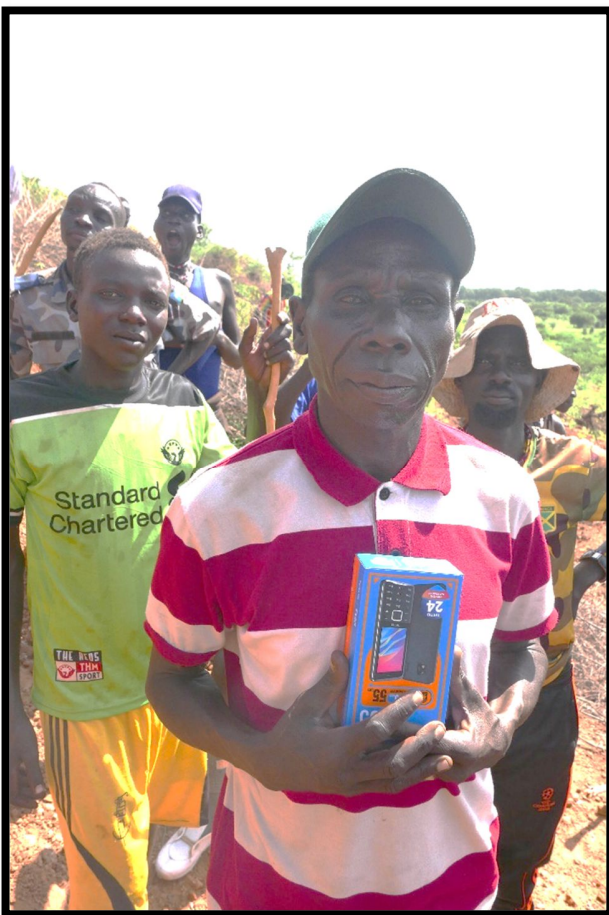


Social Economic Impacts

MTN Cell Phone Tower in Kuron Area

In June of 2021, the Government of South Sudan, in collaboration with MTN Telephone Communications, and the Holy Trinity Peace Village in Kuron, began construction on the first ever telephone tower in this area. The tower was constructed on the side of a hill just outside the Peace Village Compound and was finished in August of 2021. The Inauguration of this tower was done on Sept.02 as distinguished visitors came from all around.

The positive effects of the tower were seen immediately by the staff working in the village. Not only could they now call others within the tower range but they could communicate with family and friends far away. This helped reduce the feeling of isolation in such a far away place.



The tower has also greatly facilitated the work in the area of the Peace Village staff. Now staff can quickly and easily communicate from Kuron Peace Village to Matara where the Health, VTC and Secondary School are located. It has reduced the frequent movement of staff to Kapoeta to communicate with their families who are staying in different places. For the business men and women operating in Boma it has become easier to communicate.

As airplanes approach, staff on the ground are able to communicate with those in the plane. It is much easier to order supplies in a timely and efficient manner. Vehicles that get stuck or broken down on the road can call for help if they are in the phone coverage area.

These cell phones have greatly facilitated communication in Agriculture as previously the Coordinator had to rely on hand delivered notes or take time to walk or travel out to each village. It took a long time to organize workshops and trainings. Now he is able to call as at least one person in each target village has a phone for contact.

Toposa Chief proudly holds his new cell phone

We know that the Toposa youth are especially interested in obtaining cell phones. As of end of Sept.2021, just in Napil market village, there are at least 100 people with phones. There is reported to be many others in the kraals also having phones. Most of those who do purchase phones really have no use for them other than to contact their friends or listen to music. They see it as a modern development and want to be up with the times. Of course, mostly men are getting the phones as the traditional Toposa thinking does not allow for girls to “modernize” themselves. Males don’t want females “wasting” their time with phone conversations. However, there are several influential woman who were given a brand new cell phone during the MTN Tower inauguration by the Governor himself.

They decided to keep it for their use. One lady keeps in touch with the Bonga Girls Animator, Nyachebe, as one of her daughters is in the group.

Parents of school children are now calling the Head Masters and Mistress to enquire about certain issues at the school. So there is now more immediate feedback and communication.

The phones are also useful as contact with Kapoeta can be made very quickly to arrange for animal medicines to be transported out to these remote areas. Before it would take a week walking one way in order to carry messages to Kapoeta. If someone from the villages has to go to Kapoeta for health care it is now much easier for those family to keep in touch and provide up to date reports on the status of the patient. Before no one knew anything for weeks.



Governor and Ministers address the Toposa at MTN Tower Inauguration

Ms. Nakwar holds her new cell phone



No one knows what the long range impact on the local Toposa community will be. Already we are seeing an increase in interest in purchasing cell phones. The youth especially want to be connected to the outside world. How will they use this service? What will be the positive and negative impacts upon the Toposa traditional life?

(edited: 30.Sept.2021 gh)