

From Beneficiary to Member
Report of a Grassroots Visit to Sudan Education for Development and Peace
Programme (SEDEP)
November 8th - 16th 2000

CONTEXT

1. Political

To the casual visitor to Khartoum life appears relaxed and normal. It is only as you talk to people that you realise the reality. The country is engaged in a civil war that has been causing death and destruction for the last 17 years. During the visit there was another skirmish in the eastern town of Kassala which involved further losses. It is believed that over the period of the war 2 million people have been killed, 2 million have been displaced from South Sudan to North Sudan, and 2 million have been forced to leave the country as refugees.

It appears that the military and political momentum has stalled. Neither side has the strength to win a military victory and both sides give the impression that there is no strong commitment to negotiation. This is a conflict that has already dragged on far too long and all attempts at development will continue to be frustrated if the civil war continues. Other places of conflict have received far greater attention from world powers and Britain, in particular, needs to give greater priority to the search for peace.

2. Economic

The economic fortunes of the Khartoum government are improving with the opening of the Sudan's first oil field which is now able to produce 10 million tons of crude oil a year. One of the consequences has been that the government has become more confident that it will gain the upper hand in the conflict in the South. At the end of October President El Bashir predicted that Sudan would soon be producing its own tanks and heavy artillery.

The government has made it more difficult for NGOs to provide relief in the displaced camps and many have withdrawn. This has compounded the problems for the displaced who are experiencing even greater hardship.

3. Social/Cultural

- Brain Drain

It was a shock to discover how many of the most able people linked with SEDEP have left the country. Some have moved South to East Africa and South Sudan but the majority have moved North to Europe and North America. Young people do not see any future in North Sudan and increasingly feel that their future has to be elsewhere.

- Gender Issues

I was told that Traditional Birth Attendants receive 50,000 dinars when delivering a boy and 25,000 dinar when delivering a girl. This is the payment made by the community to the TBA and I have never come across such a differential before.

PROGRAMME

'We have moved from darkness to light' Joyce, FitiHab

'It has woken us from sleep' Napoleon, Hai Baraka

'The problem is not money - we need more training' Taban, Hai Baraka

1. Structures

SEDEP was established under the Diocese of Lui as a development of the partnership between Lund Diocese in Sweden and the displaced Lui Diocese. Lui is a Diocese in South Sudan near Mundri but the Bishop was based in Khartoum. With his death in 1997 a new Bishop was appointed who is based in the South. The members of Lui Diocese who are living in Khartoum now come under the jurisdiction of Khartoum Diocese and the Lui Diocese maintains a presence as the Moru Christian Congregations. SEDEP related to Lui Diocese through the Diocesan Link Board.

Relationships between SEDEP and the Diocese have not been easy since the death of the former Bishop because there were different understandings of the role and purpose of SEDEP. In Dec 99 the new Bishop decided that SEDEP should separate from the Diocese.

This was one of the issues addressed in the Review Workshop. Although the decision of the Bishop was made in Dec 99, no changes had been made in practice. The existing arrangement was no longer valid and so an alternative was needed. After considerable discussion, where the issues were carefully explored, it was agreed unanimously by the 32 participants in the workshop and subsequently endorsed by the Programme Management Committee, that SEDEP should become a Community Based Organisation. A small group has been appointed to draft a constitution which will be presented to a General Assembly by April 2001. That Assembly will appoint a new Committee and review present appointments. Once the Assembly has approved the Constitution the committee will apply for registration.

This decision does not mean that SEDEP is no longer related to the churches. All Coordinators linked with SEDEP are active members of their churches, all of the activities involve members of the churches and the links with the Diocese of Lui will continue through those who are actively involved in both SEDEP and the Diocese.

2. Education

Coordinator Gabriel Otor Marko

Area Coordinators:

Khartoum South Light Wilson

Khartoum North Awatif Emmanuel Kape

Omdurman Joyce Joseph

Activities

Four workshops have been held:		Participants
August 96	Introduction to Training for Transformation Facilitated by Grassroots and Lund	38
August 98	Training of Trainers (TOT) Phase I Facilitated by Premese Nairobi	60
July 99	Responding to Conflict Facilitated by Responding to Conflict Birmingham	26
January 00	Training of Trainers Phase II Facilitated by Premese Nairobi	36

Of the 60 participants involved in Phase I of TOT 13 have left the country which indicates one of the problems faced by young people from the South.

Outcomes

Individual Benefit

The evidence of this is seen in every parish and community group. Participants in the training are playing a leading role in their communities in a variety of ways. They have the confidence to take decisions and provide leadership. In some cases individuals have used the skills in other organisations and this has enabled them to gain employment. Florence has introduced Conflict Resolution into the training of IRC - International Rescue Committee. Wilma started a group on Conflict Resolution in her own community and has now been appointed as Provincial Training Coordinator for the Mothers Union. Kennet has been able to move on to new employment. Charles has been appointed Community Health Worker Supervisor for SUDRA. These individual outcomes should not be ignored. They are enabling people to play a fuller part in the life of the community.

Community Benefit

Khartoum South

Mayo

Lois and Charity organised local workshops One of the priority issues identified was children. Light Wilson and a group formed the Apaya Association which complements the work of the church by organising cultural activities. Have organised a Displaced Child Day in 98, 99 and 2000 which has attracted support from the Government and UNICEF. The organisation is now registered by Government and has support from UNICEF. Light was a participant in the workshops and he has worked with the community to identify a need and then accessed resources both from the local community and other sources in Khartoum.

The women have been active in making handcrafts which have been sent to Eliza for sale. They also organised fund raising for a kindergarten and were able to collect 100,000 pounds and build one room.

Kalakalat

Morrison and Rachel organised 3 workshops

Jebel Aulia

Florence and Simon organised three workshops on Needs Assessment, Capacity Building and Income Generation. Worked with the community to build two classes for the kindergarten.

Panyikango

Panyikango Social Development Association began in 1976 in the South among the Shilluk people of Upper Nile. War disrupted the activities but Gabriel has been working with community displaced in Khartoum to revive the Association. A Training of Trainers workshop was held in April 2000 attended by 20 men and 9 women. This was followed by a Needs Assessment workshop held in May and attended by 12 men and 5 women. The first workshop was one week residential and the costs for all the training were raised by the community. This is another very significant outcome of the training. The association has been helped to identify new opportunities in Khartoum and is placing a high value on local resources. A local elder noted that the training had

been unique in involving both women and men. Previously the Association in the South only involved men. The Association includes Catholics, Evangelicals, Presbyterians and Muslims.

Khartoum North

Hai Baraka

The participants worked with the community to raise money which has been used to buy 100 chairs and 300 plates, and 24 water cups and jars for Hai Baraka Church, and 100 chairs for Redimia Church. The womens group in Hai Baraka have also bought a stove to cook cakes as a way of generating income for their activities.

Adult literacy classes have started in Hai Baraka with an enrolment of 56 people. Participants in the workshops have also assisted in establishing a kindergarten which presently has 70 children.

Omdurman

Fitihab

Rejoice has worked with the women on income generation and they have raised the money to buy utensils which are used by the church and hired for special occasions. They have also assisted with Adult Education classes. In May 2000 they organised a workshop attended by 18 participants on Community Participation and Needs Assessment. They have been asked to run another workshop on Conflict Resolution.

Organisations

MUCAYA

Elvis found that changes in Mucaya meant that he was unable to use the ideas from the workshop. He linked with Mundri Students Association and concentrated on local fund raising which produced nearly 1.5 million pounds. It was agreed to establish a library and they have received some books from Book Aid through Eliza.

Lily took the idea of income generation to the Mucaya Executive and found they were not interested so she has used the ideas personally. Because she is very busy in the University it is not easy for her to work with the community.

Changemakers

Diana organised a Conflict Resolution workshop for Changemakers staff and this helped the group deal with some issues in relation to SCC.

Outside Khartoum

Wau

Kezia moved to Wau after Phase I and met with Catholic and ECS pastors to discuss the possibility of a workshop. It was agreed and a three day workshop attended by 60 people took place in April 99. The resources for the workshop were raised locally and over 1 million pounds was collected together with food and other materials.

Kezia was working with a Young Womens Association to start a dry season veg project but the war broke out again and she had to return to Khartoum.

Yei

Joseph and Daria organised a Womens workshop

Wad Medani

The workshop participants from Medani have been active. Three workshops were organised in 99. The first on Needs Assessment was attended by 21, the second on Conflict Resolution by 61, and the third on Fund Raising by 11. As a result of these workshops the community identified agricultural production as their priority project and developed an area for soghum production. The community also organised fund raising which produced 80,000 which was used to instal a telephone in the church.

Juba

Two participants from Juba had attended the workshop in Khartoum and invited SEDEP to send a facilitator for a workshop in Juba. Light Wilson responded and helped to facilitate a workshop for 28 participants in November 99. One of the outcomes was a commitment to income generation and plans were prepared for poultry projects.

Reflections

- Education for Development is not a quick fix

In the last three years 12 community workshops have been organised by the participants of the first two Phases of the Training of Trainers Process. These workshops have involved participation by 467 people. The majority of the costs of these activities have been raised by the communities themselves. A programme which began as a project of one Diocese of one denomination now involves many different ethnic groups and denominations. As a result of the workshops a range of activities have been initiated in response to needs identified locally. If SEDEP closed tomorrow the new skills and experience in the community could not be taken away and the work would continue. The last three years have been a learning process and the workshop held during this visit was part of that process. The risks of dependency and disempowerment have been clearly understood. Such an educational process takes time but it is the only way to ensure sustainability.

- Understandings of development

In both the 96 workshop and the Phase I TOT workshop, time was taken to explore two understandings of development. There is still confusion in the programme about this basic issue.

	Funding Based	Community Based
Assumption	That development is dependent on outside funds. That the primary aim is to maximise receipt of outside funds.	That sustainable development is dependent on local resources That the primary aim is to release the potential and energy of local resources
Power	A transfer of power from the local community to outside people. Outsider expected to take decisions	Increased confidence of the local community in its ability to take decisions Outsider shares in decision making process
Relationships	Dominated by the one way transfer of funds	Moves towards a partnership of equals where all have something to give and receive

Attitudes	Participants see themselves as passive recipients of development.	Participants see themselves as the main actors in the process.
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During the visit David was asked on occasions to make decisions about the programme and the discussion was dominated by questions about the need for more money. In other places there was excitement and enthusiasm about what had been achieved and a desire to discuss plans and ideas that were being developed in the community.

The Review Workshop tried to address this issue again and one comment by Diana suggested that progress had been made. **'We have considered ourselves beneficiaries of SEDEP and so there was no need to take responsibility for the project. Now we have agreed that we are members and it is our project'**

- Leadership Development

One of the results of the TOT should be the emergence of leaders who will begin to take an increasing role in the future development of the programme. This is happening but there are problems. The young people who have a better educational background and more enthusiasm and energy feel that they have very little future in Khartoum and are looking for ways of moving out. SEDEP has lost a number of able and committed people in this way. The second problem is one that can be addressed. On several occasions it was suggested that the process of selection for TOT had been flawed. People were selected for reasons unrelated to the purpose of the training. It seems that with the new structures coming into place it would be good to include new people for the next phases of the TOT workshops who realise that the training requires some commitment.

- Theological Reflection

In both 96 and Phase I time was given to theological reflection. The Training for Transformation approach recognises the spiritual dynamic in development. Attempts to have a special theological reflection group working on a Kairos Document for Sudan have failed because the key people are no longer in Khartoum. Many development agencies are good at asking the how and what questions, but few are asking the why questions. It is important that this faith dimension is not lost because that is the process through which values are defined and energy generated.

3. Income Generation Project

Coordinator Scopas Odrande Ezikia

Monitors:

Medani George Louis Tokporo

Jebel Aulia Scopas Kamonde

Mayo Jenny Eluzai

Kalokalat Jackline Malia

Hai Baraka Felix Sunday

Fitihab Benjamin Garille

Omdurman Esther

Jebel Aulia Florence

Activities

The training of 8 monitors and 42 Loan Beneficiaries took place in November 99. Loans were issued in Jan 2000 - 15; Feb 2000 - 12 and July 2000 - 7 partial loans.

The present understanding is that all loans are 200,000 dinars and they should be repaid at a rate of 20,000 per month ie the full loan will be repaid in 10 months. No interest is charged. In addition to the loan a grant of 70,000 dinars is made to cover the administrative costs faced by the loanee.

Outcomes

The first 27 loans were made up as follows:

Location:	Abu Saeed	3
	Kalakalat	5
	Mayo	6
	Omdurman	5
	Shigla HY	2
	Hai Baraka	3
	Wad Medani	3
Purpose:	Tea Selling	12
	Sewing	4
	Buffet	1
	Smoked Fish	4
	Handcrafts	1
	Soap making	1
	Tie and Dye	2
	Charcoal selling	1
	Knitting	1

Present Situation:

Medani

3 loans approved. 2 are repaid in full. The third has 30,000 outstanding (this person was divorced during the year and her oldest son has been accepted for University - she has had exceptional expenses but still expects to repay the balance)

Mayo

5 loans One hoped to make soap but the delay between making her application and receiving the loan meant that costs had risen and the loan was no longer adequate so she changed to knitting. She has repaid 100,000

The person drying fish has repaid 20,000

Two tea makers have each repaid 50,000

One person making Tamia has repaid 100,000

Kalakalat

5 loans - 3 for tea making and fish drying; 2 for sewing

Only one has made a repayment of 70,000 but Jackline expects the others to repay soon.

Felix

5 loans all for tea making

One has repaid 120,000, one 100,000, one 60,000 and 2 40,000

Benjamin

3 loans

One loanee died, one has been seriously ill and one had problems with her sewing machine but has now started repayments with 25,000.

Reflections

- Poverty is being reduced

The loanees tell stories of children that have been able to attend school, of medical expenses that have been covered, of regular meals. These results have been achieved through a small loan which has enabled someone to buy a bag of sugar for her tea making rather than buying in small amounts. Compared with the need it is a drop in the ocean but every drop helps.

- Admin costs

The present administration of the project appears top heavy and unviable. The amount budgeted for admin expenses is almost as much as the total amount of loans administered. The project is looking at the possibility of targeting the support for loanees more carefully so that there is a training component.

- Criteria

The remaining loans will be issued before the end of the year and then the project will review the experience so far. Some of the criteria may need to be changed.

- Repayments

It is too early to assess the repayment rate but the feeling of project workers is that most of the outstanding repayments will be made even if late.

4. Health

Coordinator Charles Placido Wani

Activities

In April 99 21 Community Health Promoters were trained and they were very active in their communities for a while. In June 99 the Chair of the Health Project left the project after causing some problems. This left the project in difficulties and work stopped until the present acting Coordinator was asked to take over. There is dissatisfaction because funds have not been forthcoming for the project and it feels as if the project is not being taken seriously. The project was asked to prepare a proposal with plans and this was sent to Grassroots but they have been unable to raise the necessary funds.

Outcomes

In spite of the difficulties there have been positive outcomes.

SAWA is a community based health initiative that emerged from SEDEP in Mayo. The group mobilised the community when it was threatened with an outbreak of meningitis. It was so successful that a number of its volunteers were taken on by government.

The project also has the support of the Voluntary Health Promoters Association based in Dar es Salaam, Jebel Aulia. This Association was formed in September 98 by 30 Community Health Promoters who had been trained and employed by MSF Holland. When MSF withdrew from Jebel Aulia the Health Promoters formed their own

association which is offering services to the community. To support the work of SEDEP they have organised the following workshops

Dec 99	5 group teachings in churches	96 participants
Feb 2000	2 workshops on immunisation in Apaya kindergarten Jebel Aulia	187 participants
March 2000	One immunisation workshop in WATAP kindergarten Jebel Aulia	300 participants

Attendances at the subsequent vaccination clinics included some of those who had attended the workshops.

Reflections

The health project has been beset by difficulties and it appears that the most sensible course of action is to support the two community based health associations with additional training rather than try to establish a separate project.

REFLECTIONS

1. Understandings of mission

When a community has been displaced and is enduring hardships such as those experienced by Southerners in Khartoum it is inevitable that the primary concern is relief of suffering and poverty. It is a desperate struggle to survive and those who have the luxury of economic security need to be continually reminded of the harsh realities. Sharing in the suffering of the community is a way of sharing in God's reaching out in love to the world. Wilma said that people in Sudan had never been closer to God and this affirms the experience of the poor and oppressed in the biblical story. Similarly today the sense of a divine spirit sustaining hope in people faced with desperate circumstances is very powerful. However the story does not end with redemptive suffering. The slaves of Egypt gained their freedom; the exiles in Babylon returned to their homes; the lame, blind and excluded discovered new life through their encounters with Christ. Our discipleship calls us into solidarity with the suffering ones but also support in their struggle for liberation. It moves to the transformation and empowering of individuals.

2. Working for Peace

One is aware of the futility of many development activities in Sudan as long as the civil war is not resolved. As well as the work in Sudan which helps to build understanding across ethnic and religious boundaries, Grassroots needs to strengthen its links with those working for change in Europe. Participation in the Lobby Group which is working to highlight the dangers of the oil pipeline for future peace, and continued links with the Sudanese community in Britain and its involvement in Development Awareness are important.

3. Making Connections (North and South Sudan, Sudan and Europe)

To add to the other divisions with which Sudan has to contend, there are those which have developed as a result of the conflict. Some in the South feel that those who have moved to the North have an easier time and both those in North and South can feel that those who have moved to Europe and America are forgetting the situation in Sudan. The project has been able to make links between communities in North and South and between those in Sudan and those outside. These links and relationships will be important when peace is established and people return to their original homes.

4. Role of Grassroots

One thing which has been clarified by this visit is that Grassroots is not a donor agency - it cannot even sustain its own staff to support the work in Sudan. Grassroots can act as a conduit for funding requests but this has to be at a limited level because there are no staff resources available for this work. It is possible that present funding applications in the pipeline could enable the appointment of a person who will be designated for work in Sudan and Development Awareness work in UK but this is only a dream at present. The role that Grassroots can offer is to accompany SEDEP and share its own experience of a faith based liberating education. There is no question that Grassroots is greatly enriched by the link with Sudan through the visits from Sudanese to Grassroots and the connections with the Sudanese community in Britain. It prevents Grassroots becoming too Eurocentric and helps put the problems of UK in a global perspective.

DJC

16.11.00