



The Diocese of Kitgum's churches are creating spaces where people can explore ways to overcome hardship. This is inspiring locally-led initiatives, which target people's most pressing issues. And sometimes, it's leading to some additional outcomes for the church. Like this new, brick-built space, which is attended by community members who used to pray in a local classroom. Source: Diocese of Kitgum

## Diocese of Kitgum - Prayer update Uganda

---

**Four years. It is amazing what can change in such a short period of time.** The little things, like a new plant growing nearby, or a change at the local shop. And the big things, like new schools or new homes. Our friendships can deepen. Our families can expand. Our neighbourhoods can transform.

Four years ago, community members from Kitgum Town would gather for prayers in a local classroom. Now, things have changed.

In the area of northern Uganda where they are based, people have faced many challenges. Drought, heat, crop pests and diseases have been a particular issue for families reliant on their farms for food and income. In 2019, St Mark's Church identified their community as one which might value a training series which other churches had been running. A series with communities at its heart. Through it, people come together, share their challenges and are supported in working out potential solutions to these problems.

It is an approach Tearfund is using to mobilise God's church in some of the very poorest places. It can unlock people's God-given power and potential to create flourishing and resilient communities. It is known locally as the Participatory Evaluation Process (PEP).

The Diocese of Kitgum has been supporting churches like St Mark's with the implementation of this training in a range of the communities that they serve. Bible Studies, exploring subjects like God's vision for humanity, and focuses on mobilising resources, can prove a particular inspiration to those taking part.

Small, action-focused groups, like Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), can then help people turn their ideas for creating change into a reality.

In 2019, 30 people in Kitgum Town formed one such group. They would save money together on a weekly basis. This would be pooled into a fund that their members could borrow from, for projects of their choosing.

The group then invited 30 community members to join them in their work, through a separate savings scheme. It is creating a 'revolving fund' - money which people can access for their household's needs, and for use in a slightly bigger project: a new church building.

People didn't stop at saving money though. They contributed other resources - sand, water, even their time as casual labourers in order to complete the church building. Within just three years, by 2021, it was up and ready to use.

But again, they didn't stop there. People would regularly carry seats from their own homes to sit on each Sunday. So the team considered how the building could be furnished and they came up with another plan. Now, four years later, the group's members have bought and given the church 29 white seats - as well as two steel windows.

Four years on, that regular team of prayers are now able to meet in this new church building, and sit on seats that they financed with their own resources. Support like yours has played a huge part in this. It empowered and envisioned the community. Akena, who chairs the group, believes its members now feel a stronger bond with the church, because of the things they learnt from being a part of the group.

## Please pray

- **Give thanks for the amazing people of Kitgum.** Give thanks for the way they are coming together to identify and find solutions to challenges people are facing. Give thanks for their drive, for the changes they have been able to make in under four years, and for their generosity. Pray for their work to go from strength to strength. Pray that they see lives change beyond their imagining as they pursue initiatives to transform things for those experiencing extreme hardship.
- **Pray for the climate.** Unpredictable climate conditions continue to be unfavourable for farmers. Those who have planted crops are particularly worried about ongoing sunshine, which threatens to destroy their produce, resulting in a loss of both food and income. Pray that instead, farmers experience a good amount of rain. Enough that plants can thrive and support communities in the coming months.
- **Please pray for peace and stability in the region.** The Diocese of Kitgum covers four political districts of Kitgum, Lamwo, Pader and Agago respectively. Over the past year, Acholi communities have experienced a loss of cattle and foodstuffs through looting by neighbouring communities. In the process, a number of people have lost their lives. This is causing heightened tensions, as well as placing those who have lost resources under greater strain. Pray for God to intervene. Pray for relationships to be rebuilt and pray that the government can scale up their resources to manage the situation and respond to any need. Conflict as a result of land grabs, have also led to displacement. Pray for stability and peace.
- **Pray for the area's local health centres.** The Diocese of Kitgum has three functional health centres, which provide vital services to communities. Pray that they can meet people's needs, access the resources required and link up with other centres so that staff can learn and grow their expertise.
- **Pray for South Sudanese refugees.** One of the districts served by the Diocese of Kitgum, Lamwo, is host to more than 800,000 South Sudanese refugees. Pray for their safety and that they would have access to the support they need.

## Thank you

