



# SELL CONNECT

## Sharing Education & Learning for Life

### A Peacebuilding Programme for Young Adults

SELL- An Initiative of St.Patricks Missionary Society

Dec 2023

(9th edition)

#### Christmas Note from Fr. Leo.

A year ago I am sure many of us thought and hoped things in our world could not get worse. But they have. The only 'winners' in a time of war violence death are those companies that produce weapons that kill. I often reflect how the discovery of gunpowder those many years ago in China was one of the saddest days in human evolution. A path opened that has led to so many ways for humans to kill each other. Utter insanity. The complete opposite to Gods desire that we be a loving species. I know injustice must always be addressed and tragically oppression brings strong feelings and responses.

Only the truly strong can follow the nonviolent way. In the midst of so much dispiriting world news we have to hold fast to the core truth that we are made for love kindness compassion and good. Let's recommit to this truth this Christmas.

We close our greeting this year with renewed thanks to ALL of you who are reading this little newsletter. There are many good things happening with our work. Sadly the Ghana team seem to be going through a difficult time adjusting since the covid years. We hope and pray their programme may stabilise there and we are as always ready to do what we can to support once they make a strategic plan.

Seeds of growth are popping up in new places with a young man Jeremiah Bassey who encountered SELL in Ghana now sharing it with university students in Kenya! Also we just got great news that the Nigeria Team have just won an Environmental award worth 2,500 Euro. Well done to them. So enjoy the clips and stories contained here. Pray for each team and for St Patrick's Missionary Society.

Have a good Christmas a blessed end to 2023 and we pray blessings over each of you and our world for 2024.

**Fr's. Leo Traynor and Tommy Hayden ( Malawi) and Robert Psinon (Nigeria).**

#### SELL Training in Kenya

You never know where an encounter with SELL might lead. Jeremiah Bassey came across SELL in Ghana. He has been sharing the SELL story with students in Kenya. Maybe a new location for SELL?



#### Message to SELL Supporters

Dear Members of SELL Connect, I want to add my appreciation to you all for the support you give to the SELL programme and the encouragement you give to the SELL teams on the continent of Africa. It has been my privilege to see the work of SELL from its beginnings in Nigeria through its development in Ghana and now in Malawi.

It was a great honour for me to witness its beginnings in Nigeria and how the vision of my St. Patrick's brothers was developed into a practical programme of education for the young people of Africa. It has grown and developed a lot since then and the building up of the SELL teams from among the youths of Africa is a wonderful thing to see.

It was a great joy for me to host Mary James of the SELL team in Nigeria and Francis Abanga of the SELL team in Ghana, when they came to Ireland last year to take part in the An Tairseach Ecology programme run by the Dominican Sisters in Co. Wicklow. One day of their programme was spend here in St. Patrick's, Kiltegan where they were introduced to all the energy saving practices we have developed in our compound. They were able to see and learn all about our Biomass heating system, our wind turbine, solar panels and composting project.

In April of this year, I had to travel to Zambia for a Leaders meeting and I took the opportunity to visit the SELL project in neighbouring Malawi. While SELL in Malawi is still in its early stages of development, it was good to see that a good foundation is being laid which we hope and pray will grow like it has done in Nigeria and Ghana.

As a missionary in Africa one of the constant requests from the young people is to help them to come to Europe for a better life. They are very despondent about their lives, and the problems and difficulties they face can make them hopeless. This is why the SELL programme is so important for the youth, as it gives them tools to better themselves and to navigate the difficulties they face, as well as equipping them to be good community leaders. The different units of the SELL programme give them a sense of hope and confidence in their own gifts and skills. Whatever support we can give the SELL programme here in Ireland is put to good use and it is our way of making this world a better place for all.

**Fr. Pat Murphy (SPMS Regional Leader, Kiltegan, Ireland)**

### GREETINGS FROM MALAWI

Hello Friends,

I am glad to be sharing my experience with SELL as now I begin my second year. It has been a good year working with the youth in different communities. I have come across many young people who care about everyone having a safe space and community to connect with, using their creativity as a tool for exploring and developing, seeing new possibilities in ourselves and in the world around us. I'm very proud of our youth ministry and happy to be part of a team with the shared purpose of cultivating change and supporting individuals. - **Isaac**

Dear Friends, Greetings from Malawi. I joined SELL team Malawi On 21st February 2023 and I am very happy to be able to serve my fellow Malawian youths through the SELL programme.

I feel our young people are blessed to have the SELL programme in Malawi and no amount of words can explain our heartfelt gratitude to you for being a generous community of friends through whose kindness we are able to experience the SELL programme and share it to others. - **Taonga**

### **Training in Malawi**

Having completed training on Leadership, the SELL Resource Team began travelling to mentor the trainees as they conducted the step down workshops in their different communities. Overall, 16 communities conducted workshops with a total attendance of 610 young men and 439 young women.



Participants at the Malawi training  
with Bishop John Ryan

### **Quotes from some Participants.**

“I see the SELL Programme as essential in bringing transformation on a personal and community level.”

“The SELL Programme is very vital in as far as the life of a human being is concerned. It has helped me to grow both spiritually and humanly.”

“The topics for discussion were well organized and educative and I was very interested in them.”

“I am encouraged by the life of Paulo Freire (SELL), and his vision, as well as his goal of trying to liberate the needy and the challenged.”

“It is a very good programme, which needs to reach out to many people.”

Dear friends, season greetings from the warm heart of Africa (Malawi). A year ago (November 2022) I returned home (Ghana) from Ireland after completing my post-graduate studies in Youth, Community and Social Regeneration at the University of Limerick. It was a deeply enriching experience. And this was all possible through your generosity. I am forever grateful.

I am excited to join the team in Malawi for the next 12 months and together, continue to reach many young adults with this life-giving programme. I look forward to experiencing the beautiful people and culture of Malawi which is a bit different from my Ghanaian culture. - **Hagar**



SELL Malawi Team.  
Hagar, Leo, Taonga, Tommy, Deborah and Isaac

It is great to see the SELL Programme grow and we cannot thank you enough for being such a wonderful community of friends through whose kindness and support we are able to move the SELL vision forward. During this festive season, we will like to wish you and your families a joyous Christmas and a peaceful 2024.

**The SELL Team, Malawi**



Buildings used by SELL Malawi, donations from SELL supporters helped fund the construction.

**SELL Nigeria**

Congratulations to the SELL Nigeria. The Foundation was nominated for the Misesan Cara Climate Action Awards 2023 and has won 1st place.

The SELL programme is a peace-building and human development programme that engages young adults in participatory learning. SELL has incorporated Muslims and other non-Catholic groups into the programme, thereby helping to eliminate mistrust while promoting tolerance and peace.

In addition to its peace-building and human development programme, SELL stands as a beacon of hope and innovation in the battle against climate change.

You may remember a SELL Group from Ghana and Nigeria last year participated in the ‘An Tairseach Ecology’ programme run by the Dominican Sisters in Co. Wicklow.

SELL has embarked on a multifaceted journey towards a more sustainable and environmentally conscious future. SELL’s tireless efforts encompass planting indigenous trees, promoting non-smoking briquettes, and fostering critical dialogues on environmental conservation and policy development.

SELL’s commitment to holistic climate action and its work is a testament of what can be achieved when individuals and organisations come together to combat climate change and help preserve our planet for future generations.

Congratulations to everyone involved for their hard work and dedication.



**SELL Nigeria- Helen’s story**

SELL Nigeria had a workshop on effective and productive farming methods aimed at improving farm yields in the scenic and mountainous Local government area of Shendam under plateau State, Nigeria. We focused on 90 participants across the seven states we conducted the the workshop.

Helen Tobi, is a resilient and committed participant of SELL Foundation project in this local government area. Through her hard work, she has emerged as a great example of the transformative power of knowledge and sustainable farming practices she embraced. Her journey from a simple unproductive methods of agriculture to successful is a thing to celebrate.

Helen participated in SELL training project with sole objective to learn and improve her farming methods. Part of the training's primary focus was on imparting knowledge about enhancing farm yields through the use of natural manures, specifically animal dung.

With information from the SELL training, Helen began incorporating animal dung into her farming practices. She meticulously spread these manure across her field recognizing that they would not only enhance soil fertility but also reduce chemical fertilizers that could harm the microbes in the soil.

Most of her neighbours and fellow farmers marvelled at how her crops looked uniquely healthy when compared to others in the vicinity. The fruits of her labour would not only improve her family's livelihood but also contribute to food security in her community.

Her success is a source of inspiration to others, motivating them to adopt sustainable farming practices as well as return to organic farming. In the midst of her flourishing farm, Helen never forgot to express her gratitude to SELL Foundation, and Misesan Cara, the major funders of the project.

In the end, Helen Tobi's journey from a participant in SELL Foundation project to a thriving farmer exemplified the project's mission. Her education to sustainable farming practices will not only improve her livelihood but also play a pivotal role in the development of her community. Helen's story is becoming a symbol of hope and a testimony to the power of knowledge, determination, and eco-friendly farming practices in transforming lives and landscapes.

Thank you to the many SELL supporters that help us financially and in prayer. **SELL Team, Nigeria.**

## In Gratitude

Bombarded by the urgency of Black Friday swiftly followed by the FOMO of Cyber Monday, where our insecurities are manipulated in the call to consume. Better for our planet (and our pockets) if we had imported the American tradition of Thanksgiving, or at least its simpler form, gratitude. The constant whirlwind of our daily lives makes it easy to forget the importance of gratitude. Dr Angeles Arrien, author of *Living in Gratitude*, describes gratitude as a universal theme, transmitted through the ages as a perennial wisdom that holds society and individuals together.

Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk, reminds us that "gratefulness is the inner gesture of giving meaning to our life by receiving life as a gift". We can choose to be grateful, or we can choose to be ungrateful and take our many gifts and blessings for granted. In the midst of global conflicts, wars, famines, and climate-related droughts and floods leading to unimaginable human distress, let gratitude show us the needs of others and compel us to respond with the generosity of spirit for which we are known. *Céad míle fáilte roimh go-léir.* (Orla McCullagh)

## Note from the Editors

SELL has achieved so much in such a short time. Reading Helen's story from Nigeria is inspiring, we now have a new progressive farmer. SELL Nigeria is awarded 1st place in the Climate Action Award, 2023. We have helped fund new buildings in Malawi and continue to grow the organisation. None of this could have been achieved without the help of you, our supporters. Your financial contributions have been vital for our growth.

## A BIG THANK YOU

Last year we had a special appeal for financial support for our building work, we had two generous responses from friends in Co Wicklow, thank you so much, your kindness is very much appreciated.

We are grateful to St. Patrick's Missionary Society (SPMS) for their support, and thanks to SPMS for their help to Fr. Leo, Fr. Tommy and Fr. Robert.

If you would like to make a financial contribution to SELL please contact Kevin on +353 87 233 5756, or any of the Team listed below. If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, (or have it sent to a friend), contact us using the addresses below.

Kevin Vaughan, (sellconnectireland@gmail.com)

Noleen Neill, (noleen.neill@virgin.net)

Tommy Traynor, (tommy.traynor@btinternet.com)

Website: [www.sharingeducationlearningforlife.org](http://www.sharingeducationlearningforlife.org)

