

Updates from Sudan

BUILDING A CENTER OF HOPE

In January of 2009, GO Directors, Jenny O'Connor and Bart Skorupa, visited with refugees and project partners in Israel to form The "Bridges to Africa" project. Since then, GO has been working in collaboration with UNHCR, The International Christian Embassy, Operation Blessing International (OBI), and the African Refugee Development Center (ARDC) to find sustainable and long-term solutions for Sudanese refugees in Israel, as well as refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan, Congo, and Eritrea. With more refugees coming across the border everyday, the situation continues to grow more difficult in Israel, as they often find no shelter, food, medical care, or jobs. As GO saw first hand during our visit, the community of southern Sudanese refugees in Israel remains optimistic, and rather than remain trapped inside Israeli prisons, or outside on the streets, they have expressed a deep interest in returning to Sudan after receiving the vocational training necessary for their reintegration.

The first phase of this project has focused on the creation and operation of an African Refugee Education Center in Jerusalem. The center will not only provide aid and education for women, men, and children as part of a Sudanese re-integration effort, but will also create programs geared to assist, support and empower all the refugees as they progress towards self-sufficiency and social integration in Israel. Currently, GO has sent over \$7,000 to our NGO partners in Israel to support the implementation of this phase. With these funds, we have supported initial education center costs, provided vocational training to the first pilot group of refugees, and returned this pilot group to Southern Sudan to re-unite with their families and re-build at home. The education center represents the culmination of a vision for a resource that will:

1. Enhance the communication ability of refugee adults, youth and children by developing literacy and language skills and making better use of the educational, vocational and social capital of refugees
2. Develop the social and psychological coping skills necessary for dealing with the new cultural and linguistic setting
3. Keep children and youth out of street and prevent engagement in high-risk activities and guide them to use free time safely, productively and creatively and create new areas of interests
4. Empower refugees to achieve a higher degree of self-reliance as independent and contributing members of society through education and training programs geared towards their re-integration to their home-countries
5. Reinforce dignity and self-esteem of refugees and asylum seekers through community mobilization that focuses on and enhances ownership
6. Restore the sense of self and normalcy and the capacity to play an active role in rebuilding their lives in the wake of trauma and crisis
7. Help develop social networks to prevent social isolation
8. Strengthen refugee's initiative and partnership, resulting in ownership of all phases of project implementation
9. Promote social coherence and strengthen the bonds between the refugee community and the Israeli community through cultural and recreational exchange initiatives

With the one-time costs of the center, including office equipment and classroom furniture, nearly covered, GO plans to facilitate, in partnership with OBI and ARDC, the completion of the clinic by August, 2010. The completion of the clinic will include the following over the next year:

- Site Manager: \$4,200
- 10 computers: nearly \$10,000 and/or some in-kind donations
- Rent: \$18,000

- Utilities: \$2,100
- Maintenance: \$1,500
- Insurance: \$900
- Cleaning: \$4,200
- Educational Materials: \$3,600 and some in-kind donations
- White boards: \$360

THE JOHN DAU FOUNDATION

As refugees continue to return to Southern Sudan, GO is committed to continuing to provide resources and aid to returnees as they move towards stability in their home country. Despite the 2005 peace agreement, the region is still not stable and medical needs remain critical. Diseases that have not been seen in the country for years now threaten to take the lives of men, women and children. In a country with a population of an estimated 11 million, there is only one trained doctor for every 100,000 people.

In addition to the ongoing violent attacks, malnutrition is prevalent; maternal mortality rates remain among the highest in the world; HIV/AIDs and guinea worm are ongoing problems; and large-scale outbreaks of meningitis, cholera, and malaria are relentless. In the midst of all of this, humanitarian aid is lacking, with some major donors having redirected their funds and the number of humanitarian agencies reducing due to a lack of resources.

In this light, GO has formed a strategic partnership with the John Dau Foundation, <http://johndaufoundation.org>, whose mission is to build and support health care clinics and programs in South Sudan. Since May of 2007, The John Dau Foundation has been successful in the building and operation of one health clinic that is providing primary medical care to the people of Duk County, Southern Sudan. Because of the Duk Lost Boys Clinic, John Dau's home village of Duk Payuel is now a preferred location for GO, UNHCR and other NGO's to repatriate thousands of displaced families. Over 19,000 Internal Displaced People (IDP) from Duk County are being transported back to their areas with the onset of peace. The situation of these returnees upon their arrival back home is of great concern to Duk County. The living and health standards are very poor. Failure of the Clinic will mean that the men, women and children of the region will no longer have access to even the most basic of healthcare services.

With the partnership of The John Dau Foundation, GO plans to implement a second phase of "Bridges to Africa" by expanding the capabilities of the clinic to include hiring highly skilled medical workers, many of whom are Sudanese themselves, to provide basic medical services and increase the efficiency of the clinic operations. Donated money goes a long way in supporting many international efforts. As an example, here is what it will take to provide various levels of support for health care in Southern Sudan:

- \$45- Medication to treat 100 children with pneumonia
- \$85- The cost of five individuals' medical visits to the clinic
- \$700- One month's worth of gasoline and diesel to provide electricity and water for the clinic
- \$2,200- One month's worth of clinic medicines and supplies

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2009-2010

The following are some key goals of GO's education and health care programs:

- The removal of 1,000 refugees off the streets of Israel and into educational programs provided through our collaborative education center
- Subsequent re-integration of 1,000 trained and educated refugees to Southern Sudan. A key measure of success for this goal will be the sustained employment upon return to Sudan and increased economic stability in the region

- The expansion and increased effectiveness of The Duk Lost Boys Clinic: This community run clinic currently provides basic medical services for 20,000 patients. These services include general practice medicine to diagnose and treat common illnesses such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and other serious medical disorders. One measure of our success will be providing a trained local clinician who can handle the simpler cases, such as malaria detection and medicine dispensing, freeing up the trained medical staff for the more intricate cases, such as reproductive health/ miscarriages and AIDS prevention.
- Expansion of the health clinic to other areas in Southern Sudan and the increased access to health clinics for the communities the clinics serve (including increased transportation services to and from the clinics, house calls, more trained staff and additional clinics)

Using an integrated approach that engages a variety of organizations and the local communities, we are implementing a broader solution to a multi-faceted problem of poverty and hardships in Southern Sudan.