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Under Tree Schools is a Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No 1117679
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Dear Supporters

August 2021

Our school has bounced back from its Covid lockdown with a bang!

In the last newsletter we wrote that the school was closed - in a year of lock down for all South Sudan schools -except for the top year, year 8, who were allowed to take the national graduation exams. We have just heard that of the 22 girls who took the final exams, 20 have passed. This is really wonderful news, and a huge credit to the teachers who prepared them for it.

All the 20 are going on to secondary school, to join our 18 pupils from previous years. Under the bursary fund that we set up a few years ago we continue to send funds for their school fees. We hope that this will provide an extra incentive to them to stay at school. Also, several of our girls who went on to secondary school have completed their four years – and have now come back to teach at our school!
So the vision of enabling girls to become eligible for careers is continuing to come to fruition.



The big piece of news is that schools have now been allowed to reopen, girls have registered for the new academic year, and teaching has begun already. And, amazingly, 590 girls have registered this year! This is well over the previous record. We find it hard to understand how they can manage that number of girls. But teachers in South Sudan are nothing if not resourceful and teaching is under full steam.

9th July was the 10th anniversary of the independence of the country of South Sudan. The school had ceremonies to celebrate with the girls marching, carrying flags and singing. We are told by the school that 500 of the girls were involved, all in their school uniforms. There is a short video on the website and here is the link:

<https://www.undertreeschools.org/news.html>

We have been able to assist the school by providing funds for some new sewing machines, so that Rebecca, the sewing teacher can continue to teach the girls this skill. Also, we have sent money to replace the six laptops that Angelo, the IT teacher, needs to teach the girls computing. The last lot of computers we provided were second-hand and they were delivered a good few years ago. So it is not surprising that with constant use, the climate, and the built in obsolescence of computers, they had given up the ghost.

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, the school has asked for hygiene kits for the older girls, so that they do not feel they have to take time off each month. We have sent this money and we hope that this will help the girls at a sensitive time for them.



Other charities are also helping the school. A German charity has taken over from the World Food Programme for free provision of food so that the girls can continue to get a free lunch every day. Another charity has provided equipment to help the effort to keep the school free of Covid. As far as we know the school and its town Malek-Alel are still free of Covid: one of the benefits of being a long way from potential sources of the virus.

We have just funded the buying of a motorbike for the school. It will mean that they do not have to hire cars or motorbikes to get to Aweil, so over time that saving will help pay for itself. We have asked the Headmaster to ensure that it is very carefully looked after, as we can't promise to replace it were it to fail.

We'd like to include here a message from Karin who has been part of the life of Under Tree Schools since its beginning. She continues to be a volunteer for the charity, a link between us and Switzerland.

"I'm very moved by seeing how our school community along with the church community has grown and become stronger through many challenges. One example is the high increase in registrations of many more girls after the Covid lockdown. This is the opposite to the trend in many African settings where girls got drawn away from education to help in flailing businesses or at home. But the school has retained a strong focus in the wider community and everyone has seen what difference education makes, especially with the return of the girls having completed secondary education.

We are more than aware in the many ways that Covid has also affected people here, and receiving donations for our work is more than ever appreciated.

But support can come in lots of different ways, and we would be more than happy to link with new friends, groups, schools and churches to be a bridge between two very different worlds. Trustees are happy to come and talk about life in South Sudan and our school community. So if you think of a friend, a school or any group you have connections with would be interested, please get in touch with Peter Boyling, our administrator:

admin@undertreeschools.org or 07962 976 755 "

We trustees know only too well that all that can be done for the school is only possible because of the generosity of you, the supporters of Under Tree Schools. We thank you again for your continuing interest and support.

Bak, the Headmaster, continues to thank us in every letter he sends us for the funds that we can send him.

We send you our best wishes

The Trustees of the Under Tree Schools Charity