



**Ruth Radley**  
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**Sudan**

Link Letter No 10 July 2011

**Dear friends,**

**Hi everyone!**

I hope that you are all well! I have some VERY happy news to report – after three years of working alone in my department, we have employed someone to work with me! Hooray! And I can also *really* see God's hand and His timing in it all! Samuel is more than we had ever hoped we would be able to employ – he already has experience in training, but is keen to know more. He also has a great sense of humour (*which he will need to work with me!*) and a deep love for children – evident in the way he responds to them and them to him! He also didn't seem too perturbed when we were last facilitating together and in the middle of my facilitation (he was translating), I decided that the best way to illustrate something was to start hitting him. I gave no warning, except a quiet 'sorry about this' as I began; he seemed to cope well with it all, which bodes well! As well as a working relationship, we are developing a good friendship also, as are all the others in Across also. But let me not go on – let me let the

man himself introduce himself to you all!

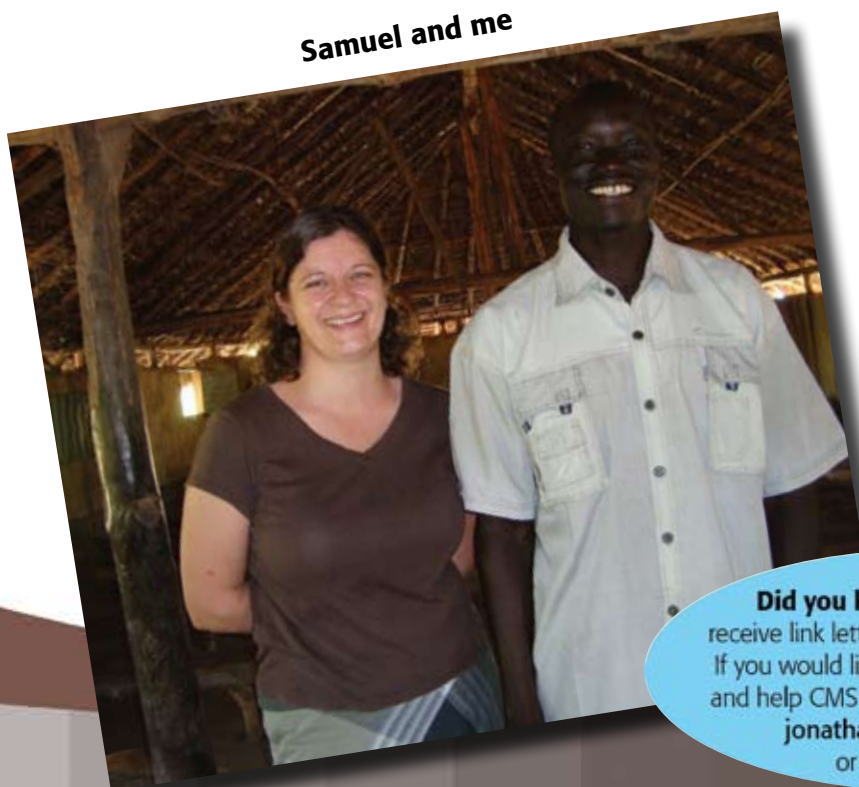
**Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,**

*Christian greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am a born again Christian serving the Lord in the church here and have been doing so for the past 12 years, in children's ministry. However, when the church admin office assigned me to work in an area of work which is not my calling, I did not accept the offer because I know that it is not the Lord's call for me.*

*I know that my call is to serve in children's ministry. So I prayed to God and received an answer from Him to continue working in this area; the church admin office and I parted, and amazingly God has continued to use me in children's ministry.*

*So now I am making new friends in the Lord like Ruth and others to be more effective in work, learning new things. So brethren, I have chosen to work with children because I know that is what the Lord has put on my heart as a burden.*

**Samuel and me**



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**Friends Mbaraza, Samuel and Gismala dancing with the children**



**Samuel leading the children in a dramatised Noah's Ark**

Following is a list of prayer items:

- Prayer for the training programmes that we have scheduled for this year.
- Prayer for the communities that we are working with, to implement what we taught them.
- Prayer for a way for me to be able to travel to Petra College to respond to their invitation of attending a mentorship and management course in South Africa next year.

**What Samuel hasn't told you...**

... is that he is also married, with three children in the home to care for, and other family members also. When he made the decision not to move where he had been asked to, believing passionately that this was not the Lord's will for his life, it left him with no regular income for a period of time – with bills, school fees, medical costs and general living expenses to cater for. However, he has seen the Lord provide for him and his family in

amazing ways, and I am so impressed that he has followed the path that the Lord has put on his heart, not the needs of himself and his family.

So, in faith we have put Samuel on a contract, faith in believing that this will be able to continue post December. In many ways, our work is not so expensive as we try to work in a sustaining way. What really raises the budget, however, is transport costs. Fuel has become scarce and it is not unusual now to have no fuel one day, then the next see huge queues as fuel arrives and everyone wants some. Our drivers went to the fuel station early last Saturday and sat for hours waiting for their turn. All our vehicles were able to be fuelled, so for this week at least we are able to get to our communities.

**An amazing gift**

The other consequence is that our power – which has been very reliable for the last three years – is now on for five hours less a

**With Samuel, facilitating**



**Samuel in facilitation mode**





**Tracking chimps in the forest in Uganda**



**With Elly and his nephew Gideon at the family home (we visited here on holiday)**

day. That still leaves us with 12 hours of power, still much better than many other areas of East Africa, but it means that we need to be aware and ready for when it goes off (which is with remarkable precision, for which I am thankful), and make sure that we do not plan anything that needs power in these times! Garry Ion, another CMS mission partner, has given me a solar powered freezer, which he used whilst he was also living in South Sudan.

I have lived now just over three years without a fridge or freezer, and again marvel at how we can make things so complicated in the West! I have reheated rice and meat left overnight, and not suffered any ill effects! We DO make our lives too clean I think in the West! However, the freezer is a huge blessing, and will be well used – not just by me but by other friends here too. My plan is to keep some water bottles frozen for icepacks, and create a fridge from a foil lined box!

The REAL blessing is that from the solar battery I will also be able to run a lighting system from it too! Amazing timing! We just need enough sun now to power the battery as currently the sun seems to have left us, as has the rain! I am hearing of crops ruined because of the lack of it, and certainly my own garden is not faring too well (except the weeds, which seem to need remarkably little rain to grow furiously!).

### **A dependency culture**

Finance for all of us in Across is a continuing struggle. We are finding

that many donors will not fund what we need, but instead have their own guidelines as to what they think is needed. This can be so frustrating, as we are committed to working in a way to *empower* rather than create a further dependency mindset. This does not mean that we never give things to communities, but we do it in a very careful way. However, many donors now want to 'see' things with the money they give. They want to see toilets, schools, health centres and churches built. They want to know that children receive medicine, food, clothes etc but, of course, so do we all. However, we want to know that these things happen in a way which does not create dependency and sadly, merely handing out things often does. We want to see communities empowered to bring about these changes themselves – this has a *much* more lasting effect (*we know – we have seen it!*).

We do training – training people to know how to bring about the above things in their own lives. We train people to know who they are, what they *have* got available (which is much more than the average westerner would think) and how to live without waiting for someone from outside to come to help. Training actually costs much less (although not the reason we do it) than material giving does, but still we struggle to find people to fund. Instead, we find ourselves writing proposals to suit the *donors'* needs. I sense that there is something very wrong in this; is it not the people who are *receiving* whose needs should be met?

I share this with you to help you understand the complexity of working overseas, and depending on donors to give money to enable the work to happen. It often leaves us with a dilemma. One of our core values is integrity, but if we end up writing proposals to suit the donors' needs, does this not mean that we are lacking in integrity?

### **It's all about people**

I am growing to understand here more and more that it is not necessarily buildings or materials that actually enable development to happen, but people! I have a new catchphrase which I wholeheartedly believe in: *'buildings do not develop people, but people can develop buildings'* – meaning that having a nice building does not mean that things will change, but having people who know their worth and ability can change everything! I know that I write a fair amount about this kind of thing, but it is because I get so frustrated by it all! It's wanting to get stuck into work we know needs doing, but are prevented from doing so by funding restrictions or being forced to do things in a way which we do not want to, just so that we can have funding to operate. Somehow it all seems very unfair....

### **Independence Day...**

You may also be aware that the political situation is not very stable at the moment, and so we welcome all the prayers that we can. Here where I am we are unaffected, except for where friends and colleagues have families living in the affected areas. We are now only two weeks away from independence (*I was just given a copy of the new national anthem! I had better get practising it in order that I can sing it enthusiastically on the day itself with my friends; it is playing over and over on the radio*) and really we want nothing to derail this process, or cause it harm.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has also been active in Western Equatoria state, again far from me but also destabilising more areas. Abyei and the Nuba mountains have been seriously badly hit, and all we can do is sit, watch hope and pray. I cannot bear the thought that we can in any way go backwards; there is so much hope and potential around. My area has seen an increase in armed robberies, but again this is nothing to panic about – but more to pray for. I am fine and I

know that I am in the right place at this time, and wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I am very contented. Please also pray for Uganda at this time. I was there recently with my mother, and whilst we had a lovely restful time (both there and back here in Yei), the political situation there was also not stable and there had been riots and accusations of the previous elections in February not being fair. It all seems to have calmed now, but I also love this country and have many friends in it and would hate also to see that situation deteriorate.

So, the next link letter will see me writing from the newest country in the world... and the 54th African nation! I find it an immense privilege to be here at this time. Please do hold us in your prayers especially over these next few critical weeks, but also for the Government of the Republic of South Sudan as they settle into full government of the country. There are many issues that they will need to tackle; please pray for Godly wisdom to know what order and how to do things.

Bless you all for your continuing support. I also encourage you to read the children's link letter if you don't usually; you may find some of the information in that one interesting.

Lots of love

*Ruth x*

**PS:** I am not ignoring the fact that where I am living has just become the Republic of South Sudan and received its own independence as a country. I wrote this link letter a couple of weeks ago, while we were still in preparation for the big day... please allow me to hold you in suspense for a bit longer and I will write more fully about this in my next link letter. Being here at such a time as this is a huge privilege, and the celebrations have been amazing! Thank you for all your prayers, please do keep praying for the world's newest country!

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