

Dear Supporter,

Welcome to the latest issue of the Sahel Reporter. In this Newsletter we will bring you up to date on what has been a busy and testing few months for SOS Sahel.

In Sudan, a predominantly peaceful referendum took place at the beginning of the year that led to the separation of the country in July. This split created the independent South Sudan – the world's newest country but also one of its poorest.

Despite the celebrations and positivity that surround the birth of the new country, tensions remain between the two neighbours. This is particularly evident around border areas such as South Kordofan where the extensive violence has caused much damage to our office and forced us to evacuate our staff.

To minimise disruption to activities, we are cooperating closely with local authorities and other organisations to ensure that work in the area can continue as smoothly as possible.

Ongoing capacity building of our staff in Sudan is giving them the skills to ably face these new challenges as they arise. For example, we recently held a week long training course in Khartoum providing staff with skills to use with local communities and the chance to strengthen team cohesion by working together.

Back in the UK, SOS Sahel marked its 25th Anniversary, celebrating the work that the organisation has done since its inception (see right).

I pass on the thanks of the teams here in Sudan and in Oxford, and from all of those with whom we work, for your support. Your ongoing donations are essential to enable us to continue our vital work in my country with communities that need us at this difficult time.

مع اطيب تمنياتي

Kind regards,



Salih Majid Eldouma
Director of SOS Sahel Sudan



Salih (far left) and his Khartoum team

Happy 25th Birthday SOS Sahel!

SOS Sahel UK's 25th anniversary was marked with an event at the Overseas Development Institute in London in June. We celebrated 25 years of a "vibrant and exciting organisation" externally evaluated in 1999 as one successfully "punching above its weight".

Attendees, including former staff and trustees, individual donors and supportive organisations, heard a range of presentations from former and current SOS Sahel UK trustees and from the Director of SOS Sahel Ethiopia, Feyera Abdi. He presented an update on the activities of SOS Sahel Ethiopia and how they have found life as an independent, national NGO. A lively question and answer session followed the end of the presentations.

Thank you to our supporters...

"SOS Sahel has stayed the course, thanks to the critical support of many committed donors, particularly individuals who appreciate the uniqueness of SOS Sahel."

Sara Pantuliano, SOS Sahel UK trustee

...and to all those involved with SOS Sahel over the past 25 years

"A small number of very dedicated people have established something which, though vulnerable, is very strong – in knowledge, understanding and achievement."

Long may we continue to work for people 'at the bottom of the heap'..."

Kevin O'Sullivan, SOS Sahel founding member

To read the presentations and see more photos please visit SOS Sahel's website.



Feyera (back left) and his team
in Ethiopia, 2004



The panel at the
anniversary event

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South Sudan: A personal perspective

Ajak Deng Meyan

South Kordofan Programme Manager

Ajak comes from Sudan's Dinka tribe and was born in Abyei, Sudan.

Abyei is an area of extreme tension lying in the middle of the new North-South border. The Abyei referendum, due to coincide with Southern Sudan's referendum, never took place due to a failure to decide who was eligible to vote, leaving the region in turmoil.

Ajak's future is therefore uncertain. The split of North and South Sudan has created problems for identities, and citizenship decisions must be made. This is a challenging time for ethnically Southern Sudanese people who have spent most or all of their lives in the North, such as Ajak and his family who had never visited South Sudan. Thinking of the best for his family with the ongoing insecurity around Abyei, Ajak has taken the tough decision to relocate his family to Juba, South Sudan's capital, whilst he, for now, remains in Sudan.

He is realistic; he knows that major challenges face the new country: many people are now returning and putting pressure on limited infrastructure and services. And there is a need to harmonise problems amongst the different tribes who fought against one another during the Civil War.

Nevertheless, Ajak says:

"South Sudan's independence is good. I was born during Civil War. I want peace and this will bring it. The South can create their own cultural identity as they have long wanted."



Ajak Deng Meyan

SOS Sahel UK Trustees in the Media

SOS Sahel UK is fortunate to have a Board of seven committed Trustees. Two members of our Board, both eminent Sudan experts, were called upon in the run up to South Sudan's independence to discuss the subject:

Margie Buchanan-Smith was interviewed on Woman's Hour on Radio 4 on July 7th 2011. Visit www.bbc.co.uk to hear what she had to say.

Sara Pantuliano can be heard in the Guardian Focus podcast from 30th June 2011.

Visit www.guardian.co.uk



Sara Pantuliano



Margie Buchanan-Smith

Neimatein hafir: the impacts

Thanks to your generous response to our Sudan appeals in 2010 we were able to complete construction of the Neimatein hafir (water reservoir) in South Kordofan. In 2011, we have been able to see the real impacts that your support has had.

Communities in and around Neimatein, a town near Sudan's border with South Sudan, have felt the direct benefits of the new hafir:

- Increased opportunities for women: The round trip for water collection has decreased from six hours to just 20 minutes, freeing women up to become involved in other activities.
- Free access to water: Prior to construction, locals had to pay for every barrel of water collected from the borehole they were dependent on for supplies.
- Reduction in the risk of conflict: Previously, competition for water was great; long queues for water led to disputes and tension, and an elevated risk of conflict that have been reduced thanks to the new hafir.

SOS Sahel Appeal 2011

Can you spare a donation today?

In this challenging funding environment, as numerous small NGOs face closure, and at a critical time in Sudan, we need your help more than ever.

The communities we have long supported need us at this crucial time of need. We hope to reach even more people by expanding our work into Darfur and South Sudan. But we need funds to do this.

Any gift you can give will go a long way. Please consider donating today to help SOS Sahel continue providing successful support to communities in the Sahel.

How to donate

Please send any donation you can offer to Anna Rowett at the Oxford Office or visit www.sahel.org.uk for other ways to give.

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