

Project Title: Rebuilding the Ruins and Promoting Peace.
Submitted by: Nyoma Clement, Talata Evers (Methodist University)
and Joy Minalla (Macalester College).

Introduction: “If you think education is expensive, try the cost of ignorance” said Derek Bok. South Sudan has over the course of many decades directly suffered the painful costs of ignorance as a result of the civil war. It has faced extreme political and economic instability. With the longest civil war fought on the face of the earth, from 1955-1972 and 1983-2005, the future of our country stood bleak. These wars wiped out millions of the once capable people in the country and thousands of others were displaced as refugees. Thinking about the ruins that our country stood in, feelings of anger and frustration, of not being able to make a change in our homeland combined to overwhelm us. After visiting one of the destroyed **villages; Yei**, in 2009, we were troubled by such a cruel reality that befell our eyes. We decided to grasp any opportunity that would allow us make the dreams of our fellow South Sudanese youths a reality. Our experiences at UWCs in Bosnia and Norway made us confident that we could make a significant contribution to peace and extend our understanding of peace and tolerance to our country and the world as a whole while holding to the ever burning fire of the UWC mission statement of “Using education as a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future”.

Context: After being recognized as an independent country on July 9, 2011, South Sudan now faces deep economic issues as one of the poorest countries in the world. The difficult economic situation has limited the ability of the government to provide education to its youth – many of whom are the “returnees,” the South Sudanese who fled to neighbouring countries for refuge. In essence, South Sudan is a very young independent country and education remains a vital necessity. To help sustain the peace and a better future for the youth, development of a culture of education is essential. The overarching challenge of preparing young people for education in South Sudan is complicated because of reasons including an inadequate number of schools to accommodate the huge number of returnee students who have overcrowded the learning institutions. Lack of school fees is another big challenge backed up by the lack of school supplies even to the already existing schools. Due to the high level of poverty in South Sudan and especially in Yei, many families cannot afford textbooks for their children and this makes the students dependent on facilities like public and school libraries. The current library in St. Joseph Secondary School does not have any textbooks to enable the students to intellectually grow through studying and research. Independent research and studies by the students in the library is important since the knowledge that the students get from teachers in class is important but is insufficient. This project seeks to better prepare, support, and equip the generation of youths in St. Joseph Secondary School to become future leaders of their once deeply troubled yet strong country by providing them with school supplies.

Project Plan: The project will be conducted by three undergraduate UWC scholars: Nyoma Clement and Talata Evers from Methodist University and Joy Minalla from Macalester College. We will partner with Richard Mabe, the head teacher of St. Joseph Secondary School and his staff. This project will be carried out from June -August of 2012. The three of us will organize ourselves into a chair person, secretary, and treasurer of the project. In addition, we shall have Ms. Turner, a faculty member in Methodist University, advise us throughout the project on the project sustainability, fundraising, and future prospects for the project expansion.

Goals and objectives

- To prepare, support and equip the generation of youths in St. Joseph Secondary school
- To provide student textbooks for academic prosperity and excellence
- Provide teaching materials (textbooks) for teachers
- Renovate the St. Joseph's secondary school Library
- To conduct workshops and seminars on:
 - a. Study strategies and excellent academic performance skills for students.
 - b. Importance of student leadership
 - c. Importance of women's education

Itinerary

June 2012

- Meeting with the school administrators: June 1-6
- Assessment of needed books from the Learning curriculum. June 11-15
- Renovation of the library facility: June 18-30

July 2012

- Purchase the books in Uganda (Round trip from Sudan to Uganda) July 3-13
- Categorize, label, and organize the books in the shelves in the Library July 17- 21
- Workshop on study strategies for students July 24

August 2012

- Seminar on the importance of women education August 3
Writing project report August 3-10

Benefits of the project: This project will directly benefit the 450 students in St. Joseph and others from the neighbouring schools in Yei. While the project first focuses on St. Joseph, we hope that in the future, we will be able to branch out to Yei County as well as other parts of South Sudan. The students' textbooks, teachers' textbooks, and the workshops will intellectually empower and enrich the students with knowledge to become better citizens in South Sudan. The textbooks will help the students understand and better prepare them to tackle the growing challenges of poverty, food security, water crisis, climate change, diseases, illiteracy, civil and tribal conflicts, and crime in South Sudan. The presentations, workshops, and seminars will help the students learn through our personal stories and give them hope.

Management and Sustainability: The library we help to renovate will not only be sustainable but will also be made to grow and develop for years to come. We will write to donors, publishers, and school districts for book donations and we will also write book requests to Cumberland County secondary schools. By institutionalizing the library and taking a documentary of the school, we will generate funding by educating the American public about the status of peace, democracy, and development in South Sudan. We will write an anthology story book that documents our personal autobiographies. The stories in the story book can be shared by the students and copies of the book can be sold to generate funds for this project. Furthermore, funds raised for this project will be used to purchase Educational Resource Kits to be used in the classrooms to fully prepare students for the challenges of the real world. We hope to cultivate peace in a small way by creating a safe and stimulating environment where the children of the different tribes in Yei can come together and use literary access as a healing resource.