

Holy Trinity Peace Village (HTPV) Activity 2012: to improve and increase agricultural production in Toposa tribe

In cooperation with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and with funding from Caritas Belgium a Livelihood and Early Recovery Project in Equatorial States is implemented.

The objective of the project is to improve the food- and surplus production of the Toposa in Kauto Payam by improved cultivation methods, and growing a more diverse variety of crops.

Seeds and tools were purchased by CRS after a bid process. The bulk of the items were sent by road to Narus, the nearest town with proper road standard. From Narus it was transported the last 190 km by a commercial transporter through very rough conditions. A distance frequently impossible to pass when wet, due to mud and a river where the bridge has fallen down due to erosion. However the load reached Kuron on 6th June.



Some of the seeds were not available at the departure of the road transport. A DC 3 aircraft was hired and transported the remaining seeds to Kuron on 16th June. The seeds reached safely in dry weather and were stored under dry and good conditions.

Seeds arriving in Kuron, brought by air by a DC 3 aircraft to Kuron airstrip, and to HTPV by the program's Unimog.

The most important period for cultivation in Kauto Payam, the areas around Kuron is June. By the end of June fields should be prepared and seed sown as this is the beginning of the main rainy season. This allowing the crops to grow before the rain stops.

At the arrival of the seeds and tools it was urgent to do the distribution as soon as possible. Villages in the surroundings of Kuron were targeted, up till approximately 15 km away. HTPV staff visited the actual villages, informing leaders about the agricultural program and the distribution, and tried to organize for a selection of farmers who were motivated and able. At the same time it was called for a formal registration and distribution. Registration and distribution would be done as a proportion of the population of each village.



Women gathering in Kuron for registration and tools and seeds distribution

The leaders of the villages together with its' people made the selection under supervision of HTPV staff.

In Toposa men are responsible for the animals and do normally not participate in farming. Basically women do the farming in this area. The distribution was therefore nearly 100 % done to women. Distribution was done on 20th and 21st June and these are the villages, with the number of households which received tools and seeds:

1. Muuruese	30 households
2. Namuton	20 "
3. Naweyapeta	25 "
4. Katanya	25 "
5. Peace village	25 "
6. Kangiriba	25 "
7. Leroboi	50 "
8. Gumarieng	20 "
9. Kolokocomu	25 "
10. <u>Naweyatir</u>	<u>25 "</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>270 households</u>

The seeds which were distributed were: Maize, ground nuts, green grams, sorghum, beans, egg plants and okra.

The tools were: Hoes, fork hoes, rakes, slashers.

The distribution exercise was challenging as the number of women who turned up for registration and distribution by far exceeded the original goal of 200.

However the village leaders together with HTPV staff handled this in a controlled and organized manner.

Women collecting their tools and seed items after being registered



HTPV also challenged the St Thomas School, Kuron (nursery and primary) to establish demonstration plots for each class, and cultivating the same crops as given to the farmers. The idea was approved by the school, plots are established and some tools given to the school, as well as the various seeds for use in the plots.

The objective is to teach the pupils how to cultivate the various crops, and also make them agents for improved farming and use of a wider range of variety of crops in their home areas.

A panga is also available for distribution, mainly meant for clearing bush in agricultural land. A panga is a highly valued tool by the Toposa. HTPV acknowledge the challenge it is to distribute for free, creating expectations among the local people that when there are needs, someone will provide. The pangas therefore will be distributed in exchange for work on programs and projects which contribute to facilitate various development projects in the local area.



HTPV staff visited farmers after distribution, as they were preparing the soil for receiving the seeds.

After distribution of seeds and tools the weather was dry for a week and HTPV staff could observe activities in many farms as women, and some men, were preparing their fields.

From 30th June, rain has been frequent in the area, which is normal for this time of the year and positive for the cultivation.

Toposa has traditions to grow only sorghum, as they greatly depend on their animals. How much and how fast they will find interest in new crops is difficult to predict. However HTPV staff will follow up and visit farmers in their villages during cultivation period.

Pupils and teachers are collecting the tools and seeds for St Thomas School's agricultural plots.

Posing for the photo with HTPV staff



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