



Mission Partner of the Month – July 2020

The Brickworks was founded in 2009 to work exclusively in the very needy nation of South Sudan. After many years of civil war, its health statistics were among the worst in the world. Very high levels of maternal mortality, few qualified doctors and nurses, few trained teachers, few homes had access to clean water or a latrine and many children were dying before their fifth birthday. UNICEF announced in 2016 that more teenage girls die in childbirth than finish secondary school. The needs were enormous.



Over the last ten years, The Brickworks has worked in partnership with the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) to help it to make a difference. This has meant investing in church schools, to improve classrooms, and in teacher training. Church clinics have also been supported to ensure that only qualified clinical staff are recruited, having trained as clinical officers, nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians. A key partnership is with the Diocese of Yei, South Sudan, where John and Poppy Spens worked until 2011. The photo above is of Yei cathedral and the photo below is of Bishop Hilary. It is hoped that Bishop Hilary will visit Bristol in 2021 when he attends the Lambeth Conference.



The Diocese of Yei strongly believes in holistic ministry and that its people deserve decent schools and decent health facilities. This was the rationale for opening an eye clinic which ran very successfully for several years before it was forced to close in 2016 due to insecurity.



The staff were among the many who fled for safety to Uganda and are now living in refugee camps. That was until early in 2019 when, thanks to an HOTC grant from St Michael's church, staff could return to Yei and the clinic could re-open. This is the only specialist eye clinic in the whole area and people travel from all around for eye treatment or for spectacles. In March 2020, 130 patients received cataract surgery to restore their sight.



This year, The Brickworks has also supported the ECSS Diocese of KajoKeji which is now based in Uganda, having been forced to flee from South Sudan. The Brickworks funds four under tree schools in the camps, catering for over 4,000 primary school children. Each under tree school has been linked with a UK primary



school, including St Michael's and Wallscourt Farm Academy in Cheswick. In 2019, Wallscourt pupils raised money to help build temporary shelters, latrines and school benches. St Michael's Pre School and Nursery is now also linked with an under tree nursery school in a refugee camp. It is hoped these links can be deepened by teachers from the UK visiting their partner school as happened in 2019 for Miss Black from Wallscourt.

There are a variety of ways that The Brickworks tries to help the church to make a difference in very tough conditions, where so many of its people are away from their normal homes and living in refugee camps.

First, The Brickworks believes in the need to train church leaders and so is giving financial support to the Bishop Alison Theological College which was forced to move from South Sudan to Uganda. 20 pastors are now in training.

Second, life can be very tough for women in the camps. Working through the Mothers Union, The Brickworks has funded training to show women and girls how to make their own dignity kits.

Third, youth in the camps are often bored with nothing to do. With some funding from St Michael's, The Brickworks funds a one-year discipleship training programme for 100 Christian youth leaders, led by one of the ECSS Bishops.



Last but not least, there is a huge need to help young people to train as teachers and health workers. Yet though they may have the right entry qualifications, they have no way of paying the tuition fees. A scholarship from The Brickworks can be life changing. The newest sponsored student is Pita Rachael (left) who is a trainee clinical officer. She married in 2010, lost both parents in 2012, and she was widowed in 2016. She had 3 children, but one died last year. Her sister was to pay her fees but she lost her job recently and so The Brickworks stepped in.

This year, St Michael's Church gave money to The Brickworks to fund the printing of 500 new service books that can be used in churches throughout South Sudan. In June, St Michael's gave an emergency grant to enable the Yei Diocese to provide food rations to 300 families displaced from their homes by rebel forces.

- 1. Please pray for peace to return to South Sudan to enable the 1.3 million refugees in Uganda to return home.**
- 2. Please pray for the Nursery and Primary Schools in the refugee camps that, though the facilities may be few, the teaching would be of good quality to give the children a decent education.**
- 3. Pray for those who remain behind in South Sudan facing many challenges but running schools and health centres, including the newly re-opened Eye Clinic funded by an HOTC grant.**
- 4. Pray that COVID-19 will not spread widely in South Sudan, which does not have health facilities that could cope with numbers of very sick patients. Pray the virus will be contained to limited areas.**