

SOUTH SUDAN EDUCATION AND PEACEBUILDING PROGRAM (SSEPP)

SSEPP 2021 4th Quarter Report

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1. Brief Context Update:

There is anticipation and tension building towards the 2023 planned elections. Many feel this election will not happen while others are hopeful that some change is in the air. Government salaries are still not being paid, which causes soldiers to use their guns to get goods and money. Inflation is high and while there are new roads being build, travel by road can still be dangerous. There are goods being imported again, by road, from Kenya and Uganda. Being in any of the big cities, there is a sense of things getting better, security wise, but if you go to the countryside there is still a lot of fear and conflict

There have been unusual floods over the last year and a half which has caused a lot of people to be displaced, sickness and death. With flooding comes loss of crops not just for that growing season but possibly for the next.

Some refugees from neighboring countries have started to return only to become displaced again, especially due to flooding. Even if they are not in an area of flooding, many of these people are returning with nothing, to homes destroyed and security lacking.

The Churches are still working hard for peace. They are also growing and through this growth able to reach out to communities and talk about reconciliation, trauma healing and the need for forgiveness.

2. PCOSS Update



PCOSS Board of Education Meeting

There has not been a resolution to the division among the PCOSS leadership as yet.

Mediation sessions have taken place and are continuing.

Please pray for the leaders that they can be an example not only to their own church but to the nation.

The Education department has been able to continue its work throughout this time. There has been the construction of two classrooms in Mangateen that will be used for about 80 students during the day and then will be open for Adult Education in the evenings.



Fifteen beautiful new desks

Fifteen new desks were made for Akatgol school. There was a teacher training workshop held and a Board of Education meeting.

The water tank at Jaborona was fixed so that students could have clean drinking water.

3. ACROSS Update

ACROSS has been impacted by fighting in different areas and have had to pull out of some areas because of security. This slowed down some of the things they were doing but are slowly getting back into full swing.

Seventy-seven girls were able to receive scholarships for school.

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) program has finally been able to get started with funds they received from PCUSA in the last quarter of the year. ACROSS decided that they should only work in the Pochalla area as security and flooding in Pibor were going to really hinder what they were able to do. They have worked in Pochalla for years and have done programs with the SSEPP in this area and we are excited to see what the impact of this program will be.

4. RECONCILE Update

Reconcile was able to hold Community Dialogues in Gimunu communities, Gimunu Bona, Yei River County, Central Equatoria. Over 160 participants including community representatives from Juba, organized forces in Mahad, returnees, receiving community gathered in Yei Town for three days dialogue facilitated by RECONCILE Int.

A follow up to this community was very encouraging. There was a visible reduction in tension between people and the relationship between civilians and the military was improved even to the point of them working together to destroy crops such as marijuana.

The youth felt heard and were contributing to the community rather than causing trouble.

RECONCILE has just received funds from the SSEPP to begin Psychosocial Training and Peacebuilding in Yei and Morobo counties of Central Equatoria.



RECONCILE

5. Testimonies of Change

Fixing a water tank may seem like a small thing but when you have no access to clean drinking water, it is a big deal. These students can now have a drink without worrying about getting sick.

Having a school building where there will be classes for adults is a big step in helping the parents to encourage their children to go to school.

Starting an Early Childhood Development program in Pochalla is exciting and when talking with ACROSS it is so encouraging to hear their excitement for this program.

And Peter Tibi, Director of RECONCILE says of the training with the Gimunu communities “We are grateful for the impact it created. We are grateful that the Lord is working in our midst as Jehovah Shalom!”

6. Challenges/Opportunities

There are many challenges throughout South Sudan – hunger, flooding, fighting, inflation and distrust.

ACROSS has had to change plans for where they work. While they are still in the Pibor area, they have had to change how they work they.

PCOSS has the challenge of their division that could also be an opportunity to be an example of reconciliation. The Education Department is moving ahead but the cost of construction is very high right now so building schools may have to be put on hold. They will need to use this time as an opportunity to focus on teacher trainings and working with getting parents involved in the schools.

7. Financial Update

The PC(USA)’s relationships with our South Sudanese partners is an incredible gift. It encourages us in our faith, it inspires us to persevere through challenges, and it reminds us to work towards new possibilities. The South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Program is one way that our denomination connects with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS), RECONCILE International, Across and also teacher training colleges in South Sudan, and we thank God that it is a connection which bears fruit in both countries.

Thank you for your contributions that allow the PC(USA) to join into our partners’ ministries. In the 2021, generous Presbyterians contributed \$38,635 towards these collaborative efforts. Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis remains committed to partially matching each gift. Thank you for your continuing prayers, advocacy, and financial support and thank you to Westminster-Minneapolis for your continuing support of this program.

8. Mission Co-Worker Update:

An update on the Smith-Mathers. Shelvis continues to work on the curriculum for the RECONCILE Peace Institute. He is working in Oxford, England at this time where he has access to the facilities at Oxford and is also able to engage with Sudanese and South Sudanese. He has found his time there to be inspiring and challenging and is grateful for this opportunity.

Nancy has stepped aside from the SSEPP manager position to be able to focus on their 4 children. This does not mean that she does not keep up with the SSEPP and she is a valuable resource for the Regional Liaison who is trying to fill her shoes.

Please keep the Smith-Mathers in your prayers. That Shelves' time in Oxford gives him what he needs and that as they look to returning to South Sudan that God's plan will be clear.



Nancy and Shelvis Smith-Mather and their adorable children