



# Toposa Student Emmanuel Napuon

## A SUCCESS STORY

### Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

1 Timothy 4: 12

My name is Emmanuel Napuon. I was born in 2002 in a very small village called Lotakawa, only 15 minutes walk south of Napil. My parents are still alive although my father, Lucino Lopun is quite old now. I am the last born of nine total children born of my mother, Elizabeth Nakitibo: 5 boys and 4 girls. Of course, we are Toposa pastoralists and my father has many cattle.

As a little boy I was looking after the animals. I went to the cattle camps far away. I never carried a gun. I ate milk, posho, dry sorghum. Yes, we ate it just like that. The lions and the hyenas would come to our camp at night. One time a lion tried to catch our animals. We tracked it. Then it actually turned on us and came after us. It became crazy. It wouldn't run away. The big men tried to shoot it. I ran away. I was quite scared.

Out there in the bush, we always encountered snakes. Those days were so long ago I can't remember so much but there is one incident which haunts me to this day. We were just with the goats. We went to water the goats in the river. You know, we go into the water just like the animals and we drink too. We did not see the python in the water. It reached out and grabbed my friend and killed him. I ran away. People tried to shoot it but it was so difficult. Then the snake took him away under the water.

The first time I saw a Kwaja in those days there were some NGOs that would come to work in the Carter Centre. I was surprised to see someone so different. People would say so many things about those kwaja. They would say they were devils. The first time I talked to a kwaja was in Peace Village when I was in Primary. I knew by now that they were not devils. I wasn't afraid because I knew they were human.



Figure 1 Emmanuel studies in the Secondary School



Figure 2 Emmanuel believes girls should be allowed to study.

As you know, in our Toposa culture, it is not common to go to school but two of my older brothers finished basic education and are now at the university in Juba. I, myself, started in Nursery in 2012 June. In 2019, I graduated from Primary School. ( I was advanced one year due to good grades) I went to Narus Secondary because there was no school in Kuron at that time. Later, when the Head Master came to get me I returned to Kuron to attend Secondary School in Matara, Kuron. As of 2022, I am in Secondary Three.

My father and mother didn't want me to go to school. My older brother is the one who pushed for me to attend school. That first time, my father came and took me out. Then my brother talked to my father and my father changed his mind. He was illiterate so he did not understand the implications of education. My father would not even allow me to sell one animal to pay for the school fees. My elder brother was working in the Kuron Theatre group and he paid for my fees. Later, my father paid school fees through the sale of some animals. Sometimes the teachers or the Kuron Peace Village helped us with school fees.

I remember that being in Primary School was something to finish and become a president or governor. They said we could choose any job we want. So we were keen to study. We thought we would become great. Later we realized our opportunities were more limited.

I was the Deputy Head boy elected by the other students. I was controlling the students and making them get to their classes on time. I would ring the bell and wake them up and get them to bathe before classes. If they were sick I would report them. If the food was not enough, I had to report that too. Any complaints I would take to the head teacher. So I was well respected.

There are many challenges in the Secondary School because it is so new. The institution is nascent and we don't have the dormitories, latrines, kitchen or anything. Everything is difficult. I want to continue here even though the conditions are bad. We are the pioneers of this school and we have to persist. I feel duty bound to see it through.



Figure 3 At the Secondary School. Emmanuel is on the left

My dream is to graduate and continue my education. I don't want to drop out like others. I want to go further for my University education. Political Science is one of my interests.

I feel that HTPVK are helping us a lot. If Peace Village was not there so many Toposa would suffer. People would be fighting in conflicts. They were not working for peace. Now they think about these things. It has helped a lot of young people who would have been raiding cattle. Now those who graduated for example, a year before, they go to other places to keep studying and making a better life for themselves. The Peace Village gives a lot of things to this community.

I am different from my parents now because my parent were not educated. I know the importance of education. They rely on their animals and agriculture. I now can see many opportunities. I am starting to advise my parents because I know so much now. I was able to influence my parents to send two of my sisters to school in Narus Bakhita Primary school. So I feel girls are important to be educated. Yes, that is a new attitude for Toposa men which came about due to the influence of HTPVK.

I do have a cell phone and find it quite useful. I use Facebook for communication with my friends. There are even some friends in Germany.

I counsel my parents that animals are not the only way you can live. Education is now important. My siblings are also able to support this. You need to put your children in school. We have to change our life through education. We aim to achieve something in our life. We have to be ambitious to raise up our family from illiterate to literate.

We were the first in our area to go to school. Now I am seeing a change and many people are taking their children to school. They have seen the importance. We are the agents of change.

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