

Amazing support for Education in church schools in Ezo, South Sudan.

Most children in Dorset go to school. Most children in Ezo County, South Sudan do not; their teachers no longer receive regular salaries from the government. Of the 52 registered primary schools, only one – the Masumbu Primary School, run by the ECSS Ezo church - functions well. This is because of support by congregations and individuals in the Melbury Villages and others in the towns and villages of the Sherborne Deanery.



The ECSS church schools at Ezo are only able to open because of Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link Supporters

There are now over 900 students – equal numbers of boys and girls – and they do very well in the national exams. No parent or guardian has to pay fees – so why do the teachers attend and work so hard at supporting the children? Well – remarkably, there is a community based “Ezo Education Support Committee” – chaired by Bishop Isaac. Key members include community leaders, political leaders and representatives from church groups. This committee encourages all families in the community to give, however small, money to pay “allowances” to the teachers and arranges voluntary support, such as help with farming of their fields. These gifts/supports are managed by the Diocese Finance Officer so that the 19 staff are able to work hard in teaching and supporting the children as they learn.



Thank You Messages and Greetings from children at ECSS church Masumbu School to Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link Supporters

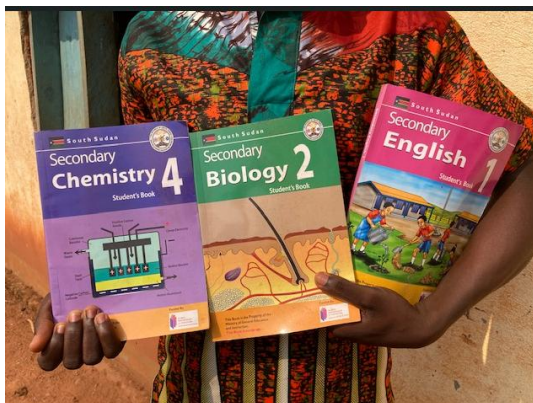
Is that all? No. The school has about 4 hectares of fertile land (now guarded with strong wire fencing to stop wild animals from raiding the food!) and the children, guided by the teachers, grow their own “Free School Lunch” – providing maize, rice and peanuts.

There is no “central government fund” for Textbooks, Exercise Books, Desks and Chairs, Classroom Repairs or Sports Activities. Over the last 10 years, The Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link, which raises funds from churches and individuals in Sherborne Deanery, has sent about £5,000 each year from “Ezo Christmas Appeals” to support these needs – as a result of publicity and hard work in organising special fund raising events. The Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link Team carefully monitors the records of expenditure sent from Ezo to ensure that all funds are accounted for.



Rebuilding Classrooms with funds from Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link Supporters

This remarkable success story has resulted in children reaching Year 8 in Masumbu ECSS church Primary school – but there are no government secondary schools open. Remarkably, the “Ezo Education Support Committee” now also supports the recently opened ECSS church St Paul’s Secondary School, adjacent to the ECSS church Masumbu Primary School - with community donations to support teachers. However, they are in desperate need of Textbooks, Exercise Books, Chairs and Desks. So that is an additional opportunity for the “Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link” to raise funds for specific purposes.



Textbooks for EZO ECSS Church Secondary School supplied by Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link Supporters

My wife, Celia, and I took our “annual holiday” – to Ezo this year. It was not easy but truly inspiring! We saw that contributions to the education of children make a real, accountable difference. You could give to the “Ezo Appeal” later this year – or better still – ask to join the mailing list (atomkins1@gmail.com) to learn how you can make a difference right now. **Dr. Andrew Tomkins** (Ezo-Sherborne Deanery Link Team)