



Man Strong Successful Business Man in Napil, Kuron

"Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men." Proverbs 22:29:



Figure 1 Second Wife Natabo, Marino Lorot, First Wife Mary and youngest children

My name is Marino Meri Lorot I was born in Kapoeta around 39 years ago. I am not sure of my exact age. I was raised in a family of three boys and four girls but one girl has passed. I am the third.

At that time it was the time of Arab control of Sudan. There was very bad war all over South Sudan . I was in Kapoeta because the SPLM was in Narus and the Arab were in control of Kapoeta. So there was no school at that time. I had no way to study and move out of there. I went to school but dropped out during Primary 5 because I had the responsibility of my family.

I was about 19 years old when I first got married to Mary in 2003. Around 2015 I married for the second to Notabo. I choose my wives myself. I knew them from before and had good relationships with both of them. My parents accepted them when I informed them of my intentions. I had to pay 28 cows for my first wife which I am still paying because that was not enough. I have to pay many different members of the family. It takes time to pay all of them. Now, I have two wives and eight children. Mary Lorot is my first wife and Notabo Laodio is my second wife. (Luke 10:38-42) Neither of them has much education but Mary takes care of my business when I am gone. She is able to do that. Mary is also in the Kuron Peace Village

Women's Group.

At the moment, my two older girls are in Ugandan schools. Both of them are in Primary Six (grade 6). The remainder of my children are attending here in Kuron at St. John Paul Nursery and St. Thomas Primary. I choose these schools because I wanted a good education for my children. I lost the chance to study due to the circumstances at that time. Now I want my children to grow up with knowledge. I moved to Napil in June 2009 and got land from my friend. I wanted to enroll my children in school here. It is important.

When I arrived in Napil, I started this supply store and I make enough to support my family through the sale of my merchandise. I sell shoes, clothes, drinks, snacks, household items like soap and laundry. I also sell cigarettes, perfume, beads, thread, school supplies and many other things. I know what the people around here want to buy so that is what I bring here. The most expensive things I sell are high quality clothes and the most in demand things I sell are food items. Sometimes, I purchase Sorghum locally and then take it to Kapoeta and sell at a profit. I need to rent a vehicle when I do that.

I sometimes go as far away as Nairobi for about 14 days. (Over 2,000 km one round trip.) I need to hire three different vehicles to bring my merchandise across the border to this place. The border crossing is difficult, as we have to be taxed twice: once by Kenyan and once by South Sudan authorities. I have to really be careful with my budget to make sure that I will make a profit to support my family.

Additionally, to my business I was asked to take care of the new MTN Tower. I had to resign from this post as the amount of money they paid me was not worth my time. I was losing time and my business must come first. However, I still sell MTN SIM cards and phone services. This I can do because people contact me and we make an appointment. I can make some extra money for the school fees. I do serve on the St. John Paul II Nursery PTA and I am involved in church activities.



Figure 2 Mary and Marino in their store

I think the hospital is the most important. That one helps people stay healthy and save the children. Many come from very far and before we saw so many people dying but now it is much better.

I think the schools are also very important. Before the schools began, children were roaming and now they are in school and learning something. Even people without any money are sending more children. Before the Kuron Peace Village started, the local people didn't send their children to schools. Now, there is a change as they have seen the previous graduates and they have seen the benefits so they want their children to learn.

What do the other Toposa men think about you sending girls to school? They say, "... you are losing cows. Why don't you marry them all and get the cows?" I told them, "... let them learn you will see the progress. When they finish school they come and work and also give me cows. Then they can marry."



Figure 3 Proud Businessman Marino in front of his store

The MTN tower has really helped me a lot in my business. Now with the cell phone I can call and communicate all the way to Nairobi. I can send them the money through the phone and they can send the things I need. I save so much time and I save a lot of money. This of course benefits me tremendously. I can call my girls in Uganda and see how they are doing. My brothers in Kapoeta taught me how to use the phone. The first time I used my phone, I remember, I called my friend in Kapoeta. I informed him I had a cell phone. He was so surprised and we both laughed.

I have seen many changes in this Kuron area. People are not like before. They know what a “town” is: by this I mean Kuron and Napil which are considered modern, populated areas with luxuries. They see the schools, the stores, the medicine is there for animals, even transport is there. They say that “development” has come to the Kuron area.

(sources: Interview with Mr. Marino 16.Nov.2021. edited by Gabe Hurrish)