

## Immanuel Kindergarten

[www.immanuelkindergarten.org](http://www.immanuelkindergarten.org) 11 Forest Park Lancaster LA1 5YA 07790161152

December 2020

I hope you are well, despite the difficulties and challenges of this unusual year.

Last year's newsletter was written in October because Claire and I were about to go to Yei in November to join with the staff, children and parents as Immanuel Kindergarten celebrated the graduation of 150 children from the Kindergarten. This was particularly important as it is an amazing ten years since moving to the new building which was built with support from Immanuel Kindergarten Charity. It was a special time as old students joined in the fun – some about to graduate from secondary school. There were endless speeches, cake and dancing as well as lots of little concerts from the children, culminating in them receiving their graduation certificates. They were ready for their next big adventure as planned to join the primary schools in January.

Since then, as in most of the world, life in South Sudan has been affected by the Covid -19 virus. Immanuel Kindergarten, along with all other schools in South Sudan, has been closed since March. This of course has had an effect on the children but also means that the staff have not been receiving salaries. There is no free education in South Sudan so all parents pay school fees which in turn pays the staff and buys resources for the children's education. Further to the stress of having no income, the country's borders have been closed making food scarce and therefore very expensive. The charity has been able to assist with some small donations to help the staff buy food during this difficult period but the funds we can use for this purpose are now quite low. If the Government doesn't allow schools to open in the new year I'm not sure how the staff will manage.

You would expect that this would mean that staff would spend all their time working out how to solve their own problems, but not this team!

All families are experiencing hardship and many of the young teenagers began to look for ways of earning money. Sadly, this led many of the girls to sell their bodies in order to buy necessities. Due to the lack of understanding of consequence, many thirteen and fourteen year old girls (some former students of Immanuel Kindergarten) were becoming pregnant. Immanuel Kindergarten team saw an opportunity to help their community so they asked for the charity's help to raise money for them to run an awareness programme for teenage boys and girls.

Friends and contacts of Immanuel Kindergarten charity were incredibly generous and as a result the team in Yei have now met with nearly 400 young people, face to face, offering information on Covid-19 safety advice, reproductive health and ways of being self-sufficient safely. They reached many more through radio talk shows and the feedback from the young people and the phone - in responses from the public on the radio programmes were all very positive. If just one young teenage pregnancy can be prevented then all their hard work will have been worthwhile.

As well as all this, the team have been working in the school garden growing food to store, ready to feed the children when schools open again, hopefully in January. Meanwhile preparations are in full swing planning the teaching for the year ahead.

Malish has also been working on a fundraising project to develop a small shop to sell stationery and other items to local people. We were able, through a generous donation, to help with this and recently the bookshop has been stocked with items such as soap and sugar and children's clothes in order to capture any Christmas trade and the profits can then be used to buy new stock ready for when schools open.

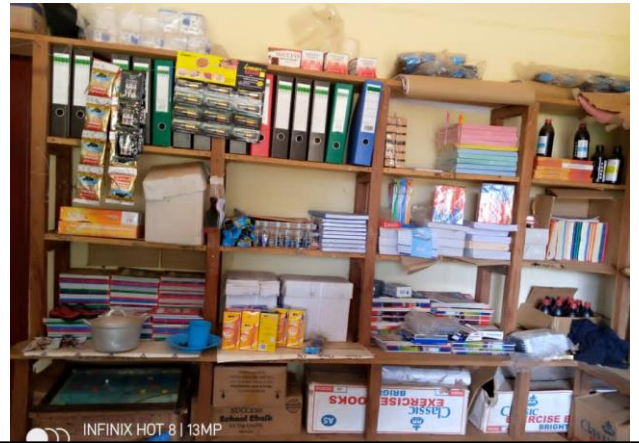
Despite the challenges of this year the amazing team in Yei have long term plans to build new classrooms and have been making bricks in the hope they can eventually find funding to purchase other materials enabling the Kindergarten to grow into a full primary school.

Thank you again to all of you who continue to send me parcels of underwear for the ladies and children in Yei. It remains very important to support them in this way.

If you would like to donate or find out more about any of the items mentioned in this article please go to [www.immanuelkindergarten.org](http://www.immanuelkindergarten.org) or contact Carolyn at [ikindergarten@aol.com](mailto:ikindergarten@aol.com)

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support. Best wishes for Christmas and a healthy 2021 from Carolyn.

Nervous children waiting to receive their graduation certificates.



A newly stocked bookshop thanks to a generous donor meaning much needed funds can be raised for the Kindergarten.



Weeding the school garden.



Young people during awareness raising the teaching sessions.

Parents have already started making bricks whilst looking for funding to build a new classroom.



Thank you from all the team involved in the Kindergarten as we hopefully look forward to a healthy 2021.



Teenagers receiving soap during the awareness raising sessions and leading the chat radio show.