

Naoi Technical School (St Daniel Comboni Polytechnic)

On a dusty plain in north eastern Uganda, two women have come to blows. One shrieks as the other shoves. More than 2,000 residents of this parish, Lokali, have come to collect food aid on a hot Saturday in May, and though the crowds have dwindled as the sun sinks and people drag or carry home



Technical School - Uganda

their sacks — a month's ration of mostly corn, with some beans — many recipients remain. They stand or sit in groups, waiting for food if they haven't yet been called, and arguing over how to divide the rations they've received. At the centre with the food stash, police clutch assault rifles to scare off bandits, as well as sticks to beat recipients who try to steal. With just a few dozen sacks remaining, would-be thieves sprint in as a pack, and more join in as the numbers swell. The officers thrash them all — old women and children too — until they drop the sacks and scatter.

Extreme hunger, and the scenes of desperation it causes, is shockingly common. Here in Karamoja, in Uganda's semi-arid northeast corner, food distribution is now a daily ritual. Karamoja is pretty typical. After years of drought, the soil is little more than sand. Goats and cattle are gaunt from lack of grazing and the sorghum crop is failing. Armed cattle rustlers roam the region, making the roads too dangerous for most travel. The women take their firewood and charcoal to local brewers and trade it for the grainy residue of beer instead. Then they eat that. Death rates in the local hospital's child-malnutrition program are twice the level they were in 2006-07.

Fr. Martin Devenish, an Irish Comboni Missionary priest who runs a technical college near Moruongor parish, in Moroto Diocese, is proud to be teaching trades that could bring industry to Karamoja: carpentry, tailoring and bricklaying. Today dozens of adult students sit at benches, eating their midday meal, mostly corn provided by WFP. But each time Fr. Devenish turns on the radio and hears about possible food-aid cuts, he says "I'm thinking what about here!"

Fr. Martin Devenish, Naoi Technical School P.O.Box 94, Moroto, Uganda



A Comboni satellite school

Alelder, Amathnhom, Awac, Billing, Bith Kalaou, Derek, Dongic, Kakuor, Karic, Mabor Duang, Majak Jier, Marial Bek, Makur Agar, Pan Barkou, Pan Cuai, Pandit, Piny Path, Pool Then, Tiitagok and Wouwou. The total of students in these schools is 5.500, of which 400 are girls. There are 180 teachers for 90 classrooms built with semi permanent material, and 70 classes under the trees (due to the lack of permanent buildings, lessons are taught under the trees). A visit to the satellite schools is done at least once per term, depending on the provision of fuel and the facility to reach the school (some satellite schools are difficult to reach during the rainy season due to rough roads). Several schools have no borehole for the students. The textbooks are very few for every class. The requirements asked to the community, in order to receive support as satellite school, are basically three:



Primary School Children in South Sudan

of students. This year workshops were organized in three zones of the Parish for satellite school teachers. They lamented that local authorities prohibited school fees to be asked to students, preventing the teachers from having a small income at the beginning of the school year.

We take this opportunity to wish you all God's graces for Lent and Easter.

Fr. Donato Goffredo & Sr. Aurora Salgado

Satellite Schools in Rumbek Diocese

Fr. Alfredo Estrada and Sr. Rita are two Comboni missionaries in charge of the satellite schools in Mapuordit Parish, in South Sudan. These are at the moment 20: Adhol, Adirdir, Agany,

dedication of teachers, students' commitment and community support. The lack of one of these three is a cause of discouraging support. As a matter of fact, last year two satellite schools were closed, as there was no support of community and poor commitment