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South Sudan, Factor 16: Education

South Sudan: Spreading the Availability of Education

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” This quote, stated by Nelson Mandela, is completely true. Education makes life easier on the general population. Education opens up our eyes to many different options and new ideas. When educated in a certain topic or area, ideas have the opportunity to flow through the mind. Ideas may become solutions to problems all over the world. Without education, there would be no solution to a problem. South Sudan is a country in major need of help because they have a very weak education system. Therefore, their problems may never have a solution. There are many negative factors leading to their poverty including conflict, which leads to the lack of education, clean water, sanitation, food, shelter, and health care (Calahan). These are the basic needs of all human beings. The problem and solution that is commonly overlooked when it comes to poverty is education.

In order to fully understand the needs of South Sudan, it may help to have a basic knowledge of the newly formed country. South Sudan has an area of 644,329 square kilometers (“Enchanted Learning”). South Sudan is the 42nd largest country in the world, being just slightly smaller than the state of Texas (“Enchanted Learning”). South Sudan is located just north of Uganda and west of Ethiopia. The South Sudanese population consists of a little more than 11,000,000 people (“World Factbook”). A country with this many people should have safe and usable infrastructure, but they have only 7,000 kilometers of roads, and very little of the roads they do have are paved and most are barely usable (“World Factbook”). This makes it hard to transport food and goods to help people live healthy lives. 50.6% of the population in South Sudan is below the poverty line (“World Factbook”). Their main revenue comes from oil production; however, they also have a very fertile area with many great opportunities for agriculture (“World Factbook”). They grow a range of crops including sorghum, maize, rice, peanuts, beans, cassava, sunflower, sesame, gum arabic, millet, sugarcane, papayas, mangoes, bananas, sweet potatoes, and they also raise cattle and sheep (“World Factbook”). They have approximately 10-20 million head cattle (“World Factbook”). South Sudan’s main source of income used to come from the oil industry; however, as a result of the war with Sudan, they lost the resources needed to produce oil. As a result, the people of South Sudan need to adapt to the losses and find another means of income. South Sudan has the weakest economy in the world with a GDP per capita at only \$1,400 (“World Factbook”). That’s an average of \$3.84 per day; granted they are still a young, developing country. They are working towards becoming more successful and stable, as are most countries; however, with them being as young as they are, they may need some assistance to start improvement. The biggest help we can give South Sudan is the power of education. Education is one of the main keys to becoming successful. Only 27% of the population in South Sudan are literate; 40% of the males are literate, and only 16% of the women are literate (“World Factbook”). All of these numbers are incredibly low; they need to be raised as soon as possible to help the start towards bettering their country. Without a quality education, some of South Sudan’s future leaders may never reach their destiny. This could hold the country of South Sudan back from their full potential of being successful.

South Sudan’s main reason for food insecurity isn’t actually because they struggle with agriculture. They actually have sustainable agricultural practices. Their main issue with food insecurity is transportation. They have very little infrastructure. What roads they do have are very bumpy and unpaved. Also, the violence in result of wars may affect food insecurity. With the people of South Sudan defending their country, they are unable to work and make a living to pay for food to feed their families. There also may be a lack of employees when it comes to agriculture or the food business. Farmers and/or market vendors

may have to fight for their country in the war, so they are forced to abandon their careers. The war may also affect urban agriculture and food production. If urban agriculture and food production are affected, many people and families will be forced to go without food. Urban food production affects a large mass of people in South Sudan. Since people living in urban areas don't grow most of their own food like many people living in rural areas, their food resources may plummet.

South Sudan is a country where war took place most of the citizens' lives. The Arab-Christian war took place from 1956 to 2005 (Ratner). This war affected many people; between 4 million and 4.5 million people were killed during the Arab-Christian war (Ratner). This war has robbed many citizens of South Sudan and forced them to become slaves in the state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Ratner).

As a result of this war, nearly 75% of the new country's adults are unable to read or write ("IRIN"). Literacy is essential in the development of a young and newly formed country. Reportedly, less than 2% of the country's population has completed their primary school education ("IRIN"). A peace treaty in 2005 helped increase the education enrollment slightly at the time; however since then, education has been at a stand hold ("IRIN"). The vital need for education is not necessarily just for the younger population, but for the adults as well. Education for adults would increase their chances in finding a higher paying job or career. Many of the items and resources that families need for survival are far too expensive after the war. Many families lost their homes and jobs because of the conflicts taking place within their country (Cahalan). If a family is unable to purchase food to prepare meals, hunger may take place as a result. This would lead to an irregular diet, which can cause malnutrition.

Malnutrition is noticed to be rising amongst children in South Sudan (Cahalan). Malnutrition is the state of being undernourished due to the body not receiving adequate amounts of nutrients ("New York Times"). Inadequate diets, unbalanced diets, or digestive issues can all lead to malnutrition ("New York Times"). The signs or symptoms of being malnourished are not always visibly noticeable. Malnutrition can be prevented if the risk of hunger is ended. However, the question remains: what steps can be taken to end hunger and malnutrition in South Sudan?

Overall, one step towards helping end food insecurity is increasing education within South Sudan. By increasing education, future adults of South Sudan will have a better chance at being financially stable. If they are financially stable, they can afford to live in an environment that will meet their needs, have enough clothing that will be appropriate to the climate they live in, and also keep enough food in stock that they won't have to worry about going hungry. By decreasing hunger within the household, malnutrition rates will decrease as a result. This could help lead to a longer life span after taking place for a period of time.

There are a number of areas in education that have benefits: science, math, language, history, and agriculture. The overall benefit of having a well-rounded education is the prevention of becoming even more poverty-stricken and the beginning of ideas that will start churning within the future of South Sudan leaders' minds. Without a well-rounded education, the ideas that will benefit their country in the future are going to be overlooked and unnoticed. Students will have an idea of what to do with the information learned once they have a basic knowledge and understanding for agriculture, business, communications, and history. Once they have this information in their heads, they can then take steps to put their acquired knowledge into action.

If education were more common among all the citizens of South Sudan, hunger could be decreased and eventually ended. A well-rounded education could include: safe practices for agriculture, so everyone is informed of sustainable agricultural practices and can pass the information on to the next generation; sciences, to help better agricultural techniques, medical fields, and much more; math, which is necessary for basic occupational requirements that will ensure a quality employee; language, so citizens know how

to communicate effectively to pass along information and can increase the literacy of the country; and history, so citizens can learn from their past mistakes and prevent themselves from repeating the same mistakes. Everyone can learn from history and the mistakes of past civilizations. If history is not known, it is bound to be repeated.

Another skill to be learned is being able to work with a variety of people. If many people are working towards the same goal, it adds to the quality of the work and the uniqueness of what is being created. People need to be able to work on their own as well; however, more will be accomplished with team work. People need to have experience working with each other. The citizens need to know how to give and take when it comes to other's ideas. Ideas have the opportunity to become better when they are presented to a partner, and they can combine characteristics of their ideas to perfect the creation.

Our country can be used as an example to South Sudan. We are actually a great example of how to help the problem with education. Our country has regulations that children must attend at least public school. They also must attend public school until they are in 8th grade before they can legally drop out. The state of Iowa even has a Dropout Prevention Act to help keep students in school for as long as they can. Many celebrities and people with respect even promote staying in school and receiving an education. Also, many high schools push students towards attending post-secondary schools. Employees within schools want their pupils to do as well as possible and also to be successful. Also, many students in our country have support and encouragement from not only celebrities and faculty workers in their school, but their family members and community as well. Though this is not true for all students, this is true for many students. If no family members, community members, celebrities, or faculty members were to support the students, encourage them to further their education, and promote schooling, then the dropout rate of public schools would be much higher. Sometimes, it only takes one teacher, one family member, or one friend to keep a student in school. Some teachers will go out of their way to keep a positive relationship with a student because they care about the student's education and his/her future. They want the student to become successful in life and be happy. Although many people say, "Money can't buy you happiness," it is also true that if you are living in poverty and can't live comfortably without having to worry about where your next meal is coming from or how you are going to pay next month's rent, you are most likely going to be unhappy.

For example: America started out with a form of government; however, they didn't know how to handle it. There were no rules or regulations for the government officials and anyone could run for president as long as people were in favor of them. They could lie for the whole campaign, and as long as they were convincing, they would receive the votes. Then America reached a point in the 1800s when the government was described as laissez-faire. Laissez-faire means in understandable terms that the government would sit back and let the country run with little-to-no regulations. Part bosses formed, immigration was out of control, and monopolies were controlling all small businesses and employees. It took some time before progressives stepped in and began making changes to help our government gain back control. Teddy Roosevelt was also an example of a progressive, political leader. He was one of the first presidents who actually improved our country as president. He knew the problems that were taking place and sought out solutions for these commonly occurring problems. T. Roosevelt, Taft, and McKinley were all presidents at a time of great change. They steered our country into a positive direction of improvement instead of guiding us into the dark as others have done. The United States has learned from their history and now knows better than to let it repeat.

As a country, the United States can share their learned history with South Sudan. They can also share their experiences and how they've learned from them. South Sudan can hopefully learn from the United States' mistakes and know to take precautions to prevent any similar situations from happening. The United States can set an example for the young country of South Sudan. Sometimes, that's the best help

to give. The country of United States can act as the role of Teddy Roosevelt with South Sudan in the position of the citizens of America.

Another step towards helping end hunger and poverty South Sudan could take is starting an act similar to the Dropout Prevention Act. This act would help keep students in school for at least primary education, so they can receive a basic education to help them with their future jobs. Once they have this education, finding and maintaining a job will become easier, and they can financially support their families. South Sudan can start by having their communities and well-known community members or celebrities encourage education for the younger population. If the younger population doesn't realize the importance of a well-rounded education, they are going to resist going to school, so other people need to stress to them how important it is to go to school and try to understand the education they are receiving.

One extra step South Sudan could take is a benefit of joining the military which would also help them in their education. In America, if you are in the military, college will be paid for once your service is complete. This is one benefit that encourages many young high school students to join a branch of the United States military. This could help South Sudan by increasing their military enrollment and help pay for a post-secondary education for those who can't necessarily afford it.

South Sudan has a great chance at leaving the title of having "the weakest economy in the world". They must work towards this goal; however, with much effort, it is achievable. They must have high hopes and expectations for themselves. They can achieve this goal by increasing their education and literacy rates. This will give them the opportunity for a variety of jobs, which will in turn increase the household income. By increasing the household income, they can improve their lifestyles. With improved lifestyles, malnutrition, hunger, and food insecurity will begin to vanish. All the steps towards the overall goal are like a puzzle. The first few pieces may be hard to find and put into place, but once you figure those out, the rest will fall into place. Many people may have doubts that South Sudan will become a successful country, but they must first have hope in themselves. "Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of overcoming it." -Hellen Keller.

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