

South Sudan bracing for 'worst hunger crisis ever'

More than 70 percent of South Sudan's population will struggle to survive the peak of the annual 'lean season' this year, as the country grapples with unprecedented levels of food insecurity caused by conflict, climate shocks, COVID-19, and rising costs according to the United Nations World Food Programme.



A message from Jack Hickel
Board President and co-founder
Alaska Health Project South

Dear friends,

First of all, I hope this finds you and your families well. This is a special time of year for me. One that brings me joy and hopefulness for the year ahead. While I am so grateful for the many blessings in my life, it's also a time of year that I find a depth of sadness from having just returned from South Sudan.

Sadness because the need there is so great. Suffering everywhere. So many people who do not have basic necessities like clean water and enough food to feed themselves and their families. This past visit I had a single personal goal: to visit new villages where the Alaska Health Project South Sudan can begin work. We know that where the Alaska Team works, the sadness and suffering diminish and hope for a better future rises like the African sun.

I've often said that we, AHPSS, are at the right place at the right time. This hasn't changed. AHPSS is the only organization actively drilling wells for clean water in this region. With your help lives have changed for the better. By the time this reaches your mailbox, we hope to have successfully completed our 47th water well in a village called

Tike. Amazing. When it comes to better health it starts with clean water. Your faithful support is paying big dividends.

I was so happy to spend time with Dr. Jill Seaman. She is always an inspiration! Back in 2007, when I first visited Old Fangak, Jill was working out of a rundown building built during the British colonial time. Today she still uses that building (which we've helped improve) but also has the first AHPSS built medical clinic for surgeries, and the newly completed tuberculosis clinic. It was great to see them in use. Saving lives!

The entire region around Old Fangak is still suffering from severe flooding. In places we usually walk to, we had to use a boat or canoe. The Old Fangak airstrip unusable. Hundreds of homes are either abandoned or sur-

rounded by hand made dikes. What does that mean for our work? There is a lot to do! We have begun to build elevated platforms for many of the wells in Old Fangak. While it might take a canoe to get to the well, once elevated it is usable all year round.

We recently shipped a rice mill to Old Fangak. These conditions are perfect for growing rice. (continued)





Rice Farm, Paguir



Elevated well platform



Imagine the transformation that can happen. With a little education and the right plan, rice can feed the entire community. Floods have destroyed the crops of sorghum and maize, but rice thrives in these conditions. In the next few months, I hope to share news and photos of the rice harvest and people feeding themselves with the rice they've grown and milled in the AHPSS mill. In other parts of Africa, they call rice a "miracle" food. Let's hope the miracle extends to Old Fangak.

So, thank you. For all that you've done to bring us to this point and for all the help to come. We are blessed by what you've brought to our work in South Sudan. I thank you on behalf of the people who have benefited so greatly.

Jack Hickel

All that we've done in South Sudan has come because of you. Your trust, your confidence and your giving. Without you there would not be an "Alaska Team" in South Sudan. Clean drinking water would still be a hope for thousands. Milling rice? Not even on the radar.



Alaska Health Project South Sudan
 PO Box 230183
 Anchorage, AK 99523
 907-244-7762
 www.ahpss.org

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