



Success Story

Mr. Lino Lomoru

AGENT OF CHANGE

Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty. – Proverbs 21:5

Holy Trinity Peace Village in Kuron has been working with the Toposa people since 2000. They are a mainly pastoralist ethnic group. However, with patience and constant contact at the grassroots level, HTPVK staff have been able to impact the Toposa in the area of food production and security. Through animal traction, introduction of a new plowing hoe, inputs of seeds and tools, assistance with bee keeping and many workshops and trainings, the Toposa people are beginning to appreciate the need for agricultural activities.

One of those who has really taken hold of the new ideas is Mr. Lino Lomoru. He has become a lead farmer from Gumarieng Village about eight km from the Kuron Peace Village. Some 10 years ago, Lino had nothing except his cows and 2 women. Lino was a well-known cattle raider for many years. His turning point was when the Peace Village started an agricultural program which was meant to transform the old ways of cultivation to modern farming practices,

Lino was keen to learn and slowly by slowly he cultivated his own garden and planted sorghum grains. After harvest, he threshed and acquired a rather enviable amount of 1,000 kgs. He then packed it in sacks and requested transport from the Peace Village to Kapoeta where he was able to sell at a higher price. This experience really motivated Mr. Lino to practice farming. He was now convinced of the positive results. From then on Mr. Lino left cattle raiding and concentrated on farming which he said is not as risky work compared to cattle raiding where most of his friends have lost their dear lives.



Figure 1 Mr. Lino (rt) accepts his loan from the CMSG group



Figure 2 Mr. Lino in white shirt and yellow cap shows how to work the plow with animal traction.

Even though Mr. Lino embraced farming, he was still using poor farming mechanism such as digging using an emeleku (local traditional hoe) which is small and requires lots of energy and is time consuming. Although he could at times mobilize resources and employ people to dig his farm, the cost of this input was too high for the realized output.

In 2019, Caritas Austria began funding an Animal Traction Project in Kuron Peace Village. (ox and donkey ploughing). When Kuron Peace Village demonstrated the new technology to the people, Mr. Lino did not waste a single minute and accepted by giving two donkeys for the project. In

that year, Mr. Lino's production was quite high. He realized a food surplus for consumption and there was no hunger in his family.

In 2021, another grant was approved to support the Animal Traction Project. The same Mr. Lino again contributed two young oxen for training so that he could excel in his farming. Many other families have emulated Mr. Lino's character and as of now his entire neighborhood, including youth who used to go for cattle raiding, have shifted their minds to farm work because they have seen Mr. Lino is gaining money from the sale of his farm products. They are now aware of the advantages of using animal power to cultivate land.

Mr. Lino is practicing crop diversification in his vegetable garden as well. He has okra, groundnuts, sorghum, banana plants and cassava. Sometimes the heat negatively affects the crops, but he never gives up. He has acquired knowledge of the rainfall patterns, especially in the recent years. Mr. Lino comments: "... the rain in previous years used to come at the right time. Now, these years its very difficult to trust rain." He advises other farmers to be time conscious either to plant early or late depending on how the rains are arriving and indeed its working out for them.



Figure 3 Mr. Lino works closely with Mr. Juma Chelimo, Agric. Expert of HTPVK

His children help to fence his garden to keep out stray animals and he applies neem tree liquid (a natural pesticide) to young plants like okra which are sensitive to aphids. He also avoids tree felling to safe guard top soil from wind erosion. All in all, Mr. Lino is a progressive and forward-looking farmer.

IMPACTS



Figure 4 Even without formal education, Mr. Lino has become a leading member of the community

Although Mr. Lino did not have any formal education, he has managed to send his four sons to school. Two are in lower primary and two are in the Nursery school. He pays school fees the money gained from farm produce. "...I didn't get the chance to study but I want my children to be educated because this is why we Toposa are so behind. We have to learn to live in this new and changing world.", comments Mr. Lino.

He also joined a Community Based Savings Group (CMSG) where the village pools extra money every fortnight into a community trust. They can then request a loan, use the money as capital for some project, and after 4 weeks pay back the original amount with 10% interest. Mr. Lino is once again a leading member of the community as he purchase cell phones in Kapoeta and sold them for a nice profit.

Through Mr. Lino's testimony of leading a dignified life many people are impressed and begin to mirror and adopt Mr. Lino's attitude. In his own words he says: *" I came here with nothing and after hard work, I have become a leading member of the community. People come from all around to get my advice and they trust me. I am now a leader in this community. "*

CHALLENGES

Toposa are still mainly concerned with caring for their cattle and many are still not convinced that using cattle to plow is good. They don't want their cattle to be over worked. There is still much resistance to the Animal Traction Project. Slowly, time will make changes in the lifestyle as cattle raiding becomes less of an attraction due to the high death rates among the male youths.

Even Toposa who accept different ideas sometimes have trouble in the community. They themselves can't convince everyone to also look at other options. So patience and understanding are necessary.



Figure 5 Mr. Lino acting in a role play for Trauma Healing at Peace Village

Once an agent of change is identified, care has to be taken so as not to single him out for special treatment as the rest of the community could get angry.

LESSONS LEARNED

HTPVK learned that working through such individuals is one of the best ways to convince others to accept and try new methods. This requires on the ground contacts to develop a trust factor. One must spend time and energy developing relationships in the community.

To affect real and lasting change, the facilitator of such programs has to be on the ground, near the people, understand and respect their culture and traditions and learn their language.

Mr. Lino advises his colleagues: *"...you work hard like me and you learn new things and you will be successful too."*

(Sources: Interview with Mr. Lino, his family, and community members. Written by Mr. Juma Chelimo, Agriculture Officer and edited/produced by Gabe Hurrish, Maryknoll Lay Missioner 01.July.2022)