

Star Support Group

Yambio, South Sudan

A fragile peace has come at last to this fragmented new nation. While much is in disarray, our project in the west of the country is thriving in its work of providing hope to the peoples most in need. Star Support Group offers its members Clinical services, a Tailoring programme, English adult learning, Awareness workshops, a Microfinance programme and Orphans gatherings. The number of beneficiaries exceeds 1,500 men, women and children.

The microfinance programme has been very successful. The anecdotal evidence from the beneficiaries backs up how significant these loans have been for them, in terms of starting up their small business operations and enabling them to grow, making them less dependent on financial support from others.

The first group of 61 people in 2016 were given loans of 10,000 SSP. During this year, these people all paid back their loans, apart from one person because of serious sickness. Some took out further loans for expanding their businesses. With repaid loans it is hoped to bring on board a new group of 100 members in 2019. One of these is Miriam who was given 6,000SSP with which she cleared some land and planted crops of maize and vegetables. From home she sold the produce as well as charcoal and groundnuts. She repaid the loan and can care for her elderly mother as well.

The Tailoring and English classes are not large in numbers (20 completed the tailoring course out of 24, and 15 completed the English course out of 20). Those who benefit from these courses learnt skills in dress-making, clothing repairs and machine maintenance. They will be given a machine for their use when leaving the course, which will help them become more self-sustainable. The class began making school uniforms for local children. This has been a great benefit for the community of Yambio. Those learning English will gain skills that will make it easier for them to get jobs.