

The price of love

Love is not enough to earn you a bride if you are a young man in Sudan. You need a few cows, or perhaps some goats, a fridge, a television, or money if you have it.



It is difficult to marry a girl from the Dinka tribe. They only want cows. A bride from another tribe will come easier, as other tribes will sell their daughters for animals or commodities other than cows.



As reaching the full bride price can be difficult for young men, many of whom will have no education or employment, a down payment is often agreed first, and the rest of the payment follows in instalments. Couples often move in together and have children before the full bride price is paid.

Or, as Bishop Hilary explained, some will go ahead and have children without getting married, therefore avoiding the bride price altogether.

Philliam Okpoa, a youth worker for Scripture Union and electrician by trade, is currently based in Yei, but has a fiancée in Arua, over the Ugandan border. He was proud to show us her photograph, and another photograph of the little red brick house he is currently building for them in Arua. It will be some time before they can marry, he admitted. He is currently saving for some cows.

CMS England worker Ruth received a very generous offer from a suitor at a border airstrip. Two hundred and fifty cows he was prepared to offer. Ruth called her father, but the suitor was to be disappointed as Ruth's father did not feel he could realistically transport the 250 cows to the green fields of the UK!