

Wave of Prayer: Diocesan Fact Sheet



LAINYA, SOUTH SUDAN

Wave of Prayer Group:

Group 11: 9-11 February

Lainya is a county on the Yei-Juba road in the Central Equatoria state of South Sudan. Lainya county has been affected by the huge devastation of 21 years of civil war, which makes it hard to develop. People's lives continue to be threatened by the innumerable neglected landmines and unexploded bombshells that remain hidden. Education in the region has been very hard, children are studying under trees which actually shows how much of the region has been destroyed. Many teak trees in Africa's largest teak plantation near Loka were destroyed by guns and deforestation has been carried out illegally, due to the lack of control when the region was under SPLA/M rebels and Sudanese soldiers. In 2007-09 the notorious Lord Resistance Army known as LRA infiltrated the area causing thousands of civilians to flee their homes for safety. Most of the people in rural areas moved to Lainya town and starting building local shelters. Some of those who fled and settled in the town have never returned home while others have returned to their villages.

The first Church in Lainya was opened in 1932. The diocese of Lainya was created sixty years later in 1992. In August 1995, the House of the Bishops confirmed the election of the first Diocesan Bishop. Due to the proximity of the Diocese to the war front line the Diocese was a scene of genocide and military struggle until it's liberation by SPLA from the Islamic Army. The first Bishop was therefore consecrated in Uganda in 1997 and subsequently enthroned in 1999 in the Sudan. The current incumbent Bishop was elected in February 2003, and enthroned a few days later in Lazarus Cathedral Lainya. He is assisted by 65 pastors serving in 48 parishes and 120 preaching centres where 287 lay readers, 248 evangelists and 300 Mothers' Union members reach out with gospel to the commandments.

Parts of South Sudan continue to experience conflict. In 2011 Lainya was directly affected by conflict leading to mass displacement. Mothers' Union in Lainya and Rumbek dioceses aimed to reach 9,500 people in total through their relief projects.

More recently, many of the projects and programmes of the Mothers' Union in South Sudan have been disrupted again by the political and humanitarian crisis that began in December 2013. Currently 1.3 million people across the country have been displaced by the crisis, and despite efforts at peace outbreaks of fighting continue. The effects of the conflict reached Lainya when in December 2013 they experienced a massive influx of people from other parts of the country – particularly those fleeing fighting erupted in the capital city Juba. Mothers' Union in South Sudan have been at the forefront of the Anglican response to the crisis. The Church has already provided food aid to 721,234 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and is now looking at ways to continue to support displaced people and seek to bring peace, reconciliation and development back to their country.

Within this difficult environment, the Mothers' Union Literacy & Financial Education Programme has been running since 2010 and is bringing hope to individuals and communities in the region.

LAINYA, SOUTH SUDAN

The programme was designed to give a holistic approach to empowering some of the most marginalised communities in the world, meeting millennium development goals of reducing poverty, increasing the participation of women and girls in education and employment, tackling HIV/AIDS and improving family health. The programme uses participatory methods to enable communities to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills whilst discussing and planning action on their daily issues and challenges. Participants become engaged in: Tackling local issues such as domestic violence and harmful traditional practices; Raising awareness of health issues and participating in local HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives; Setting up of income generating projects and small businesses; and promoting knowledge of women's rights, including democratic and inheritance rights.

Mothers' Union Literacy Trainers in Lainya have trained 50 community volunteers as literacy facilitators, who are then equipped to run literacy circles in their own community. Over 1,400 women and men have already joined the programme in Lainya since 2010 and are now on the journey to becoming literate and numerate.

Once they have been accredited as literate and numerate learners move on set up savings and loans groups. The programme focuses on building knowledge and skills in business development and community savings group formation for its members. As a result women are now gaining financial independence, have more autonomy to manage their lives and are participating in household decision-making as well as community politics and leadership. The Literacy Trainers in Lainya comment on how the financial education component of the programme and the savings groups that have been formed have visibly changed the communities in the area with noticeable improvements in the standards of living. In Lainya in particular the savings groups have succeeded so well that some groups have even set up their own education fund in addition to their savings. The team attribute this to learners now appreciating the importance of child education.

"I am one of those people who were caught up in the war. I never had a chance to go to school. I am very happy with this programme because it is an eye opener. It has enabled me to learn to read and to write. It has helped me to run my business better. I am able to tell how much money I spend, how much I can afford to save and how much I should spend on myself. I opened an account...I can bank my money on my own account!!! I can deposit and withdraw money by myself...I am able to do so. I know how much money I should invest in my business. When it comes to paying school fees for my children and I have no produce to sell, I go and withdraw money from my bank account...I am able to pay school fees and buy other scholastic materials."
Female learner, Lainya.

Bible verse:

Proverbs 22:6

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

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ANKOLE, UGANDA

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Members of the Mothers' Union in Ankole Diocese in a training session on mushroom growing at the Mushroom Training Resource Centre.

Ankole diocese is part of the province of the Church of Uganda and covers the districts of Mbarara, Ibanda, Isingiro and part of Ntungamo in the south western part of Uganda.

Mothers' Union emphasizes the value of a woman, restoring their dignity and status in homes and families and is also involved in nation building through the Church.

Mothers' Union of Ankole Diocese has building projects including the Mothers' Union Centre which is rented by Bishop Stuart University, and also the Canteen that is also rented by an individual who pays rent and brings in income to the group. These have the capacity to provide income monthly to the activities of Mothers' Union and this in turn has enabled them to support other projects in the Diocese such as the Model Homes Project and the Heifer Project in various parishes within the Diocese.

They also run training programmes for women leaders, Art and Craft/handcrafts projects, Family life projects, Mushroom growing and Adult Education or literacy programmes.

For more information visit the diocesan website: www.ankolediocese.org

Bible verse:

Psalm 5:8

Lead me Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me.

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ABUJA, NIGERIA

Wave of Prayer Group:

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Mrs Nkasiobi Okoh

Mothers' Union members

Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria. It is located in the centre of Nigeria, within the Federal Capital Territory. Abuja is a planned city, and was built mainly in the 1980s. It officially became Nigeria's capital on 12 December 1991, replacing Lagos, though the latter remains the country's most populous city. At the 2006 census, the city of Abuja had a population of 776,298, making it one of the ten most populous cities in Nigeria. Abuja has witnessed a huge influx of people into the city; the growth has led to the emergence of satellite towns such as Karu Urban Area, Suleja, Gwagwalada, Lugbe, Kuje and smaller settlements.

Abuja's geography is defined by Aso Rock, a 400-metre monolith left by water erosion. Significant sights include the Nigerian National Mosque and the Nigerian National Christian Centre.

The Diocese of Abuja was inaugurated in November 1989 and was carved out of Kaduna Diocese. It is the seat of the Primate of the Church of Nigeria, Most Rev Nicholas Okoh. In February 2014 Mothers' Union had a rededication service at the Cathedral Church of the Advent, Lifecamp where members renewed their commitment to the Mothers' Union and to the aim and objectives.

Mrs Nkasiobi Okoh is the Mothers' Union Provincial President for Nigeria, as well as Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union in Abuja diocese.

Mothers' Union activities in the diocese include:

- Prayer reflection and meditation
- Seminars
- Craft Shows
- Cooking and laundering competitions
- Annual retreats
- Day care centres where children irrespective of parents faith can come
- Workshops and seminars for school leavers

Bible Verse:

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

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LAGOS WEST, NIGERIA

Wave of Prayer Group:

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The Diocese of Lagos West was created in 1999 out of Lagos Diocese.

Mothers' Union activities in the diocese include:

- Services
- Conferences and training workshops
- Visits to branches
- Mothers' Union Parenting Programme
- Visits to prisons, hospitals, orphanages and widows take place.
- Members have also helped children whose parents cannot afford to keep them in school.

Branches hold regular meetings, and have various activities such as Bible study, craftwork and prayer.

For more information visit the diocesan website:

<http://dioceseoflagoswest.org/home.php>

Bible Verse:

Psalm 48:1

'Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God'

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LICHFIELD, ENGLAND

Wave of Prayer Group:

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There are 1800 Mothers Union members in Lichfield Diocese.

Lichfield Diocese is a mix of the very rural areas and heavily urban or industrial areas. The diocese is right in the heart of the country and it is a very spread out diocese, reaching from Birmingham over to Wales and therefore travel from one end of the diocese to the other can take over two hours. This has a big impact when they have diocesan meetings and as the Cathedral is in one end of the diocese the members from Shropshire often feel very cut off from what is going on.

Lichfield also have a big mix of socio economic problems – there are areas of wealth with very large houses and also many areas of great deprivation particularly in the towns and inner cities. Some areas are predominately white middle class and other areas are a wide mix of cultures and races. I was delighted to be able to open a branch two years ago which was mainly Afro Caribbean – I had been worried that all of our meetings tended to be white middle class and I didn't feel that this reflected many areas of our diocese.

Mothers' Union members are heavily involved in projects which reach out to people in their own communities. Members knit comfort teddies, knitted boobs and Premature baby clothes and blankets.

Mothers' Union give Away From It All (AFIA) holidays to families which are tailored to the families' requirements. Mothers' Union have recently given an AFIA holiday to one family with two teenage children and one younger. The mother is ill and was told that she would not live beyond the summer. The holiday was arranged at the very last minute as the mother had only just been given this prognosis. The children were given a week off school by their head teacher. This holiday was a lifeline for them and gave them memories that they can always keep.

There are nine prisons in the diocese and there is a Mothers' Union presence in each one of them. Members visit, help to run visit centres, assist with worship and also send a Christmas card to every prisoner – 6700 last year. Mothers' Union have received positive feedback from the prisoners - many of whom say that they have never had a Christmas card before.

Following the setting up of 'Tea and Toast' at one branch, others have taken up this idea and it is being replicated in several churches around the diocese. Young Mums come into church after they have dropped their children off at school – one day a week – and sit and chat and have tea and toast. It has formed great relationships and we have also gained a young member from it.

LICHFIELD, ENGLAND

The Premature baby knitting is always very well received by the hospitals and members also include a prayer card produced by the diocese with the knitting so that parents have prayers that they can use for their baby.

Mothers' Union in Lichfield are trying hard to work more closely with the Clergy and as a start they have made a presentation on the work of Mothers' Union to those who are on the Pathways to Ministry course. We also send a Mothers' Union Ordination card to those being ordained Deacon and a letter and pack of Mothers' Union information to them when they are Priested. They feel that it is important to get Clergy up to date with what Mothers' Union is doing as so many have a very negative view of Mothers' Union.

Mothers' Union in Lichfield have campaigned on Internet Safety for children.

Mothers' Union Diocesan President Liz Binsley writes that *"As Diocesan President I know that personally I prayed very much about the role of being President as I really didn't want to do it – I was very happy being Faith and Policy Co-ordinator. But I think God answered my prayer and has given me strength and ability to fulfil the role of DP. Now I am praying as to what to do after I finish my term of office next year. It is going to seem a bit bleak!"*

For more information visit their Mothers' Union website:
www.mothersunionlichfield.org.uk

Bible Verse:

Matthew 11:28

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

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KARNATAKA NORTH, CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

Wave of Prayer Group:

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The Church of South India was inaugurated in September 1947 and is an ecumenical Church uniting the Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Reformed churches.

The headquarters of the Karnataka Northern Diocese is at Dharwad. The Diocese came into existence in the year 1970. The diocese has 12 districts in Karnataka state consisting of Bellary, Bijapur, Chitradurga, Dharwad, Shimoga, Uttar Kannada, Haveri, Davangeri, Gadag, Koppal and Bagalkot. The total Christian population is 80,000. The Diocese is divided into 4 areas and each area is managed by the Area Chairman. The diocese has 85 churches under its administration. The diocese also runs several boarding homes, orphanages and hospitals.

The Women's Fellowship for Christian Service in the Church of South India are affiliated to the global Mothers' Union. The Church of South India Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (WFCS) was formed in September 1948, one year after the province was inaugurated. The WFCS united the Mothers' Union of the Anglican Church, Sisterhood of the Methodist Church, Kings Daughters of the Presbyterian Church and Mothers' meetings or Women's meeting of the congregational Church. The Women's Fellowship has been one of the effective bodies of the Church of South India working towards a meaningful ministry among the needy and poor, oppressed and the marginalized women and children. The women of the Church, who are 'called to serve' are encouraged to promote unity, fellowship and justice, for which they are equipped and empowered as effective leaders in their families, church and society.

The Women's Fellowship in Karnataka North diocese are active in their local communities visiting those who are vulnerable, providing gifts to the poor and promoting the role of women in the Church and society.

Bible Verse:

Zephaniah 3:17

The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."