 farmers received their package 20th June and 50 on June 21st.

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It is also agreed that each class will have their agricultural plot within the fenced area of HTPV. Here the pupils will be instructed in how to cultivate the various crops, and also do the practical cultivation together with the teacher. This program is agreed with the agricultural staff and the teachers.

Donor for agriculture: CRS and Caritas International Belgium.

Health

Health program is at the moment operation of Fr. Haumann Clinic, Kuron.

This clinic is well established and well equipped.

The main building has the necessary rooms and facilities. It has two wards, one for men and one for women.

There is a borehole used for the clinic. It is operated by a diesel generator. The pump has not been working for 3 – 4 months. It was initiated and made an attempt to test it this week, and we succeeded to make it work, however with a bit too low pressure. Still, it now is pumping water up into tanks on the ground by the clinic. Another 4 m height is needed to reach the tank in the water tower.

Bishop Paride will ask for advice and spare parts when in Kenya.

The clinic has a well-equipped solar system for lighting. A converter is missing. Bishop Paride will see to that it is transported to Kuron. It was supplied the wrong converter, which had to be exchanged. The clinic has a separate solar system for providing energy for a refrigerator used for vaccines. The equipment was provided by UNICEF. However the batteries have to be replaced to be able to hold stable temperature.

Bishop Paride will try also to follow up this.

The aim is to have all these technical installations in good conditions within few weeks.

The PHCC Kuron has up till end of May 2012 treated 4331 out-patients, and 151 in-patients.

One nurse is not in her position; she left in February and has not reported back. The status is now followed up.

The clinic has 3 nurses, 1 Lab assistant, 1 pharmacy assistant, cleaners and cooks and a watchman, total 11 staff is registered.

Drugs and equipment is provided by Ministry of Health, with back donors. The clinic has good supplies and adequate drugs and material. Some items are short and a request is sent to the ministry for additional supplies.

The medical personnel are well qualified to handle the patients the PHCC is meant to deal with. Most of the patients receive good treatments with good results.

Health education of the local people is an important topic. Many of the diseases and health problems are developed due to lack of knowledge, traditions and beliefs. At present the clinic personnel have not capacity to do such education, nor to make home visits and outreach programs.

A major and serious problem is at present lack of funding for the clinic.

Diocese of Torit was funding salaries for the clinic, by the help of a back donor. The back donor ended its funding by the end of 2011. The result is that except 150\$ from MoH, the whole staff at the clinic is not financed.

By transfer of some funding for outreach health program some salaries are paid. The majority is not financed!

This is urgent matter.

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Anyone who might assist should do so. When Bishop Paride Taban today went to Juba, one of his mayor topics was to appeal to possible donors for funding for 2012, possibly also for a longer period. An estimated cost for salaries and ordinary running cost which at present falls on HTPV is estimated to 3500 \$ per month.

The clinic staff is a bit frustrated due to delayed payments and lack of follow up. Efforts are made to encourage the staff and to improve the management systems.

The clinic is the only one in a large area for the local people. It is also an important factor for staffs' welfare and for recruitment of personnel for work in Peace Village, as well as for other actors in the area.

Peace and Sport

This program is supervised by Ulrich Thum, German, and has not been given much focus by director up till now. The program is working on changing attitudes and traditions, and to create tolerance and understanding. Some success stories have been reported:

1. The return of raided cattle is facilitated 2 or 3 times. Involving the traditional structures to take the decisions and make the formal implementation.
2. Using drama to present topics which are difficult to address. A play is written and developed by school children of St Thomas School and has been performed successfully 3 times in the area.

Topics which are due to be presented are education and misuse of alcohol.

Management and administration

This seems to be the weakest point in the organization.

Lack of information, absence of follow up and a much fractured structure is making frustration and drastically slowing down the progress of programs.

There seems also to be a clear tendency that programs are described more ambitious than the real capacity of HTPV is.

However structures are developed, but seems not to have been communicated in a good way, nor practiced as described.

Going through the management manual, updating contracts, job descriptions and salary scale system and allowances will have focus in the coming two weeks.

Absence of personnel seems also to be an important factor for lack of progress and losses. Much staff is out on various reasons, without defining alternative solutions and evaluating priorities in programs.

Donor: Friends of Sister Emmanuella and others

Logistics

Logistics is a big challenge. The operation is demanding proper and early planning – and financing.

The support given in Nairobi, Juba and Narus is not sufficient. Supplies seem to have been arranged for and purchased, but something might be missing, or it is a general lack of follow up so important items and inputs delay, some for very long.

The practical implications and the cost related to logistics seems to be underestimated, probably also in budgets and in communication with donors.

There seems to be a need to make a new set up for storage and storekeeping.

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For future success, planning ahead of time is crucial. All heavy goods should be in place in Kuron in due time before the rainy season makes access difficult or impossible. An example at present is transport of a container of 10 tons from Narus to Kuron cost 2 000 \$ = 0.2 \$ a kg. for a distance of 190 km only.

In general Logistical expenses seem to be under budgeted.

Transport capacity is now at a minimum. The old land cruiser of Bishop Paride Taban is running and stationed in Kuron.

Also the ambulance UNIMOG is here, however this car has a problem with the injector pump, and need to be serviced. The engine is giving far from normal power and cannot handle difficult situations. It cannot reach Narus on difficult conditions.

Two motorcycles are in operational conditions.

The tractor which is needed for various transports, including sand has a punctured rare tire and cannot move. New tires are ready in Nairobi.

Bishop Paride Taban will see to that they now are transported to Sudan, Kapoeta.

HTPV is planning for a DC3 flight from Kapoeta to Kuron transporting various smaller equipment, the tractor tires, diesel and food for the school.

Hopefully the plane will land in Kuron within 2 weeks.

The total stock of fuel is now app 300 ltr of diesel. Diesel is needed for the land cruiser, generator for light etc. in the compound, the UNIMOG, the excavators and the water pump at the clinic.

The situation is soon becoming critical.

Pastoral work

There is a mass in the chapel at the compound each morning, except Sundays when there is a mass in the school at 10 am.

Fr David Taban came back from Kapoeta today, and is responsible for this together with Bishop Paride Taban.

Airstrip

The airstrip is in good condition. However it is necessary to slash it. Also to cut down trees along the runway. This has to be done within app. one week to allow a DC 3 to land.

It is also important to re-open ditches, directing water away from the airstrip, to prevent erosion. This is fairly urgent.

As soon as more fuel is available more murrum will be added on the air strip and also as soon as possible on additional 300 m which is graded. This will make the air strip accessible for WFP flights. WFP has already inspected the airstrip.

As this work is completed it might give a new situation as WFP is considering making landings in Kuron on regular flights.

General

The dream of Bishop Paride Taban is great.

The dream is also a dream with visions, which will take generations to fulfill.

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Starting to change the traditional community and way of life for the Toposa will bring along a lot of problems and challenges. Positive results will be followed by negative. At the moment a high consumption of alcohol is a negative development of concern, not created by HTPV, however by the contact with the outside world.

A summery will at this stage be:

The most important is to be able to run the activities and programs that are already in place and which are working well.

Nursery School and primary school should have a very high priority. This first generation which now is getting some education is probably the first important step to make the next generation able to catch up with the outside world.

The clinic is the other very important activity. Due to lack of knowledge, traditional behaviors and superstition the population get diseases and have sufferings which are important to treat, however also trying to inform and educate in such matters.

Peace and Sport is an important program to advocate for changed attitudes etc. It is also an important program to make the profile of the HTPV.

And finally: The core activity is planning, admin and logistic in this location.

In these matters capacity building is important; especially making a committed team.

To establish a high capacity support in Juba is another important matter. Hopefully this will materialize when Teody is transferred to Juba!

Much more could have been presented and commented.

Still I hope this will give a decent picture of the status in Holy Trinity Peace village, Kuron.

And with realistic expectations it is inspiring and an honor to work in HTPV.

Per Nordmark