



Loreto – Rumbek

Extended Impact Report

2017



– A Message from our Principal –



Dear Friends of Loreto – Rumbek,

As the school year ends, I would like to reflect on our highlights over this year and our hopes for the future. It has been a busy year here at Loreto! We've had record enrollment and attendance rates in the primary and secondary schools, and our primary health care unit continues to offer an impeccably high quality of health care to our community. Our secondary school girls have excelled at this year's national examinations and our first class of primary school students will graduate this year.

With our commitment to providing a holistic, child-centered education, we recognize the need for supporting our students' families, encouraging them to invest in education. Towards this end, we have invested in community support and development by providing food, vocational training, employment and health education.

As we look back on this year, we are inspired to dream and look towards the future with hope. Despite the challenges facing this young nation, we are inspired by the resilience of our students, by their laughter and their joy for learning. So, we march on!

We could not do this work alone and we would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, our friends, advocates, supporters, partners and funders! Your support and encouragement has been integral to the success of our students and the growth of our community.

Please stay in touch with us by signing up for our monthly newsletter, or through our [website](#) and [Facebook account](#) for frequent updates on our programs.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Orla Treacy'.

Sr. Orla M. Treacy IBVM
Loreto – Rumbek Principal



– Context –

The situation in South Sudan has deteriorated over the last year. Half of the country's population does not know where the next meal will come from, a third is displaced, and the whole of South Sudan is still waiting for peace.

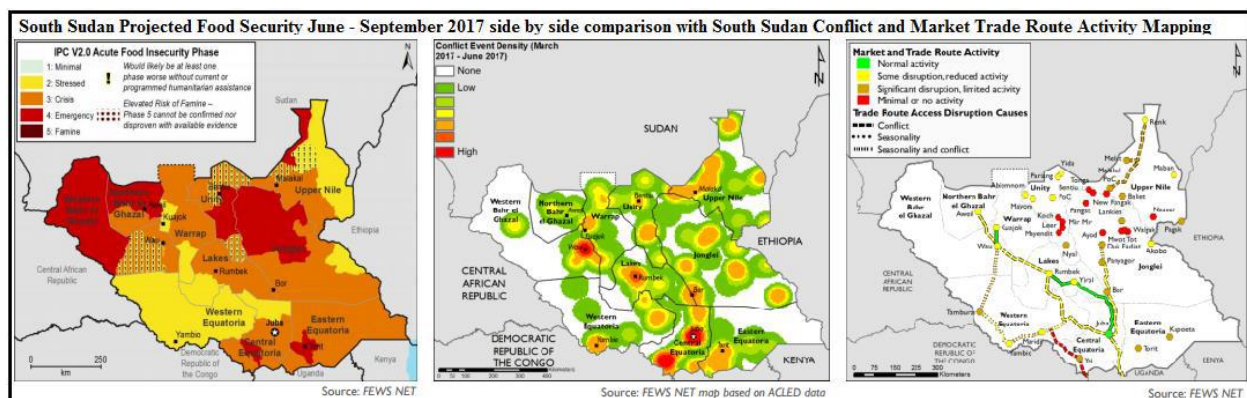
The education situation has remained dire and has even worsened in most areas of South Sudan. According to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of South Sudan, school conditions are appalling, teaching materials and capacity remain low, and the gender disparity is clearly visible in the schools – especially within the greater Lakes State region.

The food security situation in South Sudan has deteriorated – as of August 2017, nearly 6 million South Sudanese were facing crisis stages of hunger or worse. Despite the UN having declared the internationally reported “famine” to be over, food insecurity is still severe. This has challenged gains made in both the health and education sectors, as schools struggle with poor attendance due to lack of food, and health related issues. Further compounding the food security issue in areas affected by conflict, is insecurity and inaccessibility. Overland trade routes remain insecure, driving up the prices of food, increasing desperation and opportunistic banditry, and this further increase insecurity – creating a vicious cycle of insecurity and hunger.

The economic crisis has been ongoing since last year. In the previous report the foreign exchange rate had reached 80 SSP to the US Dollar. Today, the same dollar is worth 170 SSP – a 112% increase over the last year. The economic situation has become so dire in this area that since May 2016, the price of white sorghum is 745% higher than last year; having increased from 47 SSP to 350 SSP per unit. Sorghum is the staple grain of most of South Sudan, and its prohibitive cost has crippled traditional coping mechanisms.

Thankfully, the security situation has remained fairly stable for the school – however, the same could not be said of the community. While we have not been directly affected by the ethnic fighting of the conflict at the national level, traditional cycles of cattle raiding, revenge attacks and killings have been ongoing. Rumbek, is the center of these volatile interactions with almost as many recorded instances of community based violence as the rest of the nation - 60 in Rumbek area; 64 in the other 9 states combined.

During this crisis, Loreto – Rumbek has remained a constant for the children, young women, and vulnerable community members that come through our gates to attend school, seek medical treatment, or work towards supporting their families. Our ability to help the community is only made possible by the generosity of our advocates, friends, supporters and donors, who have committed time, effort, and funds towards making quality education and healthcare a reality in Maker Kuei, South Sudan.



– Loreto Primary School –

The Loreto Primary School continues to grow, with a massive increase in enrollment in 2017. Last year we boasted our largest enrollment of 542 active students in Primary 1 through 7; as well as 142 afternoon students enrolled in the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). This year we had an enrollment of 623 students enrolled in Primary 1 through 8 and an additional 295 students enrolled in the ALP – a total **active enrollment of 918 students**. Of that number, **41% are female** – higher than state operated schools in the area with only 25-33% female populations. While young girls are still less likely to enroll and more likely to dropout – the school’s gender equity initiative during enrollment encourages parents to enroll their daughters.

The school has worked hard to ensure that students are safe and cared for within its environs. This has meant implementing tighter compound security, food security and nutritional support, and open access to health care through the Loreto PHCU. All of these efforts have helped to maintain student attendance and retention rates in the face of increasingly bleak indicators. In 2017, the Loreto Primary School maintained an **attendance rate of 92.5%**, significantly higher than the roughly 75% attendance rates experienced by other primary schools in South Sudan. In addition, the school has maintained a **retention rate of 99%** for the second year in a row. This year marks the first year that the Loreto Primary School has registered students for the National Primary 8 certificate examination.

The school works to ensure that students’ physical and academic needs are being met, while recognizing the importance of engaging and “fun” supplementary programs. The school has implemented several clubs and extracurricular activities including sports, traditional dance, drama, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), literacy, and tablet-based after school programs. These activities are designed to maximize students’ learning through practical application, and also provide a healthy venue to celebrate competition and culture!

As the school has grown, so has the infrastructure provided for the students. The school has provided 16 fully furnished classrooms, support offices for teachers and administrators, 24 latrines for students and staff – separated by gender, as well as kitchens and stores to facilitate the delivery of school meals. The school also offers open access to water for drinking and sanitation purposes with a water tower that supplies 20,000 liters of water using solar power. The Loreto Primary School remains 100% solar powered.

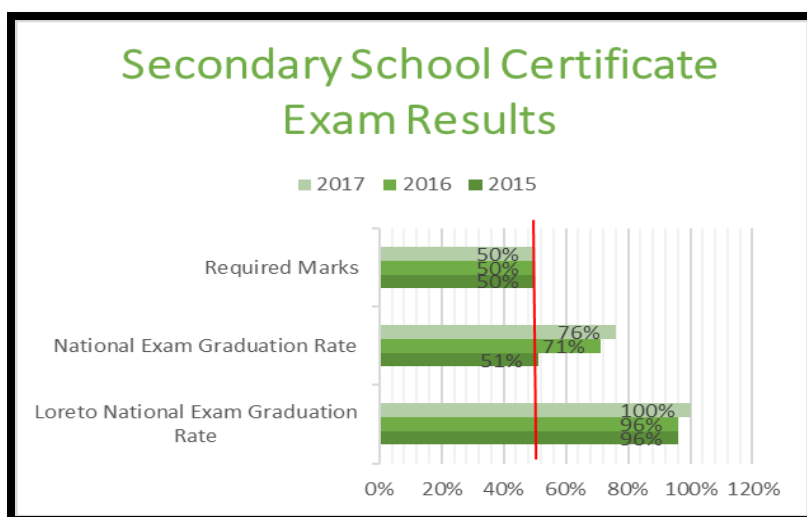
We recognize that the low quality of education endemic in South Sudan stems from the low capacity of much of the available teaching staff. In working towards sustainability and ensuring the highest standards of education possible in the Maker Kuei community, the school further implements a comprehensive capacity building program including: in-service teacher training, mandatory teacher training workshops 3 times a year during term breaks, and formal professional development to help committed teachers gain a teaching certificate.



– Loreto Girls Secondary School –

The Loreto Girls Secondary School continues to be at the forefront of girl child education in the Rumbek area. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of opportunities available to young women, and the quality of education received at Loreto has empowered our graduates to develop continuing education and professional opportunities.

Since the school operates as a boarding school, the attendance rates are disproportionately high – approximately 100%. The school has a current **enrollment of 237 girls**, as well as an additional 8 students as a part of the Loreto Primary 8 “transition year.” The transition year enables young women who have not had access to a high-quality primary education to strengthen their foundation in a specialized Primary 8 program geared towards preparing them to join Senior 1 at the Loreto Girls Secondary School.



For the last 2 years, the Loreto Girls Secondary School has successfully graduated 96% of students in Senior 4. In March, the 29 candidates of the Loreto Girls Secondary School Class of 2016 sat the Nation Secondary School Certificate Examination and **100% graduated**. All students scored an average of 60% or higher. One of the Loreto girls was in the top 10 students in the state, one of only 2 girls to achieve this prestigious

distinction.

Similar to the methodology employed in the primary school, the Loreto Girls Secondary School works to provide a protective, engaging, and empowering education program. In addition to a full complement of academic classes, the school provides 2 specialized academic tracks for Senior 3 and Senior 4 students – arts and science. The school further provides additional resources for critical subjects that are central to life skills, English literacy and fluency, critical thinking, and computer skills.

Loreto also provides activities related to student leadership, debate, sports, drama club, peace club, culture club, English competitions, Mathematics symposia, and the ever-popular Ms. Loreto Beauty Pageant.

The school’s most critical function, is that of a young women’s refuge. While the school’s academic and social education programs are designed to support the girls after graduation, the program itself is designed to protect



and empower the girls. The school provides a social support structure to the girls, a “school family” framework that provides critical support to girls who are not being supported by their families. Further, because Loreto is a boarding school, we are able to protect and advocate for girls facing forced/child marriages. **Roughly 10% of the girls boarding at the Loreto School have either faced or are facing forced**



marriage circumstances, and their presence at the school is the only boundary preventing this harsh reality from taking hold of these girls’ futures.

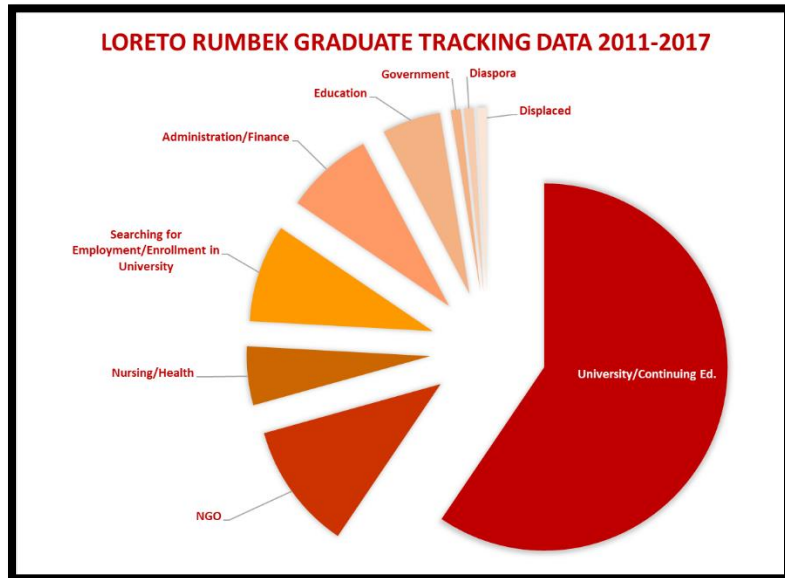
The diversity present in the student body is a stark reminder of the unity that this country once shared and could share again. We have girls learning, living, and succeeding together from many clans and sub clans of the Dinka tribe, as well as students from the Nuer, Bari, Zande, and Acholi tribes of South Sudan. The school works at bringing the students together by providing them with a culturally diverse “school family,” and providing venues for the healthy celebration of these cultures. Traditional dance is a popular method of sharing tribal traditions between girls and the Culture Club leads students in tribal dances beyond those they would have learned from their birth families; to those taught by their school family.

As the school has continued to grow, and needs have arisen, Loreto has worked to develop the school’s educational and boarding infrastructure. This year we have added another full dorm, and additional sanitation facilities, to the school’s current complement. This enables Loreto to reach its target capacity for 2019 – 320 full-time boarding students. In addition to this, the school has implemented both English Literature and Computers as core curriculum classes; the school and our generous donors have worked to ensure that there are dedicated resources for these specialized classes.



– Loreto Graduates –

Loreto graduates have continued to succeed by going on to either tertiary education or by finding formal employment. **59% of the current Loreto Girls Secondary School graduates are enrolled in continuing education**, and 62% of Loreto graduates have either graduated or are attending a tertiary educational program. This includes young women studying to be doctors and nurses, teachers and professors, lawyers and lawmakers, entrepreneurs and business women, accountants and administrators. The Loreto Rumbek program has even had the pleasure of employing several of our past pupils in critical roles at the school.



In addition to the 59% of the girls who are currently enrolled in continuing education, **31% of Loreto graduates have secured formal employment** with NGOs, education or health related institutions, and are working in administration and finance, or even with the government.

Only 1% are among South Sudan's displaced, while 9% are currently searching for continuing education or employment opportunities.

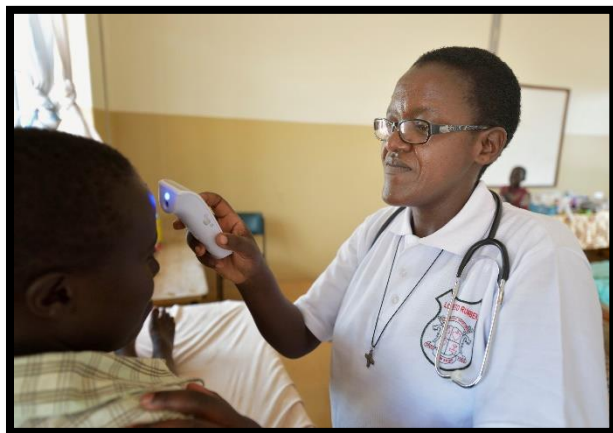
For the graduates currently enrolled in tertiary education program, most will stay in South Sudan (65%), however, the additional 35% will find support for programs in Kenya, Uganda, or further abroad. The school works to support girls as they develop these opportunities for themselves – this requires a varying degree of support depending on the student's needs, family situation, and dreams.

One of the key programs that the school has initiated in the last 12 months, is the graduate Professional Internship Program (PIP). This program places a highly motivated young South Sudanese Women with a professional mentor who oversees their work. They are given opportunities to work as



unskilled professionals, access regular capacity development including computers training, professional training, and position specific skills. Students can apply for positions as administrative, financial, or project assistants, compound managers, trainee teachers in the primary school, or nurses assistants in the Loreto PHCU. **This allows them to explore a career while searching for continuing opportunities – for many of these girls, their positions in PIP have helped them to become contributing members of their families; reducing chances of forced marriage, and empowering the girls.**

– Loreto Primary Health Care Unit (PHCU) –



The Loreto Primary Health Care Unit is the newest of the core programs of Loreto – Rumbek. Nevertheless, it has had an extremely deep impact on the community. The PHCU provides targeted health resources towards our community's most vulnerable members – children, young women, and mothers.

In just the first 16 months of operation, the Loreto PHCU and its clinical staff have helped to reduce common health issues such as malnutrition, open wounds, and fungal infections. Our students have become strong proponents of

health and readily access the services as needed through the school.

In reaction to the famine north of Rumbek and the extreme levels of hunger in the community, the Loreto PHCU implemented an emergency feeding program. This program utilizes synthetic nutritional supplements as well as moringa, a natural nutritional supplement, to fortify a basic protein enhanced porridge for patients. On average, the primary school children will only have 1 meal every 3 days outside of the school. For children under 5, this can be life threatening.

The Loreto PHCU has continued to conduct between 1000 and 1500 clinical consultations during each month of operation. The school continues to work with local health stakeholders to facilitate vaccine drives for students and families in the community.

In partnership with the schools, the Loreto PHCU has worked with teaching staff and the local nurse assistants to provide health education to the secondary school girls and community workers – discussing critical community health issues of sanitation and nutrition, as well as reproductive rights and health for the secondary school girls. In the primary school, basic sanitation sensitization helps the students to become accustomed to simple practices that will support their health. Teachers help students to organize dramas featuring key health learnings as an easy and engaging way of disseminating the information.



– Community Support and Development –

The hunger, poverty and insecurity in Maker Kuei has been steadily increasing over the last few years – as the crisis has drawn on. This has all been exacerbated by poor employment opportunities – under 1% of the adult population has access to employment within Maker Kuei (outside of Loreto) – and, of course, poor rains. More than any other factor the hunger has driven insecurity in this community; and all factors of the crisis seem to intensify the situation.



The school started supporting school staff and community workers by providing supplementary dry rations. While the salaries have been found to be an important tool of dignity, and of reducing dependency, the dry rations provided to each worker has become a staple for coping. As part of this program, Loreto has started to support early recovery techniques in the community – especially in the agriculture sector, by supporting economically disadvantaged families that have faced extreme poverty, conflict, or are female led-households. This initiative allows Loreto to hire community workers, supply them with seeds and tools, and train them in agriculture techniques that will enable them to maximize their yields.

In addition to the agricultural work, and food security support offered to the community, the emergency feeding program offered through the Loreto PHCU specifically targets mothers and babies facing extreme food insecurity. This feeding program involves multiple feedings each day. To help the mothers to afford the time it takes to seek treatment, and to support their other children, the school often hires these mothers as casual workers, allowing them to access free health services for themselves and their children.



While the primary school's Accelerated Learning Program targets out of school children, many uneducated local youths are currently unemployed. The school started a Masonry Training Program which includes 3 elements: masonry training for local youth, block making training and employment for community women from female led households, and an exposure program for the secondary school girls. This program has allowed the school to build up local capacity for critical skilled labor like masonry, as well as challenge traditional gender dynamics present in this male dominated field. The program further increases sustainability by creating a skilled labor pool that is capable of maintaining and repairing the schools' essential educational infrastructure.

