

1. Introduction

1.1. Involvement

JRS began working in Yei River County in 2004, following invitations from the Bishop of Yei and the local government authority to assist in rebuilding the county's education sector after two decades of civil war between north and south Sudan.

Many local people formerly in exile in Uganda or Congo, or internally displaced, have now returned to the County, especially since the 2005 peace agreement between the warring sides. JRS's work has therefore centred on helping these returnees, and those who stayed in the area throughout the war years, in their efforts to expand and improve their local education services and opportunities.

JRS has engaged in four main areas of activity: erecting and rehabilitating school infrastructure; improving the skills and resources of teachers, school managers and education officials; implementing affirmative action and peace building initiatives within the school system; and facilitating religious education and community development in parishes of the Catholic Diocese of Yei.

In recent years, particular emphasis has been put on assisting secondary schools, in line with priorities set in JRS's 2007-2010 strategic plan for the region.¹

In 2004, the project began by targeting 10 primary schools and one secondary school. In 2009 the number of targeted schools has grown to 20 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. However, through generic activities such as college scholarships, help in staging county exams, and support for county and payam education officials, the project now in effect assists all 90 primary schools and all 13 secondary schools in the County.

2. Project Description

2.1. Achievements

Category: Primary Education
Objective 1: To improve the infrastructure, learning resources, and teaching and management skills in 19 community primary schools, leading to improved educational opportunities and outcomes for some 11,250 students
<p>Achievements:</p> <p><i>Strategy 1: Improve infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Installed toilet blocks at 2 schools (1x5 stance & 1x4 stance+urinal at Mahad, and 1x3 stance+urinal at Attende) ▪ Renovated temporary classroom structures at 2 schools (Wuluturu + Lomuku) ▪ Installed rainwater collection systems at 6 schools (Ronyi, Jigomoni, Kinji, Immanuel Model,

¹ Jesuit Refugee Service, Eastern Africa Region, 'Strategic Plan 2007-2010', Sep 2006, pp 24ff.

Minyori, St Joseph's)

- Helped the local community at 1 remote area school (Minyori) to construct houses for teachers posted to the school (nearing completion)

Strategy 2: Improve learning resources

- Provided extra seating (12x3 seater desks) for 1 school (Minyori)
- At the start of the school year, provided school attendance registers (291) to teachers in JRS-supported schools to help them keep accurate student records, and counter books (594) to help them prepare schemes of work and lesson plans
- Provided teachers among the 7,000 or so newly arrived Congolese refugees in the Lasu refugee settlement with teaching resources (blackboards, chalk, exercise books, etc) to help them start rudimentary classes, pending development of an education programme by the UNHCR/ACROSS camp managers (unplanned activity)
 - Added a school located near the settlement (Nyori PS), and hosting both local and refugee students, to the list of schools targeted for direct support by the project (bringing the total number to 20)
 - Assisting Caritas Germany and the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference to organise a donation of food and non-food items to the refugees (unplanned activity)
- Provided Yei Prison authorities with teaching resources (blackboard, chalk, exercise books, etc) to help run an adult literacy programme for prisoners and prison staff (unplanned activity)

Strategy 3: Improve teaching and management skills

- Provided teachers and management bodies in JRS-supported schools with ready access to support and advice through the project's field visitation programme
 - Each school was visited at least once a month on average
- Provided the County Education Office (CEO) and the 5 Payam Education Offices (PEO) with a range of material resources to improve their operating capabilities, including computer, printing and duplicating equipment in the case of the CEO, and basic office furniture and stationery in the case of the PEOs
- Achievements in the area of in-service and college-based training for primary school teachers and managers are detailed below in the Training Category (Objective 3)

Category: Secondary Education

Objective 2: To improve the infrastructure, learning resources, and teaching and management skills in 6 community secondary schools, leading to improved educational opportunities and outcomes for some 2,050 students

Achievements:*Strategy 1: Improve infrastructure*

- Installed a toilet block at 1 school (1x5 stance at Yei Girls; a financial contribution was also made to a 1x4 stance block built at the school's boarding dormitories by another NGO)
- Renovated temporary classroom structures at 2 schools (Yei Day, Equatorial College)
- Installed a rainwater collection system installed at 1 school (Yei Girls)

- Sunk 2 boreholes (1 serving St Monica's SS and 1 serving church institutions at Lutaya, including JRS, a primary school, a secondary school, a parish centre, and a pastoral centre)
 - Note: These 2 boreholes were sunk using non-JRS church-sourced funds

Strategy 2: Improve learning resources

- Furnished the recently completed (end-2008) JRS-built science laboratory and second girls dormitory at St Joseph's with 120 lab stools and 20 double-bed bunks respectively
- Provided 2 schools (Equatorial College, Kings College) with extra seating (25x2 seater desks each, with Equatorial also being provided 2 office tables)
- Provided 6 schools with sports and games equipment (eg footballs, netballs, volleyballs, athletic equipment) and agricultural tools and seeds (eg hoes, rakes, axes, pangas, assorted seeds)
- At the start of the school year, provided school attendance registers (49) to teachers in JRS-supported schools to help them keep accurate student records, and counter books (162) to help them prepare schemes of work and lesson plans
- Organised an intensive 2-week holiday coaching programme for S4 students to improve performance in core subjects (eg Maths, Physics, English)
 - 158 S4 students (99M, 59F) from 5 schools enrolled and completed the programme
- Implemented a JRS/CEO school award/student prize programme for top performers in the county's joint secondary exams
 - Prizes were awarded to the top 18 S1 to S3 students (9M, 9F) in the 2008 end-of-year countywide exams, and the top school in the 2008 end-of-year external exams for S4 (UNEB exams)

Strategy 3: Improve teaching and management skills

- Provided teachers and management bodies in JRS-supported schools with ready access to support and advice through the project's field visitation programme
 - Each school was visited at least twice a month on average, except St Monica's at Tore, which due to its remote location was visited only once a month on average
- Provided the County Education Office a range of material resources to improve its operating capabilities, including computer, printing and duplicating equipment
- Achievements in the area of in-service and college-based training for secondary school teachers and managers are detailed below in the Training Category (Objective 3)

Category: Education: Training

Objective 3: To improve the range and quality of professional development opportunities for teachers, school managers and education officials in Yei County, leading to a more competent, confident and qualified workforce

Achievements:

Strategy 1: Provide opportunities to obtain or upgrade professional qualifications

- 26 JRS-sponsored students (16M, 10F) successfully completed their 2-year Certificate in

Primary Teaching at Yei Teacher Training College and have begun taking up teaching positions (2 more are repeating 2nd year)

- This represents a completion rate of 87% (the original number sponsored being 30)
- 30 new students (24M, 6F) were awarded scholarships to start their 1st year of College studies in March
- Provided ongoing support for 12 JRS-sponsored students (10M, 2F) in their final term of a 2-year Diploma in Secondary Education at Muni National Teachers College
 - 15 new students are currently being selected for sponsorship to start their 1st year of College studies in September
- 12 teachers/education officials (10M, 2F) were awarded scholarships to pursue a qualification upgrade via distance education while continuing to work full-time
 - 5 are primary teachers, 5 are secondary teachers, and 2 are County Education Office officials

Strategy 2: Provide opportunities for in-service professional development

- 36 primary teachers (25M, 11F) completed a 2 week professional development course held during the Term 1 school holidays
- 30 secondary teachers (29M, 1F) completed a 2 week professional development course held during the Term 1 school holidays
- 49 head/deputy head teachers (44M, 5F) completed a 3-day course on school management and leadership, with 13 (11M, 2F) from secondary schools and 36 (33M, 3F) from primary schools
 - Note: This course was packaged with a 2-day course on generic and cross-cutting topics in affirmative action and peace building, making a 5-day course altogether
- 25 county exam board members (23M, 2F) completed a 4-day course on exam management principles and practices
 - 2 experts from the Ugandan National Examination Board helped facilitate this course
- 22 county exam board members and school directors' of studies (21M, 1F) participated in one or both of 2x1-day workshops reviewing the new South Sudan secondary curriculum and the county's 2008 joint secondary exam process
 - JRS staff and the County Education Director facilitated these two workshops, which inter alia led to the drafting of a detailed syllabus for each subject. Once finalised, these syllabuses should help teachers introduce the new curriculum, and provide a common academic platform for the county's 2009 joint exams
- Note: the above 1x4 day and 2x1-day workshops were organised by JRS at the request of the County Education Office. They are a substitute for the 2x3-day courses originally planned for county and payam inspectors

Strategy 3: Provide field-based support and advice

- 31 secondary school teachers (28M, 3F) were provided feedback and guidance during 'on-the-job' training carried out in 4 schools (Kings, Equatorial, Yei Day, Daystar) in an intensive follow-up exercise to the abovementioned 2 week professional development course
- In a further follow-up exercise, JRS assisted teachers at 2 schools (Kings and Yei Girls) in conducting a 2-hour career guidance seminar to 96 students at Kings College and over 150

students at Yei Girls.



The Deputy Headteacher of Mahad Primary School teaches a lesson observed by the JRS Yei Primary Education Coordinator, who then gives her feedback, suggestions and ideas afterwards (below).



Category: Affirmative Action and Special Education Needs

Objective 4: To improve the support services available to vulnerable or disadvantaged students, and to female teachers and education officials, leading to a more equitable distribution of opportunities and benefits in education sector development

Achievements:

Strategy 1: Provide services for vulnerable and disadvantaged students

- 137 students (122F, 15M) meeting needs-based criteria are being financially supported to undertake secondary school studies
 - The students are drawn from 9 schools and include 74 continuing students (ie students also sponsored in 2008) and 63 new students
 - The new students include 12 Congolese girls from Lasu refugee settlement, who are being sponsored for S1 studies at Yei Girls
 - The level of sponsorship this year is set at 75% of school fees, except for the Congolese refugee girls, who are being provided full support in view of their particular circumstances
- Issued health kits (sanitary pads, soap) to 228 secondary girls early in Term 1 and 310 girls early in Term 2 to help them avoid disruptions to class attendance

Strategy 2: Improve training and networking opportunities for female teachers and education officials

- 1 untrained female teacher is being sponsored to complete S4 to qualify for entry to primary teacher training college (7 having completed S4 last year, and the overall target being 10 over the two years 2008-09)
- 31 female teachers (4 secondary, 27 primary) completed a 3-day course on issues relating to gender, affirmative action and special education needs (the first course exclusively for women teachers ever run by the project)
- 30 senior women / senior male teachers (14F, 16M) completed a 3-day course on issues relating to gender, affirmative action and special education needs
 - Note: This course was packaged with a 2-day course on issues relating to peace building, child protection and sexual and gender based violence (see Objective 5), making a 5-day course altogether

Strategy 3: Improve general awareness of issues relating to affirmative action

- Information and discussion sessions on issues relating to gender, affirmative action and special education needs were also included in most other courses run by the project (see Objective 3), reaching:
 - 49 head and deputy head teachers during 2x5-day professional development courses
 - 30 secondary teachers during a 1x2-week professional development course
 - 36 primary teachers during a 1x2-week professional development course
- 47 parents at Mahad PS (26F, 21M) participated in a JRS-facilitated 1-day seminar on gender and girls education issues
 - This seminar (an unplanned activity) was initiated by the school in response to the above-mentioned course for senior female and senior male teachers

Category: Peace Building

Objective 5: To improve knowledge of principles and practices relating to peace building – including human rights, democratic principles, the nature of good governance, and non-violent methods of conflict resolution – and how they might be applied in school and local community settings

Achievements:

- 30 senior women / senior male teachers (14F, 16M) completed a 2-day course on issues in peace building (eg election and referendum procedures, codes of conduct during elections), child protection (focusing on the GoSS/UNICEF 'Child Friendly Schools' campaign), and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV)
 - Note: This course was packaged with a 3-day course on issues relating to gender, affirmative action and special education needs (see Objective 4), making a 5-day course altogether
- 49 head/deputy head teachers (44M, 5F) completed a 2-day course on issues relating to peace building, child protection and SGBV
 - Note: This course was packaged with a 3-day course on school management and leadership (see Objective 3), making a 5-day course altogether
- Information and discussion sessions on generic issues in peace building, child protection and SGBV were also included in most other courses run by the project (see Objectives 3 & 4), reaching:
 - 30 secondary teachers during their 1x2-week professional development course
 - 36 primary teachers during their 1x2-week professional development course

Category: Pastoral, Social Services and Community Development

Objective 6: To improve the opportunities and resources for religious education and community development in parishes of the Catholic Diocese of Yei, and the visitation and accompaniment services provided to prisoners and the sick, leading to a growth in local church leadership skills, self-help capabilities, and pastoral accompaniment activity

Achievements:*Strategy 1: Improve community infrastructure*

- Construction of a parish hall/community centre at Ombasi is progressing well, and should be completed by late August

Strategy 2: Improve religious knowledge, leadership skills and self-help resources in parish-based communities

- 6 JRS-sponsored parish leaders (3M, 3F) successfully completed a 1-month Lumko training course in Uganda
- 559 local parish community leaders (326M, 233F) – catechists, youth leaders, Catholic Action members, etc – participated in courses of 4-6 days on religious/church formation and development
 - 10 courses in all were conducted, in 6 different parishes (Christ the King, Lutaya, Ombasi, Lasu, Kajo Keji, and Tore), with Lumko catechetical materials being the main teaching resource
 - Approximately 15 Congolese catechists and other church leaders from the Lasu refugee settlement participated in the course run in Lasu parish
 - Follow-up reports from the parishes indicate that the courses have inspired a number of

local leaders to organize their own training programs

- 321 women completed ½ day to 1 day seminars for women's groups in bread, soap and/or Vaseline-making as self-help / income-generating activities
 - 15 seminars in all were conducted, in various localities, including for Congolese women in the Lasu refugee settlement
 - Follow-up indicates that while some groups are struggling, others are making impressive progress (eg the Ombasi bread and soap making group, the Daniel Comboni bread making group, and the Dodonha bread, soap making and grinding mill group)

Strategy 3: Improve catechetical and leadership training resources and equipment

- Ongoing progress is being made in translating, typing, producing and distributing various catechetical resources (mainly Lumko materials), as well as other church material (eg the Children's Bible and Sunday Missal in Bari)
- Resources distributed to help establish income-generating projects include 4 bread making ovens, 14 wooden forms for soap making, and various quantities of start-up ingredients (eg cooking oil, baking flour, salt, yeast, sugar, chemicals)
- Resources distributed to help support parish communities include 6 church benches plus numerous other items (eg baskets, basins, cups, plates, saucepans, ladles, tarpaulins)

Strategy 4: Provide a visitation/accompaniment service for prisoners and the sick

- Responsibility for conducting weekly prayer meetings in Yei Prison and Malteser Health Centre was passed in February to catechists from Christ the King parish
 - The service is continuing well, with occasional support being provided by the parish priest and JRS pastoral coordinator.



Congolese primary school learners in Nyori Refugee Camp, Lasu, Yei County