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

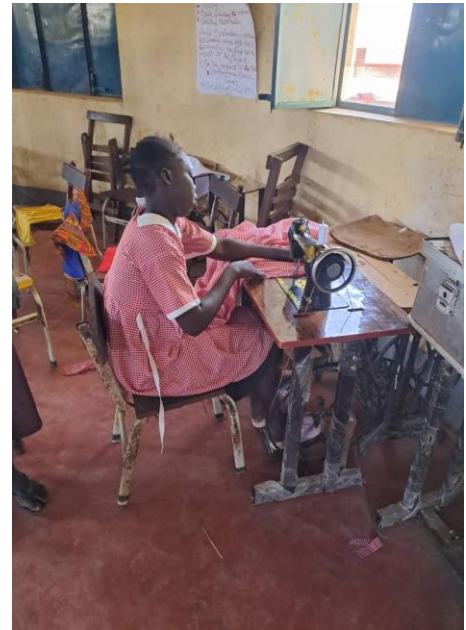
November 2023

Welcome to our latest newsletter about our school for girls in South Sudan.

The school continues to work hard. 366 girls took the end of term internal exams at the end of August. 275 passed – so the school takes the exams seriously. They are now in the middle of the third term of the year.

We ensure that the school can offer a free uniform every year to the girls, as an incentive to mothers to let their girls come to school – they want their girls decently dressed of course. The school has tended to buy fabric in bulk and have dresses made locally.

The last purchase was several years ago, so this summer one of the teachers went off to Uganda with the charity's funds to buy 150 rolls of fabric. Supplies of such things are not available in South Sudan, as the national economy is in a poor state and the borders are closed with Sudan because of its own troubles. So now the girls have their uniform for this year. Apparently, the national government is requiring school uniform to be worn in national examinations, so when the time comes for our 28 year 8 girls to do their leaving examination they will be appropriately kitted out!



Angelo also brought T-Shirts for the school staff.





In the last couple of years, the area of the school was badly affected by floods – you may remember the photos in previous newsletters. This year that did not happen, indeed there has apparently been rather a shortfall of summer rain, and the groundnuts many local people have planted this year will have a limited crop. But heavy storms a few weeks ago brought a lightning strike on the school, which knocked out part of the solar system – and it badly frightened children who were nearby.

It's not only lightning that frightens some of the girls. The high-water levels in the river in the summer bring an unwanted hazard for girls on their way to school – hippopotamuses! We had not heard that this was an operational issue for the school before. But apparently at times of high-water hippos are found around the river, they are very dangerous. Girls needing to cross the river on their daily commute to school are being chased by them! Not an issue that girls in Europe have to contend with.



The school needs its electric light in the dark, so a repair to the solar was needed. A teacher (Angelo, the IT teacher, the same man who went for the uniforms) had to travel to Uganda again to get a new inverter (to convert DC current from the solar panels to AC for the lights). We paid also for lightning conductors on the school admin building and the large hall, to reduce the risk in future.

We send off money for the school for two months at a time. So we have sent money for November and December. This covers wages for the 20 teachers and the 18 non-teaching staff (including the five cooks, the matron, the two herdsmen for the school cattle herd, caretaker, security, the pastor of the school's chapel and others). We also send small amounts of funds for school stationery, food, repairs to the buildings, working costs of the sewing teacher and so on.

This time we have added in money for refreshments (and soap) for the over 70 girls who play regular weekly sports under the guidance of the sports teacher. They play in football and volleyball teams in local leagues and also do athletics. In the 30 plus

degree temperatures they play in, refreshments are important – so they asked for about \$1 (US) per girl per month.

An annual payment we send them at this time of year is for the Christmas meal that the school provides for the community. We understand that about 500 people including children attend the Christmas service at the school's chapel, so we sent \$500 for the purchase of vegetables, flour etc for making a hot meal that they enjoy. This annual event helps to maintain the strong links between the school and the community which are so important in a village community like Malek-Alel.

We cannot do any of these things for the school without the generous donations that you provide to the Under Tree Schools charity. We are very grateful to you for your individual donations, and also for the events that you run in your own community. Recently we were grateful to receive donations from Fishpond Church, the Barnes Summer Fair and a clothes swap event in North London where Caryn Franklin spoke. There will be a UTS stall at St Mary's Barnes Christmas Fair next month.

It would be really useful if you could tell other people about us and encourage them to become a donor. On our website people can make an online donation through the Wonderful organisation that is free for both the donor and the charity to use. And if people would like to make a small regular contribution, we have on the website a Gift Aid declaration that enables us to recover the Gift Aid from the Government.



Thank you all so much for enabling our Under Tree Schools charity to continue to fund this very successful school and community initiative!

We send you our best wishes and wish you a joyful Christmas

*Geoffrey Barnett, Peter Boyling,
Helen Chauncy, Ron Sullam,
Dan Sullam*

The Trustees of the
Under Tree Schools Charity