

UPDATE FROM NANCY McGAUGHEY - OCTOBER, 2013

“I cannot read. I cannot write. But I CAN learn”

words of a TBA (traditional birth attendant) following a recent training in Bor, Jonglei State

It started as a training that exemplified how NOT to do a training. Everything that could possibly go wrong did. One and a half hours after we were to start the training, there was only me and a bird (a very pretty one at that) in the room. When people came, only 4 of the 16 met the qualifications for the training. The training was to be in English, but only 5 people could speak some English and I had no translator. Before giving the pre-test, I had to teach most of them how to make “T”, “F” and circle the correct answer in multiple choice. I noticed someone walking outside our training room. On the back of his t-shirt was written “KEEP CALM, CARRY ON” and that became my motto for the week.

South Sudan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world – 2054 deaths per 100,000 live births. That means for every 50 children born, one mother dies in pregnancy related deaths. In the USA it is 11 deaths for every 50,000 children born. Our training was on the Prevention and Treatment of Post-partum Hemorrhage, the leading cause of these deaths.



Listening for fetal heart

And learn they did – they learned hand washing techniques, how to put on



gloves (a challenge for some of them who had not worn gloves before), we practiced good delivery techniques using models from the USA provided by IMA World Health, they learned how to resuscitate a baby, how to clean the mouth and nose with a bulb syringe, how to make a good referral and how to teach pregnant women to plan ahead for their delivery.



Cleaning mouth and nose

This is hard work!

At the close of the training, another woman said, “You have given us a small amount of money to pay for our expenses. This money will not last. The knowledge and skills you have given us WILL last. It will help us save lives of women in our communities. For this we thank IMA.”

Earlier in the month I was able to make a one-day return visit to Pibor. The Murle have an expression, ‘awuci ziniz’ which literally means ‘pain of the heart’ but extends to mean ‘deep sorrow’. That is what I felt as the

Commissioner, James ChaCha my counterpart at the County Health Office and I walked down to the church and through the town. The destruction of what I had known as Pibor town was overwhelming. But the spirit of the people who remain is not broken. Tears of joy came as I greeted people and was greeted by my friends from



Pibor Market – then



and now

my days living there. I look forward to returning, but I fear that may not happen in the near future.

The English classes for Murle women started in October and are proceeding well. The enthusiasm, concentration and joy is amazing as these women learn to communicate in English. Many of these women came up to me after church last week with their, “Good Morning, how are you?” beaming from ear to ear as they spoke and could respond in English. They are eager, they are working hard and are proud of their achievements. This class is supported by funds from Presbyterian Women’s Group.



Some of the members of the English class with their new bags and books.

As I close, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you for your prayers, your financial support, your letters and e-mails of encouragement. Without you, I would not be here. Some days are a struggle, but I know that God is strong in my weakness. May He richly bless you as you have blessed me.

Standing with you in prayer for the Murle people,

Nanc

(Tokolec)

