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Dear Friends

Here is our latest news; we hope it makes you feel as excited as we are!

The headline is that we can now look forward to opening the school in April. Joseph has just returned to Southern Sudan after a summer break back in England. He will be buying the last lot of building materials to complete the three blocks we need before we can use the school. The building work will start again now the rains have stopped and will go on into the spring. He also intends this autumn to appoint the headteacher, and the deputy headteacher who will be the administrator. Then in the new year he and the senior staff want to appoint 6 teachers, as well as experienced teacher to train them, and acquire books and the uniforms for the 300 girls who will be registered.

We plan a grand opening in late April, with some visitors from England and Switzerland. This will be a great way to deepen the ongoing relationship we have established between the school (and Malek town) and our supporters in Europe. After a worrying time this spring when tension rose between North and South Sudan, the area is quiet again, and we hope that will remain the position.

Have we said before that the Under Tree School trustees have agreed with Joseph that we will call the new school the Ayok Anei Under Tree School, after Joseph's grandfather, who was the first teacher in Malek? And we have been delighted to welcome as new trustees, Moira Laffey, Margaret Rudland and Tony Evans who have agreed to join us. All of them are, or until recently have been, very experienced headteachers in England and we are very pleased to have their offer of support in guiding the teaching in the new school and strengthening our network of supporters.

We thank you so much for your generous giving. You have been a real source of encouragement and with your help we are further forward than we thought we would be a year ago. We do need further funds over the Christmas period and in the New Year to buy furniture for the buildings, as well as books and other materials. A few weeks ago we were thinking we needed about an extra £40,000 by April: unfortunately since then the sudden and frightening change in the exchange rate between sterling and the dollar (the currency we mainly use in Southern Sudan) has increased that amount. But Joseph, with his knowledge of the country, will as always seek to get the best result for his buck.

It would then be wonderful to have a regular income to pay for the running costs, if people would consider making a small standing order in our favour. We can supply forms (and they are on our website).

We want to build on our current contacts, by interesting further schools, churches, and other groups, in our project. We can offer them a relationship with a school and community in Africa, and the opportunity to exchange cultural experiences. We need your help here. Could you contact a school or a church for us and give them our details?

We can send promotional material. And for Christmas we have a Christmas card and gift certificates available to buy as Christmas presents, the certificates also work as birthday presents. They come in a range of prices to suit all pockets, as the attached shows. Please get in touch with Karin if you'd like further information.

Also, we are always happy to visit organisations to talk face to face about the project.

Since our last newsletter we held our annual supporters' meeting, on 4th October in Barnes. We were delighted that 40 of our supporters could make it, and we had a good discussion on the way ahead. I attach a copy of the note we made of the meeting.

On behalf of the community in Malek, many thanks!

God's blessings

Karin and Joseph Ayok-Loewenberg

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