

# Loreto Rumbek



Annual Report 2021

## Introductory Statement Director

We are delighted to welcome you to our second annual report. The past twelve months have been busy, challenging, full of hope and in the midst of it all we continue our work. We began with the Government's decision to re-open all the schools. This was a welcomed decision by all. With our new enrolment, we now have 340 girls in Secondary Boarding School, 1,388 Primary School boys and girls, and our Clinic has continued to welcome great numbers with their many services.

This report has been divided into the different departments we have in Loreto Rumbek. The Secondary School is our core programme; it is a Boarding School for Girls all over South Sudan. The Primary Education is attended by our boys and girls from the local community. The Clinic and Feeding programme both offer means of supporting and sustaining the students in their quest for education. The Agricultural programme provides us with the opportunity to nurture the land and learn new ways to cultivate and harvest. The use of solar and tree planting brings us closer to the realities of deforestation and care for the environment.

We have also welcomed the development of our internship and graduate programme. With the lack of suitably qualified graduates in South Sudan, Loreto offers ongoing training and has a scholarship programme for graduates and male interns. This year the internship programme accommodated thirty-four resident secondary school graduates. We have also said goodbye to twenty-two of our former interns as they left for colleges and universities in Kenya and South Sudan. Most of the interns have taken courses in Education and Health Care.

With the arrival of Fr Alan and our new counsellor Anne, we have been able to continue developing the psycho-social programme. Staff and interns enjoyed a year-long course in counselling while students participated in programmes such as pastoral care, trauma healing, and counselling. Our students have already benefitted from these courses and we look forward to expand our work in the future.

In April this year we received the good news that we would welcome a new Bishop, ten years after our last Bishop died suddenly. While our new Bishop-elect was just settling in he was attacked and shot six times. Miraculously he has made a full recovery and hopes to return in the coming months to take up his position as Bishop. The incident put Rumbek in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. We have all extended our hands to support the local Church during this difficult time.

The Secondary School has once again achieved great academic success. With the release of the final government examination results, Loreto took third position in the National

Examination and first place in the State. Meanwhile the Primary School also enjoyed academic success with the graduating class also achieving first place in the State.

We are grateful that we have much to celebrate. We thank our staffs, community, and families who continue to support the day-to-day running of the compound. To you our partners, donors and friends we say a big thank-you for your ongoing support. Without you none of this would happen.

We hope you enjoy!

Sr Orla Treacy

Director



Photo: One extended family, very committed to education

## Table of Contents

Introductory Statement Director .....	1
Governance .....	5
Loreto Girls Secondary School .....	6
About Loreto Girls Secondary .....	7
Extra-Curricular Activities .....	8
Staff .....	10
Graduate class of 2021 .....	11
New Intake .....	12
Loreto Primary School.....	13
About Loreto Primary School.....	13
Students – Morning and Afternoon Schools.....	14
Quality Education – Teacher Training.....	15
Graduation .....	15
New Intake .....	16
Activities – Extra Curricular .....	16
Loreto Parent Teacher Association .....	17
Mary Ward Primary Health Care Centre.....	18
Student Services.....	18
Twins’ Support Programme .....	19
Nutrition Programme.....	20
Outreach .....	21
Health Education Programmes .....	22
Epilepsy .....	23
Vaccination Programme.....	23
Covid-19 Vaccination .....	24
Hepatitis Programme.....	24
Loreto School Feeding Programme.....	25
Primary School Feeding Programme.....	25
Secondary School Feeding .....	26
Feeding at Mary Ward PHCC.....	27
Community Outreach.....	28
Meals for All Staff Members .....	29
Agriculture – Care of the Earth .....	30
Tree Planting .....	31
Piggery project .....	31

Water .....	32
Development.....	33
Construction of New Female Accommodation Block .....	33
Solar Power .....	33
Vocational Programme .....	34
Professional Internships Programme (PIP) .....	35
Memorial Wall .....	36
Celebration Photos .....	37
Hopes for 2022.....	38
Review of goals for 2021.....	38
Plans and hopes for 2022.....	39
Banking and Donations .....	40

## Governance

Loreto Rumbek mission is under the trusteeship of the Loreto Province in Ireland. All the Loreto Programmes are overseen by a Board of Management incorporating various stakeholders from both genders, with multiple skills, experiences, and nationalities. The current Board of Management that was reconstituted in 2021 meets regularly and approves overall budgetary goals, targets, practices, and policies.

Monitoring of the day-to-day implementation of projects is overseen by the Internal Operations Committee (IOC) which is comprised of all the heads of departments in Loreto Rumbek together with the Director. The IOC meets weekly and the department heads give reports and updates on the progress of activities in their respective departments. The daily administration of Loreto Rumbek programmes is overseen by the Director of Loreto Programmes in South Sudan, in collaboration with the Operations Manager.

Loreto Rumbek has a Finance Committee based in Ireland which audits all our accounts. In Loreto Rumbek itself a Finance Officer is in place and is responsible for all financial matters in the compound. These reports and the SAGE backup are sent to the auditors and Treasurer in Loreto Dublin. The Finance Officer also liaises on a weekly basis with the Finance Manager in Loreto Ireland regarding bank reconciliations. The Finance Officer reports to the Director of Loreto Rumbek on a weekly basis.



IOC members with Sr Barbara (far right), one of the Trustees visiting from Ireland

## Loreto Girls Secondary School



Photo: Secondary School Girls at Assembly

***“I thought 2021 would be another challenging year because of the time we lost out of school in 2020 due to the lockdown. I thank my teachers for going the extra mile to enable us catch up with studies. I am enjoying learning at Loreto and I am also happy that I got promoted to the next class. we are now covering both Form 1 and Form 2 work at the same time which means that everyone in the compound is always be busy. I make sure that I go for sports in the evenings to relieve some stress.”***

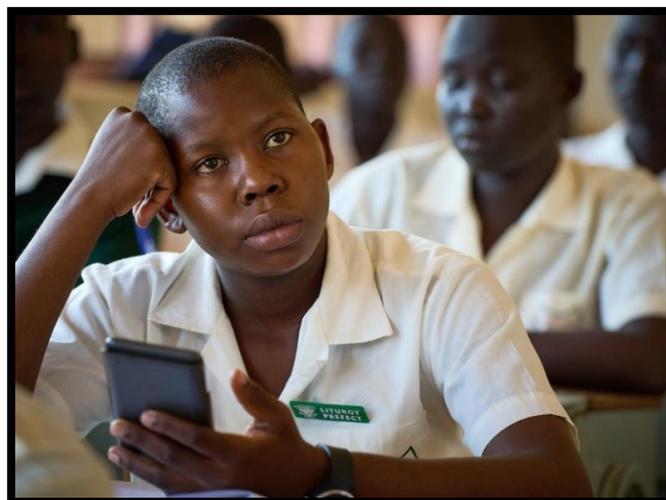
*Anhiak Majok, Senior Two student\_ Loreto Girls Secondary School*

## About Loreto Girls Secondary

Loreto Girls Secondary School is one of the premier education centres in South Sudan with a strong reputation for girl-child education and protection. For the past 13 years, young South Sudanese women have had the chance to live and learn in a Christian centred environment that provides them with the safety they need to learn in a country where economic and social challenges, as well as conflict are the hallmark of everyday life. Students from Loreto Girls Secondary school have been performing exceptionally well in their national examinations, with Loreto School being the third best in South Sudan, recording an average score of 88.3% in the examination results of 2021 and a 100% pass rate for all candidates. Loreto Girls Secondary School also produced 7 out of the top 10 students in Lakes State.

Having resumed learning after almost a full year away from school in 2020 due to COVID-19, Loreto Girls Secondary School welcomed back students in May 2021 after the government of South Sudan lifted restrictions on school closures. A total of 340 students were enrolled across all the classes including Transition Year and Senior 1. For the new students in Senior 1 and Transition Year, this is the first time for most of them to be in a boarding school setting. They were welcomed into the school and integrated into their various school families, where students in upper classes mentor and provide emotional support to help them fit better and adapt into the school system. The 105 new students in these classes were drawn from across South Sudan, keeping up with the school's philosophy of cultural integration to promote peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

Teaching and learning form part of everyday life for students and teachers in the school. Students are encouraged to participate in class and extracurricular activities to foster their academic, physical, emotional, and personal development. This year was also unique as students had a great deal of academic work to cover, given that they missed out a lot when schools were closed in 2020. Students and teachers showed their commitment to learning as they adapted well to the demands of the new school system. Out of class, the girls participated in sports and other activities which enabled them to bond and helped them to integrate and recover from the challenges that they faced at home, including conflict and hunger.



## Extra-Curricular Activities

These formed an integral part in the healing and reintegration of students back into the school system having been away from school for about a whole year. While Loreto is able to provide the students with protection when they are in school, outside the school the situation is quite different. While South Sudan's legal marital consent age is 18, according to the UN Children's agency (UNICEF), South Sudan has the seventh highest prevalence of child marriage in the world. About 53% of girls in the country are married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and 9% marry before reaching age 15. The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 crisis made this situation worse.

During public events organised by Government and Non-Government organisations the girls are invited to perform and share their experiences. One popular medium that the girls enjoy is through poetry.



*Photo: Students practising their poetry to share at a conference on 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.*

Club activities including Peace Club and Drama and Entertainment Club provided avenues for students to express themselves and heal from the experiences that they had encountered during this period.

In these club's students also learn to share their cultures with one another. South Sudan has sixty-four different tribal groups. In sports the students enjoy opportunities to play against other schools and learn how to accept winning and also losing!



*Photo: Students perform a cultural dance.*



*Photo: Student Prefects, ensuring the smooth running of School activities*

## Staff

Loreto School teaching staff provided exceptional support and cooperation this year. The teachers coped extremely well with a demanding schedule and having to spend additional time tutoring students, most of who were unable to study while at home. Despite the challenge of availability of adequately qualified teachers in South Sudan, Loreto Girls Secondary School always endeavours to attract the most qualified and experienced teachers in order to maintain the quality of learning that students receive.

The teaching staff, consisting of 7 female and 8 male members are proud to be associated with having produced the third best school performance in South Sudan in the 2020/2021 national examinations as well as 7 of the top 10 students in the state for the same exam. Their efforts were well celebrated this year when Loreto- Rumbek celebrated its's first ever teacher's day commemoration. Together with other staff members, the teachers participated in team building activities, shared their experiences of being teachers and also encouraged each other as they continue on this journey of imparting skills to students to help shape the future of South Sudan.



Photo: Secondary School staff under the leadership of Mrs Ruth Njuguna (centre)

## Graduate class of 2021

41 students in Senior 4 graduated and attained a mean score of 88.3% in their secondary school national examinations. These students had resumed learning for the second term in October 2020 following the Government closure of all schools in March 2020 due to uncertainties caused by COVID-19. After the Christmas break, the students embarked on revision for their national exams which they sat in March 2021.

This group of students demonstrated their courage and resolve to complete their secondary school education despite the challenges that they had faced at home and in the community over the last four years of their academic life. The good results that they were able to achieve enabled many of the former students to be enrolled into the Loreto Internship Programme, while others pursued other professional courses and other endeavours in colleges, universities or in business. So far, a total of 290 students have graduated from Loreto Girls Secondary School.



*Photo: Loreto Girls Secondary School candidate class of year 2020.*

## New Intake

Young female students who sat their national primary school examinations for the year 2020 in South Sudan had the opportunity to join Loreto Girls Secondary School. Applications from students all over South Sudan were accepted, of which 361 potential students sat the entrance assessment and subsequent interview in the four examination centres (Juba, Wau, Yambio and Rumbek). 105 students were successful for this year with 70 having straight admission into Senior 1 and 35 being admitted into Transition Class. The Transition Class is an intermediary class which enables weaker students improve on their core subjects before they are deemed qualified enough to join in the Senior 1 Class.



*Photo: Applicants sit for the entrance assessment.*

## Loreto Primary School



***“I am happy that we are now back to school doing our normal class activities and getting enough food, stationery and medication here at Loreto. These have helped me to concentrate on studies and focus building a better future for my family and community.”***

*Teresa Amakou, P7 Student at Loreto Primary School*

### About Loreto Primary School

Loreto Primary School admitted its first group of students in 2010, following requests by the community to have a learning centre for the young children close to their homes. Loreto Primary School has since grown over the last eleven years, accommodating students from kindergarten to Primary 8 Class. Students from a radius of about five kilometres from Loreto walk to the school daily for two separate programmes, a morning school and an afternoon school. This ensures that students who are not able to attend school in the morning have the chance to access school in the afternoon and vice versa. The school has been able to grow and currently has a total student population of 1,388 enrolled in 2021. The school runs various programmes meant to attract and retain students in school.

The School Feeding Programme is a core activity implemented in the Primary School outside of learning and is also a major draw for students in school. Students benefit from one daily

meal in either of the schools. This has been a key component in keeping the pupils energised in class, as well as reducing levels of students dropping out of school. The children are able to make use and benefit from access to clean water for handwashing, as well as sanitary facilities through the availability of toilets. In addition to these, the students also benefit from weekly health education sessions which are facilitated by staff from the Mary Ward Primary Health Care Centre (PHCC).

The PHCC also provides daily access to healthcare for students. In the local community, the uptake of modern medicine still remains low, but the work of the clinic has proved to be helpful for students to remain in school. Primary school pupils, as well as their secondary school counterparts, comprise the biggest percentage of beneficiaries who access the PHCC. This has helped in reducing absenteeism among students particularly during periods of high malaria infections.

### **Students – Morning and Afternoon Schools**

Primary school enrolments were highest this year in Loreto Primary School's history. The enrolment was an 11% increase from 1,236 students enrolled in 2020. The 2020 student enrolment for both schools was 795 (454 boys and 341 girls) in the morning school and 593 (325 boys and 268 girls) in the evening school, the general distribution of boys to girls was 54.8% boys and 45.1% girls. The enrolment of students was a reflection of the uptake of education among community members. Following the closure of primary schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a risk of losing students due to various factors hence a high number of drop out cases in the school. However, upon re-opening, Loreto primary school recorded 98% re-admission of students, while 100% of the students who had registered to sit their national examinations returned to school and sat their exams.



*Photo: Loreto Primary School Students walking to school.*

## Quality Education – Teacher Training

The teacher training programme and capacity building of the current teaching staff continues to be implemented in the school. The quality of teachers in Rumbek and in South Sudan still remains low and falls below international standards to provide the standards of education that Loreto demands. Our teacher training programme for local teachers both at Loreto Primary School and in surrounding schools continues to be implemented in order to improve the quality of education provided, as well as the quality of students produced through the school. The teacher training has been complemented by three qualified East African teachers who have also been teaching at the school in the efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school. A total of twenty- two teachers benefited from the programme in 2022.

## Graduation

The graduating class of 2020 produced the best graduates for that examination year in the whole of Lakes State. In that class, there were a total of 62 students (44 boys and 18 girls) who had resumed their studies in October 2020 following closure of schools in March of the same year. In the local culture, girls have an additional burden at home, where they help their parents in taking care of their younger siblings and the house chores, including fetching water and firewood over long distances, which interfere with their ability to study at home unlike their male colleagues. In order to provide these disadvantaged students with an equal opportunity during the examinations, Loreto invited female students in candidate classes to live, study, and learn in the boarding section of Loreto Girls Secondary School. This enabled the female students prepare, revise, achieve a 100% pass, and considerably improve their chances of joining a secondary school.



Photo: Loreto Primary School graduate class of 2020.

## New Intake

A total of 179 new students were admitted to Loreto Primary School in the year 2021. These new students consisted of 99 boys and 80 girls, most of whom are drawn from the surrounding community. Their parents have made an explicit commitment to ensure that these children will be facilitated with all the family support possible to ensure that they do not drop out of school. The high demand by students wishing to enrol in the school was attributed to the quality of education provided, the safe learning environment, the school feeding programme, and medical support offered by the PHCC.

## Activities – Extra Curricular

Students at Loreto Primary School are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities as part of the holistic learning programme. These activities include students' participation in arts and crafts, sports events, drama, dance, and debates. These activities enabled the students to have a reprieve from stressors which they face in their homes and in school, hence contributing to their personal wellbeing and supporting their academic work in class. The arts and crafts especially helped the pupils to express themselves and their understanding of their environment, as well as what they admire the most in their culture. In an exhibition held in October students had the opportunity to showcase some of their talents.



Photo: *Display by students during the Primary school arts and crafts exhibition.*

## Loreto Parent Teacher Association

The Loreto Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for 2021 was constituted to represent parents in the decision-making process of the School. This has immensely improved the general management of the school, as well as making decisions that would improve the general management and sustainability of Loreto going into the future. The PTA leadership consists of seven members, including three men and four women. The group meets once a month and once a term they facilitate the meeting of all parents with the School Administration. As the PTA continues to be grow, they are becoming more proactive in the affairs of the school and also in encouraging the other parents in taking up and implementing resolutions that have been passed by the Association.



Photo: Primary PTA committee with the School Administration



*A parent contributes her views during a past PTA meeting.*

## Mary Ward Primary Health Care Centre.

Mary Ward Primary Health Care Centre (PHCC) was established in 2016. Initially set up to look after Loreto Secondary School students the Clinic extended its remit to treat simple ailments for our Primary School students. In the year 2019, the facility was inaugurated as a Primary Health Care Centre and currently has a work force of six nurses, eight nursing assistants, and six casual staff. It is now able to provide additional services, including medical consultations, simple laboratory tests, and pharmaceutical services. The PHCC was an important contributor to provision of medical services locally in the year 2020, providing over 33,000 consultations for community members during the pandemic year. This year it conducted around 35,000 consultations ranging across different ages and gender.

### Student Services

Boarding Secondary School students account for approximately 10% of the total number of consultations provided by the facility. This essential service enables them to stay in school and actively participate in the learning process. When unwell, the students have full access to the Clinic where they are diagnosed and provided with treatment for the identified illness. This is done at no extra charge and provides the students with prompt and essential healthcare which prevents further escalation of the illnesses and therefore ensures that they do not miss any classes. Parents are especially grateful for these services provided to their children as it gives them peace of mind that if their child becomes sick at school their health is well taken care of. This is a contributing factor in reducing family stress.



Photo: Secondary School student being attended to at Mary Ward PHCC

Day schooling primary students also have access to the health services provided at the PHCC. In the year 2021, consultations offered to primary students constituted about 25% of the total number of medical consultations with over 75% of students visiting the facility at least once in the year. The most common illnesses diagnosed among the student's included malaria, skin infections, and flus.



Photo: Primary students registering at the Clinic

## Twins' Support Programme

The Twins' Support Programme has proven to be an important element in the improvement of health of twin children from vulnerable households by reducing their likelihood of getting ill and even losing their lives. A common belief in the community is that when mothers give birth to twin children then one or both of the children will have to end up losing their lives. The reality however is that the capacity of the mothers is low and that most of the time the mothers are unable to cater for both babies either due to inadequate diet for her to produce enough milk or inaccessibility to health facilities for quick and prompt treatment of the children including access to vaccinations.

Mary Ward PHCC Twins' Support Programme has this year enrolled and supported thirty-one sets of twins who have benefited from health checks, vaccinations, and additional food support for their nutrition. The mothers of these babies were not left behind, but instead participated in weekly health education trainings where they learnt about various topics, including

vaccinations, proper nutrition, hygiene, and early child nutrition. The health education has been helpful in debunking myths about the care and lives of twin babies and therefore helped in fostering their survival and well-being.



Photo: Mother and her twins

## **Nutrition Programme**

This component has been an integral programme implemented by the PHCC. The programme, which mostly targets children under age 5, the most vulnerable members of the community, supports them to access, food, medication, and vaccinations to help them overcome their vulnerability and have a chance of survival. The nutrition programme has been in operation for the past 4 years and was initiated as a result of extreme hunger that affected the community in that year leading to the death of several children.

Currently, the programme provides over 60,000 meals annually to about 400 beneficiaries, including children in the programme, their younger siblings, and their caregivers. This year, the programme supported fewer than the projected number of beneficiaries due to the suspension of the programme and dedication of the clinic to boarding students and community

members due to COVID-19. In 2021 there were also improved harvests following sufficient rains, coupled by relative peace and calm in the community which enabled community members to focus on their farming.



*Photo: A caregiver feeds her child at the Mary Ward Nutrition Centre.*

## Outreach

During this period of the pandemic, the provision of health education outside of Loreto revealed the knowledge gap that existed in the community. It also showed how the regular transmission of this knowledge has helped this community to change its attitude towards the uptake of modern medicine. The outreach by Mary Ward PHCC to the community was able to make access to health care easier as the nursing team drove into the remote parts of the community and prioritised reaching out to the elderly, women, and those who are unable to walk the long distance to a health facility.

In South Sudan, it is estimated that less than 20% of the population lives within a radius of 5 km of a health facility. To access the facility most of the community members, have to walk, due to the lack of a functional public transportation system. The outreach activities provided the community members with a mobile clinic which reached to 10 rural communities providing health checks, tests, and dispensing medicine for confirmed cases of infection.



Photo: Mary Ward PHCC staff dispense medicine to community members from the back of a mobile dispensary, a Land cruiser in a remote community.

## Health Education Programmes

The health education provided by the PHCC does not only focus on parents and caregivers who come to the various programmes, but also provides education to students and staff in the Loreto compound. Students in both the Primary and Secondary School benefit from weekly sessions where various relevant topics are discussed depending on the participant group. A total of 1,388 students in primary school and 340 students in secondary participated in the health education meetings.

In addition to the students, community members represented by over seventy-five community members learnt about topics like personal hygiene, nutrition, disease prevention, and early diagnosis. The health education was facilitated by a nurse who has a good contextual understanding of the cultural norms in order to facilitate proper understanding of the topics of discussion, without the risk or causing conflict or misunderstanding among the different participant groups.



Photo: Community members during one of the health education sessions at Mary Ward PHCC

## Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a common illness in Maker Kuei community. Culturally, epilepsy is believed to be a spiritual disorder where someone who wishes you ill sends evil spirits to attack you. Almost every family knows of a member, neighbour or distance relative who is affected. Epileptic members of the community therefore face stigma, isolation, and neglect particularly for the older members of the society or young children. In 2021, Mary Ward PHCC established the Epilepsy Support Programme to help members of the community with epilepsy to access medication. The programme has so far supported eleven community members and three of our Primary School pupils who access medication and healthcare at the PHCC. The beneficiaries are grateful for the support they receive and they are reporting longer times without experiencing fits. This has enabled them carry out other tasks and look for jobs to sustain themselves.

## Vaccination Programme

The Vaccination Programme targeted children under the age 5 in the local community, reaching ten villages in the year 2021. The programme which administers government approved vaccines has achieved success in the promotion of immunity against preventable illnesses in South Sudan, hence greatly improving the chances of survival for children into adulthood. This year, a total of 3,307 children were vaccinated through the programme implemented by the PHCC. Of these, 1,493 completed all the doses of vaccines recommended by the Ministry of Health. Caregivers whose children were able to complete the course of medication provided by the PHCC were incentivised with a baby kit and soap to help them take care of their children. The baby kits contained clothes, as well as bed sheets and shawls, which are normally too costly for families to afford.

## Covid-19 Vaccination

Mary Ward PHCC was identified as one of the eighteen Covid-19 testing and education centres in the district. Since the vaccine was rolled out in South Sudan last June, 175 staff members (representing 97% of those employed in Loreto) have been fully vaccinated. It is an indication that the health education has been having great influence on the community's uptake, especially when compared to the less than 1% of the total South Sudan population taking up the vaccine despite its availability in some cases.



Photo: Covid-19 Vaccinations at Mary Ward PHCC

## Hepatitis Programme

Hepatitis infections continue to be diagnosed in our community despite the continued efforts that are being made to contain it. It is estimated that about 20% of the population has mild infection. While the number of severe infections may be low, risk of transmission remains high. In 2021, 120 of Loreto staff members received vaccinations for the disease while four staff were enabled to obtain treatment. The medical support provided was able to avert cases of severe infections or hospitalisations.



Photo: Healthcare in the village

## Loreto School Feeding Programme

The Loreto School Feeding Programme provides in-school feeding for school children, as well as malnourished children enrolled in a Nutrition Feeding Programme. The programme also provides take-home rations for vulnerable households whose members provide casual labour in the Loreto compound. The in-school feeding promotes school attendance, learning, and improvement of academic performance of school children by reducing short-term hunger and malnutrition that impedes learning. It also increases the attractiveness of the school to children, which results in greater attendance, increased participation, higher test scores, better cognitive development, and improved overall health. The take-home rations help improve access to food for children in vulnerable households, where average daily food consumption is well below the recommended level.



Photo: Loreto Primary School Students receive their school meals

## Primary School Feeding Programme

Meals provided at Loreto Primary School are a key incentive for school attendance and active student's participation in class. The daily meal provided to students gives them an assurance of having something to eat on each school days, despite the prevailing conditions at home. Among other factors, school feeding was attributed to 98% daily student attendance in school and less than 1% dropouts in 2021. This year over 250,000 meals have been provided to students, teachers and staff through the school feeding programme at the Primary School.

Through the support of donors, Loreto has been able to offer a meal each day of school to the participating primary school pupils and ensure continuity of their learning and feeding.

### Secondary School Feeding

340 students enrolled in Loreto Girls' Secondary School are provided with daily meals in school through the School Feeding Programme. This year, the students who have been in school for 42 weeks benefitted from three daily meals due to the boarding nature of the school. These students were able to stay in school and recover physical as well as psychologically from the challenges that they faced while at home.

Hunger remains a real threat in the community, but when the students can access daily meals, they achieve some peace of mind which enables them to concentrate on their schoolwork. Approximately 252,000 meals were provided in the secondary school area this year covering the meals given to students, resident and non-resident staff, as well as teachers. The boarding section is supported through this programme because it protects the girls from challenges relating to forced/arranged marriages, as well as heavy household duties/burdens. Without these challenges dragging them back, the young women stand a better chance of pursuing their education to completion.



Photo: *Secondary School Students at a Mealtime*

## Feeding at Mary Ward PHCC

Due to ongoing food security crisis in the community, younger children often carry the burden of having to adapt to decisions made by adults, such as skipping meals and/or reducing the number and types of meals eaten in a day and exposing them to extreme vulnerability to malnutrition and wasting. Meals at the PHCC are provided through the Nutrition Programme, the Vulnerable People Support Programme, as well as the Twins' Support Programme. These programmes are meant to provide simple but nutritious meals to the beneficiaries, most of whom suffer from malnutrition or nutrition related illnesses. The beneficiaries of these programmes receive two daily meals, in addition to take home rations which are meant to complement their feeding at home and at the same time foster their recovery to regain good health.

In 2021, approximately 60,000 meals were prepared and given out to approximately 400 beneficiaries. The programme has been extremely successful in negating the effects of malnutrition, as well as fostering recovery and healing of the children enrolled. Most of the children are discharged within three months of beginning the programme, having shown significant improvement of their health. Those that do not show satisfactory improvement are continued in the next phase of the programme, where they get to continue benefiting from the nutritional and medical support.



Photo: Vegetables grown in the garden are added to provide nutritious meals

## Community Outreach

This provides take home rations to about one hundred vulnerable households to enable them have access to daily meals in spite of the prevailing weather and food shortages. It targets local people working as casual labourers in the Loreto compound. This approach guarantees children at least two meals a day and it helps to narrow the hunger gaps between children from food insecure households. It has also helped in boosting food consumption by vulnerable families by incentivising them to regularly send children to school and avoid engaging them in the negative coping mechanisms, such as taking children out of school to search for food or income as a source of labour. The support provided was the equivalent of approximately 150,000 meals, supporting about 100 families with an average of six members each. These were provided in the form of maize, beans, sugar, salt, and cooking oil. Soap is also provided.



Photo: Staff member receiving food for the family

## Meals for All Staff Members

Whether a staff member comes from the village as a worker or is a resident member of staff all are welcome to share the food in the compound. All staff receive the same food as the students. Resident staff receive three meals a day, while casual workers and those coming from home receive two meals a day. Providing food for the staff ensures they have the energy for work while also saving on time in the preparation of food. Supporting staff in food amounts to over 100,000 additional meals a year.



Photo: Cooking over 3,000 meals a day

## Agriculture – Care of the Earth

2021 was a positive year in the school farm, even though the rains started about one month late. Farming in the school farm, as well as in the community, took place in earnest as community members took part in cultivation and planting in the school gardens. In this time planting of the traditional crops, including maize, sorghum and groundnuts was done in May and harvesting was done in beginning of September and into October. This year, the relative peace in the community meant that families paid more attention to their farms, tilled more land, and were able to weed and harvest adequately as displacements due to conflict were minimised. In the Loreto compound, maize and ground nuts were the main seasonal plants grown. This was in addition to the vegetables which are planted under irrigation all year round. The total harvest this year was 253 bags of groundnuts from the school farm. The dried groundnuts are stored in the school stores where they are consumed as needed in supplementation of the School Feeding Programme.



*Photo: Happy students with freshly harvested maize cobs from the school farm.*



*Photo: School family plucking the groundnuts that they have harvested*

## Tree Planting

Tree planting, a core component in the care of our environment, was also carried out in 2021. The trees planted are meant to replenish the ones that are continually cut down in the community for firewood, charcoal, and construction purposes. The planting of fruit trees by students and staff in the community is also a way of improving food availability and diversification of household diets. This year, about 150 fruit and non-fruit trees were planted within the Loreto compound and outside in the community.



Photo: *Tree planting outside the Loreto compound*

## Piggery project

The piggery project at Loreto went a notch higher this year, as the school's pigsty was redesigned. From a mere five pigs in 2020, the pig's population has grown to sixty-four. Pork is becoming increasingly popular among both students and staff. This project has contributed towards a reduction in the food costs incurred annually, as well as providing students practical insight about animal husbandry, management, anatomy, and among other topics.



Photo: *Newly born piglets at the pigsty*

## Water

A new 40,000 litres water tower was commissioned in the Secondary School area this year. The additional water will provide sustainability in the availability of water as it complements the existing 20,000 litre water reservoir. As the student population increased water needs in the compound have grown. The new water tower, which consists of a steel tank, will provide a longer-term solution for the plastic water tanks which are prone to breakages. With no town water system female students have a long journey each day carrying water to their homes. One popular point for all students in the school are the water taps!



Photo: Primary Student enjoying the water

## Development

### Construction of New Female Accommodation Block

After going through the education system, graduates of Loreto Girls' Secondary School are finding their way back as professional staff members. Currently, three staff members working in administration, health, and teaching have joined the list of former students working in the compound. To accommodate the increasing number of these female staff members, a new accommodation block was constructed to provide adequate and secure accommodation. This newly constructed block contains six self-contained rooms which are already in use. With the availability of this block, Loreto can provide more comfortable accommodation to ensure that the staff are able to provide quality services in the various departments in which they work.



Photo: The new female staff accommodation block

### Solar Power

Solar power has provided a reliable source of energy for lighting and powering electric equipment. The systems provide clean and low-cost electricity in a context where there is no connection to a national power grid. As the demand for electricity grows and new equipment demand more power, it is necessary to upgrade the existing systems. This year, a new system was installed in the convent, which has been relying on the secondary school system for its electricity needs. This shared system led to frequent power losses which could affect the boarding students who study at night. To curb this the school uses a back-up generator which complements the solar system. The generator however has high running costs in terms of servicing and fuel. The new solar system has reduced the reliance on the back-up generator system while at the same time ensuring that there is constant availability of electricity in both

the Secondary School and in the convent area. Solar was also installed in the intern's accommodation block. This unit enabled 34 young women enrolled in the Loreto Professional Internship Programme to have access to a sustainable power source for their lighting.

## Vocational Programme

Loreto Rumbek trained community members in the areas of tailoring and adult literacy. The project mostly targets young women who have not had a chance for any formal education. The women learn how to make and mend clothes by hand or using simple sewing machines. In addition, they attend adult literacy classes where they learn simple arithmetic, reading, and writing in Dinka and English. Those that have benefited from this project in being able to do simple tasks such as counting money, recognizing letters and numbers, and understanding instructions written by medical personnel on how to administer the medicine to their children. An educated person might take this for granted, but for them it is a life changing opportunity.

The classes take place late afternoon for one to two hours, five days a week. The women can look after their families before or work for pay before attending the training. It also allows them to get home in time to prepare the evening meal. This is important in ensuring that the learners, especially the women benefit from the programme. In 2021 34 learners were registered in the programme.



*Photo: A community member practicing tailoring*

## Professional Internships Programme (PIP)

This programme was established with the aim of developing professional skills of Loreto secondary school graduates. At the beginning it was clear that many of the graduating class required time and support to continue with education opportunities in a protective environment. The PIP has been growing over time and in 2020/2021 the project included some non-Loreto graduates, as well as a few men. The interns are attached to the different departments within Loreto including the Mary Ward Primary Health Care Centre (PHCC), the Loreto Primary School as teacher assistants, the administration office in the Loreto Secondary School, the finance office, the development office, logistics office, the maintenance office, the kitchens, the agricultural sector, and the director's office. The interns gain experience and learn both at the professional and apprentice levels. The interns get an opportunity to learn essential skills such as critical thinking, basic counselling, advanced English, and computing.

The internship programme takes a minimum of one year to a maximum of two years. During this time those in the programme are rotated from one department to another for maximum exposure in different areas. At the beginning of 2021 nine interns went on to university and eight continued into the second year of internship. In 2021 a further 26 young women joined the programme. Currently there are 34 interns in the programme. They are expected to be in the programme for at least 2 years before moving on to pursue third level studies. The interns act as mentors for the Loreto Secondary School girls and provide an example for their parents and the community. The Internship Programme gives the interns with an opportunity to grow and empowers them to make good decisions regarding their future career choices that are relevant to themselves as individuals and for South Sudan as a country.



Photo: *Interns work as Trainee Teachers in the Primary School*

## Memorial Wall



Over the year we have said good-bye to Sr. Redempta Horan. A resident in the Loreto community in Bray, Ireland, Sr. Redempta was an avid fundraiser for our mission in Rumbek. She was often seen in the shops, the market and outside churches with collection boxes. Whenever the Sisters returned for visits to Ireland Sr. Redempta would look forward to hearing how the mission had developed. While never a missionary herself, her heart was for development.

Her motto as a Sister was, “In thee O Lord I have hoped”. We continue to pray that her hope and spirit may be felt in our mission.

May she rest in peace.

### **Moses Marial**



Moses was a dedicated staff member at Loreto having been connected with the mission over the past nine years. He previously worked in Loreto Primary School as a trainee teacher. Attracted to health care, he joined the Internship Programme and worked as a trainee nurse before attending nursing college. He graduated from the Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI) in December 2019. Returning to Loreto, Moses became a full-time nurse in our new Primary Health Care Centre. He was a wonderful man, filled with compassion, gentleness, and a desire to serve his community. Moses passed on in November after a short illness. He is sadly missed by us all.

May he rest in peace.

## Celebration Photos



Congratulations to Sr Orla who was awarded by the Irish President the Distinguished Service Award in the category of Business and Education. This award is given each year to Irish people making a contribution abroad. We congratulate Sr Orla in this great achievement.



**Elizabeth Adak**, class of 2014 and member of our Board of Management. After completing her Secondary School Adak returned to Loreto to be part of the internship programme. With a scholarship for university, Adak followed her dream to study law. She graduated earlier this year with her law degree from Kampala, Uganda. Adak is currently studying for her Bar

Exams. She dreams of continuing to fight for the rights of women in South Sudan.  
Congratulations Adak.



Jennifer Nyilueth, former Head-Girl and graduate of class of 2015. Like Adak, after finishing school Jennifer joined the Internship Programme and experienced different offices and roles in the compound. In 2017 Nyilueth travelled to Nairobi to study teaching and education. She is now a qualified teacher of English and English Literature and has recently joined the Secondary School in Loreto.

Congratulations and welcome to the team Jennifer!

## Hopes for 2022

### Review of goals for 2021

Much of our hopes and desires for 2021 were accomplished:

1. Education – Reaching out to 2,000 learners
2. Feeding Programme - our goal is to prepare 800,000 meals in 2021
3. Health Care - To offer an average of 3,000 consultations per month in the Clinic
4. Agriculture & Environment – ongoing development
5. Spiritual Development and Ongoing Formation - continued development



## Plans and hopes for 2022

As we say good-bye to 2021 we continue to plan and develop for 2022. We are ambitious in our hopes and we trust that all may be achievable.

### 1. Education:

- Continuing to provide education to over 1,800 students in Primary and Secondary Education
- Develop the Arts in the curriculum. Introduction of Art and Music into the curriculums
- Quality Education – ensuring greater quality of teaching in the classrooms
- Intensive English Language courses
- Teacher Training for our trainee teachers
- Mentorship for new staff
- Computer training for staff members to access more online materials and trainings
- Sponsoring ten young men and women in full-time educational studies
- Providing staff to supporting teacher training in other institutions

### 2. Feeding Programme:

- Providing over 800,000 meals per year
- More precise recording of all meals prepared
- Training for kitchen staff on nutrition and good hygiene
- Develop the twin programme further, providing community sensitisation on the stigma around twins
- Identifying and continuing to support the most vulnerable in the community

### 3. Health Care:

- Continue to offer services and consultation to over 3,000 patients each month
- Developing and expanding services in health education to local communities and schools
- Sponsoring fifteen young men and women in their studies of healthcare
- Developing the programme for trainee nurses and clinical staff
- Construct new stores to help in the storage and maintenance of Clinic materials
- Provide a new car for clinic outreach work

### 4. Agriculture and Environment:

- Provide water to three communities, providing them with greater access to clean water
- Tree planting to be promoted by all students in their homes, 1,500 seedlings to be prepared for their distribution.
- Reclaim more land for agricultural use
- Introduce the local staff to new methods of agriculture and planting
- Continue to supply groundnuts and vegetables from the school farm to all departments
- Build stores for agriculture materials and crops when harvested
- Install solar systems for staff houses
- Install more security and night lights in the compound

5. Pastoral and Psycho-Social Development:

- Initiate a care team for staff involved in student affairs and support
- Career guidance training for senior students and interns
- Counselling made available to all Secondary School students who require it
- Ongoing support for students in the catechetical programme
- Retreat days to be organised for different departments
- Ongoing support for students experiencing family trauma and forced and early marriage
- Supporting staff to complete further studies in counselling and psychology
- Celebrating two hundred years of Loreto education, sharing the stories and charism of Teresa Ball and Mary Ward

6. Development and Governance:

- Complete a new strategic plan
- Continue developing policies and practices in compliance with Irish Charity Law
- Renovate old staff houses
- Renovate old classrooms expanding them to provide appropriate space and ventilation
- Expand and renovate toilet blocks in the compound
- Continuing reporting regularly to partners
- Expand the use of the website with more regular updates and videos
- Ongoing formation and training for our interns
- Develop the university scholarship opportunities to ensure a new generation of quality teachers and health-care workers, alongside other expertise.

## Banking and Donations

For more information about our programs, to support the work at Loreto- Rumbek and/or for partnerships, please contact: [director@loretorumbek.ie](mailto:director@loretorumbek.ie) or – visit the Loreto Rumbek Website on [www.loretorumbek.ie](http://www.loretorumbek.ie)

For donations, kindly use the bank details below:

€ - Euro Account

**Name of Bank:** Bank of Ireland (BOI)

**Address of Bank:** College Green, Dublin 2, Ireland

**Account Name:** Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary- Irish Province- Loreto Rumbek

**Account Number:** 60775342

**BIC/SWIFT CODE:** BOFIE2D

**IBAN:** IE76BOFI90001760775342

**Currency:** € Euro

\$ US Dollar Account

**Name of Bank:** AIB

**Address of Bank:** Currency Account Services, Payments Operations, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 1 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2, Ireland

**Account Name:** Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Account No:** 25162304

**Sort Code:** 930067

**BIC:** AIBKIE2D

**IBAN:** IE66AIBK93006725162304

**Currency:** US Dollar \$

Credit Photos by Mr Paul Jeffrey

