

TriState Relief Sale “My Coins Count” Project 2015-2016 – South Sudan Relief

The following are some reports from Mennonite Central Committee regarding the needs and MCC’s response in the South Sudan. Links are provided with the stories or you may go to www.mcc.org and search for South Sudan to bring up continuing updates and photos which may be downloaded for your use. We will also be updating resources on the www.tristatesale.org web site on the Penny Power page – check periodically.

The conflict, which began in December 2013 because of a split within the ruling political party, escalated into widespread violence.

Nearly a third of the population is facing starvation in South Sudan, according to Ken and Laura Litwiller, MCC’s area directors in East Africa, from Lewistown, Pa. Those who have been displaced by fighting – people now living in Awerial, Renk and Bor – urgently need food, clean water, medicine and seeds before planting season ends this month.

“A great deal of international attention has been given to political posturing and spectacular acts of violence,” the Litwillers wrote. “But many more will lose their lives in the slowly unfolding humanitarian catastrophe of famine, floods and cholera that the rains will bring with the end of the planting season this month.”

Sudan's 22-year civil war decimated communities in southern Sudan, which is one of the most impoverished regions in the world. About 2 million people were killed and 4 million people were forced to flee their homes before a peace agreement ended the conflict in 2005.

Since then, about 1.7 million people have returned to their home areas after spending years in refugee camps or other temporary living arrangements. More people are continuing to arrive despite the fact that few resources exist, such as schools or food supplies, to accommodate the rapidly growing population.

MCC has launched a multimillion-dollar campaign to help people in southern Sudan recover. The campaign, "Coming Home: Sudan," is focused on building schools, supporting education, assisting farmers and promoting peace in southern Sudan.

Through the MCC-supported Episcopal Church of Sudan’s Mother’s Union tailoring project in Juba, South Sudan, women such as Flora Lino are gaining skills that they can use to build a brighter future for themselves and their children.

Each year, 20 women participate in this six-month program supported by MCC. At the completion of the program, participants can buy their sewing machine at a reduced rate.

Staying close to their mothers, children become familiar with sewing machines and the sights and sounds of a sewing class in Juba, South Sudan. (photos available on <http://mcc.org/stories/gaining-skills-build-better-future-children>)

<https://donate.mcc.org/cause/south-sudan-relief>

The ongoing crisis in South Sudan has left an estimated 3.9 million people in need of food assistance. The United Nations says the country is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe.

More than 1.5 million people have been displaced; over 1 million inside South Sudan with 430,000 now in neighboring countries. In addition to displacement, the violence has prevented farmers from planting for the next growing season, which means that many people will require food assistance in the months to come.

MCC is responding.

Your gift will help MCC and partner organizations in South Sudan:

Provide food baskets for 10,028 vulnerable displaced people in Mundri

Supply 11,340 displaced people in Budi County with monthly food vouchers

Provide three days of food to 300 vulnerable South Sudanese refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp

Train 80 local women and youth church leaders in trauma healing

Prepare a shipment of relief kits, hygiene kits, blankets and canned meat

<http://mcc.org/stories/south-sudan-unrest-update>

WINNIPEG, Man. – 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 Mennonite 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.”

In search of a safe place

<http://mcc.org/learn/what/education/globalfamily/reports/2014/spring/juja-education>

I was born on March 24th, 1997, in Nyai Payani Unity State in South Sudan. I am the last born after my brother Gabriel Dak. In 1999 our mother died and life became difficult. That year my uncle came to collect us, saying he should take over the responsibility of providing for us.

In August 2001, my brother and I left South Sudan for Kakuma refugee camp. Here we joined school for the first time. I studied from Class 1 to 6 before being repatriated back to South Sudan in 2006 where I reunited with my uncle's family. My brother continued on in Kakuma with his high school studies.

My uncle's wife never treated me with love, subjecting me to all sorts of abuse. In 2009 I decided to run away to live with a church matron who eventually fostered me. I continued on with my education. When my matron informed me that my uncle wanted me back home where I could be married off, I called my brother Dak in Nairobi. He sent me some money to come and join him in Kenya. I am now living at Emmanuel Centre, preparing to join a high school that enrolls many South Sudanese. I thank God for His unique help and leading me to a safe place.

The Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya is being seriously stretched as it continues to be flooded with new arrivals from South Sudan.

The ongoing fighting in South Sudan is displacing hundreds of thousands, creating a crisis in provision of refugee services. With this influx of people there is also an increasing demand for refugee education opportunities for their children. Kenyan schools are to introduce mother tongue (or Swahili in urban areas) as the language of instruction until the end of Class 3.

Update

Emmanuel Centre currently supports 323 orphans and 35 South Sudanese refugees. Of the refugees, nine are in primary school, twelve in secondary and fourteen in vocational training. The Sisters' Technical Institute, now in

its second year, serves the poor of the community, especially those who couldn't make it to secondary school. Their agricultural section provides much needed food.

<http://mcc.org/stories/stitching-together-better-future-south-sudan>

JUBA, South Sudan—Carrying her two-year old daughter Ester on her back, Jerisa Muro walks to a sewing class almost two miles from her home in Juba, the capital city of South Sudan.

Muro, a mother of four children, ages 2 to 11, hopes to start a tailoring business and earn enough money so that her children can go to school. She is especially concerned that her two eldest children are not attending school.

“I didn’t go to school because of the long war,” she says. “My father died of a stroke when I was young. My mother had no means to send us to school. If I acquire good skills here, then I can send my children to school and they will not be illiterate.”

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has been supporting this project since 2009 when it was started by Florence Ayikoru and the Episcopal Church of Sudan’s Mother’s Union. Each year, 20 women learn sewing, life skills and small business management skills.

Graduates of the six-month program can buy their sewing machines at a reduced rate and take out small loans to help them start a tailoring business.

“I feel so good about what we are doing,” says Ayikoru. “We are changing lives. We are making a difference. Every time I see graduates of our program, I ask them if they have customers and they do.”

It is these success stories that motivate Muro to learn skills that will help build a better future for herself and her children.

Her life is marked with hardships. Her eldest brother was killed during the civil war, 1983-2005. “During the war we spent many years in the bush,” she recalls. “We went to a refugee camp in Uganda, but I did not get any training there.”

Six years ago Muro left an abusive relationship. She maintained custody of their baby, who is now seven years old, but lost custody of her two eldest children. These children are being raised by their grandmother, who cannot afford to send them to school.

Now remarried, Muro sees a brighter future for herself and her two youngest children. But she also wants to help her eldest children.

“If I could make two dresses a day, I would be much taller,” she says as she looks forward to the day when all of her children can go to school.

See photo gallery

\$20 will train one person to become a Peace Mobilizer, to help shift thinking from a culture of war to a culture of peaceful living.

\$50 will help provide basic medical equipment to the Juba Hospital.

\$175 will provide one scholarship to help a student complete four years of a university education.