

bulletin

special insight After decades of struggling war, the children of southern Sudan face new challenges in the name of peace. Anna Koblanck shares with us her experience, and examines the most important issues and problems facing the new Sudan.



PHOTO ANNA KARI

editorial

What is in the best interest of the child – do we make a difference in the real world?

The best interest of the child is one of the pillars in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. It should always be in the back of our head when we are trying to improve the situation for children. But what does it really mean to our children and the girls and boys we work with/for in Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya etc? The key formulation in the CRC is in Article 3: "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration."

It applies to 'all' actions, taken by SCS, the Ministry of Education or the local chiefs. It also concerns 'children', both as individuals and as a group. For example, all children should have access to schools, and maybe some governments want to make sure that a certain group – girls – have access. But the government also has to make sure that Achol who is eight years old and has a physical disability in her right leg also has access to education. This is important when it comes to political decisions and policy development.

The Article talks about 'a' rather than 'the' primary consideration. Thus, the best interest of the child can not normally be the only consideration, but it should be among the first aspects to be considered and should be given considerable weight in all

decisions affecting children. But what is the 'best interest'? The Convention does not offer any definite statement of what is in the best interest of an individual child in a given situation. This is meant to be, so that we can have our discussion within each village, project or government institution. However, the CRC as a whole provides a frame of reference. The best interest of the child is one of the pillars and should therefore be linked to all the other articles and not seen in isolation. So, if we are talking about Achol and whether she should go to school or remain at home to learn how to do household work and support the family, we have to look at the best interest of Achol. When we discuss what the best interest is we will have to listen to her views (children's right to make their voice heard, one of the other pillars of the CRC). We also need to relate it to her right to access to quality education, and her right not to be discriminated upon because she is a girl etc.

The best interest of the girl or boys is at the core of our work. It is very useful to discuss what it means within SCS when we talk about how we should design or implement projects. It is very useful when we have discussions with men and women in the villages or towns where we work. What does the best interest of the child mean to them? What is it in the local culture that strengthens the best interest of the child? What is it in the culture that work in the opposite way?

cont page 2



Save the Children
Sweden

Armed with a notepad

Armed with a notepad, and a photographer, Anna Koblanck headed into the southern Sudan to find out what life was really all about. Her story reveals how the people, after decades of war, now are reshaping and reforming their own country – with little more than nothing to start off with. It's a battle for each and everyone, not least for the children, who recently celebrated the Day of the African Child – for the first time ever in a peaceful environment.

The Sudanese telling their stories in our

Special Insight are from Malual Bap, a rural region in the southern Sudan, where Save the Children Sweden (SCS) are working to strengthen the community and the rights of children, focusing on education, non-discrimination and participation. Creating basic grounds for a better future.

Throughout this Bulletin, our work in the region is highlighted – our projects, our progress, and our aims for a promising tomorrow. We're glad to share this with you, now in a somewhat redesigned package. Welcome back to the Bulletin!



PHOTO ANNA KARI

cont editorial

In the real world there is always a balance between various interests that stand against each other. Questions that we will have to face in reality might be;

- How to balance the interest of one child against those of others? For example, in an educational system with limited resources – should all the kids get some education or should some kids get a very good education?
- How to balance the interest of the child versus those of the parents? It is sometimes argued that only the parents know what is good for their child. But this is not always the case, e.g. in case of abuse or neglect. The CRC always stand on the side of the child and see it from her/his point of view.
- How to balance the interest of the child versus the whole society? Such contradictions are often about resources. For example, a child that needs extensive hospital care versus the limited resources available. The CRC states that the government should allocate resources to their 'maximum extent' of their available resources. A serious decision maker therefore has to determine what reasonably should be regarded as the 'maximum extent' possible. How can this be discussed by the national or local politician?

As in all the work we do, we base it on the CRC. However, the challenge that we have is to apply the CRC. We can not come to a village and talk about Article 3 in the CRC. But if we know the content of the CRC and the Article 3, we can have an open discussion about what is in the best interest of children. Our knowledge on the CRC and how to apply the same is something that we constantly have to update. It is a learning process where we all have a part to play. And we learn by discussing with girls and boys and adults outside the organization, as well as our internal discussions. I think that this learning process (try different ways, assess them, improve our ways) is the key to our success in actually improving the situation of children – to make a difference in reality.

Anna Lindenfors, Country Director, SCS Kenya/southern Sudan

Regional update

Ethiopia

The current Ethiopian election problems, stemming from fraud in the process of counting votes, have put the country in an unstable situation where the confrontation between the governing and opposition parties over election results has led to infringement on basic human rights violation that last June took the life of more than 30 people, and led to detention of several thousands. The instability created by this issue and the uncertainty about what comes next in the Government structures would possibly have a negative impact on our work, particularly with government offices, for some times to come.

A demonstrations that was due to take place 2 October, was cancelled at the last minute as the Government had invited the Opposition parties to discussions.

Governmental Sudan

On Thursday 29 October, SCS received a phone call from UNOCHA expressing its suspicion that Tawilla town was under attack. Accordingly, SCS team contacted their office at El Fashir confirming the news and also adding that relief agencies have begun evacuation of all their staff members in Tawilla town.

SCS team was instructed to evacuate the area and proceed to Elfashir, where they arrived safely.

SCS N Darfur manager was told that 5 people have been killed and 25 injured in Dali IDP camp, 51 houses have been burned inside Tawilla town and there are reports of three rape cases. The IDPs have dispersed to nearby villages and about 2,500 people have taken refuge at the African Union compound.

Kenya/southern Sudan

This is the period which was characterized by gloom and uncertainty due to the death of Vice President of Sudan, Dr John Garang De Mabior, who was killed in a helicopter crash on his way to New Cush from Mbarara Uganda on 30 July. The security situation in the whole of southern Sudan was rated at level 3. Most of our operation areas were relatively calm, the residents, the UN agencies and the NGOs were preoccupied with the security situation and the funeral arrangements.

The body of the former vice president was brought to Rumbek for the people to pay their last respect on 5–6 August.



Exploitation and abuse

Street boys of Sudan

Charles neither knew his father nor went to school. His mother, a sex worker, handed him over to her maternal aunt who could not afford to pay school fees.

Eventually, Charles ended up on the streets of the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. "Charles mother wanted nothing to do with him from the time he was born." Marie McIntoff, founder of IRIS, a rehabilitation centre and orphanage caring for street boys, said. IRIS is currently home to 40 boys, 25 of them under the age of 13.

Charles is one of the thousands of street boys who have lost their parents or guardians to prostitution, alcohol, drugs and death as a result of Sudan's 23 year long civil war. In 2000, a survey indicated that there were 34,000 street children roaming around Khartoum State, 83 percent of them boys.

For those children without family or who are unable to integrate back into their own, a foster family system was being set up in order to get the children off the streets.

"We have found that showing parental love to the children has delivered them from their desire to return to the markets and sniff glue. They are becoming obedient and helpful to both one another and to the staff. We expect these children to play significant roles in building up their community and country for the better in the future," said McIntoff.

Signing in Nairobi brings the Diversion Project further

An MOU was signed on 9 September between SCS and the Department of Children's Services in Kenya. The signing of the MOU by Hans Ridemark, SCS Regional Representative for Eastern and Central Africa, and Mr Ahmed Hussien, Director of the Department of Children's Services, marks a new phase in the Diversion project, where the government is beginning to take ownership of the project and support the same in terms of personnel and resources.

Prior to the signing, between 5 and 9 September, Hans Ridemark and Anna Lindenfors, Country Director for Kenya and southern Sudan Programme, carried out a monitoring visit to the Diversion project areas of Nyanza province and Rift Valley province. The Team also included the Director of Children's Services, a Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police and the Co-ordinator of Girl Child Network which is one of SCS partner NGOs in Kenya amongst others.

By September the Diversion project expanded its child protection units to five new project areas, adding to a total of nine child protection units in nine project areas. The project has also, through partners, initiated five community based sup-

port systems for children. The community based support systems are for rehabilitation, care and support of children in conflict with the law, as well as for support to other categories of vulnerable children at the community level.

A draft report on the situational analysis has been produced and distributed to children officers for their comments and inputs before finalization and distribution to stake holders.

The objectives of the analysis were:

- Gather information and present the situation of children's rights in Kenya within diversion project areas.
- Assess the community based support system for children that are existing and/or can be strengthened.
- Review and assess the current planned initiatives in child participation by each of the key NGOs and Government departments within the project areas.
- Assess and provide information on the criterion of expansion on the diversion project for children in conflicts with the law in Kenya, from current four areas to a total of 14.
- Propose appropriate areas of intervention in the area of child protection for SCS in Kenya.

Repatriation of Sudanese refugees in Ethiopian camps

The Sudanese refugees were settled in Ethiopian refugee camps since the early 1980s. However, following the comprehensive peace agreement between the Sudan Government and SPLA/SPLM in January, the issue of repatriation has been a hot discussion point among the refugees, NGOs and UN agencies.

Assessment results indicate that more than 90 percent of the refugees agree to repatriation, as long as the security situation inside Sudan is dependable and basic services essential for life and schools for their children are available. SCS has been involved in the camp for over 13 years, mainly in areas of education and psychosocial services for children as well as capacity building and training.

According to UNHCR it has updated

the population statistics mainly for repatriation purpose and has made necessary conditions regarding logistics to carry out organized repatriation before the end of the year. The plan is said to first start with the Uduks in Bonga Camp of Gambella Regional State. From the Government side, in addition to facilitating conditions for the repatriation, the local government has also taken an inventory of all fixed assets owned by organizations operating in Bonga. The Uduk refugees have confirmed their readiness to repatriate any time when UNHCR and the governments of the two countries are ready but urged to be taken altogether than in groups.

SCS will have a role in monitoring the situation of children at the departure point and to the border of the two countries.

Children in armed conflict and disaster



PHOTO ANNA KARI

Serious attack on camp for displaced people in Darfur

An unprecedented attack Wednesday 28 September, on a camp for thousands of internally displaced people in Sudan's West Darfur region, left 29 dead and another ten seriously wounded.

Initial reports received by UNHCR indicate a group of 250-300 armed Arab men on horses and camels attacked Aro Sharow camp, in the northern part of West Darfur, on Wednesday afternoon, sending thousands of camp residents fleeing into the countryside. The attackers reportedly burned about 80 makeshift shelters - about one-quarter of the total

number in the camp.

While many villages have been attacked in this way, this was the first direct attack on a camp for displaced people anywhere in Darfur since the conflict began in early 2003.

The attack is the latest and most serious in a series of alarming security incidents throughout Darfur, which may prevent the provision of vital aid to tens of thousands of internally displaced people in Darfur.

There are an estimated 2 million internally displaced people in Darfur, including 715,700 in West Darfur; 770,800 in South Darfur, and 480,000 in North Darfur.

Emergency relief implementation in Darfur

SCS is restructuring its education and child protection program in Darfur. The program is now more focused on north Darfur particularly in Elfashir, Kutum and Tawilla. This implied SCS to enhance capacity as an implementation agency on the ground.

These last two months have seen a major development in SCS's usual direction of work. SCS has finally taken the role of implementers in order to try to contribute to the existing Darfur crisis. We are proud to announce that three sub offices have opened in the north Darfur region, namely in Elfashir, Kutum and Tawilla. These three areas are in desperate need for support and we have established our offices with the hope of assisting the already existing schools (basic and pre-schools) in rehabilitation, capacity building of teachers through child right training, ensuring maximum child participation and the provision of books and educational materials.

As 25,000 of the population in Tawilla fled to Elfashir after the mass attacks in November last year, El Salam camp is finally being established near Abu shok after long delays. SCS has constructed 32 classrooms and 4 offices in the camp, educational materials are going to be distributed as well.

new project

The Blue Nile Recovery and Rehabilitation Project

After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the EC has created a fund for rehabilitation programs in war affected areas all over Sudan. SCS has joined a consortium of national and international NGOs (Spanish Red Cross, Islamic Relief, and Mine Action Group) in an EC funded and UNDP executed project in the Blue Nile State.

The main aim of the project is the provision of basic services and poverty reduction. SCS, with Child Rights Institute (LNGO) as its associate, aims to incorporate CRP in the implementation of the project. The duration of the project is three years and SCS has been approved funding of 1 million Euros in order to provide CRP training, capacity building, teachers training and to strengthen child participation in all the project's areas.

We are very enthusiastic about this new project as it allows SCS to expand its vision and support in new areas in Sudan.



Education

PHOTO ANNA KARI

More girls go to school in southern Sudan

Some of the factors that keep coming up as being reasons for girls dropping out of schools are early marriages, lack of uniforms and proper clothing, school fees, diseases such as malaria and diarrhea, and lack of teacher support.

Most of the barriers to girls' education are being addressed through continuous and persistent education to the communities on the need to take girls to school. As a result, there is an improvement in attitude and an increase in the number of girls going to school. The advocacy and education against early marriages has also contributed to minimized drop out of girls from school.

It is encouraging to note that, unlike previous times when there would be a drastic drop in school during harvesting

period because many girls would be expected to be attending to domestic chores as their parents go out to harvest crops, the reality is currently quite different as there are more girls attending school.

There is a general increase in school enrolment in southern Sudan, Lakes region. This could be attributed to varied factors, such as returnees coming back from displacement and joining schools, whilst the students are excited and feel more rejuvenated to go back to school.

As the number of teachers have increased in Rumbek and remained stable in Yirol, the decrease in Cuiebet is attributed to the fact that some teachers are secondary students and have gone back to school.

SCS undertakes new education initiative

SCS has added a new education initiative to its already existing education program, by deciding to undertake a Joint ABE project with Save the Children US and Save the Children Norway in Endera wereda in Tigray region and Hamer wereda in SNNPR.

This education program is to be planned and implemented jointly. SCS's education program officer has made a visit to the project areas and provided some additional inputs to revise the project proposals to strengthen elements of child participation, issues of corporal and humiliating punishments, etc.

Workshop focusing on Sudan's Child act

In collaboration with the Child and Women Protection Centre (CWPC), SCS organized four workshops for 180 basic school's teachers in Elfashir-North Darfur locality.

The workshops aimed at spreading knowledge on CRC, psychosocial support, corporal punishment and Sudan's Child act 2004. As a follow up, a monitoring system was developed to observe the behavioral change towards child protection in schools.

32 new classrooms in El Salam camp, North Darfur

As 25,000 of the population in Tawilla fled to Elfashir after the mass attacks in November last year, El Salam camp is finally being established near Abu shok after long delays.

SCS has constructed 32 classrooms and 4 offices in the camp – educational materials, including school uniforms, books etc, are going to be distributed as well.

SCS partner portraits

In Ethiopia, as in the rest of the world, SCS implements projects together with a number of partners, fulfilling the rights of children.

Some of them are Abebech Gobena Orphanage, African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Center for Development Initiatives (CDI), Emanuel Development Association (EDA), Focus on Children at Risk, Forum on Street Children, Handicap National, Hiwot, Hope Enterprises, Integrated

Family Service Organization (IFSO), Prognyst, Support Organization of the Mentally Handicapped (SOOM), and Yekatit 12 Hospital Child Abuse and Neglect Unit (CANU).

If you would like to know more about our partners, how we work together, and get a deeper understanding of our projects, stay tuned for the next Bulletin, as we then feature a new series of 'partner portraits'.

For contact details of partners, send an e-mail to david.neveling@swedsave-ke.org

Main issues for improved teacher training

The following came up as the main issue of concern in the teacher education sector on a two day workshop held by Secretariat of Education, southern Sudan.

- Southern Sudan still has great shortage of trained teachers in schools.
- Many teachers are not carrying out the teaching due to lack of salaries.
- The quality of teachers is still low due to lack of secondary education.
- Lack of female teachers in schools was noted as a great concern.

New forum advocates for child rights inclusion in Sudanese constitution

Kenya/southern Sudan Training team formed

A Training team is finally formed which comprised of Fatuma Juma as the head, Joyce Mwangi and Sammy Mwangi. Staff training form core part of capacity building, and a draft strategy paper on training has been written and circulated to all staff. The overall purpose of staff training is to have competent and qualified staff that upholds children's rights high in the agenda, and to improve effectiveness and sustainability in relation to mission and context.

Apart from the core training team, there are three other training teams, one in each of our southern Sudan operation areas (Lakes, Bor and NBEG). The core training team will assess the training needs of the staff, develop/solicit training material, monitor and support the training teams.

Training on facilitation skills for the training teams was conducted in Rumbek 25–30 July. A total of 25 participants from different locations attended. Topics covered included assessing training, characteristic of adult learners, quality of a good facilitator, planning of lessons plans and organizing workshops etc.

Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration

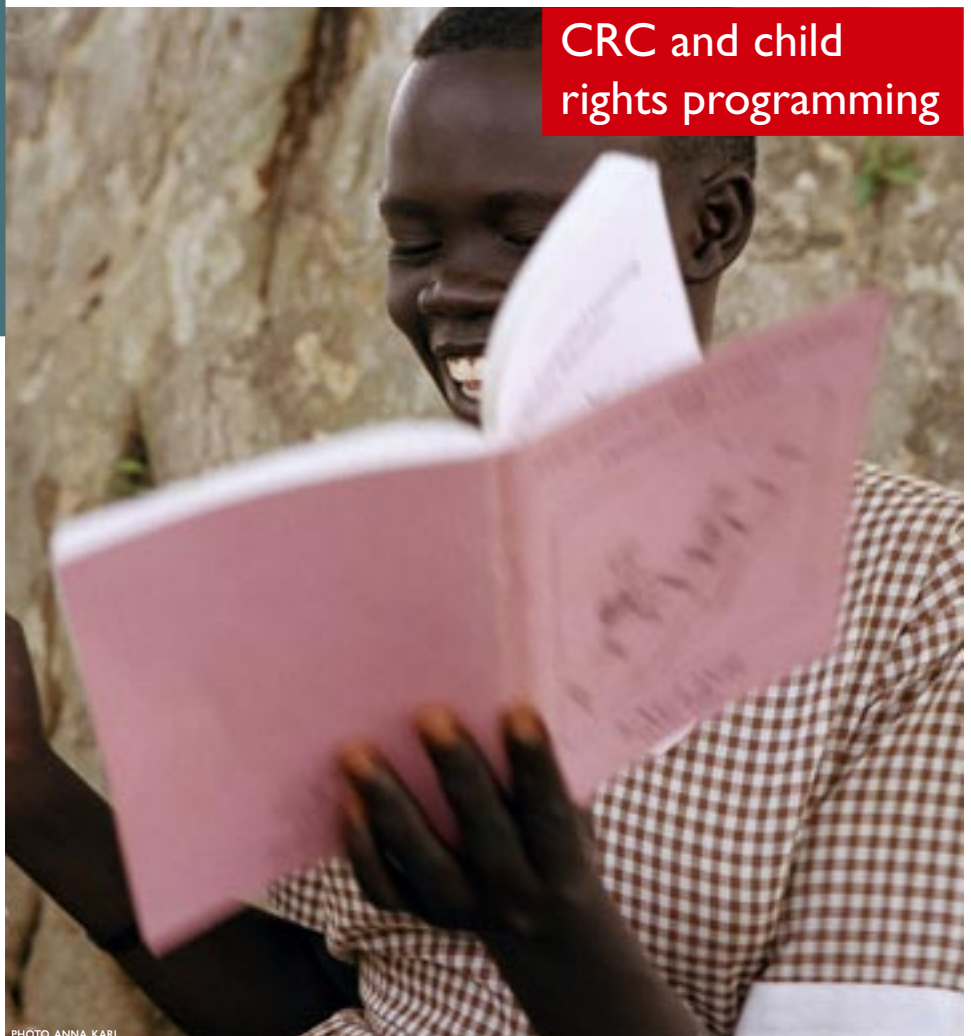
SCS is playing a lead role as a member of the children's technical committee of interim authority on demobilization, disarmament and reintegration in developing a policy framework that will guide the work on children associated with armed forces and groups. During the period 30 May to 1 June SCS supported a CRPO training workshop for all the staff of the DDR authority. The workshop was well received and the DDR authority has consulted with us on possibilities of providing child rights technical support to other parts of the government including the Council of Ministers.

In view of the opportunities that have aroused from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including the writing of a new constitution and revision of all laws, SCS initiated the formation of an interagency forum bringing together UN agencies, national and international NGO's who can work together with SCS in advocating for child rights inclusion in the products of the legal reform process.

Regarding the national child law, the forum succeeded in making consultative processes including civil society and the different bodies/authorities affected by the law as a basis for the revision of the child law as opposed to the theoretical version initially suggested. A number of workshops were conducted to facilitate consultations and recommendations

produced to be included upon the formal resumption of the revision process, currently pending the finalization of the constitution. Forum members are also currently involved in the process of writing a child law for Khartoum state.

The forum adopted a child rights article as a means of advocacy for inclusion of child rights in the constitution. The forum lobbied with several members of the national commission for constitutional revision and succeeded in including the discussion of the draft article in the agendas of the commission. Although the constitution is still being finalized, the commission has made known that it adopted clauses emphasizing child rights and providing among other rights the right to free basic education.



CRC and child rights programming

PHOTO ANNA KARI



Meetings, workshops and conferences

SCS Country Directors met in Khartoum

19–20 September the SCS Country Directors (CD) from Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya met in Khartoum. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss future plans and find ways to cater for the different offices' individual needs and concerns.

The new direction for 2006 was discussed and pending issues such as staff capacity building, security, IT, the regional network and strengthening cooperation within the alliance were dealt with.

Lawyers get TOT on CRC

In November last year an orientation on CRC was organized by SCS and the Federal Supreme Court Juvenile Justice Project for the members of the Alumni Association of the Addis Ababa University Faculty of Law. 25 lawyers volunteered to give free services to SCS and its partners for the realization of children's rights in Ethiopia.

As a follow up to this commitment, a Training of Trainers (TOT) on CRC was organized 22–26 August for 20 participants composed of lawyers, judges, lecturers, prosecutors and legal advisors.

The objective of the training was to build the capacity of the lawyers for child rights activism and constituency building as well as carry out joint planning of activities for 2006.

At the end of the training, the lawyers committed to give legal aid to the SCS partner projects they had visited at the field visits included in the training. They have also formed an ad-hoc committee of three lawyers that would coordinate them as child right lawyers support group/activists with a long-run vision of evolving into an NGO Network of lawyers for children's rights.

Children discuss poverty in drama and poems

SCS organized, in collaboration with Addis Ababa Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED), a children and youth consultation meeting on the 2nd Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) on 29–30 August.

The participants, a total of 120 children, were drawn from the 10 sub-cities of Addis Ababa. They comprise of school children, working children, street children, children with disabilities, orphans from institutions and youth leaders.

After the children were briefed about the PRSP, they were asked to give their views on how they define or understand poverty. The children expressed poverty, social injustice, rape and related topics in the form of drama and poems.

The children's active participation and deep insight has indicated the importance of children's views in such pertinent discussions. This was the first time they have been invited to participate in this discussion. Proceedings of the meeting have been sent to relevant bodies for follow-up.

NGO seminar

Through coordination of the Alliance education task group and in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF and Ministry of Education, girls' education workshops were conducted in Afar and Somali regions, Ethiopia.

The workshops were aimed at increasing capacity of various stakeholders at wereda level to strengthen education of girls, and were based on findings of study on girl's education conducted by SCA earlier.

ERDR meeting in Maridi

Three days Education Reconstruction and Development Forum was held in Maridi, southern Sudan. The meeting was organized by the Secretariat of Education and attended by all education partners in southern Sudan.

The main objective was to follow up on the harmonization of activity plans for the Secretariat. SCS was represented by the Education programme officer.

Perhaps the greatest appeal by the Secretariat was the need to be supported in terms of capacity building. This would enable them to stand as independent and accountable to matters of education in southern Sudan.

Workshop on violence against children

In May 2005, a boy and a girl were elected at the closing of a three-day workshop, which was organized by SCS and Unicef, to introduce around 30 children from different child/youth related organizations to the UN Study on Violence against Children, and to see how children perceive violence from their own perspective. The election of the representatives was made by the children themselves.

Children discussed the definition of violence, reasons behind violence

and suggested actions to be taken to prevent violence in their societies. The children offered suggestions and recommendations focused on raising awareness of the public and parents, ending war; provision of free education, creating alternatives to corporal punishment and supporting all activities that work to prevent violence against children etc. 27–29 June the two children travelled to Cairo and participated in MENA (Middle East North Africa Region) consultation meetings.

Launch of SCS intranet

SCS's new intranet makes use of modern technology to facilitate efficient communication and information sharing in and between different SCS offices and staff globally. The use of the system will allow SCS financial and programmatic information on the intranet to be accessed. The system will accelerate communication in a very efficient way, minimizing time and monetary consumption for this purpose. External communication and information will also gain from the intranet, as for efficiency and reliability.

Twenty-one years of civil war have turned Sudan into ruins. However, since the peace agreement was signed earlier this year, there is hope for the future. Anna Koblanck visited Malual Bap, where the villagers confronted the devastation and started building a new life – a school, a well and a meeting point for the traumatized. Photo Anna Kari.

The Beginning of a Better Life

Deborah Majok hits the broom on the ground several times, making the dust swirl as she sweeps the yard in front of the hut. While her mother takes a bath in a purple plastic basin, the tender seven year old Deborah enters the hut and gets the goats. She passes the smouldering fireplace, and ties the goats on the big tree while the hens walk back and forth in front of her bare feet.

“Hurry up to school and make sure that you come straight home afterwards so that you can take the goats to pasture,” Deborah’s mum, Nyanthuoi Kur, says just like she does every morning. With a plastic bag for a schoolbag, the little girl then departs for school in the early sunlight and walks along the dry, bushy landscape to meet her friends.

It is peace in southern Sudan. On the 9th of January 2005, the regime in Khartoum and the SPLM/A signed a peace agreement that finally brought one of the most brutal civil wars on the continent to an end. Two million people died from the violence and sufferings, and twice as many were forced to flee. For those Sudanese who survived the conflict that lasted for two decades, a new and different time has just begun. With their painful memories and experiences from the past, they have to step into a future which is both uncertain and promising.

The signs of war are visible everywhere around the school in Malual Bap. Among the huts in the village are ruins of old houses that were destroyed by bombs or fell into decay after the inhabitants hurriedly abandoned their homes under a hail of bullets. The broken houses slowly get covered by thin plants that defy the heat and drought. All around villagers are cleaning the front yards of their new homes. The older residences consisted of big square shaped houses whereas the

new ones are simple round huts made of mud and straw.

It seems as if no one really dares believe that the peace is a reality, which is not difficult to understand, especially since many attempts to end the conflict through the years had failed. Then the death of the legendary SPLM-leader and newly appointed vice-President John Garang in a helicopter accident appeared to stretch the thin thread of peace to its outmost limits. Despite this, hope for a peaceful future is sprouting. Already four years earlier, the villagers of Malual Bap decided to defy the destruction of the war. The village leader Santino Majur Amuom, worried about the lack of education gathered his neighbours and proposed to build a school. “I realized that we wouldn’t have any future leaders in our village if we don’t let our children go to school,” he recalls. Together, the villagers cleared a spot in the village and built a house with two classrooms. Next they built a smaller house with an office for the headmaster and a room for the teachers to meet in. A short while after they completed two more classrooms with open holes for windows and a black board as the only furniture. Here, almost four hundred students gather to learn how to read, write and count.

It looks idyllic when Samuel Bol leads his students in song and dance on the open schoolyard between the classrooms. Dressed in a fringed denim vest and with dark sunglasses, he claps his hands rhythmically at the same time as about thirty pupils in badly fitting clothes hold each other’s hands and sing and dance around him. The children are bare footed in the hot sand and squint towards the burning sun. It is obvious that they are having fun, but the tensed shoulders of the twenty-five year old Samuel Bol signify an uneasy soul which has experienced all

the horrors of war. Even now, at a time of peace it seems difficult for him to find peace of mind. “I thought that I could at least try to help,” he tells us, “since I know how to write and read”.

Like most men of the Dinka tribe, Samuel Bol has had, since his teen years, five parallel cuts on his forehead, a traditional proof of his maleness. The dark scars give him a threatening and at the same time grim impression. He looks more like the guerrilla soldier he until recently was than a primary school teacher, and it is easier to imagine him with a machine gun in his hand than a pointing stick. He lacks basic education and like a couple of other young men he works for free as a teacher in the home village. There is no money for salaries for anyone in Malual Bap – the only driving force is the hope of a better life for the next generation. “Actually, I don’t even like to work as a teacher because I lack experience and my knowledge is scarce in several subjects,” Samuel Bol admits.

Since the peace agreement was signed, former inhabitants have started to return to Malual Bap again. In only a few months, the population of the village has increased by almost three hundred persons, or ten per cent. Thirty-eight year old Angelina Diing is one of the returning refugees. She has moved in with relatives that she had not seen for over twenty years. “I am very happy to be back and to meet my relatives and my husband’s relatives again. We talk and share memories with each other,” she says sitting on the bed in the dark hut that she has borrowed for herself and her two almost grown-up children. The smell of seko, the white home brewed alcohol, rises from the glass that Angelina Diing hands out. However, the drink has a mild taste and is not as strong as the steam of the alcohol might indicate. “Among the first things that I saw when I got off the truck



in Rumbek was that the women were selling alcohol on the streets," Angelina says amazed. "I asked carefully if they were not scared of being arrested but they said no. Then I said to myself, pleased – here I will make a lot of money".

In the refugee camps around Sudan's capital Khartoum, where Angelina lived for two decades, it was strongly forbidden to sell alcohol. In order to make a living, she still brewed a batch now and then, which she hid behind her scarf and secretly sold on the "souk", the market. She laughs when she demonstrates how she became an expert at carrying a full glass close to her body and then quickly lift her scarf so that the client could drink. "If the police caught you, you would be put in jail for

one and a half years or you would have to pay a fine. Even if you only drank the alcohol you could be punished with a fine or fifty whips in public", Angelina says.

A couple of weeks after reaching her home village, having experienced a cumbersome trip across the whole of Sudan, she is pleased with her new everyday life. On the wall in the hut there is a poster which celebrates "The Return to Southern Sudan" and return-makers like Angelina. Outside, her daughter grinds peanuts on a stone into a plain dough. The only thing Angelina wishes is that there was more food to eat and that she would find her husband whom she has not seen since the beginning of the 1980's when he joined the guerrillas. "I'm trying to save

money so that I can go to the radio station and ask them to send him a message saying that I'm back now," she explains.

Since Santino Majur gathered the villagers to start building a school four years ago, the project has increased. The equivalent of a local village association is now fully established and has received funding and support from Save the Children Sweden to educate their teachers and develop the activities of the school. Next to the school yard a ten meter deep well has been dug so that the school has access to water; and in the same area people are in full swing building another house with three rooms.

What is so far only a few walls in grey-black bricks and a thick timber roof will gradually become a meeting *cont*

point for the adults in the village. Most of them are illiterate but here they will learn how to read, write and count. These adults and the children in the school next door will also get support to work on their experiences from the war: "In that way we will try to come to terms with the scars that people carry," Santino Majur Amoum says.

Deborah and her mum Nyanthoui have also relatively recently moved to Malual Bap. The whole of last year they stayed with a relative while they finished their own hut in a glade in the shrubberies in the outskirts of the village. "We fled back to this village because of the tribal fights that were going on where we lived before," the young Deborah says with a light but clear voice. "They looted our village and killed a person who was a friend of my mum and who had helped us to build our house there. They killed him and later that night we heard that they were planning to attack again the next morning, so we walked the whole night and stayed in a village and then we walked the whole of the next day as well until we came here," the seven year old continues in one single breath.

The smell from animals is strong in the windowless hut. Deborah and her mum usually sleep under bed nets on the yard

so the hut is almost only for the goats. The family's belongings fit on a wooden shelf attached to the roof – a few clothes, a pair of bowls made of dried pumpkins and a bag of goat leather. Two hens are sitting towards the wall. Underneath a woven basket four small kids are hiding. They run on unstable legs when Nyanthoui Kur takes off the cover:

"It was terrible during the war. The Arabs controlled the cities and the natives lived on the countryside. There was no salt, no clothes, no medication," the mother says. She is thin and skinny, and smokes her pipe decisively all the time. During the years of war she lost two children from illness and Deborah is the only one she has left. One time when she was almost dying herself she had to walk all the way to the town of Wau, and when she miraculously recovered, she met the man who later became Deborah's dad. "I was so sick that nobody believed that I would survive," Nyanthoui Kur says, sitting on a tree stool outside the hut.

The teacher Samuel Bol does not have any good memories from the war but is constantly chased by nightmares about his time as a guerrilla soldier. He was fifteen years old when he held a machine gun for the first time. The first attack he took part in lasted only half an hour but left fifteen of

"I always tell her that she doesn't have a sister or brother who can support her through life. Education is her siblings," Nyanthoui Kur says as she invites the neighbours for some homebrewed beer.

his friends dead. His guerrilla unit retreated and returned later with reinforcement. The fifteen years old Samuel Bol shot and shot until the battle was won. Afterwards he felt guilty that his friends had fallen and that he had survived. Still today he cannot understand why he survived. "One of my strongest memories from the war is how we prepared to attack and how we then moved towards the enemy and started shooting. It was always very scary. Every time I thought - now I am dying, this time I will not return".

A violent and sudden storm quickly sweeps outside the hut while Samuel is talking about the war. The wind blows through the door opening and makes the clothes on a line in the roof flutter. An angry rain makes the ground outside totally dark. Samuel Bol sits with a bad posture on the bed with his hands resting on his lap. How



many people has he killed?

"I have no idea. Most of the time we attacked late at night or early in the morning and in the dark it's difficult to see whether you hit or not. You don't know whether you've actually killed someone, or how many".

Angelina Diing's husband joined the guerrilla in the early 1980's shortly after John Garang and some other officers in the Sudanese army had started a riot against the regime in the north. A couple of years later, Angelina and her children had to flee from Malual Bap when the government's troops attacked the adjacent city of Rumbek and the surrounding villages. "We saw people falling around us and we just ran," she says. First they fled to the forest and then she took the children to Wau. After that, the capital Khartoum was waiting and during the years in the north Angelina has fled from one refugee camp to another. With disgust, her daughter Mary Akol describes how they had to live in small huts of mud and cow dung with plastic covers as roofs next to the city's highrises. The other inhabitants in the city treated refugees from the south as second-class citizens and the only job they could get was as badly paid maids. That is why her mother put her freedom at risk to sell alcohol in secret. "I don't know anything about the war myself. The teachers in Khartoum never said anything about it," says Mary Akol who left Khartoum pregnant and now has a big stomach underneath her thin nightdress.

The village leader Santino Majur Amoum lost a grandson in the attack of Malual Bap in 1986. He did not manage to bring the child when they escaped. "We had to leave him behind. There was no chance that I could manage to carry him because I was already carrying several other children," Santino recalls. How do you survive such experiences? If it is too difficult to look back, perhaps one has to look ahead instead. "I am pleased. Our next step is to investigate whether we can build a clinic, because it would be good to have a clinic next to the school where the children can be taken care of if they get ill," Santino Majur Amoum continues.

Deborah's mum Nyanthoui never went to school. Like many other girls in southern Sudan she got married only a couple of years after her first menstruation. Her parents chose her husband, the father

of the two children who died in the war: Deborah's dad she chose herself. "Deborah will choose her husband herself. She belongs to a new generation and things are different now," Nyanthoui Kur says and coughs with the pipe in her hand.

When she was a child most people lived in a traditional way, in nomadic cattle camps that moved with the seasons. Life was determined by the access to grazing land for the white cows with horns like harps, the most valuable belongings of

tell her that she doesn't have a sister or brother who can support her through life. Education is her siblings," Nyanthoui Kur says as she invites the neighbours for some homebrewed beer.

Even the teacher Samuel Bol is looking for a future through knowledge. He is hoping to save money so that he can go to Uganda or Kenya in order to get an education and become a real teacher. "I would like to study and then continue to teach. Then I will have a broader academic



the South-Sudanese people. The war has changed a lot of things and Nyanthoui is alarmed by the fact that today people are begging along the roads. People used to be embarrassed at asking someone else for food.

The good thing is that instead her daughter has got the chance to go to school. Deborah is aiming at become a doctor when she grows up. "I always

background and will be able to educate on a higher level and then I will enjoy it," he muses.

In the cold and dark classroom his students are sitting on a plastic sheeting on the ground in front of him, drawing in the sand. With a white chalk Samuel Bol is writing a counting example on the rickety board and a boy, who is typically tall and skinny like most of the people cont

of the Dinka tribe, is standing up to answer. He does not yet have any scars on his forehead and if Samuel Bol could decide, no more young boys would have to go through the painful rite of maleness. "If I had a son of my own, I would not let him do it," he declares.

Even though he stubbornly argues that the war was worth its losses and the pain - "for the nation's sake" - one can suspect that Samuel Bol wishes that he did not have to take such a brutal step out of childhood like he did when the guerrilla put a gun in his hand as a teenager. "To teach here in the school helps me to forget the past. I work with the children and what I'm doing doesn't have anything to do with the war," he says.

It is obvious that Angelina Diing and her daughter have been influenced by the life in the north. Angelina always puts a scarf on her head, just like Muslim women often do. Her daughter says that despite the misery in the refugee camps around Khartoum there were good things with the life in the north. "Here there is nothing," she sighs, standing on her knees with her big stomach towards the ground, while she irons the family's clothes. She is twenty-one years old - as old as the war- and she is a child and a woman at the same time. She laughs embarrassed and often pulls the black dreadlocks on her head.

On the first day in the secondary school in Rumbek, near Malual Bap, she felt that the other students were looking at her as if she was some kind of beast. They have interviewed her about life in the north and she asks them constantly what people do

to survive in southern Sudan. To be honest, she had expected something better for herself and her unborn baby. "I will have to wait for a while and see how life turns out to be here. If it doesn't look like improving I will move somewhere else," she says defiantly.

But Angelina has found her home. To have her loved ones around makes up for all difficulties. "I will start building my own life on what you have just tasted - the homebrewed alcohol. I will make money so that I can build my own house," she says, determined.

Inside the woven hut which constitutes the kitchen of the school, the village leader Santino's wife, Rebecca Ayen, and her female colleagues are distributing a brown-grey porridge on hundreds of plastic plates. The porridge is made of flour from the UN and the efforts of the ladies cooking the food are as voluntarily and non-paid as everyone else's in the village. Outside, the children of the school are singing, conducted by Samuel Bol. "We usually gossip about all sorts of things while we cook. We talk about the peace, about the new government and how well our children will do when they grow up. We hope that they will not have forgotten us by then," Rebecca Ayen says and smiles.

Anna Koblanck is a correspondent in Johannesburg for the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter, anna.koblanck@dn.se This article was first published 28 August in Dagens Nyheter. With kind permission from Anna Koblanck and Dagens Nyheter, we have translated the same.



War and peace within Sudan

- The civil war started with a revolt in southern Sudan in 1983, led by the former officer John Garang, and ended officially with the peace agreement that was signed on the 9th of January 2005.
- Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, SPLM/A, took up arms as a protest against those sharia-laws that Khartoum wanted to institute in the whole country, and against the discrimination against the country's African inhabitants. The northern parts of Sudan are traditionally Arabic, the southern parts are African.
- During several years of the 1990's there were also fights between John Garang and the current second vice-President of SPLM/A, Riek Machar, over power in southern Sudan. That power struggle was as equally devastating to the population as the revolt against the north.
- Due to the lengthy civil war, southern Sudan belongs to the most under-developed regions in the world. The illiteracy rate is high, hunger widespread, there is a lack of medicines even against treatable diseases, and the average life expectancy is short.
- It is still not peace in the whole of Sudan. A conflict between the regime and the guerrilla in Darfur is still ongoing and there are still disturbances in the eastern part of the country.
- Dr John Garang De Mabior died in a helicopter accident in August this year.



Upcoming events, new publications and picks

The Power of Continuity: Ethiopia through the Eyes of its Children

by Eva Poluha, PhD, Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, Sweden

Children play a vital role as a source of information on politics but have been neglected as political actors in research contexts. In this study, children are used as a window to an Ethiopian society where hierarchical relations persist, despite the numerous political and administrative transformations of the past century. With data gathered

through participant observation the book examines how young, Addis Ababa school children learn to adapt to and reproduce relations of super- and/or subordination based on gender, age, strength and social position. The children's experiences are viewed in the historical context of state-citizen relations where hierarchy and obsession with control have been and continue to be dominant. The discussion focuses on the power of continuity in the reproduction of cultural patterns and political behavior; and on how change towards more egalitarian relations could come about.

The Good Soldier book on child rights and child protection

written by Fred Magumba of SCS, and Una Mackauley of Unicef, was launched 16 June, Day of the African Child

The Good Soldier book, with illustrations, was written in the Sudan context and aims at sensitizing armed forces in Sudan on the positive role soldiers can play in the protection of children, before, during and after armed conflict.

In his address to the participants of the DDR process, Cdr. Salva Kiir, who is at present date the chairman of SPLM and Vice President of the new Sudanese Government, retaliated the efforts the SPLA has made to protect children.

He noted also that this years Day of the African Child was unique, as for the first time since its inception, children in southern Sudan were celebrating the day in a peaceful environment. He encourages the SPLA soldiers to read the book as it has vital information that will help them protect the children of Sudan.

Regional Calendar

24–25 October

Juvenile Justice Network meeting
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

24–25 October

SCS administrators training
Lima, Peru.

1–5 November

ERDF Meeting

8–9 November

Regional SCS Meeting
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

10 November

Media training
SCS staff and partners in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

11 November

Communication briefing
SCS staff in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

14 November

Media training
SCS staff and partners in Khartoum, Sudan

14–18 November

Universal Children's Week
Documenting children in Rumbek, southern Sudan.

15 November

Communication briefing
STC staff in Khartoum, Sudan

21–25 November

Leadership for change
Management training.

24 November – 2 December

Field visit by Swedish Cooperative Centre
Southern Sudan.

5 December

Due date submission for the next Bulletin

5–9 December

Annual Review

Calendar dates are accurate at press time; please send a mail to david.neveling@swedsave-ke.org or call +254 7341 139 166 for more information.

Global week on education

Following activities were carried out by SCS, celebrating the global week of education:

- SCS sending out advocacy messages to the humanitarian and donor community in Sudan.
- A radio program emphasizing children's right to free basic education.
- A consultation with children on the main issues that will allow all children to enjoy their right to education.
- SCS supported the Ministry of Education to produce a magazine on the issues of education for all.

**Due date submission for
the next issue: 15 December**



Get involved

You don't have to work for SCS to contribute to the Bulletin. Please, share your experience on fulfilling the rights of children, or comment on our work. You can also visit SCS website, rb.se/eng.

Send an e-mail to:

Dahlia El Roubi, SCS Khartoum office
dmroubi@gmail.com

Lullit G. Michael, SCS Addis Ababa office
lullit.gmichael@swedsave-et.org

David Neveling, SCS Nairobi office
david.neveling@swedsave-ke.org

Eastern and Central Africa region

Ethiopia, Regional Office
Box 3457
Addis Abeba, Ethiopia
Tel +251 11 3210960
Fax +251 11 3214234
office@swedsave-et.org

Kenya/southern Sudan
Box 19243
202 KNH – Nairobi, Kenya
Tel +254 20 2711282
Fax +254 20 2711280
office@swedsave-ke.org

Sudan
Box 6134
Khartoum, Sudan
Tel +249 183 256415/16
Fax +249 183 241589
rbsudan@sudanmail.net



Save the Children
Sweden