



**Menonite
Central
Committee**

Providing relief in South Sudan



Food purchased by MCC through partner Sudanese Relief and Development Agency, is unloaded in Awerial County, South Sudan. MCC provided supplementary food for 7,539 children displaced by the conflict. (MCC Photo, Brendan Tuttle, 2014)

Relief, relationships go hand-in-hand in South Sudan: Emily Loewen, August 29, 2014

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As conflict has displaced more than 1.5 million people in South Sudan since late December, about 70,000 of them sought refuge at an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Awerial County, South Sudan, where they could find people who spoke the same language.

The Sudanese Relief and Development Agency (SUDRA) coordinated a food distribution project to help meet the needs of displaced children. The project, which is supported by Menonite Central Committee (MCC), also helped provide a place of stability, where people could begin to build a sense of community and routine.

That stable place and sense of community is important, said Andrew Biar, a volunteer supervisor at one of the feeding centers, because it helps people manage the kind of conflicts that arise when people are suddenly dislocated and placed in extreme circumstances.

“The MCC-SUDRA feeding program has restored the hopes of the community, brought a good number of pastors together and increased reconciliation as people meet and interact together,” said Biar, who is a volunteer from the Episcopal Diocese in Awerial County.

The project provided two months of food for 7,539 displaced children under five in Awerial County from mid-February to mid-April. Because food was distributed primarily at church compounds, it encouraged people to join church activities and meet each other.

“The feeding programs provided people with a place to gather and talk and learn firsthand that in settings marked by common hardships, cross-cultural, religious and linguistic differences can turn out to be no more important than the differences that exist among individual human beings,” said Brendan Tuttle, MCC’s representative for South Sudan and Sudan.

Since conflict in South Sudan erupted nine months ago, MCC has allocated more than \$1.1 million in funding and resources, such as relief kits and canned meat, for displaced South Sudanese people both inside the country and in Kenya and Ethiopia.

In addition to the food distribution in Awerial, MCC is supporting the distribution of food baskets or vouchers to more than 21,000 displaced people in Budi and Mundri counties in South Sudan through its account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

MCC also is supporting a project with Lutheran World Federation to provide supplementary food, such as fruit, to children, new and expecting mothers, seniors and people with disabilities or illness in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Refugees in Gambella, Ethiopia, will receive MCC relief, hygiene and school kits as well as blankets and canned meat.

Beyond meeting basic needs, MCC is continuing to support education, peacebuilding and agriculture projects in South Sudan. This includes funding two training sessions on dealing with trauma for 80 women and youth church leaders and supporting a similar program for South Sudanese refugees in Kenya.

In Sudan, MCC is starting a three-year program providing meals at school for children, some displaced by conflict in South Sudan. The meals increase students’ attendance and ability to focus.

“Emergency relief is necessary,” said Tuttle, “but we have also tried to ensure that our longer-term projects continue and embody the kind of world that we hope to live in – one where discussions about peace, schooling, libraries and farms have a useful place.”