

# Redevelopment of the Martha PHCC Eye Clinic, Yei, South Sudan

**Poppy Spens<sup>a</sup>**

The redevelopment of the Martha PHCC Eye Clinic took place during 2010. Figure 1 shows what the building looked like at the start of the year. It had been constructed as two wards for the former eye clinic, and was to have been operated by an NGO. However, it was never completed and for several years the empty building was used by youths for drug taking and graffiti, and to generally cause a nuisance to those who lived nearby.

In 2009 the building was handed over to the Diocese of Yei, which owned the site, and plans were made to develop it as a new eye clinic, with full facilities and an operating theatre. As the building was large, it was decided that the remainder would be refurbished to create a much-needed paediatric ward for 10 children.



Figure 1: The original building.

In the early part of 2010, the Martha PHCC project manager worked with a local contractor to specify what refurbishments were required. These included the complete renovation and upgrading of the building to include running water and solar electricity.

Work began at the end of March and was completed by the end of June at a cost of nearly US\$64,000. This was fully funded by a UK charity called The Brickworks. As Figure 2 shows, the building has been finished to a high standard. You can see the solar panels on the roof and the water harvesting in the foreground. Elsewhere on the site, the pit latrines have been refurbished, three new washrooms have been constructed and a kitchen shelter has been built so that families can cater for their in-patient relatives.

<sup>a</sup> a Health Project Development Coordinator, ECS Dioceses Yei and Lainya, CMS Ireland Affiliate. poppy.spens@gmx.com



Figure 2: The refurbished building.

The paediatric ward was the first part of the building to be opened and the eye clinic was opened on November 1st. We are very grateful to Dark and Light, Light for the World, ECS Diocese of Yei and the Brickworks who together have enabled us to set it up. We have an ophthalmic clinical officer, Mr Abui Simon, who recently trained in Juba with the Christian Blind Mission. We thank this Mission and a church in Ireland for assisting Abui to complete his training.

The opening of the clinic coincided with a visit from Dr Trevor Buchanan (ophthalmologist from Ireland) and Mrs Pam Whitehead (optometrist from Southampton). These two visitors helped Abui Simon to assemble equipment and start the clinic (see Figure 3).

The eye clinic has been busy from the start. Using the Martha PHCC mobile clinic, outreaches have taken place on several Saturdays to identify and treat people with eye disease in villages. We are drawing up a list of patients waiting for cataract surgery and hope that the first cataract operations will take place in February 2011.

Photos from Poppy Spens



Figure 3: Abui Simon examining a patient