



INCLUSION OF ALL

HOLY TRINITY PEACE VILLAGE

I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made. Psalm 139: 14

Holy Trinity Peace Village has a policy of integrating any and all people of good will who would like to be a part of the program. With this in mind, many are those who carry their burden from birth. These individuals who are disabled in some form, are doubly at risk due to the harsh nature of their culture and climate that they live in. Traditional Toposa culture scorns those who have physical or mental disabilities remarking that they are useless to the family. However, HTPVK believes otherwise.

The St. Thomas Primary School accepts all students regardless of situation. There is a Scholarship Program for those who can't pay. ACROSS and AVSI are wonderful to sponsor these pupils. There are several disabled people in this area. Normally these people are kept at home and one rarely sees them. However, in the HTPVK programs there are some notable exceptions.



Lotere is a young boy who was born stunted. His body never fully formed from birth. The parents abandoned him saying: this boy will be useless. Lotere has brothers and sisters but the family doesn't really support him. As Lotere was rejected by his own flesh and blood, he decided to take matters into his own hands. He wanted to make something of himself regardless of what others thought of him.

One day, this determined young boy simply walked through the gate of the school. With complete disregard for his physical appearance, he confidently inquired where the Head Teacher might be found? The Watchman thought he was joking and just waved him away. Lotere ignored the Watchman and walked right up to the Head teacher and said, "I want to study." Mr. Sebit Atanga was so taken by his confidence and self-assurance, that he allowed him to enter the school there and then. In effect, the school would become his home and family.

Lotere's body may be less than full but his mind is sharp and he is a very good student attending Primary 2. He is well liked by his classmates who see someone overcoming a challenge they might not be able to handle. Teachers were surprised to discover that Lotere has the best handwriting of all the pupils in primary two. Lotere enthusiastically participates in most activities whether physical, mental or spiritual. He is an inspiration to all his classmates and the teachers who are impressed by his desire to succeed.

One of Lotere's classmates is 12 year old **Lillian Achiro**. Her mother is Grace Achiro, the Primary School Cook and her father, Kator, works in the Nursery School. She lives with her family just nearby and walks to school with other children every morning. She is currently in Primary 4 and keeping up with the others.

In addition to her Down's Syndrome, Lillian suffers from poor eyesight. It has not been discovered if this is a simple problem resolved with glasses or if she might need more extensive correction. The parents have never had the opportunity to take her to a specialist.

She often has to be near the front of class to see the blackboard and even to write she needs help sometimes. She cries when she can't do the work properly. She might have the answer but she can't write it down. Bright things, even red chalk, upset her and she doesn't like that.

Lillian is a delight to work with. She is a bright young lady who is very diligent in her studies. She often takes care of others who are younger. She is well liked by all her classmates.



Determination overcomes any obstacle as **Angelo Notabo** believes. This quiet spoken boy moves around with a crutch as he has only one leg. Angelo does not remember how he lost his right leg as he was too young. His parents tell him when he was just a child he had an infection and the leg had to be amputated. Angelo is a Toposa who comes from Namurupus.

Angelo has no problem with his mind. He joined St. Thomas school in Primary 4 after attending another school. Angelo is currently attending Primary P7.

He is a sharp young man performing well in school. Math is his favorite subject. What he has done is shown the rest of the students that a person with one leg doesn't mean he is useless. He carries out all his duties as well as any student. He even brings his own wood. He is very respected and accepted by all other students. Unfortunately, if it rains he cannot move around very easily in mud and water.

The Primary School is not the only place we can find disabled and disadvantage youth. The Nursery School also has as many as five young children who have a variety of difficulties. One has a wandering eye and can't see well. Two boys have hearing defects and must sit in front of class and read lips. One girl was bitten by a snake and her right forearm is not fully functioning. Another young child has a hip injury from a fall and has to use a crutch (stick) in order to walk.



Nawii Simon is a young Toposa boy from the Namurupus area. He would work with his father in the Peace Village Plantation helping to cut grass and brush and care for the fruit and bananas. One day he was in the hills collecting honey from wild beehives. He lost his balance when some rocks slipped and he fell. He left ankle was damaged so badly it was amputated from just below the knee in Kapoeta in 2020.

He was seen as useless by the Toposa. How could a one legged boy be of any use now? But again, HTPVK found a use for such a clever young man. Nawii loves to keep working and active so he was eager to do anything.

Currently, he is incorporated in the Peace Village doing odd jobs here and there. He is especially good at fixing patches for the large vehicles. Using a hand knife he can cut out rubber from old tires and use it to repair the flat. Nawii even stays with his father in the Plantation and does odd jobs



here and there. He is determined to live a full life in spite of cultural beliefs that disabled are useless.

All of these wonderful people are integrated into the work and education programs to the fullest as staff and teachers are able. There is no one at Peace Village who is specifically trained in the education with disabled and handicapped but all the staff and teachers are sensitive to the needs of these fellow human beings. For sure, some of the others will make fun of those with disabilities but the teachers are quick to use these as teaching moments. Discussions are immediately opened on how Jesus treated all those around him with disabilities. Students are made aware that all lives are sacred and should be seen as equal to us all.

Including those who seem worthless in life is a testimony to God's love of the poor and oppressed. HTPVK sees goodness in all peoples as part of its Vision and Mission in Kuron Peace Village.

(edited by Gabe Hurrish: 27.Oct.2021)