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GLOBAL SOUTH

DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

#ISSUE 15 April 2015, ISSN:1799-0769
Gsdmagazine.org



South Sudan

A Fragmented &
Forgotten Story

Refugees: a
Burden or an
Asset to the
Host Country?

Translators
Without
Borders: When
Linguistics
Saves Lives

23 Governments
in 24 Years
Jeopardizes
Nepal's
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SOUTH SUDAN: A FRAGMENTED & FORGOTTEN STORY 15-23

FROM THE EDITOR

We clearly remember the sense of excitement and jubilation that many people had four years ago when South Sudan seceded from Sudan. For many it wasn't about secession, it was about independence, freedom and self-determination. It was about hope, hope for a better life. After all it was an outcome of an unflinching struggle that lasted for decades and claimed more than 2 million lives. South Sudanese people received global sympathy for their determination, sacrifice and for that tedious struggle to freedom.



That hope and jubilation and excitement have dissipated and things have gotten a lot messier. Just after two years of its independence, South Sudan has plunged into a bloody civil war and thousands of people have lost their lives already. IGAD-mediated peace talks have failed in Ethiopia last month and what South Sudan awaits is more fighting and uncertainty. This edition of Global South Development Magazine focuses on South Sudan and presents an overall picture of the on-going conflict.

As usual, you will also find other stories and in-depth reports from different parts of the world.

Happy reading!

by **Manoj Kr. Bhusal**

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A collection of global development stories from global media outlets.

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Cover Photo: A voter on the first day of voting in Southern Sudan referendum, 2011. UN Photo/Tim McKulka.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR //

THE PROBLEMS WITH SOUTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION

It was a pleasure to read an entire issue dedicated to South-South cooperation. As a development activist, I have been a fervent supporter of South-South cooperation in international development cooperation. However, as with North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation, too, has a lot of underlying problems, some of which is explained in detail in your recent publication. I would like to add a few more issues that haven't been explained in your magazine.

As you have mentioned, South-South cooperation, indeed, faces the dangers of dependency and regional hegemony. In many cases it is also dependent on traditional donors' assistance. One of the most overlooked aspects of this is that South-South cooperation is a generic term and it

is not homogenous across the global South. Cuba's assistance to other developing countries can be motivated by the will to do good; but let's say Ethiopia's or Uganda's involvement or assistance to South Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo might have a different story altogether. So like any other generalizations in the field of international development cooperation, this touted concept of South-South cooperation should be saved from an overt generalization.

Sarah N, Nairobi, Kenya



//GSDM OCTOBER 2014 EDITION

WHAT ABOUT EBOLA FIGHTERS IN AFRICA?

Good to see GSDM covering Ebola issues in its October 2014 edition. However, it would have been great to see a feature on how African themselves are fighting Ebola, not just dying of it. Many Western media outlets portrayed a grey picture of the crisis. Like before once again Africans were victims and the West

was a savior. In reality that is not the whole picture. Thousands of Africans were at the forefront of Ebola battle and they fought it vehemently. Media prefers creating and glorifying exotic heroes, but do not see the heroism of a common African man.

Solomon B, Sierra Leone

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GSDM is published by Silverlining Creation ry, a non-profit development media organization in Finland.

SOUTH IN THE NEWS

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

SIERRA LEONE'S TOP SPRINTER HOMELESS & STARVING IN LONDON



THIS IS AFRICA
Reported by
Stanley Azuakola

Sierra Leone's top 100-metre sprinter, Jimmy Thoronka, has become the subject of widespread attention after a story broke of how he was found homeless and starving on the streets of London.

Jimmy Thoronka was one of Sierra Leone's athletes at last summer's Commonwealth Games in Britain but did not return afterwards after he heard news that his family had perished from Ebola. The relay athlete refused to go back after the games due to his fears for his mental and physical health.

"I want to stay here. Nobody [would] look after me. No one persecuted me, my problem is I don't have a family there. The person that would help me has passed [due to] Ebola. If I go back, I would not be able to make it, or I would kill myself because I would not proceed with my dream," he said.

During winter, Thoronka slept under harsh conditions in the park, and sometimes he spent nights hopping from bus to bus till daybreak. He jogged to keep warm and kept fit by using a local gym. Now, he says he wants to resume training and become one of the fastest sprinters in the world.

An official police spokesman said that his mother, Jelikatu Kargbo, who worked as a nurse in the police service, died last summer at the Rokupa government hospital in Freetown. Even though she was displaying signs of Ebola, it was uncertain that was the actual cause of her death as at the time of her death there were no testing or treatment centres for Ebola in Freetown. But why didn't he leave for Sierra Leone immediately after the Games? The athlete said that there weren't any flights after the Games so he and his team-mates scattered in different directions. He was unfortunate as his bag containing his money and passport were stolen. His visa expired last September and he has been fearful of approaching the police in case they locked him up. He decided to brave the streets.

GLOBAL INNOVATORS BUILD APPS FOR PEACE//

• New York - A range of new mobile apps and digital games have been hailed by international experts as world-beating examples of how technology can boost peace, break barriers and smash damaging cultural and religious stereotypes.

The five winning entries of the global PEACEapp competition included a world-wide conflict simulation from Germany, 'the choice is yours,' a mobile phone game to educate voters and inspire a commitment to peace around the 2013 Kenyan elections and a pioneering mobile app from Australia that lets users walk in the shoes of people who suffer from racism in their daily lives.

The two other winning entries were prototypes, specifically a virtual game from Canada which fosters a sense of community and collaboration and ethical values, and a digital game from Brazil that helps players develop empathy skills to end conflicts.

"The broad range of projects submitted to the PEACEapp competition shows the huge untapped potential of new technologies to create new spaces for dialogue and story-sharing, and to overcome stereotypes" said Patrick Keuleers, Director of Governance and Peacebuilding at UNDP.

"Mobile apps and games offer smart and cost-effective ways to engage communities and citizens of all ages. They help people break down walls, be they walls of division, oppression, injustice or prejudice" he added.

The PEACEapp competition was organised by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). The competition brought technological innovators and activists together from around the world to create hi-tech and fun tools that can contribute to a culture of peace. (Source UNDP).

// Sierra Leone: People with disabilities look to an Ebola-free future

A group of young wheelchair-bound men barrel down a busy street hustling cars for a few leones (the local currency). The money they collect is meagre - and gets less and less as the Ebola crisis pushes them further towards the fringes of society.

"To change a tire is 70 (thousand leones). For a new bike, its 250," said David Mgani, one of around 70 people living in a temporary, yet decade-old tent city in a bombed out compound in the centre of Freetown. It takes days or even weeks to earn enough to afford repairs to the wheelchairs, let alone buy a new chair for around US\$50.

In the meantime, the community dubbed HEPPPO, The Help Empower Polio People Organization, shares what they can with each other, including a limited number of wheelchairs or crutches. Those without chairs for the day drag themselves across the ground, making them susceptible to cuts, bruises and infections.

In Sierra Leone, there are an estimated 300,000 people living with disabilities; as many as 200,000 of them are polio survivors and are now left with twisted limbs and limited mobility. Pushed to the margins of society, they set up camps and compounds around the country and resorted to begging to get by.

"Because of the rejection from their families, from the society, they live in dilapidated houses and in clusters, so this puts them in high risk of getting the infection," said Haidatou Diallo, Senior Programme Manager with One Family People.

Diallo has helped spread Ebola prevention messages to people with disabilities as part of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiative to reach out to the most vulnerable communities.

To date, in all of the UNDP/One Family People supported communities, no Ebola related deaths or cases of Ebola have been reported.

This is because, Diallo explained, they knew how the virus was spread and what to do to prevent it. In crowded conditions, an Ebola infection would have been catastrophic to people who rely on touch to survive.

Using two sturdy wooden arcs, resident Wenger Komba clacks on the ground, keeping his hands out of the dirt. It's easier for him to get around on his hands and knees than in a wheelchair. For Komba, Ebola was just one more thing to worry about, but it wasn't the most pressing issue.

"Our main concern is shelter, and after that is food," he said.



EBOLA, POLIO & DISABILITY

“ In Sierra Leone, there are an estimated 300,000 people living with disabilities; as many as 200,000 of them are polio survivors and are now left with twisted limbs and limited mobility. **”**



WORLD CARBON EMISSIONS STALL AFTER ALMOST 40 YEARS OF GAINS //

Global emissions of carbon dioxide in the energy sector stalled in 2014, breaking steady rises over the past four decades except in years with an economic downturn, the International Energy Agency has said. The Paris-based IEA said the halt in emissions growth was linked to greener patterns of energy consumption in China. "In China, 2014 saw greater generation of electricity from renewable sources, such as hydropower, solar and wind, and less burning of coal," it said.

Emissions of carbon dioxide were flat at 32.3 billion tonnes in 2014 from 2013 around the globe, according to the IEA.

"This is both a welcome surprise and a significant one," IEA chief economist Fatih Birol said in a statement.

"This gives me even more hope that humankind will be able to work together to combat climate change, the most important threat facing us today."

Birol said the data provide "much-needed momentum to negotiators preparing to forge a global climate deal in Paris in December: for the first time, greenhouse gas emissions are decoupling from economic growth."

NORTH KOREA: PEOPLE 'STILL MALNOURISHED, BUT BETTER FED'

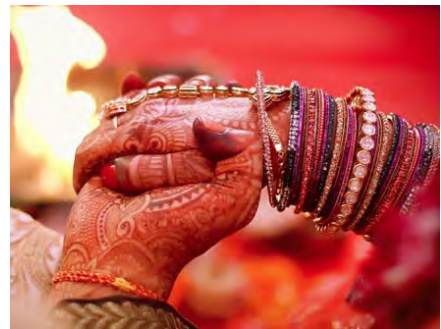
When one thinks of North Korea, the narrative that often comes to mind is that it is a cloistered country with an ambitious nuclear program, a testy human rights record and a population that is going hungry.

But while the country certainly needs humanitarian support, the situation there is not as dire as most people believe.

Despite decades of trade, travel and banking sanctions from the U.N. Security Council and major economic

powerhouses — including the United States, the European Union and Japan — Pyongyang has been able to grow its economy in recent years, albeit modestly. Data from Seoul, South Korea-based Bank of Korea notes real gross domestic product improved 1.1 percent in 2013, after growing 1.3 percent the year before.

"We can definitely talk about significant improvement of living standards in North Korea over the last 5-7 years," said Andrei Lankov, professor of Korean Studies at Kookmin University in Seoul and author of "The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia." (Reported by Fragkiska Megaloudi for Devex).



INDIAN BRIDEGROOM DUMPED OVER FAILED MATHS TEST//



An Indian bride has walked out of her wedding after her bridegroom-to-be failed to solve a simple maths problem, according to police in Uttar Pradesh.

The bride asked the groom to add 15 and six. When he replied 17, she called off the marriage. Reports say the groom's family tried to convince the bride to return, but she refused saying the man was illiterate.

Local police said they mediated between the families, and both sides returned all the gifts given before the wedding.

Most marriages in India are arranged by the families, and it is common for a bride and groom to get married without spending time in each other's company. A police official of Rasoolabad village where the incident happened told BBC Hindi that local resident Mohar Singh had fixed his daughter Lovely's wedding to a man called Ram Baran.

"But just before the marriage ceremony Lovely came to know that Ram Baran is illiterate and she refused to marry," he said.

Mohar Singh told the Associated Press news agency that the "groom's family had kept us in the dark about his poor education." "Even a first grader can answer this [the maths test]," he said.

REFUGEES: A BURDEN OR AN ASSET TO THE HOST COUNTRY?

THE CASE OF UGANDA

//By Irungu Peter

GSDM Global Development
Reporter, UGANDA



99% of the refugees said they were earning their own income. In the capital city Kampala, 78% received no international aid at all. Meanwhile, 40% of refugees who were employers provided work for Ugandan nationals.

A report published by a research team at the University of Oxford shows that refugees can have a positive economic impact on host countries. The report was based on a research by the Humanitarian Innovation Project at the University of Oxford. The research project aimed to show host countries how they can build upon the skills, aspirations and entrepreneurship of refugees. The researchers involved say that humanitarian response, especially towards refugees, has historically been based on a model of donor state-led assistance, which in some cases has led to unsustainable responses or long-term dependency.

The study by the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford focuses on Uganda, a country where refugees have greater freedoms to move around and work. The report finds that this freedom has enabled many refugees to make their own way in the business world. They are often highly networked individuals, using mobile phones and the internet to run businesses, sometimes even having global trade networks.

In addition to qualitative studies, the researchers conducted a survey with 1,593 refugees in Uganda. The refugees were mainly from the DR Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, Burundi, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. The data was

drawn from refugees in Nakivale and Kyangwali settlements, as well as Kampala. The researchers also inter-



viewed Ugandan nationals, government officials, business representatives, and staff from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Far from being exclusively dependent on aid, 99% of the refugees said they were earning their own income. In the capital city Kampala, 78% received no international aid at all. Meanwhile, 40% of refugees who were employers provided work for Ugandan nationals, and nearly half (43%) of the employed refugees living in Kampala worked for Ugandan nationals. The report argues that

refugees can bring economic benefits to their host country, contradicting a widely held view that refugees are just a drain on a receiving nation's resources. The 44-page report, *Refugee Economies: Rethinking Popular Assumptions*, shows that many refugees in Uganda do rely on humanitarian assistance; however, most are more dependent on their own social networks and aspire to receive other forms of support. In many cases, they seem to create sustainable opportunities for themselves and make enough to be able to afford basic necessities such as food, water, shelter and clothing.

Refugees living in Uganda have higher levels of internet use than the general population, use mobile phones extensively and often adapt their own technologies, the report says. Of the refugees living in cities, most (96%) of them used mobile phones and more than half of them (51%) had an access to the Internet. In rural areas, 71% of refugees used mobile phones with 11% having an Internet access.

The report also details how refugees trade with each other within their settlements, with some nationalities appearing to have different strengths and preferences in the markets they choose to operate in. Many Somali shop-owners in Nakivale, for instance, operate out of small stores that import products from as far as Dubai

and Thailand. Across rural refugee settlements throughout the country, daily, weekly and monthly markets are taking place that benefit not only the refugees, who are drawn from all over Africa, but also Ugandan nationals who visit the markets in significant numbers, says the report.

Report author Alexander Betts, Associate Professor of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies at the University of Oxford, says: 'To date, there has been very little research into the economic lives of refugees. Refugees have a range of different occupations and trades to offer, with some being successful entrepreneurs. They often benefit the economy of the country where they settle, yet it is commonly assumed that refugees are passive individuals who only rely on aid.'

'In Uganda, refugees have more rights than in many other host countries, but this study shows that given basic freedoms, refugees often find a way of earning enough to live on. Refugees are often highly networked individuals who are not only operating from within the refugee settlements but also nationally and internationally. The situation in Uganda can be regarded as a success story as its refugees are making a positive contribution to the country's economy.'

NEW UN REPORT PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON PLIGHT OF SYRIANS

Damascus – Four out of five Syrians are now living in poverty, with almost half the population displaced from their homes, according to a new report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Published at the start of the fifth year of conflict, the report – '365 Days of Resilience' – paints a grim picture of life in a country that continues to endure hostilities that have resulted in huge loss of life, and damage to infrastructure, the economy and livelihoods.

In spite of the challenges, according to the report, UNDP continued to respond to the needs of the Syrian people over the past year, as it has done since the conflict began in March 2011. Over the past twelve months, early recovery and resilience interventions, initiated in line with the 2014 Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan, were scaled up in 14 highly affected governorates across



the country.

"As the crisis continues, the level of suffering for ordinary Syrians is immense", said Janthomas Hiemstra, UNDP Syria Country Director, speaking in Damascus. "UNDP is working to build the resilience of the affected population: stabilizing livelihoods, and helping people cope with the impacts of the crisis." (Source UNDP News centre).

HARD WORK HAPPENING IN GUATEMALA CHILDREN SHOULD STAY HOME



//By Anthony Luberto

GSDM Global Development
Reporter



Yes, gangs do exist and yes, many development areas are flickering but there is also hard work being done to curb the future of Guatemala from draining away to the U.S.

Living and working in Texas, it's hard to ignore the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied children entering the United States from Central America. Arriving tired and often without adequate food and water for weeks, it is a hotly contested debate in the U.S. and even more so now since President Obama recently signed an Executive Order temporarily allowing legal status to millions of illegal immigrants.

As I listened to media stories about masses of children arriving from Central America hungry, thirsty, and without their family I could not help but feel compassion for them and wondered could I possibly help? What is going on in Central America and why are families there going through such lengths with sometimes tragic results, to get their children to the U.S.? Then it dawned on me, I was inundated with information about what is being done to protect the American border but I had personally never heard about what is being done internally within El Salvador, Honduras or Guatemala to prevent them from coming here. I began asking myself, what is happening in the development arena that helps prevent families from making the decision to send their children thousands of miles to

the unknown? I wanted to know, so I began digging into Guatemala development efforts and more specifically the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Rather than float statistics and what different agencies say about the subject, I want to give the Global South Development Magazine readers

ac-



development zine ership a first-hand count of what I observed in development during my recent visit to Guatemala. Plain and simple, crime, poor education, lack of interest in the future and love of country is

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NOT what I saw. In fact, the USAID team in Guatemala and the wonderful people I observed and talked to provided me a beautiful glimpse into the potential of a bright future. Yes, gangs do exist and yes, many development areas are flickering but there is also hard work being done to curb the future of Guatemala from draining away to the U.S.

SCHOOL HELPING PREVENT CRIME

The first day on the ground, I took a short but curvy ride to Palencia, a small town just northeast of Guatemala City, in search of any current or past USAID project. A town once plagued with crime, drugs, and gangs, Palencia is turning the tide with the help of an expired USAID but self-sustained project. I was

ecstatic when a young Palencia City Hall employee, Shirley Ramirez, walked me down an alleyway to a tucked away little two-story school, the Casa Barrilete. Located in a former gang neighborhood and sitting atop a steep hill with picturesque views, Casa Barrilete is very well alive and vibrant with students, staff and learning. For three years, the school thrived under the umbrella of USAID funding but unfortunately, some courses went away when the project ended and the Palencia City Hall began funding the school in the middle of the 2014. However, to my surprise the school continues to function and keep children away from crime by providing formal and hands on instruction in computer skills, art, music, and television production. Orien Siguenza Quezada, a boyish 26 year old computer skills teacher, believes he makes a difference to the country but also understands the “country must invest in education,” if children are to remain and not head for the U.S. The inner workings of the school are truly encouraging. There are 25 computers on-site where students can take 128 hours of Windows courses and another 128 hours of advanced learning. Students have the opportunity to learn drums, the xylophone, or paint a vivid picture expressing their inner most thoughts or troubles. City Hall evens lends a hand by allowing the school to use their bus one day a month to teach subjects to communities in the outlying areas of Palencia.

As I finished walking around Casa Barrilete, Juan de Dios Pineda Castro, the Director of Casa Barrilete, and I walked outside where three boys casually played with some local cows. We talked about our families for a minute and then on to a deeper discussion and his views about what is going on in Guatemala and what help is needed. “Children leave for three reasons,” he explained, “1) One of the parents is already in the U.S wanting the child or children with them, 2) There are no job opportunities for children between 13-17 years old and; 3) Violence inside and outside the family.” He’s trying to change those trends by handing out flyers and encouraging the community he’s lived in his entire life to come to Casa Barrilete and learn the skills necessary for a successful life. He then said to me, “we have a class on immigration to the states next week,” which caught my interest. Before I knew it, he was on the phone and I was on my way to the local World Vision office in Guatemala City.

WORLD VISION IN GUATEMALA

The immigration class Juan referred to turned out to be much deeper in scope than I anticipated when I arrived at the World Vision office. Arriving unannounced but inquisitive about the program, Monica Ramirez, the Chris-

WHY DO CHILDREN LEAVE?

“Children leave for three reasons,” He explained, “1)

One of the parents is already in the U.S wanting the child or children with them, 2) There are no job opportunities for children between 13-17 years old and; 3) Violence inside and outside the family.”

tian Commitment Manager and 15-year World Vision employee, set me straight. She explained, “We are focused on causes...immigration is a result.” Principally, World Vision believes violence to children is one of the main root causes to children leaving the country and protection from physical abuse, drugs and alcohol, and sexual abuse can help keep them in Guatemala. With a massive reach all over the country, World Vision provides a simple course to over 274 schools and 50,000 children designed to educate them about children protection. Its premise is simple, but the long-term benefits could help shift the thought process behind the meaning of family therefore decreasing the need to leave the country. Focusing immediately on the Western Highlands of Guatemala, where the challenge is most prevalent, specific topics taught to children include:

- 1- Overall respect for God,
- 2-The rights and obligations of parents (my family takes care of me),
- 3-The rights and obligations of the community (my community takes care of my family),
- 4-Self-worth (I take care of myself and know what is not right...sexual abuse),
- 5- And the risks associated with leaving all of these behind (immigrating to the U.S.)

RURAL VALUE CHAIN: AGEXPORT

The lack of job opportunities not only contributes to a poor economy in Guatemala but also to visions of available opportunities in the U.S. I wanted to know from USAID what they were doing in this particular arena to help. The USAID Guatemala team linked me in with one of their implementing partners of a rural value chain project, AGEXPORT to find out. The overall goal of AGEXPORT is to consolidate small farmers and their products, provide technical assistance where necessary, and get those products to a standard where they are exportable to markets worldwide. To see an example of this process, AGEXPORT took me out to Sololá, a small farming town near Lago de Atitlán about two hours west of Guatemala City. Upon arrival, Mr. Juan Tuis Tuy, the President of the local Adiba, greeted me with a smile and handshake. I was curious how the whole process worked, his role within it and how it contributed to the overall economic improvement of Guatemala. He and his team of managers explained to me as simply as they could. AGEXPORT provides the program management of 31 separate Adibas throughout the country. Not all Adibas are of the same size, scope, or product but they all act as regional consolidation management points of small local farmers and their products. Adibas consolidate, classify, and separate the products and then turn them over to Siesa who exports the product to foreign markets including England and the U.S. Not all farmers, but small farm leaders get their quality certification through the Global Agricultural Practice (GAP), which certifies that their farming practices and procedures are following global set standards. The

extra bonus is that it allows their products to access U.S. and other foreign markets. On Mr. Tuy's Adiba, there are 160 GAP certified farmers who employ over 16,000 additional farmers. In 2015, he anticipates employing more women and is proud to say that 95% of his farmers can read and write. Why isn't this model being replicated throughout the country in order to prevent unaccompanied children from going to the U.S.?

After talking through the processes, actors, and getting to know one another Mr. Tuy offered to take me to one small area of his 41-acre Adiba that produces sweet peas. As we walked or more like crawled up the side of a small mountain, he informed me that his particular Adiba produces over 800,000 pounds of sweet peas for the U.S., Canada the European Union and England. Turning around and looking at all of the sweet peas behind us and the view of a volcano in the distance, I turned to him and said “Mr. Tuy, this is the most beautiful view I've ever seen in my entire life and I thank you for that.” I told him that I would go back home and help promote his story and the stories of farmers like him. I would tell people that there are citizens of Guatemala who ARE hard at work, who do CARE about their families, who do BELIEVE in the future of their country, who want to SUCCEED in life and not get into crime. We shook hands, hugged and I took the long drive back to my hotel deep in thought.

It was evident to me during my time in Guatemala that there is strong potential in the future and children must stay put and not take the treacherous journey to the United States where the journey alone might kill them. There is a future in Guatemala and there are bright spots all over the country that highlight that future. Children are interested in education, farmers and businesses alike are looking to get their products to global consumers. Guatemalans must not give up on Guatemala but they cannot be alone in that endeavor. International organizations and foreign governments, must assist and provide adequate resources to areas of the world that need development. Guatemala is no exception. As the U.S. comes out of conflict, it must shift its funding and resources to diplomacy and development in countries that are promoting democracy and have potential like Guatemala. Thousands of unaccompanied children are headed to the U.S. as we speak because of one of the reasons mentioned throughout this article. If the U.S. or any other developed country wants to end the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied children entering its borders then perhaps they should seriously consider investing more resources into USAID and their projects. Projects like AGEXPORT and Casa Barrilete are rare because not enough funding and resources are allocated to USAID or other organizations to help. However, these types of projects actually work and are preventing crime, educating the future, and helping to create a sustainable economy.

WHEN LINGUISTICS SAVES LIVES

THE STORY OF TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS



// MIKE LEVIN
Guest CONTRIBUTOR



WHAT DOES TWB DO? //

- **Translators Without Borders (TWB)** is a humanitarian non-profit that offers free-of-charge translation in crisis situations as well as in day-to-day work for some of the world's most renowned humanitarian organizations.
- **Lori Thicke saw the need** and in 1993 founded Traducteurs Sans Frontières, a pro-bono translation service for NGOs, non-profits and social enterprises.
- **In an emergency scenario**, TWB contacts five translators in its network who can work in a specific language. If no one responds within 15 minutes, then the next five are contacted.

By summer's end in 2014, an outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa had turned into a full-scale epidemic, and Firdaus Kharas was frantically trying to find ways to translate his animated Ebola-prevention video into enough languages to be understood in every village in the stricken areas.

That's when he contacted Translators Without Borders (TWB), a humanitarian non-profit that offers free-of-charge translation in crisis situations as well as in day-to-day work for some of the world's most-effective humanitarian organizations like Médecines Sans Frontières, UNICEF and OXFAM.

"They took on Herculean tasks of translating the script, finding a young voice, recording the talent and sending me the audio files in each language. Their tenacity ensured the video reached many people in their native language. They contributed to the saving of lives," Kharas says of Ebola: A Prayer For The Living, his short, emotional story of a young boy's death and the pleas of prevention he passes to his family.

TWB Global Co-ordinator Grace Tang was the one to take up the challenge. Within weeks she arranged for the video's voiceover to be dubbed into five more languages (Bambara, Swahili, Fula, Mende and Themne). By early November the video could be understood by 400 million Africans and as much as 80 percent of those in the Ebola zones. It has been watched more than 500,000 times online and has already won multiple awards.

Tang co-ordinated the effort from Nairobi. She says the logistics were difficult but the commitment was instantaneous. "Our volunteer translators have a deep connection to the region and the people of the language(s). They are from there, and those who speak the same language natively, have a connection."

As people become aware of TWB's services, emotional moments have arrived more and more frequently.

Program Director Rebecca Petras' voice cracks as she tells the story of how two children were rescued during Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines during November 2013. Someone had been able to get a note in Tagalog to an English-speaking helicopter pilot. A TWB translator was immediately able to translate it and guide the pilot to the rescue spot.

"Every time I hear that story, I'm so proud to be a part of this organization," Petras says from her current home in Moscow. The message is clear: if information isn't delivered in the language of the intended audience, the results can be of no value, or worse.

It is the simplest and most effective of human connections - the transfer of knowledge, yet its importance in humanitarian scenarios is, surprisingly, only recently becoming understood.

Lori Thicke saw the need and in 1993 founded Traducteurs Sans Frontières, a pro-bono translation service for NGOs, non-profits and social enterprises. But it couldn't scale so in 2010 she incorporated it in the United States under the English name Translators Without Borders. With the move came expanded funding and exposure.

Its role was to offer translations in a sustainable, often daily, environment. But when an earthquake devastated large parts of Haiti earlier in 2010, Thicke knew TWB had a far broader role.

"It was the impetus for me personally to go out and put together a board to help me scale the new (organization). Haiti was a completely different scale. It showed us how much need there was. For the first time we had the technology to reach and listen to people," says Thicke.

Within days of the earthquake TWB started receiving 1,000 applications a week from translators wanting to help. Similar responses came during subsequent crises in the Philippines, China, India, Syria, the Ukraine and West Africa, among many others. The results are so successful that the organization is piloting a crisis-relief network in Nairobi called Words of Relief.

Its goal is to link communities and relief workers in any local language or dialect by monitoring and translating key messages from a crisis zone and then disseminating information to those who most need it. This requires spider networks of rapid-response translators that can use digital platforms (mostly mobile) to aggregate information and other data. The platform also allows for crowd-sourced information that can make responses far more efficient.

This is not as difficult as it may sound because the penetration of mobile phones throughout much of the developing world is between 50 and 70 percent of the population. Digital platforms are the only realistic way to achieve its goals because there are no resources to have physical teams on-site.

Only about five percent of incoming communications monitored by TWB are unique and vital so the key factors are analysis and timing.

In an emergency scenario, TWB contacts five translators in its network who can work in a specific language. If no one responds within 15 minutes, then the next five are contacted.

Only a small portion of TWB's work is done in the high-stress weeks after a crisis. The rest is nuts-and-bolts translations that eliminate linguistic barriers to humanitarian information. Diasporic volunteers have never been a problem to recruit.

It can be as basic as translating

"Thicke's Website tells a story of a homeless Czech man in Canada who couldn't read English and therefore couldn't understand how to live in charitable housing. TWB translated the documents and helped him find a home."

“As of 2015, TWB is translating 800,000 words a month for 160 humanitarian organizations. Except for a small paid team in Nairobi, all work is done by volunteers. The demand is growing fast, which makes one wonder why it took so long for a global translation NGO to arrive.”

Wikipedia entries or user manuals so that billions of people have equitable access. There's also a component that links the United Nations Refugee Agency to refugees. Thicke's Website tells a story of a homeless Czech man in Canada who couldn't read English and therefore couldn't understand how to live in charitable housing. TWB translated the documents and helped him find a home.

The organization co-ordinates this work through a digital exchange called Workspace that links users and translators, and the most valuable aspect lies in health care. For those without access in their own language, the consequences of not being able to read basic medical instructions can be catastrophic.

There are hundreds of stories about

people in developing countries who are given medicine to help with infection or maternal issues only to misuse the drug because they can't read the instructions, which tend only to be in major European languages. Deaths are all-too common because of this failing.

Some will never be able to see a doctor at all, so translated leaflets or posters in public spaces take on an importance that most people in developed countries can't understand. The problem is most evident during outbreaks of preventable diseases like malaria, cholera, HIV/AIDS, Ebola and many others.

A company like Ireland's iheed does great work moving basic healthcare training into mobile-delivered modules, but it isn't widely multilingual. So a frontline healthcare worker in rural Africa or Asia may be able to access information on infection but can't understand or communicate it. It's bitterly ironic that a language barrier rather than a technology barrier is the biggest problem.

As of 2015, TWB is translating 800,000 words a month for 160 humanitarian organizations. Except for a small paid team in Nairobi, all work is done by volunteers. The demand is growing fast, which makes one wonder why it took so long for a global translation NGO to arrive.

“We have found the concept of communications to be a relatively new piece of the (development) puzzle,” says TWB's Petras. “The (big humanitarian outfits) have lived in a world where they believe English and French are enough.”

This political component is easy to ignore in do-gooder environments. European (colonial) languages have always carried the communications of elites in power. It has become so inflexibly entrenched that those working in-country don't want to ask

the structures that fund them about why this has never changed.

Also, translators must be cultural intermediaries, which requires an intimate focus on how relief recipients think and feel. Accurate translation requires an ability to believe each individual is unique, and no one has the financial resources to make this path work effectively.

It is no surprise that during the continuing Ebola epidemic in West Africa, when healthcare professionals told villagers they have to give up their tradition of touching and bathing a body before burial (one of the disease's main infection vectors), widespread distrust arose. The attitude was supported by virtually all the official messaging being in English.

“Language is very political. We steer away from that,” Petras says. But she understands a connection is unavoidable and uses the 2013 election in Kenya as an example.

“In the (2007 election), groups that benefit from chaos used misinformation in tribal languages (to affect the election's outcome),” she adds.

The United Nations noted that the 2007 election was widely marred by corruption and violence. This spawned an Africa-based digital platform called Ushahidi that crowd-sourced trouble spots and relayed them to others. TWB and Ushaidi found a natural fit, and in 2013 TWB became heavily involved in the election, where a record number of voters turned out.

Ten translators filled in around the clock under project manager Paul Warambo in Nairobi. “I am a Kenyan and a voter at the time, I had the memories of the deadly violence of the 2007/8. I feared just like any other Kenyan that chaos would have erupted if the situation was not well

handled," he says.

When the data system collating votes from around the country broke down, there was huge potential for manipulation and more election chaos. The biggest problem was communicating accurate information to and from districts far from Nairobi, which meant using 11 different Kenyan languages. During eight days TWB volunteers worked 24 hours a day ensuring that no one was misunderstood. This included hundreds of conversations and emails and 38,000 SMS texts.

The election is considered the calmest and most-fair in the country's recent history.

TWB and Ushahidi teamed up again for the March 2015 election in Nigeria. "Our goal is to make sure every voice counts," Petras says.

That's a tough task when, until now, making every human understood has never had a high priority within large humanitarian organizations in development aid and crisis management.

That's the thing about translation; like a shovel in the desert, we never think about it until we really need it.

Last year TWB brought together 111 language pairs and used 3,000 volunteer translators who donated 33,000 hours of their time. These numbers are impressive but not the balance-sheet deliverables that the world seems obsessed with. Not the kind funders can take to their Boards of Directors to show lives saved or catastrophes avoided.

Firdaus Kharas understands the situation well. His four public-service-announcement campaigns aimed at the developing world in multiple languages are often ignored in the Western world because the effects are so hard to measure. Yet with mainstream projects rarely getting metrics worth bragging about, things may soon change.

"We are now at a new point of human history: an age of global, instant, widespread, personal, two-way communications. In order to succeed,

vital content that travels in this new age must be understood by the recipients. One of the principal barriers we have as a species is the myriad of languages that exist. We must overcome that barrier in order to make this world a better place," he says.

This is where Lori Thicke, Rebecca Petras, Grace Tang and thousands of volunteers are trying to direct Translators Without Borders in the future. In a globalized world with billions of people trying to talk to and understand each other, technology never goes as far as the all-too-human elements of translation.

(Mike Levin has been a journalist for 35 years. He has lived and worked in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and his native Ottawa writing about economics, business, the environment, humanitarian efforts and the music industry among many other subjects.)

I UNITED NATIONS WORKERS

The New York Times

ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ABUSE

United Nations personnel were accused in nearly 80 cases of rape, sexual assault and sex trafficking in 2014 alone, with the bulk of the cases involving peacekeepers deployed to some of the most troubled parts of the world.

The findings, part of a 32-page report released quietly in March, are part of a decade-long effort by the organization to stanch sexual abuse by its own staff and soldiers.

The report resurrects some tough proposals that countries in the General Assembly had quashed in the past,

including holding courts-martial in the countries where complaints were made, rather than simply sending the accused soldiers home, as is often the case.

The report proposes to establish a trust fund for victims, including "children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse."

Complaints have declined in the last four years, the report said. Still, the issue remains delicate for the United Nations system. It can hardly afford for its blue-helmeted troops to be seen as exploiting those they are sent to protect.

At the same time, the United Nations must depend on contributing countries to pursue accusations of wrongdoing involving its military personnel.

The report found that in 2014, 51 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported in peacekeeping missions.

The majority came from three large missions, in Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Among them were 13 allegations of sex with minors. There were paternity claims in 12 cases.

SOUTH SUDAN: A **FRAGMENTED** & **FORGOTTEN** STORY

South Sudan plunged into another conflict just 2 years after independence. Civil war in South Sudan has claimed thousands of lives and has displaced nearly 2 million people. With failed negotiation attempts, violence and suffering continues in the world's youngest nation.



Photo: Samir Bol/GSDM

That was in 2011. When the people of southern Sudan voted in favour of independence and gave birth to the youngest nation on the planet, the Republic of South Sudan. That vote for independence was also a vote for a better life, freedom, security and human rights. That joy and vigor and passion of South Sudanese people had a meaning and a hope and a purpose.

Within three years that zeal has been virtually crushed and the country has been plunged into a bloody civil war that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives already.

How did it all start?

A series of armed rebellions, such as the National United Front and the South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA) led by former SPLA General George Athor, did emerge shortly after independence. Though incapable of toppling the ruling regime, those rebellions destabilized regional security and caused continuous civilian suffering. Majority of such groups were led by former SPLA commanders and basically aimed at fulfilling their vested interests.

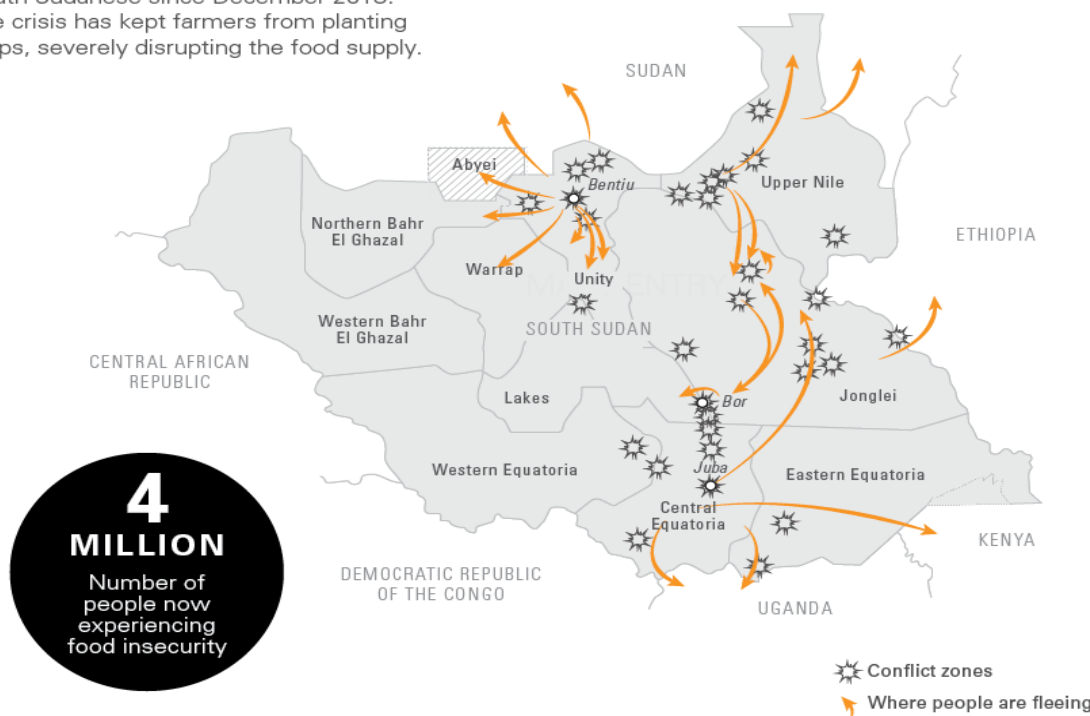
A more serious conflict has erupted since December 2013 after the ruling

“According to the Global Peace Index (GPI) South Sudan now ranks as the third least peaceful country in the world after Syria and Afghanistan”



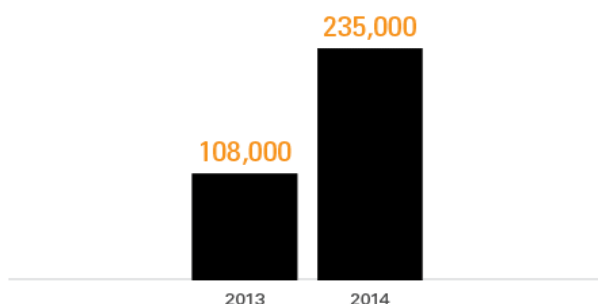
HOW CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN TURNED INTO A FOOD CRISIS

Fighting has displaced more than 1.7 million South Sudanese since December 2013. The crisis has kept farmers from planting crops, severely disrupting the food supply.



THE COST OF INACTION

The estimated number of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition has **doubled** since the conflict began



What is severe acute malnutrition?

Severe acute malnutrition is **life-threatening**. Children with this condition are severely underweight, show visible signs of wasting, and suffer fluid retention, which causes swelling.

CHILDREN AT RISK

Children are the most vulnerable during conflict and food crises.

FOOD SHORTAGES

34% of the population is affected by food insecurity. 50,000 children under five may die this year if they are not treated for malnutrition.

MALNUTRITION & DISEASE

Children with severe acute malnutrition are more vulnerable to illnesses such as malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia and measles.

WATER SHORTAGES

Less than 50% of the population has access to clean water. Water-borne diseases like diarrhea are a top killer of young children.

SANITATION

Only 13% of the population has access to sanitation facilities. There are now more than 5,000 cases of cholera following an outbreak in May.

SHELTER

Families are spending their days without shelter in the intense heat and sun, and sleeping in the open during the cold nights.

VIOLENCE

An estimated 9,000 children have been recruited into armed groups, and many have been victims of assault and sexual violence.

Source: UNICEF

APRIL '15

ISSUE N. 15

party's internal tussle turned violent on the evening of 15 December in a party meeting.

Fighting started initially among members of the Presidential Guard and the SPLA split between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir, a Dinka, and former Vice-President Riek Machar, a Nuer. Fighting rapidly spread to various states and military joints and within less than 24 hours civilian lives were caught in the violence.

The SPLA suffered disintegration in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity States and the capitals of these states were under control of the opposition forces. In Jonglei State, when opposition forces initially took Bor town, civilians fled

and, according to local authorities, more than 300 civilians, mainly women and children, died while trying to cross the river into Lakes State. The 12 days of intense fighting claimed numerous lives and according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the conflict has displaced more than 2 million people inside South Sudan and another 0.5 million people have fled to neighboring countries.

A 2014 report released by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan accused both warring parties of extrajudicial killing and war crime. The report stated:

Reports of widespread killing of hundreds of civilians, destruction of entire villages, and looting of livestock, food items, and other personal possessions were received...The consequences for the civilian population have been devastating. There have been attacks on hospitals, churches, mosques, and United Nations bases. All parties to the conflict have

committed acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women of different ethnic groups...Despite the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement on 23 January, fighting continues with little hope that civilians will see any respite from the relentless violence...there are also reasonable grounds to believe that the crimes against humanity of murder, rape and other acts of sexual violence, enforced disappearance, and imprisonment have occurred.

Civilian suffering and humanitarian crisis

An internal fragmentation within the ruling party has complicated the con-

and now ranks as the third least peaceful country in the world after Syria and Afghanistan.

What has prevented peace?

The main reason of the conflict is an internal rift in the ruling party, but there are wider issues of transitional justice, security and power sharing. Both sides blame each other for violence and subsequent peace talks negotiated by the The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have repeatedly failed.

"The people of South Sudan continue to suffer in this manmade crisis," Zlatko Gagic, Oxfam's South Sudan country director, said in a recent statement,



flict and South Sudanese people have greatly suffered as a result. Apart from widespread killing and displacement, the conflict has brought the country to brink of famine and food scarcity. There have been reports of rape, abductions and recruitment of school children to militia groups.

According to the Global Peace Index (GPI) 2014 put together by the Institute for Economics and Peace, South Sudan experienced the largest drop (of 17 spots as compared to 2013)

"with 2.5 million people at risk of severe hunger by the end of this month, and no end in sight as this process yet again fails to deliver peace."

The United Nations Security Council recently adopted a resolution to impose sanctions on any party that hampers efforts to restore peace in South Sudan, but that hasn't stopped the fighting. While efforts for peace negotiations are going on, any sign of peace deal is unlikely in near future.

OIL AND WEAK INSTITUTIONS:

Root causes of Conflict in South Sudan

Global South Development Magazine's Global Development Reporter Mr. Samir Bol recently caught up with Dr. Luka B. Deng Kuol, Director and Associate Professor at the Centre for Peace & Development, University of Juba, South Sudan and talked about the ongoing political crisis in South Sudan. An excerpt:



I think South Sudan is a very lucky country. God blessed it with several resources. In terms of minerals, oil and even water. But these are the things that make it be envied.



Q: How's the current political situation in South Sudan?

I think the situation in South Sudan now is very bleak after the peace talks failed. I think there is a lot of disappointment too because people were expecting a peace agreement especially after the United Nation resolution and the sanctions. But the talks have stalled and every South Sudanese citizen is disappointed, the

international community feels also disappointed and the worst part is that now there are not much options, the one option that warring parties have now is resume fighting. We are actually expecting an escalation of fighting especially in the oil producing areas like in upper Nile and Unity state, and unfortunately, we are going to see more human suffering. There is another issue of food security and if humanitarian assistance is going to be obstructed due to fighting, we might face another famine in South Sudan. So the situation is really very tensed.

Q: Are there any signs of political agreement?

I think even though any peace agreement doesn't seem possible right now, but there are some opportunities and possibilities. I think as South Sudanese the warring parties should continue dialogue and should realize that war definitely is not a good option. It's not an option that many South Sudanese favor. One good sign of the last fifteen months is that there has been an agreement in Arusha about the reunification of

the SPLM and that agreement will be quite important in solving the disputes. If the SPLM chairman is able to implement the Arusha agreement it might open avenues for a national dialogue and things can move forward. On the other hand, definitely the international community should continue to encourage the parties to come back to the talks.

Another option is that IGAD continues its mediation, but we need to change the way they have been mediating. I think they should take experience of the CPA time, of having all the observers on board. I mean all IGAD member states should be observers rather than just three: Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya. In fact, these three countries seem to have their own interest in South Sudan. So having most IGAD members aboard and if possible relocating the place for mediation talks from Ethiopia to maybe Kenya might be appropriate. Another option is to have another mechanism, outside the region or outside any IGAD country that doesn't have any direct interest in South Sudan. For instance, countries like Nigeria, South Africa, possibly Tanzania or even Burundi. Countries like these can have an objective way of mediating and likely to get trust from the parties. Still the other option is to combine and go for different options. For instance, the IGAD process and

I SUDAN-SOUTH SUDAN RELATIONS

An unstable Sudan is not good for South Sudan as well. So we want to see a democratic system in Sudan as well as in South Sudan and then we can have good relations with Sudan in a meaningful way.

then IGAD plus these two options.

Q: What is the main reason for conflict in South Sudan?

I think South Sudan is a very lucky country. God blessed it with several resources. In terms of minerals, oil and even water. But these are the things that make it be envied. Southern Sudan has been at war for many years, even before the independence of Sudan. So you had the first civil war and now this is another civil war. So it is a country that has gone through bad governance for a prolonged period of time, it is also a land-locked country. Another problem is of weak institutions. That's actually the biggest problem because we have seen that weak institutions sometimes manifest themselves in these crisis forms. For example, the current crisis started from within the SPLM and because there was no tradition of democratic practice in the party, even a small crisis would not be contained. As it had led the independence movement, still the whole country depends on SPLM and when an internal crisis erupts within SPLM that also becomes a national problem and that makes South Sudan very fragile. And this is of course because of weak institutions in South Sudan.

So I could say that there are two main reasons that cause instability in South Sudan at the moment. One is the problem of oil and weak institutions and the second one is, what I call, the chaos of liberation. When we moved from the liberation movement to the governing phase it's been difficult and chaotic. This chaos again is a result of weak institutions in South Sudan.

Q: How do you see Sudan's role in South Sudan?

As I often say South Sudan is a land-locked country with bad neighbors. Sudan in particular, and specially the ruling NCP party's undeclared policy has been to divide Southern Sudanese along the lines of two major tribes Dinka vs Nuer and create instability.

What is very apparent to us now if we look at the community, national or regional level is that Sudan in particular has been having its role in the conflict. This has happened since independence. Many people feel that they have been trying to weaken the South. For example, they have been deliberately playing around with outstanding border issues, also the Abyei issue, and what happened in Heglig was a clear case of how they want to provoke the south.

Sudan seems to be bothered by South Sudan's possible plans for constructing an alternative pipeline for oil transportation, either through Kenya or through Ethiopia. This seems to threaten their security and economic interest in South Sudan. Many people believe that Sudan wants to see a weak, unstable South Sudan that continuously relies on Sudan to transport its oil. And some people also believe that they do not want South Sudan to collapse to the level that oil production stops altogether. Ironically, they have good relations with the opposition and at the same time they see themselves having good relationship with the government of South Sudan as well. A very dirty political game

seems to be going on.

South Sudan depends on Sudan to transport its oil and when the oil prices are going down South Sudan receives per barrel less than \$10 while Sudan is getting at least \$25 per barrel. So just because of the pipeline, or just because South Sudanese oil flow through their transportation system, they are receiving almost three quarter of the oil revenue. So a weak and unstable South Sudan is in their economic interest in that way.

It is also important to see what happened in the Arab world because of the political Islam and it's an issue in Sudan as well. Sudan gets a lot of support from Arab countries and the information we have is that it benefits a lot from the oil in Libya. An unstable Sudan is not good for South Sudan as well. So we want to see a democratic system in Sudan as well as in South Sudan and then we can have good relations with Sudan in a meaningful way. The role they are playing in IGAD negotiations was very clear they were not favoring the Arusha agreement that was signed for the reunification of the SPLM.

Q: How do you see the UN's and other Western countries' role in South Sudan?

Of course, at the moment, the international community is facing a lot of problems, for instance, the ISIS, the volatile situations in Syria, in Libya, in Ukraine and so forth. So South Sudan has not been on focus lately. However, the troika countries that mediated the CPA are still engaged in mediation. One problem, however, especially with the Western countries seems

to be that they don't have enough and holistic understanding of the situation on the ground. For instance, they said that the Arusha agreement for reunification of the SPLM is not a positive thing because they think that you can't resurrect a dead monster for they believe that SPLM has been monopolizing the political affairs in South Sudan and the only chance of achieving real democracy in the country is having divided the SPLM.

Sudan is very interested in seeing a divided South Sudan and sees a reestablished South Sudan as an obstacle for its vested interests. Ethiopia is also having its own agenda because of the Renaissance Dam especially on the issue of the Nile Basin; and Ethiopia is emerging as a strong power in the region especially after Egypt got destabilized.

Another interesting thing with Ethiopia is that the issue of the pipeline that is to pass via Ethiopia to Djibouti as well as the number of Nuer community in the Gambella region of Ethiopia is too high let alone the refugees.

Kenya, too, has a lot of economic interests in South Sudan, especially the goods imported to South Sudan. Another issue is the issue of ethnicity in Kenya between the ruling Kikuyu and the Luo. This has made the Kenyan government feel that the South Sudanese people are more connected to the opposition Luo tribe.

Uganda is very clear in their stance by having their soldiers on the ground and they are also aware of the economic benefits. These are the reasons why IGAD has failed in negotiating a peace deal for South Sudan.

Q: What are the problems that ordinary South Sudanese face everyday?

We have done a calculation in the Center for Peace and Development

Studies of the economic cost for South Sudan if the war continues for the next 5 years. It will cost around 158 billion dollars, it will cost the neighboring countries 23 billion dollars and the international community around 30 billion dollars. So the people who suffer most are the people who cannot support their relatives in the neighboring countries.

However, the biggest problem is that we have 2 million people displaced and another 2 million people as refugees in the neighboring countries and with the failed peace talks; we have a danger of 4 million people facing hunger. Last year we averted famine because of the December harvest, but if you look at the latest reports, the rate of malnutrition has gone so high. So the average South Sudanese citizen's life is surely going to have a negative impact and if the conflict continues things will get worse.

One thing, which is very clear, is that oil isn't flowing like before and the country is faced with a problem of aid, whether to entrust the non-governmental organizations or the private institutions to cater for the aid. This is because aid has become a business partly due to a weak government. One thing, however, is obvious that if the UN had not interfered last year, things were going to be worse.

Q: What are the main achievements achieved since independence?

I think the most important achievement of the country is the independence of the country itself and that is why if you ask South Sudanese people, as much as 70% of them will tell you that things are better because for example there were no cars to transport you from the airport. Education and development has greatly improved. Though there is conflict, these facts can't be undermined.

WHAT CAUSES FIGHTING? //

• **As South Sudanese the warring parties should continue dialogue and should realize that war definitely is not a good option. It's not an option that many South Sudanese favor.**

• **Sudan seems to be bothered by South Sudan's possible plans for constructing an alternative pipeline for oil transportation, either through Kenya or through Ethiopia.**

• **The biggest problem is that we have 2 million people displaced and another 2 million people as refugees in the neighboring countries and with the failed peace talks; we have a danger of 4 million people facing hunger.**

The U.S. government is one of the countries that have contributed a lot to the independence of this country. While South Sudan's relations under George Bush's presidency was very good, the Democrats now seem concerned about accountability and good governance issues which South Sudan government hasn't fared very well on.

ALGEBRAIC CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN: CAN AREA BOY DIPLOMACY HELP?

// JOEL OBENGO

GSDM Global Development
Reporter



South Sudanese President Salva Kiir. Photo: Samir Bol/GSDM

Gabriel Olusanya, the former Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, NIIA and former Ambassador to France, coined the expression 'area boy diplomacy' to describe the country's foreign policy under the autocracy of General Sani Abacha (1993-1998), as conducted by his often abrasive foreign minister, Tom Ikimi.

Beginning in the aftermath of state and national elections in April 2010, South Sudan has faced an eruption of armed insurgencies, the majority of them led by former Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) commanders. In a number of cases, the rebellion are closely related to state and national politics and governance

challenges and the often contradictory responses to them have exposed deep rifts both within and between the SPLA and government.

South Sudan, which became independent from Sudan after a referendum in 2011, has since experienced conflict in multiple locations, including between different ethnic groups in Jonglei state. After a violent event on 15 December 2013, a civil war broke out in South Sudan. Despite multiple cease fire attempts and ongoing peace negotiations, violence continues to consume much of South Sudan. Insecurity throughout the country has disrupted agricultural activities and exacerbated food insecurity, bringing South Sudan to the brink of famine and a humani-

tarian crisis. According to a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs dated 12 March 2015, 1.5 million individuals have been displaced internally by this conflict since December 2013 and this demonstrates the urgency by which it should be resolved.

South Sudan's combustible mix of armed political opposition, violent ethnic militias and dysfunctional political system are part of the tinder that led to the eruption of the civil war in South Sudan in late 2013.

Despite thirteen months of peace talks mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the war threatens to re-intensify. The negotiations do not

reflect the diversity of armed groups in the country and the region- most of which are nominally allied with either President Salva Kiir or former vice president Dr. Riek Machar, SPLA in opposition and counter-accusations of impartiality deficits of mediators.

There exist constellation of South Sudanese armed groups which are emblematic of the regional, national and local challenges to peace and the pattern of a war that cannot be resolved by engaging only two of the nearly dozen armed groups in the country and ignoring those that have not yet engaged in the fight many of who do not support the peace process thereby creating a chaotic environment on the ground.

The trajectory of the civil war in South Sudan reflects the bifurcated nature of the pre-war political landscape of the country which includes multiplicity of armed opposition groups and related ethnic militias.

The North-South conflict formally ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 9th January 2005. The CPA was signed by the ruling national Congress Party and the SPLA/M and this signalled a historic compromise: the government in Khartoum was guaranteed sharia law in the North while the south gained the right to self determination after an interim period of six years but the anticipated peace dividend have not trickled down to majority on the ground.

With its provisions for a permanent internationally monitored ceasefire, power sharing and access to oil wealth, the separation of religion and state, autonomy and separate army, the CPA responded to key southern grievances.

However, intra-Sudan conflicts continued to fester and present threats to South Sudan's overall security environment. Despite its name, the CPA

was interestingly not comprehensive, but instead the deal was carefully crafted to benefit two dominant military elites.

South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF) not only threatened to undermine the authority of SPLM/A (Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army) and the legitimacy of the CPA, but also disrupted civilian livelihoods in many parts of the south

The current national power struggle was sparked off largely because of the political stand-off between President Salva Kiir and other leading members of the SPLM, including a number of former members of the government. A press conference held on 6 December 2013 in which senior members of the SPLM, including the former vice president Riek Machar, the former SPLM secretary Pagan Amum, as well as the widow of the SPLM's deceased leader John Garang, accused President Kiir of "dictatorial tendencies." They diagnosed "deep-seated divisions within the SPLM leadership" and demanded that party structures to be reformed in order to make possible "collective leadership." They called for internal reforms and restructuring in government to meet diversity in the southern Sudan society.

However, there is competing narratives of the events of the previous one and half years. Hannah Bryce, writing for Chatham house – a foreign policy think tank – argues that the current struggle illustrates "the prevalence of political 'tribalism' at the highest office". Thus, in the search for straightforward explanations, 'tribalism' is a concept which many commentators readily tap into. However, the key protagonists in South Sudan's crisis also make use of a distinctly anti-tribalist rhetoric and warnings of ethnic conflict in order to justify their political agendas as well as the use of force.

According to Jok Madut Jok, a co-

founder of Sudd Institute and an expert in Sudanese affairs, the violence unleashed on December 15 came as a shock. First, the abruptness of events—how suddenly they erupted on the Sunday night, without warning. Then, the speed at which violence spread, not just from barracks to barracks but then from state to state. The viciousness was a shock. So was the ethnic tone that the violence rapidly acquired, having previously

SECURITY IN SOUTH SUDAN //

• **Despite multiple cease fire attempts and ongoing peace negotiations, violence continues to consume much of South Sudan.**

• **Insecurity throughout the country has disrupted agricultural activities and exacerbated food insecurity, bringing South Sudan to the brink of famine and a humanitarian crisis.**

• **The trajectory of the civil war in South Sudan reflects the bifurcated nature of the pre-war political landscape of the country which includes multiplicity of armed opposition groups and related ethnic militias.**

been contained as an internal military issue.

WAY FORWARD

Negotiations between delegations representing President Kiir and Dr. Machar have started in Ethiopia under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an organization of eight East African countries. The negotiations have so far focused on

securing a ceasefire, a positive first step to bring an immediate end to the killing, destruction, and displacement. But this is only the first of many steps. Horrific as the violence since mid-December has been, the crisis also presents an opportunity to address unresolved issues and put South Sudan back on the path of democratization, good governance and peace—a path from which it deviated well before the current crisis

Given that most armed groups are not fighting for control of the government in Juba and more so this conflict has causal relationship with local issues such as land, representation in state government, cycles of revenge violence and a sense of ethnic exclusion, it is important for IGAD to engage them to critically build support for a future peace agreement and to ensure Kiir and Machar are not able to use these groups to undermine peace agreement.

Various initiatives should be undertaken in order to transform SPLA/M from being a highly militarized rebel movement into a politically independent army and democratic Party of which it claims to be and of which it is not. To be successful, the SPLA/M will need to develop a culture of accountability and transparency and to eschew rule by excessive military force. Although Salva Kiir and his supporters are making professionalization of the army a major priority, his views are not always shared by others in the SPLM/A leadership.

The merging of SSDF and SPLA in 2006 even though was problematic, a great deal stability of the country hinges on its success. The SPLA must find money, space and tolerance for the former enemies. It faces a major challenge in transforming from a rebel force into an accountable and transparent governing body and army. Unless SPLM/A can move quickly to establish effective systems of administration to oversee development programmes and respond to widespread

grievances, there is real danger that achievements in the security sphere will dissolve under the weight of internal dissent. Given the SPLA's past tendency to respond to dissension with force and for the recipients to respond aggressively, such a scenario could be disastrous for south Sudan

The ceasefires so far signed, between the rebels and President Kiir should address what political future there will be for the former vice president and the 11 released detainees accused of plotting a coup. A politi-

WHAT CAUSES FIGHTING? //

- **Most armed groups are not fighting for control of the government in Juba and more so this conflict has causal relationship with local issues such as land, representation in state government, cycles of revenge violence and a sense of ethnic exclusion,**

- **Despite its name, the CPA was interestingly not comprehensive, but instead the deal was carefully crafted to benefit two dominant military elites.**

cal agreement that makes room for increased plurality and addresses the issue of elite infighting within the ruling party would go a long way toward preventing an early return to conflict.

The political ruling class should identify actionable options to promote more inclusive politics and improve the prospects for a political resolution of conflict in South Sudan

Moving forward, the provision of representative governance opportunities – and at the very least recognizing

their absence – offers a more practical basis on which to build longer-term peace. Progress will require measures that address both ethnicity and participation, incorporating the concerns of the many disaffected factions of South Sudanese society into the governing of the country. The government and its international partners should work towards building the capacity of local governance and incorporating the existing complex social structures into the process constructively. This includes the voices of the marginalized as well as the frustrated male youths who are willing to fight to be heard.

SPLM leadership must commit to undertaking significant internal reforms to overcome the weaknesses revealed in the current conflict. An interim party leadership structure and bodies will need to be formed until a new convention can be held. Nomination procedures for candidates for local, state, and national positions need to be freely debated. Regular communication between the local bodies, secretariat, and leadership structures need to be implemented. Focus needs to shift from competition over titles to tolerating – and encouraging – constructive policy debate, open dialogue, and productive dissent both within the SPLM and with other parties. And if visions for the future of the party and its policies cannot be reconciled, the negotiating parties and mediators may need to consider reaching agreement on principles and a process for the peaceful dissolution of the SPLM and formation of new parties.

About the author

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23 GOVERNMENTS IN 24 YEARS & Nepal's Underdevelopment

Political instability in Nepal has badly affected the country's ambition for a rapid economic development.



// RAJENDRA SENCHUREY

Development REPORTER
Nepal

Nepal has fallen in the mire of perpetual turbulence nearly for two decades. The restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1990 was expected to catapult a paradigm shift of the socio-economic condition of the then kingdom. But the failure to tap the potential development begot a leftist outfit just in a few years. As a consequence, the country experienced a decade long (1996 - 2006) bloody civil war which not only took the lives of around 15000 people but also ravaged the development infrastructure vehemently.

Peoples' Movement in April 2006 converted the Hindu kingdom into a secular federal republic state and the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) was signed between former belligerents by 21 November of the same year. Then the neo-republic state formed a Constituent Assembly (CA) in 2008 to carve a new constitution for the country. As the 601 lawmakers could not accomplish their task even after extending the deadline for 4 times, the CA got dissolved and amidst pros and cons

the country again selected another assembly in November 2013. The newly elected CA members promised that they would finalize the remaining tasks within a year. The yearlong, self-imposed, time limit has passed already in January this year; and there is a fear amongst Nepalese that the country might fall into another vicious cycle of political chaos and underdevelopment.

Nepal's counterparts in Asia have progressed dramatically in these decades. But since the advent of multiparty democracy, Nepal has not achieved anything significant. The historical archives show that the country before and in early 90s was more prosperous than it is today. For instance, Alan Macfarlane's chapter 'Fatalism and Development in Nepal' in Michael Hutt edited "Nepal in the Nineties" (published in 1994) reads - In contrast to India there appears to be little absolute poverty, with no begging and no real shanty towns. Famines are infrequent. There is a notable absence of violence; the police are few, crimes rates are

low, and political violence has been limited.

Despite people's positive expectations, the post-1990 era shows quite the reverse. Governments formed after the democratic movement in 1990 often lacked transparency, and a sense of fairness and justice. They couldn't guarantee human rights and the rule of law. Nepal now is in a morass of rampant corruption, widespread health and nutrition problems and eroding infrastructures. Unfortunately, it also has a quarter of its population under the poverty line. Quite surprisingly, in terms of economic progress, Nepal exhibits the characters of a Sub-Saharan economy. Never been colonized, Nepal doesn't have excuses to attribute the causes of its underdevelopment to colonization or imperialism. Then what is the cause of Nepal's stagnation?

The only rational reason for the predicament of Nepal is its political instability. Because the continuous political instability has fuelled poor governance, corruption, conflicts,

environmental degradation and so forth. Manifestations of strikes, demonstrations and violence have been the immediate reflection of the political instability whilst the decade long insurgency has remained as the extreme case of it.

The worsening security situation as a result of political instability has hindered overall development in Nepal. It has also caused trade volatility and some donor agencies have reduced their assistance due to corruption and

ested in the country's development. Sandwiched between the biggest democracy (India) and the biggest Communist country (China), Nepal should have been benefitting from its strategic location, but since political leaders turn to their neighbors only for power alteration or accumulation; much can't be expected in terms of development dividends.

On the other hand, Nepal is not being able to utilize its resources in its full capacity. Despite having the poten-



misuse of funds. As a consequence, the country has not been able to magnet foreign investments either. It's been a practice for a long time that in order to defeat 'opponents', social and development policies are switched when regimes change in Nepal. The research of Ari Aisen and Francisco Jose Veiga for IMF conducted by taking 169 countries (between 1960 and 2004) found that, in Nepal, the annual real GDP per capita growth rate is decreased by 2.39 percentage with each cabinet changes. In fact, Nepal has experienced almost 23 government changes in the last 24 years.

Nepalese political leaders, as far as their position in power is prioritized, do not seem to be much inter-

tiality of 83500 MW of electricity, Nepal has merely been able to generate nearly 800 MW. This doesn't fulfill the annual peak demand of 1201 MW energy and as a result, the country known as the second richest in water resources has upto 16 hours of load shedding in dry season. Nepal also lacks concrete plans and policies to employ its youths. The flow of labour migrants to the Gulf that started during the civil war years has now become an inescapable reality. This massive labour migration of nearly 1600 youths in a day, though, bags the remittance that accounts for 28.8% of the Nepalese GDP. But hardships associated with remittances are equally scary. Every month hundreds of dead bodies of Nepali migrants return to the country's Tribhuvan

WHAT FUELS NEPAL'S UNDER-DEVELOPMENT?

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International Airport. These are only a few instances of underdevelopment as a result of political instability. In fact, there is no room for complacency in any sector in Nepal.

The Way Forward

If Nepal is to progress, restoring political stability and peace is the most urgent task. Only after that its endeavors for economic development can progress. Security and good governance are equally important to attract foreign investments and investment from non-resident Nepalis. Besides empowering economic activities in small and medium scale, it should also make plans and policies to boost up its macroeconomic sector. Economists believe that minimizing trade deficits is another crucial factor, which can be achieved by promoting tourism and the agro industry.

HEALING THE BROKEN BONE:

Gang Rape Cases in Afghanistan



// SAYED JALAL

Development REPORTER
Afghanistan

A convoy of cars after attending a wedding ceremony were joyfully returning to Kabul from Paghman. In the darkness of a gloomy night the convoy was stopped around 20:00 o'clock by armed men in police uniform. Both men and women were disembarked from the convoy and were separated from each other at gun point. First the women were strip off their valuable accessories (jewelries, money, mobiles phones... etc) then they were strip off their honour and chastity. The women were gang raped by ten barbaric men hiding in police "uniform", which is at least a symbol of providing security in war ravaged Afghanistan. But that night they were devils in angel's skin. What does it tell us? Of course there used to be occasional rape cases in Afghanistan, but the recent trends, in a very ugly and overt way, reveal the darker side of a traditional patriarchal society. These trends also tell us that social morality is in sharp decline. From juvenile rapes by Mul-

las (Religious scholar) in mosques (Masjid), to rape of daughters by fathers and animal rapes, these rapists seem not to be scared or obligated by any code of conduct neither religious nor social.

Among the four women raped by them was an 18-year-old girl, who could not bear the scar of the heinous sexual violence. The last word she uttered was "don't tell anyone, we will lose our pride".

Apparently, we live in a society where pride seems to be the most important asset we seem to deeply care in the social settings. In this case, the Afghan girl was concerned about her family pride and wanted everyone to keep silent and put a veil of ignorance about the incident, even in her last breaths.

Perhaps it was her last words that jolted or perhaps it is the severity of the crime that awoke the authorities to take action. Initially a case of robbery was registered and when the victims visited the hospital, it was

ultimately registered as a gang rape case.

When a misplaced or a broken bone heals badly, it normally leaves doctors with no choice but to re-break and reset the bone in order to allow the bone to appropriately do its job. There have been repeated cases of rape and sexual violence, but the legal machinery in Afghanistan rarely cares about addressing these social evils.

A few convicts of the gang rape case had already served a ten-year term in prison for similar convictions of rape and robbery. It was found that after their release they were once again looking for their next prey. Rape is considered utterly forbidden in Islam and is punishable by death. In Islam capital punishment is reserved for the most heinous crimes, which severely harm the victims and destabilize society and according to most respected Islamic scholars rape falls in both categories. Islam takes the honour and protec-



tion of women very seriously. Though Islamic scholars call rape “hiraba” a form of forcible assault, which involves an attempt to overpower a weaker person to unwillingly accept the sexual advance of the attacker. Many people argue that had these

rapists been charged with capital punishment at the first place, much had been different today. The young girl who lost her life in hospital would have been alive; the women would not have been humiliated. Perhaps it's time to go back and

“re-break the bone” so it may heal properly.

Some people have argued that by serving capital punishment to the convict the legal apparatus should make sure that rapists will not be able to repeat the appalling crime again and again.

In some cases of rape and sexual violence, in traditional societies like Afghanistan, there seems to be a tendency to blame women too, but there needs to be more awareness raising campaigns since rape is a punishable crime and is not caused by women's action in anyway. Anyone who does something under utter duress is not guilty of any sin, even in the case of someone being forced to deprecate their faith in Allah. The Quran says: “Except him who does it under duress and whose heart is at rest with Faith...” (Al-Nahl: 106).

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EDUCATION & Development As Freedom



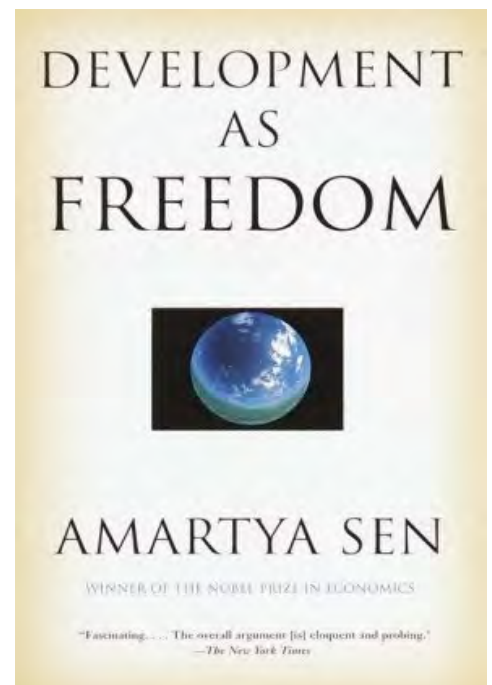
// Bak Hyejin

Education could be regarded as a crucial factor for the development of capabilities as well as human development.

Amartya Sen's seminal book *Development as Freedom* (1999) offers a whole range of new ideas when it comes to understanding development, economics, freedom and rights. In the book, Sen describes development as 'a process of expanding substantive freedom that people have' (1999, p. 297). He also emphasizes the concept of 'capabilities', which is to enrich people's own lives and to overcome difficulties through the expansion of freedom, which should be the ends and the means of development under a variety of structures. In his perspective, economy seems to be a significant factor, but when looking at the relationships among three key notions - 'freedom', 'capabilities' and 'development'; education does not seem to be linked or playing an important role at first glance. However, education could be an instrument for enhancement of the capabilities which Sen considers: people can improve skills and knowledge through education; education can promote capabilities which peo-

ple can recognise and act through as well as participating in public issues. Sen (1999) considers individuals as a conative agent of act, but the scope of an individual's freedom could be limited by social influences. According to him, eliminating the limitations and barriers of substantive freedom could be regarded as a part of development. He mentions poverty, famines, disasters, gender discrimination, and irrational social issues as targets in need of removal. He discusses relationships between them and freedoms, capabilities and development.

From Sen's perspective, providing social opportunities like public health and education through public action could be important since such opportunities could compensate the economic and political freedom of individuals, and motivate individuals' acts to overcome the deprivations simultaneously. He argues that social opportunities should be encouraged; and education should be a part of



DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM //

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social opportunity, which should be provided to all people to enhance their capabilities.

While we generally consider that individual's trials are important for better implementation and higher ranking results from competitions in education in developed countries; providing educational opportunities as a means of implementing supportive public assistance equally for all, based on the necessity of basic capabilities at the national level seems to be more significant in developing countries. Education could be regarded as a crucial factor for the development of capabilities as well as human development.

First of all, basic education such as reading and writing could improve an individual's ability to acquire information, and provide more communication opportunities with society. These basic skills might be the most basic factors which could help people recognise the importance of the right to participation in elections or to exercise their civil rights.

Thus, the acquisition of these basic factors could bring changes to economic opportunities, and the entire life of the individual could be changed eventually.

Moreover, these educational opportunities could bring about more effects upon the quality and flourishing of individuals' life than direct contributions. This means that, the general educational enhancement of individuals could bring social changes. It could further help other people to obtain benefits through expanding

the social capacity of production and economic development.

This human development is explicitly useful, and its overall effects could be explained through relevant and comprehensive views. For instance, the relationship between education and economic development in some Eastern Asian countries like South Korea and Japan could be remarkable examples. Therefore, for the efficient delivery of the general effect of the



social services, cooperative activities and support ventures should be considered at the national or local government level.

In terms of education, we can easily guess that it is significantly relevant to civic/social participation, environmental sustainability, health, and well-being/happiness. We might need to consider two crucial factors. Firstly, education should not be merely regarded as a mechanical tool, but available educational opportunities should be provided based on their value and priority instead. Secondly, the notion of human capabilities should be considered more than the view of Human Capital Theory where human-beings are regarded as human capital only. That is, human-beings and education should be

stressed as both means and ends in the development process. This awareness brings together the previous descriptions of education in two perspectives.

This review tried to consider the importance of improving capabilities through education for development. Although, the explanation of the roles of education could be seen as merely theoretical, not as a pragmatic alternative, it was regarded as an

essential and considerable target. It is often said that education is a far-sighted national policy. This indicates that if education is regarded to function as the cornerstone of all sectors, eventually in the long-term, the necessity to be concerned with its importance and role could be more acceptable.

Thus, for the better effectiveness of aid to pursue sincere development for people no matter where they live, we might need to consider the fundamental relationships between capabilities of both individuals and society/environment and how education helps to build these.

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(Bak Hyejin is a doctoral student of lifelong learning from South Korea. Her interests include the relationship between education and development, especially continuous learning and network of teachers in terms of roles of education for development)

Development In the Middle East

THROUGH THE PRISM OF "SELF-INTERESTED SECURITY"



Photo courtesy: www.stimson.org



// HRIDAY SARMA

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
at GSDM

One of the enduring problems with certain societies in the world - and this is certainly true of a lot of places in the Middle East - is that the capacity for self-governance and self-organizing just isn't there. It has to do with history- Patrick Jake O'Rourke (Senior Research Fellow at the Cato Institute, U.S.).

Yes, O'Rourke is partially correct; but in a way partially incorrect too, if we are to deconstruct modern Western discourse and objectively study the historical development of the region. This is in-fact the same region that had most predominant power epicentres and celebrated civilizations, which gifted mankind with fundamentals of knowledge in an array of disciplines, in the known past.

The Islamic Golden Age- which lasted from 8th century C.E. to 13th century C.E. - witnessed Islamic Renaissance that marked a zenith of cultural, scientific, religious and

commercial prosperity across the region. Many reputed nonconformist academics and technical experts assertively argue that the Islamic Golden Age did not end in the 13th century, rather it continued almost until the end of the 16th century C.E.

Unfortunately, at present almost the entire Middle East seems to be in a state of abyss or mayhem. The Middle East as we know is obviously not a homogenous region in any reckonable term. Yet we commonly make the mistake of conceptualizing and analyzing the region as a singular entity. The term 'Middle East' was first coined by Alfred Mahan- known as the most important U.S. military strategist and historian of the nineteenth century- in 1902. Mahan referred to Middle East as the Persian Gulf, which he insinuated the Great Britain should assume security responsibility in order to keep Russia in check and keep secure the route to India.

However, after the First World War when Britain and France gained control over Transjordan, Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, the meaning of the term was expanded to include

these territories as well. Now the term was no more solely linked to the security of the region, and in-fact defined the area in general. Starting from then until the states in the region got independence, foreign powers arbitrarily imposed sacrosanct inter-state borders across the region – where people had previously moved about without any restrictions and lived in symbiosis. A big question that was then not introspected and still lays undressed is: whether the Western defined concept of Westphalia based sovereign states system is rightly applicable for the Middle East?

Even when the new-born states in the region were not able to stand on their own feet they were subjected to severe jolts from extra-regional actors, i.e. both states and non-states (institutions). The latter endeavoured to evince maximum self-interests while engaging with the former by selectively engaging with chosen insider actors (lackeys) and in self-desirous ways and terms of engagements. They have adhered to this strategy over the years until now, but have of late realized that a mutually complimentary relationship is in-fact yielding on their part rather than attempting to further sustain absolute gains. This realization has come about for the Middle East has considerably accumulated 'power' over time and is now becoming more restive vis-à-vis the era ensuing inglorious exit of the colonial powers from the region. Presently state and non-state actors across the region are openly challenging Western influences of different kinds over the region. "Life in the Middle East is quite different from other places"- Zaha Hadid (a globally renowned female architect who hails from Baghdad, Iraq). Yes, it is indeed so for the numerous gory conflicts of all possible types (sectarian, religious, secessionist, etc.) that have been unceasingly or intermittently happening across the region. From the time all the hereby-located countries regained independence, there has been a rat race between different warring factions inside most

states as well as at a regional level in order to secure political and administrative powers in their respective hands. For instance, in Israel the Jewish community has succeeded in gaining an upper hand in all administrative matters of the state; howsoever the Palestinian community has not succumbed to the Jewish preponderance. The Palestinian Liberation Organization, which presently comprises of ten Palestinian groups, has been globally recognized as a legitimate entity that is seeking Palestinian statehood for its people. Moreover, there exists HAMAS, branded as a terrorist organization by a handful of mostly Western countries – that is presently ruling the Gaza Strip in Israel after winning 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections with a majority. Also, the Kurdish community – the largest ethnic group without a state – that inhabits in the adjacent parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey are waging conflicts against these states for greater autonomy as well as a loosely tied campaign for a unified Kurdistan state. A list of such conflicts is an extensive one!

Interestingly, a commonality in the approach of state and non state actors of the Middle East, which are either themselves a belligerent party or have stakes/ interests in any prevalent conflict, is that they give excessively high priority to their individual conflicts of concern while defining their national policies in all regards. This essentially means that while pursuing their general course of actions, including development-related activities; they keep in consideration of the high-conceived value of the conflicts that directly or indirectly concern them. Hence, in process each of these actors has been intentionally or unintentionally building a local milieu surrounding themselves and their subjects that is filled with the necessary wherewithal to address the concerning conflicts. On a similar line, extra-systemic state and institutional actors are equally contributing to building a mega complex of accumulated self-interested security in the Middle East for they tend to



LIMITS OF DEMOCRACY //

Is encouraging democracy among the states in the Middle East, which is presently going on at the behest of the West, a genuinely good way to address the prevalent and future conflicts of the region?

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, current President of Turkey, once frankly said, "I do not subscribe to the view that Islamic culture and democracy cannot be reconciled. However, democracy cannot be defined as the existence of parliaments and elections alone."

prioritize particular conflicts that are of concern for them while engaging with the region. The overall outcome of this security-centric perspective of all actors is that at the moment there is no realistic development happening in the once-great Middle East region. Is encouraging democracy among the states in the Middle East, which is presently going on at the behest of the West, a genuinely good way to address the prevalent and future conflicts of the region? Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, current President of Turkey, once frankly said, "I do not subscribe to the view that Islamic culture and democracy cannot be reconciled. However, democracy cannot be defined as the existence of parliaments and elections alone."

Further it is for the readers to contemplate whether we should let the Middle East decide what is best for the region or we may continue to do what we are best at – poke our nose into its internal affairs.

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