



## Mission Partner of the Month – July 2022

The Brickworks was founded in 2008 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 fourteen 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 like the one in the photo, and to build new ones. ECSS 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 ECSS Diocese of Yei, South Sudan, where John and Poppy Spens worked until 2011.



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 settlements. 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. Annual cataract camps are organised and funded by The Brickworks and to date more than 1000 successful cataract operations have been performed, restoring sight to many patients who previously could hardly see, such as this woman.



For the last 4 years, 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 refugee settlements, catering for over 4,000 primary school children. In controlling COVID, the Ugandan Government required all schools to



close throughout 2021 and the schools only re-opened this January. Each under tree school has been linked with a UK primary school, including the two in our parish - St Michael's and Wallscourt Farm Academy in Cheswick.

There is a huge shortage of trained teachers in South Sudan and the Bishop of Yei has asked The Brickworks to sponsor the training of as many teachers as possible. With help from another UK charity, this year, The Brickworks has awarded full scholarships to a record number of 23 teachers for the Diploma of Education. The photo shows ten of the teachers who this year received scholarships from The Brickworks. As well as teachers, The Brickworks is also sponsoring a midwife and two nurses at the Yei School of Nursing.



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 settlements. The Brickworks helps support the Bishop Allison Theological College, which trains ECSS clergy. The college was forced into exile in Uganda in 2017 but now that the situation in South Sudan is more stable, the College plans to return to Yei in January 2023.

The Brickworks sees the training of laity as just as important and recently funded a course for church treasurers (see photo), and the training of church youth leaders in the refugee settlements and at the cathedral in Yei. All this training is delivered by local church leaders and aims to strengthen the South Sudanese churches.



**Thank you St Michael's Church for your amazing support.**

**Please pray:**

- 1. For peace to return to South Sudan to enable the 1.3 million refugees in Uganda to return home**
- 2. That the road from Uganda remains safe for medicine delivery to Yei**
- 3. For the churches that they can reach out to their communities to share God's love in these hard times**
- 4. For the youth leader training conferences in Uganda and Yei**
- 5. For Bishop Allison Theological College to return to Yei safely and for the renovation of college buildings**
- 6. For the health and education students in their studies**

**St Michael's Church Link:** John and Poppy Spens.

**Website:** [www.thebrickworks.org.uk](http://www.thebrickworks.org.uk)