



PARTNERING FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND RENEWAL – TRANSFORMING LIVES

YOUR IMPACT

# Welcome, South Sudan!

**How does an organization like PEER Servants celebrate 25 years of partnerships?** By looking forward and announcing what may be one of our most exciting partnerships yet – in the world’s newest nation, South Sudan!

## Faithful in the Face of Death

PEER Servants President, Todd Engelsen, often shares one of his most moving experiences. It took place on Easter Sunday in 2005 in Yei, South Sudan. Some semblance of peace was returning to this war-torn area and Todd and his wife, Leslie, had the privilege of attending church with hundreds of South Sudanese people, all of whom had lost family and friends to a force that wanted to convert them to Islam.

“Onward Christian Soldiers” was the first hymn, and “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus” was the second. Leslie and Todd were so humbled and inspired to stand with those who really did stand up for Jesus, being faithful to Him even in the face of death.

In the years that followed, the new nation of South Sudan was born. Ongoing war scars have left it relatively unstable and very undeveloped. Now is the time to help build this nation and honor its faithful people.

## JED is Born

Amidst the instability, God gathered a very impressive group of young South Sudanese women and men. The war led them to pursue educations in some of the world’s most respected universities. Now they returned to South Sudan with their advanced degrees

and impressive credentials to rebuild their nation. They came together to form Joint Effort for Development (JED), a South Sudanese NGO dedicated to extending the kingdom of heaven to a people who had experienced something closer to hell. Who better to carry out such important work?

## The SIMPAP Partnership

JED didn’t wait for money to come from beyond the South Sudanese borders. They collected what small amounts they had and built a school and a church. They started a cooperative to give the materially poor strength in numbers. And they started to ask how they could empower the many, many single mothers widowed in the long civil war.

This led JED to develop SIMPAP – the Single Mothers Poverty Alleviation Program. The program will focus on 500 single mothers and equip them with vocational education and access to credit to start a small business that can provide for their families. SIMPAP will also provide spiritual encouragement to the mothers – something they value so much as they depend on God for their daily bread.

JED will launch SIMPAP in 2016. They reached out and invited PEER Servants in to partner with them on this program. The organizations are raising the funds needed to empower these beautiful South Sudanese single moms. Would you like to join JED and PEER Servants in supporting SIMPAP with your prayers and financial support? Mark your donation for The South Sudan Fund and 100% of it will go to the SIMPAP program. Thank you!

### Celebrating 25 Years of Partnership!

**How we thank God for 25 amazing years of extending more of the kingdom of heaven to earth!** Through your prayers and financial support, God is at work enabling tens of thousands of the materially poor and non-poor to experience economic, social, and spiritual transformation. Thank you!

If you would like to send a tax-deductible donation to PEER Servants, you can direct 100% of your gift to any of our Microfinance Partner Funds. See the back side of the newsletter for contact info. Thank you for your generosity. **God bless you!**

*Todd G. Engelsen*

Todd G. Engelsen  
President



## Global Worship Concert-March 12

It’s one of our most popular events of the year – our Concert for Economic Empowerment! Join us for songs of worship and justice as musicians who are originally from around the world lead us with fantastic music. International desserts, inspiring testimonies of PEER Servants volunteers, and free admission will make it an evening you won’t want to miss! Saturday, March 12, 7-9 pm, Revive Community Church, 111 Terrace Hall Avenue, Burlington, MA. Call a friend or two and join us for an inspiring, encouraging evening!

## WHAT TRANSFORMATION LOOKS LIKE



## More than a Soccer MVP

There was more happening on the field than may meet the eye at our recent Pagdiriwang ("celebration") global gathering in the Philippines. The players included not only microfinance practitioners from around the world, but young men whose lives were being transformed through the ministry of our Filipino partner and host, CCT. Team Asia took top honors, and who was the MVP? Romeo (second, right), a young man who not long ago was living on Manila's streets and now is a sharp, educated follower of Jesus (and great soccer player!).



## Singing Hymns at the Factory

When is the last time your HR Department led you in "Great is Thy Faithfulness"? "Yesterday" might be your answer if you worked at one of the factories in which CCT, our Filipino partner, has been asked to form the workers into cooperatives. CCT has saved thousands of jobs in the Philippines and helped create higher-paying jobs as the workers benefit from higher productivity. What helps enhance productivity? Optional daily Bible studies, prayer meetings, and singing a hymn or two!

## THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS



PEER Servants is a global discipling community and, as a result, more effective at working well with global partners. Pictured here are volunteers from Nigeria, South Korea, Haiti, Uganda, Burundi, and Singapore.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

## We'd love to hear from you!

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*Through PEER Servants' network of indigenous microfinance partners, hundreds of thousands of the materially poor have received micro-loans that have enabled them to grow small businesses, including Vasile in Moldova, Florence in Uganda, and Najima in India. They have been great examples of those who bless others as they are being blessed.*

## 25 Years of Inspiring Entrepreneurs

**As we celebrate 25 years of partnership in 2016, we can't help but reflect on some amazing micro-entrepreneurs along with the organizations, staff members and volunteers who are serving them.** This is the first in our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Series recognizing some of those who stand out the most among a very impressive crowd!

## Vasile, Moldovan Sausage Maker

**For many of you, Vasile was one of the first faces you saw of a successful micro-entrepreneur.** Served by Invest Credit, our Moldovan microfinance partner, Vasile and his wife, Olga, were trying to get on their feet in post-Soviet Moldova. An initial micro-loan of \$100 started a relationship that over the years has led Vasile from buying and selling pork to creating his own sausage manufacturing business and ultimately even opening his own retail stores to sell his product.

Today, Vasile has been able to create many much-needed jobs in Moldova. Prior to the first micro-loan, he was hesitant to even step into a church. Over the years, his business has provided a means of significant support for the church. Even the poorest of the poor, children in orphanages, were blessed with sausage through Vasile's business. Vasile's vision, hard work, and having access to services from Invest Credit have helped make all of this possible.

## Florence, Clothes Retailer

**A widowed, disabled woman in Northern Uganda with five children.** That may sound like the poster person for a handout relief program. Don't tell Florence that! Florence qualified for an initial micro-loan of \$100 from CAF ECC, PEER Servants' Moldovan microfinance partner, to grow her very small

secondhand clothes business. As she grew the business and accessed larger amounts of capital from CAF ECC, she not only provided for her own family, she created jobs for others, and used the business profits to take care of a significant number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

Recent zoning changes in her town have forced Florence to move her business and have adversely affected her sales. But she is still providing for a smaller number of orphans, still a leader in her community, and still thanking God every day for providing an organization like CAF ECC that has not only met her material need, but empowered her socially and spiritually as well.

## Najima, Septic Rings Maker

What would you do if your children were hungry, you and your spouse skipped meals to feed them, and you didn't have access to a job? If you were Najima, you'd apply for a \$50 micro-loan to start a concrete septic rings business! It doesn't matter that women don't do that work. She grew the business and gave her husband and eight other men a job!

Najima has now received many loans from Christian Service Society (CSS), PEER Servants microfinance partner on the outskirts of Kolkata, India. 99% of CSS's 28,000+ clients are Muslim or Hindu. Najima, a Muslim, can now provide for her family, educate her children, and even provide very generous benefits to her workers. She is generous to her community in the Muslim festivals. Through her ties to CSS, she has come to meet followers of Jesus who really love her and have gone the second mile to help her establish her business. Najima, along with Florence and Vasile, are three of the inspiring micro-entrepreneurs we've met in these first 25 years.