

Uchechi Mba

Century High School

Sykesville, MD

South Sudan, Conflict

The Fallout of Political Instability in South Sudan

They say that home is where the heart is, that your home holds the utmost sentimental value within you. It is where your joy and childhood memories reside. Your home acts like a barrier channeling out the ruthless ways of the world. It protects you from the violence and conflict within the world. But for some this protective barrier of a home does not exist. For where they live, the conflict and violence has flooded into their homes, putting them in danger. This danger is evident within South Sudan as the contradicting claims between two South Sudanese political parties impelled the country's civil war. A war that severely impacted the growth of South Sudan and is causing a massive rise in poverty, immense displacement, food shortages, and a receding economy giving root to a large humanitarian crisis.

South Sudan has recognized independence as of July 2011 and has a growing population of 10.5 million people (CIA, 2020). The Nile River flowing through South Sudan provides the country with an ample water source, fertile soil and rich agricultural areas. Ten percent of South Sudanese citizens are employed and most of the employed work as farmers, as 75% of South Sudan's land area is suitable for agriculture (CIA, 2020). South Sudan is also one of the world's most oil-dependent countries and has a large oil industry, exporting 130,000 barrels of oil a day (CIA, 2020). Before the war occurred, South Sudan was a growing country with agricultural potential and a growing oil industry. But the incoming war would soon disrupt almost all farming efforts and put an end to any growth soon to come within South Sudan.

South Sudan's web of complications started at the top between their President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar. South Sudan had a widespread political party called the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) which was the party in favor of independence from Sudan. After about 2 years of independence Kiir became suspicious of Machar and accused him of attempting to form an opposition party. Machar was outraged by Kiir's allegations and left his duties as Vice President to create and lead a rebel party called Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO). The two parties began fighting for political control of South Sudan's government. The SPLM-IO wanted South Sudan to create a federal system and to have judicial independence, but the SPLM was against this and soon the fighting for political power turned violent. Deserters of the SPLM army would either join the SPLM-IO army or create their own rebel group (BBC News, 2020). These non-government controlled groups alongside the SPLM-IO army would soon start attacking, killing and abusing South Sudanese citizens.

In December 2013, the violence between the SPLM, SPLM-IO and rebel groups spread to the streets of South Sudan's capital, Juba. The violence slowly spread across the country and more rebel groups were beginning to form. They abducted young men and women and forced the men to fight with them and raped the woman. In a five-month period spanning across 2018 and 2019 the rebel forces abducted over 887 civilians in these attacks. (Pur, 2020). Catherine who is an 18 year old woman lived in one of the

attacked villages in South Sudan. She says the rebels “ambushed and abducted” her from her home in May 2018. They took her to their base and demanded her to be the wife of a soldier. He raped her for three weeks before she eventually escaped and now lives in fear. Rebel forces completely wiped out villages burning and demolishing churches, schools and health centers (Pur, 2020)

Approximately 191,500 of South Sudan’s citizens have died due to the war between the SLPM and the SLPM-IO (FAS, 2019). The violence flooded into the homes of South Sudanese citizens putting them in danger. This danger instilled fear within South Sudan and caused 3.7 million citizens to flee from their homes. They fled to bordering countries Uganda and Kenya where the United Nations held 6 camps for the refugees, creating Africa’s greatest refugee crisis. 1.8 million people were displaced within South Sudan unable to leave, living in smaller villages away from the threat of danger (Mercy Corps, 2019)

Just recently on February 22, 2020, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar struck a unity deal and formed a united government, putting an end to the violent fighting within South Sudan (BBC News, 2020). Even with this ceasefire the lingering effects of the civil war are still heavily endured within South Sudan. Life in the refugee camps is far from pleasant. Hygiene and sanitation are deficient as the refugee camps are overcrowded, with 6 out of 10 refugees being children (Mercy Corps, 2019). Overcrowding generates a plethora of disease outbreaks. Cholera, Malaria, and Meningitis are outcomes of inhumane conditions within these camps.

The displacement of South Sudanese citizens has provoked a rise in the poverty rate. Spiking from 51% in 2011 to 82% in 2019, (World Bank, 2019) since they are without jobs to provide for themselves and their family. Families are now far away from their home making them unable to plant their crops and seeds to grow on farms. Because of the threat of violence almost all South Sudan’s food markets have been ultimately wiped out and abandoned. What small amount of food is left has surged in price, as South Sudan’s economy is severely receding. Inflation has been raging and South Sudan’s pound has experienced a reduction in value, making prices surge. The majority of the population in South Sudan is living on less than around \$2 a day (CIA, 2020).

South Sudan is faced with the challenges of food shortages, displacement, poverty and a receding economy generated by political instability. In order to address these many challenges, there must be a durable answer. South Sudan is in dire need of a solution that can be carried out fully throughout the entirety of South Sudan. For what good is a solution that only addresses the needs of a small-scale of citizens, only helping some and leaving the rest to assist themselves. An effective solution for these challenges is measured by three important components; economic development, accessibility and flexibility. Economic development can be described as the process of living standards and the well-being of South Sudan’s citizens rising which would then lead to the rise of a more advanced economy in South Sudan. High levels of education, a higher literacy and employment rate along with the improvement of health standards are all means that would drive economic development. The 2nd component for an effective solution would be accessibility. This would be a solution that could be found widely throughout the country for easy admission to all South Sudan’s citizens. The last component is flexibility, meaning that the solution should include multiple parts that are able to work together smoothly as one in order to reach fullest potential. An appropriate solution for South Sudan is one that incorporates all 3 components,

this solution is found within the conversion of abandoned buildings and trailers into aquaponic systems and the implementation of projects that provide each of South Sudan's 10 states with schools and medical clinics.

Trailers and buildings left deserted and empty in the civil war would be renovated and converted into aquaponic systems that are provided by the company Growspan Greenhouse Structures. Growspan is a trusted supplier of these aquaponic systems that are designed energy efficiently, and Growspan has already built structures across the United States and the rest of the world (Growspan, 2020). Their Hydrocycle Aquaponic system would be the best fit for South Sudan as it is constructed durably for a long lifespan and comes complete with all parts that would produce crops and fish. The aquaponic system will be used to sustainably raise fish and vegetables for a family and to feed villages within the state. Aquaponics is a model of efficient year round, indoor farming without worry of climate. The structure can be built relatively anywhere within the state, providing fresh local food.

Another advantage of using aquaponic systems over other means of growing crops like farms would be that the fish and the crops would be sheltered inside. South Sudan and other East African countries are currently dealing with locust swarms plaguing their land. Billions of the locusts consume and ravage crops leaving little to nothing behind. Farms are vulnerable to the threat of locusts as well as droughts and floods. Having an indoor aquaponic system would mean that those environmental threats would not harm the fish and food being produced within the aquaponic systems.

The South Sudanese government would also set up educational programs for the South Sudanese citizens who will be working in these aquaponic structures. These educational programs would teach each individual how an aquaponic system functions and how to properly use the tools and equipment within these aquaponic structures. Each South Sudanese worker in the structure would own a small percentage of the aquaponic structure within their own state. This co-ownership of the aquaponic structure would decentralize the power of control from South Sudan's government and Growspan and back onto the workers.

Along with these aquaponic structures in South Sudan there would also be an implementation of medical clinics and schools in states. The Canadian Economic Development Assistance for South Sudan (CEDASS) is a non-government organization in the Republic of South Sudan. The CEDASS has built the Jebel Ladu Ladu Clinic and the Jebel Ladu School which are both means of aid to the citizens of Jebel Ladu, South Sudan. Their mission statement is to "create a sustainable economy through agricultural and economic training for the local people." (CEDASS, 2020) Their medical clinic provides free vaccination and treatment for gastrointestinal diseases, malaria and malnutrition. Their school is supported by the state Ministry of Education who provides the school with curriculum. The school provides meals with a nutrition program, a library, a sports field, and a hygiene program. As children's development is hindered by hunger, the Jebel Ladu School provides children with a food plan and an education. What the CEDASS is doing in the town of Jebel Ladu, South Sudan is a microcosm of what is going to be done in all South Sudan's states. Implementing replica programs like the CEDASS are doing on a widespread scale all throughout South Sudan in each of its 10 states.

These solutions for South Sudan all incorporate the 3 components of an effective solution. The medical clinic, the school and the aquaponic system would be established in all 10 states in South Sudan, meeting the accessibility component. South Sudan is a relatively small country comparable to the size of Texas, which is only 19,364 square miles bigger (NetState, 2020). Implementing the projects by state will give the citizens easier access to them and would also provide the states with the flexibility to be able to expand these solutions in the future once progress is gained. The schools will help drive the rise in education levels and the literacy rate which would drive economic development. The well-being of the citizens will be addressed by the clinic providing free vaccinations to common diseases contracted in refugee camps. The aquaponic system is flexible as it has workers that are citizens of South Sudan and each worker owns a small percentage of the system in order to decentralize the control of the government on the aquaponic system.

With the invitation of these structures, comes even more opportunities for South Sudan to grow economically. Skills learned by workers in aquaponic structures could be transferred to seek out jobs in other industries like oil and farm work. The invitation of these structures would bring in even more industries to form in South Sudan, like transportation and technology and with this boosting the economy of South Sudan.

With the establishment of aquaponic systems, schools and medical clinics across South Sudan we can help address the challenges of food shortages, poverty and a need for education. By providing the citizens of South Sudan with the ability to get a job and provide for their families while at the same time growing and maintaining fresh food and fish to feed other families, promoting economic growth. South Sudanese citizens would then be able to come out of poverty as they are now able to have a source of income and find their way back to where their heart resides. These structures would be funded by aid money given by the United Nations, as well government officials, and charities so that the facilities within South Sudan can grow bigger and more widespread into all the different cities in South Sudan and other in need nations. This multi-layered solution would ensure that South Sudan faces there many challenges due to their political instability and return to the promising and young independent nation they once were.

Works Cited Page

- Africa: South Sudan — The World Factbook - Central Intelligence Agency. (2020 17). Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html>
- BBC News. (2020, February 22). South Sudan rivals strike power-sharing deal. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51562367>
- Blanchard, L. (2018, November 8). South Sudan's Civil War: Nearly 400,000 Estimated Dead. Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IN10975.pdf>
- CEDASS - The Canadian Economic Development Assistance for South Sudan. Retrieved March 28, 2020, from <https://www.cedass.org/>
- Finn, A. (2019, April 23). How conflict and economic crises exacerbate poverty in South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/how-conflict-and-economic-crises-exacerbate-poverty-in-south-sudan>
- Growspan. (2020, April 28). Aquaponics Systems. Retrieved from <https://www.growspan.com/growspanindustries/hydrocycle-growing-systems/aquaponics>
- Mercy Corps. (2020, March 3). Quick facts: What you need to know about the South Sudan crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/south-sudan-crisis#how-people-surviving-south-sudan>
- NetState. 50 State Rankings for Size. Retrieved from https://www.netstate.com/states/tables/st_size.htm
- Pur, N. (2019, January 17). World Report 2019: Rights Trends in South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/south-sudan>
- Pur, N. (2020, March 3). Freeing South Sudan's Captive Women and Girls. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/19/freeing-south-sudans-captive-women-and-girls#>

South Sudan Population | 1960-2019 Data | 2020-2022 Forecast | Historical | Chart. (n.d.). Retrieved March 22, 2020, from <https://tradingeconomics.com/south-sudan/population>