



# Serving those who live with HIV

## IN THIS ISSUE ►

**The Star Support Group helps HIV patients**

*Page 2 and 3*

**Expanding the Catholic university**

*Page 4*

**Lives saved spotlight: Eman Gabriel Kuku**

*Page 3*

**Protecting at-risk mothers and babies**

*Page 5*



## A tailor-made future for young HIV patients

**T**he buzzing patter of 20 sewing machines is a welcome sound in a region where electric power is scarce and opportunity even scarcer. Here, in a large, poorly-lit room, students are working on a pattern.

Above the low din are sounds of laughter and chatter—

the sounds of friendships sprung from sharing a common goal: to start a small tailoring business.

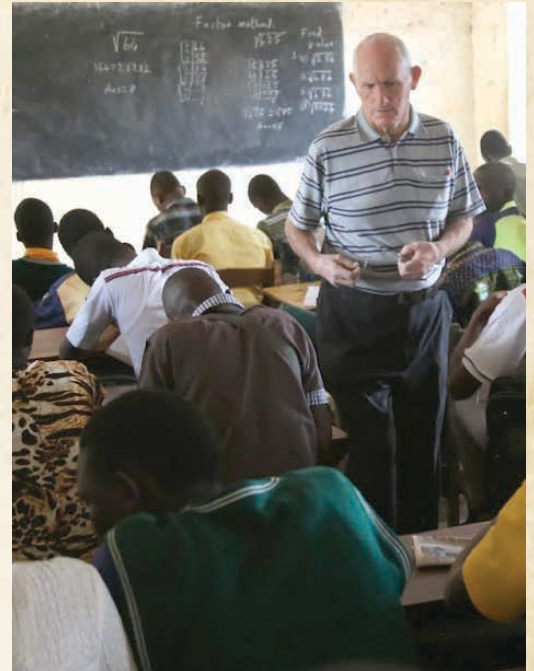
“They are talking about their children. The business they will start. Giving each other advice,” says Br. Denis Reardon, a missionary from Ireland who came to Yambio 20 years ago and currently serves as the Acting Director for The

Congregation of Christian Brothers’ Star Support Group. “These friendships are essential to being happy and successful at whatever they choose to do.”

**The students face difficulties beyond the typical deprivations of South Sudan**—lack of food security, fresh water, and infrastructure. These 20 young tailors all have HIV/

**“Please tell all of the kind supporters of Sudan Relief Fund that they have not only saved lives, but that they have given survivors independence and concrete reasons for hope!”** said Br. Denis.





AIDS, a life-threatening condition that poses acute challenges in a nation without adequate health care.

The Star Support Group helps give them a future.

“First, we heal by providing anti-retroviral drugs through our pharmacy. Second, we support through counseling those who have suffered trauma, and we educate the children of those living with

HIV and orphans whose parents have died from the disease,” said Br. Denis. “Finally, we help our members become self-sufficient through the tailoring program and other efforts.”

Since 2013, the Sudan Relief Fund community of donors has provided school fees, uniforms, and a daily meal for some 218 HIV positive orphans and

children whose parents have HIV. And 115 persons living with HIV have begun small businesses as tailors, farmers, and grocers with the help of the Star Support microloan program. Participants can open a savings account, acquire a small loan to start the business, and receive training in basic business skills.

## LIVES SAVED SPOTLIGHT:

### Eman Gabriel Kuku

**T**his is a picture of Eman Gabriel Kuku. She is 2 years old, and from Dabakaya, Sudan. One morning her father awoke and heard her crying a strange, panicked-sounding cry. **To his horror, he found her completely paralyzed**—and no one at the local clinics could help.

Eman was finally referred to Mother of Mercy Hospital, where Dr. Tom Catena and his staff immediately put her on a series of lifesaving drugs—



provided by the generosity of SRF donors.

A few days after she was admitted, Eman began to move her hands again. Within a month, she could move her chest, hands, and torso too. Throughout her recovery, her older sister remained by her side to give little Eman comfort and safety. Eman's father is eternally grateful to Dr. Tom, Mother of Mercy Hospital, and Sudan Relief Fund's donors.



## Expanding the Catholic university in South Sudan

Father Morris Ibiko surveys the courtyard where four groups of students are engaged in animated discussions. He is optimistic, though his eyes bespeak concern.

The young priest knows well what these students have overcome—and the challenges they still face. He has suffered many of the traumas of living in a war-torn and impoverished nation. What sets Fr. Ibiko apart is his education: in a nation where few ever have the opportunity to study at the collegiate level, he is one of very few South Sudanese to have earned a doctorate.

Now he wants to spread educational opportunity—not only to these students in the courtyard, but to everyone in the Yambio region. That’s why he opened the St. John’s Campus of Catholic University of South Sudan in June 2019.

Asked if he is surprised that the young college already has 67 full time students, Fr. Ibiko

responds with conviction. “There is a demand for such quality education because, despite so many hardships, opportunities for primary and secondary education have improved in the Diocese.”

“For this we have to thank Bishop Kussala and Sudan Relief Fund. This has been such a fruitful partnership!”

**Walking by three classrooms under construction, he explains that such strong support has allowed the St. John Campus already to become a nationally licensed and accredited university.**



“We don’t pretend that South Sudan’s troubles are over. They are not. Even some of these students are deprived of many basic necessities,” adds Fr. Ibiko. “But to see them overcome and continue their studies is a great blessing to me as a teacher and administrator. More importantly, it is a strong example to their peers and children in the area. This can be done. It is being done, now.”

At the St. John’s Campus, students are working towards Bachelor’s Degrees in Economics, Education, and Business Administration, while others are studying for Diplomas in Business Administration and Accounting.

“This is the generation that will set South Sudan on a different path, building businesses and stronger schools and the like,” said Fr. Ibiko, adding: “I am grateful to God to be able to serve Him in this mission. **All of us here are deeply grateful to the donors of Sudan Relief Fund, without whom this campus would not exist.**”

# Protecting at-risk mothers and babies



**T**he miracle of birth is all too commonly menaced by death in South Sudan, where the maternal mortality rate is consistently among the highest in the world. A pregnant mother in South Sudan today has a 1-in-50 chance of dying in childbirth. The baby, meanwhile, has a 1-in-10 chance of dying before his or her fifth birthday.

Tragically, a great many of these deaths are preventable: the most common causes of childhood death are malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, and complications of malnutrition.

**The Safe Motherhood Program combats this tragic injustice.** A collaborative project between Sudan Relief Fund, the Catholic Medical Mission Board, and SRF's donor community, the Safe Motherhood Program helped deliver 694 babies in 2020 alone! In addition, 1,747 mothers had at least one prenatal care visit, and 468 attended all four recommended appointments.

**You are saving mothers' and babies' lives.** And with your help, SRF is scaling the Safe Motherhood Project in 2021 and beyond. Soon we will be able to provide comprehensive services for 2,288 pregnant and lactating women. These services will include clean water—essential both for the facilities' operation and the lives of patients.

Your generosity is what provides the program-supported healthcare centers in Lirangu, Ezo, and Nzara with essential medicine and supplies, as well as staff training and incentive programs that have been proven to save the lives of patients.

With your help, SRF is moving quickly to protect the miracle of life in South Sudan through this next stage of Safe Motherhood.



**You are saving mother's and babies lives. And with your help, SRF is scaling the Safe Motherhood Project in 2021 and beyond.**

# A MESSAGE FROM NEIL CORKERY

PRESIDENT OF SUDAN RELIEF FUND

DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST,

Our God is so good.

There are moments in this job where, I must admit, the fact of Our Lord's limitless mercy and generosity are not obvious. And as the president of Sudan Relief Fund, I am daily confronted with the needs that I can't accurately describe here.

You and I care so deeply . . . but we simply have no frame of reference here in America. How can you or I imagine being so thirsty that we risk being assaulted, kidnapped or killed on the way to a watering hole? How can we imagine being so hungry that we are eating leaves from bushes? Being so desperate that we carry a gravely ill child for two days straight to a hospital in search of healing?

Our brothers and sisters in South Sudan know these trials intimately. Yet, with grit and courage, they find ways to survive. And with your sacrificial support, they begin to thrive.

In this newsletter you will find testimonies from Eman, Fr. Ibiko, the Christian Brothers, and reports of our partnership—YOUR partnership—with CMMB and so many others whose lifesaving impact grows daily.

They demonstrate most of all the power of solidarity —of the generosity of God enacted through kind donors like you. You are why there is a new university. You are why better-equipped hospitals are saving more lives. You are providing communities of support for those living with HIV/AIDS, and countless other stories of resilience and hope.

God bless you for all you do for Sudan Relief Fund and those we're honored to serve.

Sincerely,



NEIL CORKERY, *President*



## PLANNED GIVING, LEGACY GIFTS, BEQUESTS, WILLS & ESTATE DONATIONS

### *What will your legacy be?*

Planned giving or legacy gifts are one of the most generous ways you can help the desperately poor people of South Sudan. At Sudan Relief Fund, we are blessed to have the most generous donors in the world. Please consult your investment advisor, accountant, or lawyer for details on remembering Sudan Relief Fund in your estate plans. Please consider remembering Sudan Relief Fund in your estate planning. **For questions contact Brendan Gotta, Director of Stewardship, at 330.461.3356.**

LEGACY SOCIETY  
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