

Grassroots Programme
Sudan Education for Development and Peace Project (SEDEP)
Report of a Visit September 30th to October 12th 2003

Background

Grassroots has had a partnership with the Sudan Education for Development and Peace since 1996 when David was invited to lead a workshop on Training for Transformation. Regular visits were made by David and Eliza Jones between 1996 and 2000 but there was then a difficulty with visas which resulted in a three year gap. This visit was the first since November 2000 and was an opportunity for Grassroots and SEDEP to review the project and the partnership.

Context

The 20 year old civil war in Sudan has caused huge loss of life and movement of people. No accurate figures are available but we are talking about at least 2 million killed and probably nearly 4 million who are either displaced within Sudan or have become refugees. The majority of this suffering is among those from South Sudan who rebelled against the government which was dominated by those from the north. The conflict is portrayed as an Arabic, Islamic north against an African, Christian south and the religious and cultural factors are fundamental. However the violence between different factions in the south and the resistance of groups in the north against the policies of the government are also significant.

In 2000 the prospects for peace looked even more remote. The government had successfully developed oil wells in the South and was becoming more arrogant and confident in its pronouncements. The foreign exchange earnings from the oil meant that the government was not so exposed financially to the costs of the war and it was able to start manufacturing its own weapons and munitions.

September 11th has changed the dynamic. The fact that Osama bin Laden had lived in Khartoum for some years meant that Sudan appeared on the list of countries supporting terrorism and therefore subject to the attentions of the US military. Suddenly the international community began to put some muscle behind the IGAD peace talks which had been dragging for years and getting nowhere.

In July 2002 the Machakos Peace Agreement was signed which for the first time acknowledged the cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of the people of Sudan. It also recognised the right of the people of Southern Sudan to self determination. The government and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) agreed to continue talking to work out the implications of such an agreement. To the surprise of many a security agreement was signed in September which recognises the presence of two armies and will establish a joint command structure that will reduce the strength of both armies by 80% and allow the presence of SPLA forces in the north. Further talks are taking place in October and it is anticipated that a final agreement will be reached by the end of the month which will address power sharing, wealth sharing and the status of three disputed areas.

The Machakos agreement envisages a six year transition period during which all attempts will be made to create conditions that will make a united Sudan attractive to

the people of the South. A referendum will be held at the end of the six years for the people of the South to decide on their own future.

The change in mood is dramatic:

- many Southerners are talking of going home for Christmas
- Southern political groupings that are not part of the SPLMA are discussing the priorities for developing the south
- Southerners who have benefitted from collaborating with the government are very apprehensive about their future
- The government held a convention of the political party and is talking the language of inclusion

1. SEDEP

a) Structures

The Review Workshop held in November 2000 had discussed the need to form a new legal structure because of the changes in the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS). It was agreed that SEDEP would become an autonomous Community Based Organisation (CBO) and a small committee was appointed to draft a constitution ready for registration.

On 26th January 2001 the first General Assembly of SEDEP was held and attended by 43 people. The draft constitution was presented and discussed. It was approved with a few small amendments. On 4th May 2001 a further General Assembly was held attended by 26 members and it was reported that 35 people had completed membership forms and 25 had paid the fees. On 1st November 2002 a further General Assembly was attended by 14 members to address the problems being experienced by SEDEP. On 10th October 2003 another General Assembly was held and attended by 43 members.

A number of problems have occurred in the period since November 2000:

i. Staffing

Abraham Bandere was the founder of SEDEP and its team leader from 1998 to January 2001. He was a very experienced development worker who had previously been Deputy General Secretary of Sudan Council of Churches in Juba. His sudden retirement in January 2001 was a surprise to the members of SEDEP.

Gabriel Otor was appointed as team leader in January 2001. He was a younger person with good development experience but little experience of programme management. In November 2002 the General Assembly noted that Gabriel had been inactive for the last twelve months and Light Wilson Agangwa was appointed as team leader.

Light is a founder member of SEDEP and has been very active in the programme. He has established an independent CBO and has been an important link between SEDEP and other community based organisations.

ii. Financial Management

The systems established by SEDEP were professional. A qualified accountant, Rachel Idia, was appointed as treasurer and she has prepared accounts and financial reports for the General Assemblies. Cheques required two signatures and one of these had to be a member of the Leadership/Management team. In spite of this, Abraham Bandere

withdrew \$4,101.23 in July 2002 and has now moved to South Sudan. The cheque was signed by the Chair of the Management Team Stephen Kayanga and he personally accompanied Abraham to the bank. Abraham had resigned from SEDEP eighteen months earlier and did not indicate why this money was needed. Stephen's explanation of this action is that he trusted Abraham too much having known him for many years and worked with him for a long time. Stephen is in contact with Abraham and trying to obtain an explanation of what has happened to this money.

iii. Role of Management team and General Assembly

One of the aims of capacity building is to encourage the formation of viable and sustainable community structures which are able to provide a vehicle for the development of the community. The standard model involves three components:

- General Assembly made up of members of the organisation and responsible for electing a Management group and holding them to account.
- Management group which is elected by the membership and has responsibility for appointing and monitoring staff, approving budgets and accounts, and ensuring that the wishes of the members are executed.
- Staff appointed by the Management Group and accountable to the Management Group.

SEDEP's Management Team has been ineffective in responding to the failures of Gabriel as team leader and monitoring the financial management. The General Assembly has been active in questioning the Management about these failures.

iv. Relationship with the church

SEDEP was established by the church and operated under the umbrella of the church for the first three years. The members of SEDEP are active in their own churches and provide leadership in the parishes. However during visits to the Parish centres questions were raised about the relationship between SEDEP and the ECS. This visit provided two opportunities to address this problem:

- discussions with Bishops

David met with Bishop Bulus Idris, Bishop of Khartoum, on two occasions and discussed the outcome of the visit. The Bishop emphasised that there was only one diocese in Khartoum and the diocese need to be kept informed of SEDEP activities.

The Dean of the Province, Bishop Eluzai Guma Munda, from Mundri Diocese was visiting Khartoum and so David was able to meet with him on several occasions and discuss the work of SEDEP.

Both Bishops were supportive of SEDEP and encouraged it to continue its work.

- discussions with church leaders

A meeting was called for 9th October to discuss the misunderstandings between SEDEP and ECS. At this meeting, attended by over thirty people, it was made clear that the change in legal status was a recommendation by the new Bishop of Lui designed to strengthen SEDEP so that it could attract other outside funding and be free to work more widely. There were some comments from pastors that they knew nothing about SEDEP, and there were some comments from SEDEP facilitators that they had organised activities in the parish and no clergy had attended. It was agreed that SEDEP needed to improve its communication with the church leaders.

The General Assembly held on 10th October 2003 reviewed the activities and achievements of SEDEP and then considered the difficulties and problems. The Assembly was asked to decide whether it was time to close down SEDEP or whether it should continue. David made it clear that there were financial consequences of the failures. No further funding would be available from Christian Aid and Grassroots in any case reviewing its link with SEDEP because of David's retirement.

The Assembly agreed unanimously to revive SEDEP with Light Wilson Agangwa as Team Leader. The understanding is that activities will have to be funded from local resources in the immediate future until SEDEP is able to demonstrate improved financial management.

b) Education

The aim of the programme has been to train 60 facilitators who can work with communities on education for development and peace. Two phases of the Training of Trainers have been held and an additional workshop on Responding to Conflict. A third phase of the Training of Trainers was planned for 2001 but it has never been held. In terms of the SEDEP activity in education the last three years have been wasted because there has been no further training and little follow up and support of those who have been trained. However the continuing activity of those who have been trained is encouraging.

i. Outcomes

Individual Benefit

As noted in the 2000 report, participants in SEDEP are playing a leading role in their communities. There is a growth in confidence and during visits to many of the parish centres it was clear that SEDEP animators have the respect of their communities.

Development

A number of SEDEP members have been actively involved in the establishment of CBOs so that they have a vehicle to enable the community to take leadership of its own development.

- Mundri Province Youth Cultural and Social Club MPYCSC

Started in December 2001 after a workshop organised by SEDEP members was held in Dar el Salaam in March 2001. 120 members. Summer Schools and workshops on Human Rights.

- Manna Charitable Society Joseph Khamisi

Registered in 1999, present membership about 100 drawn from 6-7 ethnic groups Involved in Poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS awareness, Education. Joseph said that one of the values of the training had been that participants now had a different attitude to northerners. 'They are not just enemies, we need to try and understand them and look for the root causes of the conflict'

- Mundri Area Council Youth Association MUCAYA Major Clement Monyoro

Established in 1987 in Juba, Mucaya was very involved in the birth of SEDEP. Involved in the management of a Basic School

- **Mundri Students Association MUSA**

Established in 1993 and organise cultural activities, holiday courses and teaching seminars.

- **Jambo Area Youth Association JAYA** Laverick Abdalla Ali Modi and Mary Gideon Jagu

Formed in November 2001 to promote socio-economic development in the Jambo area of Mundri. Organised Christmas celebrations in 2001 and 2002 and is now involved in Health training with UNESCO.

- **Sudan Self Help Foundation SSF** Felix Sunday Khamis

Established March 2002 and involved in training of trainers programme for peace building, human rights, good governance and development

- **Apaya Association** Light Wilson Agangwa

Formed in 1999 and works particularly on children's rights.

Networking

Of the 60 people trained by SEDEP 19 have left Khartoum and are now living and working in the Nuba Mountains or the South. Contact is maintained with some of these people and it is known that there are similar community based organisations established in the South.

The universal feeling among all of the groups was that people would be moving back to the South as soon as it was clear that the Peace Agreement was effective. The priority will be to help in the process of repatriation, peace building and resettlement. This network of people and CBOs is well placed to provide assistance.

c) Income Generation Projects

The allocation of loans is summarised below:

Location	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount Loaned in SDD	Amount Repaid
Haj Yousif	5	100,000	52,000
Mayo	6	120,000	78,000
Kalakalat	7	140,000	108,000
Fitihab	3	60,000	9,000
Omdurman	5	100,000	67,500
Wad Medani	3	60,000	55,500
Angola	4	80,000	Nil
Jebel Aulia	7	<u>140,000</u>	<u>52,500</u>
		800,000	422,500

42 women were trained in the management of small scale businesses. One woman died in 2000 and one woman refused to accept the loan because of the delay between the training and the issue of the loans.

There is no doubt that these small loans have been beneficial and enabled some women to improve their financial situation.

There have been difficulties including:

- there was a delay between the training and the issue of loans
- the accounting is weak and it is difficult to trace all of the money that has been repaid
- the follow up of the loanees has been inadequate

2. Other Contacts

a) Diocesan Link Board

This was the body set up in Khartoum to coordinate the links between the displaced Diocese of Lui and the Diocese of Lund. It is now a sub committee of the Diocesan Link Board in Lui. Assistance is still received from Lund and administered by the Committee. As SEDEP was one of the children of the original Link Board there was discussion about SEDEP. The Chairman described SEDEP as the training and educational organisation of the Link Board. Its work was important because development is more than the transfer of funds. The Link Board hoped that SEDEP would be revived so that its work would complement the work done by the Board.

b) Sudan Inter Religious Council

This featured in several discussions but I did not have direct contact with those involved. The government has supported the establishment of a forum where inter religious issues can be discussed. The Council was not considered very effective by the Christian community because the members were all appointed by Government. The Catholic Church has chosen not to participate because this is not perceived to be an effective way of building understanding between the faith communities.

As part of the peace process the Council has been changed and new members chosen by the Council. A new Muslim academic has been appointed to head the Council and he has been out of the country for some years and so does not appear to be so involved in the political agendas. The newly constituted Council met on 27th September and the Archbishop of the ECS contributed a paper. The agenda of the Council has not engaged at the theological level and is primarily concerned with addressing the injustices of the present situation. The Archbishop in his address raised the following issues:

- the government's consistent refusal to approve land for the building of new churches
- confiscation and assault on churches and their properties
- contextualization and islamization of the educational curricula nation wide ignoring the cultural and religious diversity in the Sudan.

If the Government is serious about a peace process leading to a united Sudan it is likely that some of these issues will be addressed over the coming months.

c) Theological Education

Shokai Bible Training Institute was founded in 1970 and offers a three year Diploma course for 20 students. They also run a three year Certificate course and a TEE programme. The Institute does not have adequate space to take more than one group of students so a new group of students is recruited every three years and then taken through the three years course. The Rev Musa Elgadi is the Principal and he has seen the Institute move into its own buildings, increase the size of its intake from 12 to 20 students, and upgrade from Certificate to Diploma level education.

Bishop Ngalamu Theological College began in 2000 from an initiative within the Moru community. It too is providing diploma courses but this is also designed to provide training for 'interested young men and women in social and natural sciences with theological flavour'. There is a recognition that the skills required for ministry in the coming years will need to incorporate those disciplines that will enable clergy to relate to other sectors of society and to the challenges of modernity. There are no full time staff and tutors are drawn from the Universities and other areas of public and church life.

d) Theological reflection on peace building

A brief meeting was held with the Provost of the ECS Cathedral, Canon Sylvester Thomas Kambaya, Stephen Kayanga and Moses Monday John an evangelist with the Diocese.

David was reading *Violence in God's Name* during the visit which is by Oliver McTernan. He argues that many of the peace agreements that are signed in conflict situations which have a religious dimension, do not recognise this religious element. The agreements are signed by the political elite who then have great difficulty in persuading those they represent to accept the agreement. His case studies are Northern Ireland, Palestine, and Sri Lanka and he suggests that the way in which these agreements have frequently unravelled is partly because the religious dimension is not taken seriously.

Grassroots has been exploring ways in which it can engage with those involved in conflict situations to reflect on the theological implications. In what ways has our faith been used to justify violence? In what ways does our faith provide the opportunities to transform conflict?

In the conversation in Khartoum I was reminded of the need for humility. Sylvester had recently been called in by the security and questioned for four hours. In 2001 he was badly beaten and tear gassed when the police and military attacked the Cathedral to break up a demonstration in protest at the banning of a religious rally to be addressed by a German evangelist. In these situations you may not have the luxury of theological reflection!

It was said that the SPLA has never used any religious justification for its conflict. The argument for the armed struggle has been based on human rights and justice. The Churches have always preached non violence and the record of the Southerners displaced in the north has certainly been one of passive resistance.

The area which was perceived as relevant was how the church can be more effective in bringing reconciliation. It was recognised that there will be huge challenges when the peace agreement is signed.

e) Human Rights Education

A number of groups have been involved in human rights education so that people are more aware of their legal rights. One organisation described a situation where one of their participants had been learning about the Sudan constitution and the rights that it provides. Some time later a group of police arrived to search his house and so he

asked for their permit. The police were taken aback at being asked and left without making a search.

Students who were arrested during the attack on Khartoum Cathedral were subjected to violations of their rights because of abuses of the legal system. These abuses were challenged and the students were released.

f) Christian Aid Local Grants Committee

David and Light met with Mary Philip, the Chair of the Local Grants Committee and Sara Musa the Christian Aid Local Accompanier. They provided information about the priorities for the Local Grants Committee and procedures for applying.

g) British Embassy

David and Light met with Muna Eltahir Hamdan and discussed the priorities of the Local Small Grants Scheme and the new Peace Building Funds. Full information was available on their web site and Light will share this information with the Management Group.

3. Reflections

a) Creating a Culture of Peace

Everyone recognises that signing a piece of paper in Kenya is a long way from creating peace in Sudan. Iraq has shown that the skills and experience for peace building are far more difficult and hard to find than the skills for war. Some of the issues that were discussed included:

- those who will be responsible for the implementation of the peace are the same people who have sustained the war. Will they expect to use force if they are unable to get their way.
- What will happen to the various militia in the south whose power depends on their arms?
- How will those who have remained in the south relate to the return of those who have spent 20 years in Europe and America, and to those who have spent the last 20 years in Khartoum
- How will the government react if it realises that the people of the South are going to vote for full independence in the referendum
- Will the SPLA share power with representatives of other political groupings in the south

In the discussions many argued that democracy was the best safeguard for peace. The most important priority was to ensure that democratic structures were established. Such structures are only effective if the people are aware of their rights and know how to make the democracy effective. This emphasises the importance of the type of approach taken by SEDEP. In some ways it is ideally situated to play an active role in building a culture of peace. Members of SEDEP are now scattered over the south and north and could link in a network. Joint activities could be organised by those from the south and those displaced in the north.

b) Ethics and War

One of the comments in the discussion about the financial problems in SEDEP was that we needed to understand the difficulties of a war situation. The value system of a society can collapse in such a conflict. The abuses perpetuated by the military, the

daily injustices experienced by people in the north, the desperate need to find ways of surviving all conspire to blur the ethical standards. The danger is that the only value becomes survival and a person will do anything if that means they survive. Young people who have grown up in a situation where they have never experienced peace have not had the opportunity to develop ethical values that will be respected by others and upheld legally.

c) Whose Liberation

The plight of the south Sudanese is a blot on the conscience of the world. The way in which Britain has contributed to that situation through its inadequate preparation for independence and its ineffective support for justice for the south during the conflict, are facts of which the British need to be more aware. There are encouraging signs that the voluntary agencies, the UN agencies and western governments are making a concerted effort to achieve a peace agreement and then mobilise the resources necessary to build peace.

However peace and development are not things that can be delivered by others. They have to be created by the people themselves. The struggle and suffering of the people of the south has given them a deep understanding of the important values in life. Christianity is a way of life not an optional extra on Sundays. There is the recognition that faith must have something to say about the political world and the church must engage with the secular world. At a personal level it is less important what words a person may use – people have learnt to read the soul. What is at the heart of a person is what matters.

In many ways Britain has much to give to Sudan at this time and many of the people of the south look to Britain to provide a lead. It is also important that the people of Sudan and the people of Britain recognise how much Sudan has to give to Britain. Sobrino argued that the suffering people of the world today still have the power to contribute to the liberation of the rich and comfortable.

d) A future for SEDEP

When I realised the scale of the problems within SEDEP I felt initially that there was no alternative to close down. That may well be the decision that will have to be taken next year. However as I met the people who have benefitted from SEDEP and heard their dreams and saw their work, I realised why they are so anxious to revive its activities. Grassroots is making £1,000 available to enable the registration process to be completed and planning activities organised over the next six months. The SEDEP members recognise that they will have to fund the activities in the immediate future until they have built up greater credibility over their financial management. There is now a clear sense of community ownership – this is their project, not Grassroots or Christian Aid.

Without doubt there are enormous opportunities and needs for the skills and vision of SEDEP and so it is my hope that the past difficulties will prove to be a means of strengthening the organisation for future challenges.

Djc
15.10.03

Appendix Programme of Visit

Date	Description	Purpose
Oct 1st	10.00 Rt Rev Bulus Idris – Bishop of Khartoum	Courtesy call
	11.00 SUDRA (ECS Development Board)	To meet Rob Watson
	1.00 Diocesan Link Board	Discussion with Chairman Wilson Sebit Apollo
	3.30 SudanAid (Catholic Development Board)	Discussions with Isaac Kungur Kenyi (Justice and Peace Commission) and Francis Bassan (Exec Sec Aid and Development)
	7.00 Sudan United Democratic Front	Discussions with Peter Sule and Dr Wani Sule
Oct 2nd	9.30 SEDEP Management	Update on present situation
	11.30 Sudan Self Help Foundation	Discussions with Felix Sunday
	2.00 Sudan Council of Churches	Discussions with Joy Kwaje
	4.00 FitiHab Parish Centre	Meeting with community
	6.00 Charity and Stanley Ambajoio	Bringing greetings and gifts from sister in Luton
Oct 3rd	10.00 Dar es Salaam	Meet with community and see Lunjini new church, Apaya Basic School, Mundri Apaya Club
	3.00 Kalakalat Parish Centre	Discussions with community and church leaders
	7.00 All Saints Cathedral	Meeting with Provost and small group to explore theological implications of the conflict
Oct 4th	10.00 Rev Andy Ambrose – Dept of Religious Affairs	Courtesy Visit
	12.00 Changemakers	Discussions with Bol Ring
	3.00 Ulla Mothers Union Centre	
	4.30 Hai Baraka Parish Centre	Discussions with church and community leaders
	7.00 Dean of the ECS Province of Sudan – Rt Rev Eluzai Guma Munda	Discussions
Oct 5th	9.00 Rachel Idia	Discussions about SEDEP finances
	11.30 FitiHab Church Centre	Preach
	3.30 Mandela/Mayo Parish Centre	Discussions with community and church leaders
	6.00 All Saints Cathedral	Bring greetings
	8.00 Prof Sibrino Barnaba Forojalla	Discuss proposed Nile Institute
Oct 6th	9.30 Joanna	Discussions
	11.00 Swedish Free Mission	Share experiences on training for development
	4.00 Ngalamu Theological College	Meet staff and learn of plans
	5.30 Women Leaders	General discussion
	7.30 Charity and Stanley Ambajoio	Social evening
Oct 7th	9.30 British Embassy	Meet Muna Eltahir – Projects Officer and introduce SEDEP
	11.00 Mary Philip	Chair of Christian Aid Local Projects Committee
	11.30 Azza Womens Association	General Discussions
	2.00 Mucaya	General Discussions
	3.00 Mundri Students Association MUSA	General Discussion
	4.30 Jambo Area Youth Association JAYA	Learn of plans
	8.00 Wilma and Dr James Odra	Social evening
Oct 8th	8.30 Sarah Musa El Saeed – Christian Aid	Discuss Christian Said Local Grants

	Accompanier	policy and introduce SEDEP
	9.30 Manna Charitable Society	Learn of work
	12.30 Wad el Bashir	Meet community and church leaders
	6.00 Stephen and Miriam Kanyanga	Social evening
Oct 9th	9.30 SEDEP staff to plan seminar	
	12.00 Shakai Bible Training Institute	Discussion with Musa Elgadi = Principal
	3.00 Fitihab Parish Centre	Meeting with church leaders to discuss relationships between SEDEP and ECS
	7.30 Youth	Discuss requirements for democracy
Oct 10th	9.30 – 6.00 ECS Guest House	Workshop with SEDEP General Assembly
	7.00 Bishop of Khartoum and Dean of Province	Report back on visit
Oct 11th	9.30 – 2.30 Report writing and winding up	
	3.30 – 7.30 Farewells	