

**A Simple Tool Needed in a Complex Situation:  
A Development Worker's Perspective on the Use of Vocational Training to Augment the  
Peace Process in Sudan**

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*We wanted to save more boys but we couldn't. There were 4,000 of them [Darfur boys] waiting as we arrived but we could only take 180. Some tried to sneak on at night as we left Nyala but they were found at the checkpoint. Those that stay will become prisoners of hell; the starvation, famine is the cheapest way to kill and they will die.*

– Fr. Vincent Donati, Society of Don Bosco Catholic priest on educating young men from internal displaced people (IDP) camps near Darfur.<sup>1</sup>

History is written every day. And, every day, wide-eyed scholars studying peace and conflict resolution convene in classrooms to postulate perfect solutions to the world's most disastrous conflicts, each hoping for the chance to create a page of history. In 2004, I was one of them – a young graduate student in Northern Ireland with big dreams of making the world a different place. I studied the errors and hardships of several conflicts, searching for what decades of diplomacy and warfare had failed to produce, and found myself particularly drawn to the crisis in Sudan. In 2005, the 22-year long second Sudanese civil war had finally and mercifully come to an end with the signing of a peace agreement between the Arab north and the Christian and animist south. But Sudan was not yet free from strife. Another crisis was looming: Darfur.

Labelled by the United States as 'genocide', Darfur began to up images of Rwanda in 1994. Upon completion of my Master's degree, I could no longer take anyone else's word for it. I had to see it for myself. I spent two years in development fieldwork in Sudan, searching for

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<sup>1</sup> Internally Displaced People (IDP) differs from the common *refugee camps*, as IDPs are a group of people found displaced inside their own country unlike refugees who flee one country into another.

more answers to my questions. Why does the conflict continue? What is the reality on the ground, and what can be done to empower the civilian groups that are most affected?

What I found were several complexities of the political situation that permit continuation of the conflict in Sudan. I found a group of civilians, namely young men, who were simultaneously especially vulnerable to the effects of the conflict and especially pertinent to peaceful resolution and reconstruction. I also found a simple tool, vocational training, to be an effective method for engaging these young men, distracting them from participating in the violence and training them to become effective agents of change in the peacebuilding and reconstruction processes.

### I. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

The facts on Darfur are clear, and the media remind us daily of the 215,000 refugees, the hundreds of villages burnt down, the 200,000 plus killed and the 2.5 million displaced.<sup>2</sup> Many movements have labelled the conflict as ‘genocide’. The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), signed in May 2006, provided a framework for cessation of armed conflict, though it suffered from lack of support from a number of rebel groups. However, despite the DPA, the conflict and suffering in Darfur continue. Blame has been placed largely on the Sudanese President, Omar al-Bashir. The governments of the United Kingdom and the United States have threatened to use their ‘Plan B’, a stringent list of sanctions or a no-fly zone, but no indications of this have materialized as yet.<sup>3</sup> There is little doubt that the conflicts in Sudan, and not just in Darfur, have received media attention and been strongly condemned by the

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<sup>2</sup>[African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamid/background.html), ‘Background’, at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamid/background.html> (accessed 17 July 2009). Additional information on the website of the United Nations Mission in Sudan, at [www.unmis.org](http://www.unmis.org) (accessed 17 July 2009).

<sup>3</sup> News spread widely in Sudan of a possible ‘Plan B’ that may have been enacted by the US. *The Sudan Tribune* placed this story on their front page on 12 April 2007. *The Sudan Tribune*, “US Natsios hails Chinese cooperation, unveils Sudan Plan B”, electronic version available at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article21317> (accessed 17 July 2009).

Actual definitions of Plan B were never described in detail by the United States or the United Kingdom. Speculation revolved around the possibly intervention by other means outside of financial sanctions. Mr. Natsios, the US Special Envoy on Darfur was interviewed shortly after discussions of Plan B were announced.

West. However, little effort has been made to publicly denounce Sudan's leadership as responsible for those conflicts. Some wonder why more has not been done to topple the government of the current dictatorial regime. Has progress with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the south proven that the government can change? Is acceptance of the United Nations (UN), international observers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into the country a sign of progress towards peace? All these developments may have shown some degree of movement away from conflict, but violence remains a part of everyday life in Darfur. Popular organizations, such as the Save Darfur Coalition are exposing the tragedies of the Sudanese region. Many people are suffering in Darfur – a population is being murdered by government-backed militias and has been neglected for decades. But there is more to the story. Hoile asks some intriguing questions: for example, why would the government want another conflict after it reached peace with the south? Hoile digs deeper into this issue and examines evidence which suggests that there is a plausible reason for Western non-interference (aside from sanctions): Sudan is a country which once hosted Osama bin Laden, and many of his followers have remained in the country. Among the most reputable is Dr Hasan Turabi; a player in the initial 1989 coup d'état, Turabi was later imprisoned and forbidden to participate in government. Labelled by many as a terrorist, a lot of Sudanese also consider him and his party, the Popular Congress (PC), to be the voice of the people.

For all the claims of marginalization, there is no doubt whatsoever that the conflict within the Sudanese Islamic movement, which led to the imprisonment of Dr Hasan Turabi in 1999, is central to the Darfur conflict.<sup>4</sup> The connection between Turabi, the Popular Congress and the conflict in Darfur lies in the support the PC has given to the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). JEM is one of Darfur's largest rebel groups, and has not agreed to the ceasefire with the Khartoum government brokered by the UN and international community representatives. Hoile cites various organizations and reports in support of this hypothesis, including the International Crisis Group (ICG), Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahram* and many others, including statements from local government officials. In September 2004, the Governor of West Darfur, Suleiman Abdullah Adam, claimed that the Justice and Equality Movement was the

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<sup>4</sup> David Hoile, *Darfur in Perspective*, Second Revision (European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council: UK, 2006), at 17. Hoile provides an extensive collection of works cited by many organizations, groups and interviews conducted in Sudan and confirmed by other third parties. His insights and questions beg others to reconsider the simple rhetoric shown in media, both Western and Arab.

military wing of the Popular Congress. It is also becoming apparent that the Popular Congress has been using a dual, interconnected strategy in its attempts to overthrow the government in Khartoum.

The conflict in Darfur is far more complex than first meets the eye. Careful examination of the roots of the ongoing conflict should thus be at the forefront of any education or advocacy on Sudan. Simply overthrowing the current regime could result in the coming to power of an even more violent and oppressive government. As the saying goes: be careful what you wish for, you might just get it.

## **II. STATE LINES VERSUS TRIBAL LINES**

A gathering of tribes in Sudan can signal unification for war or for peace. Like politics, tribal differences demand much attention and study. Upon my arrival in Sudan and throughout my work in different areas of the country, I was constantly being asked to which tribe I belonged. Many young people had difficulty understanding that I was an American and that my parents came from different countries. They insisted that I explain my tribal lineage. My colleague, who was also born in New York, would respond that he was from the Mets tribe and that I was from the Yankees tribe. End of confusion, the matter was settled.

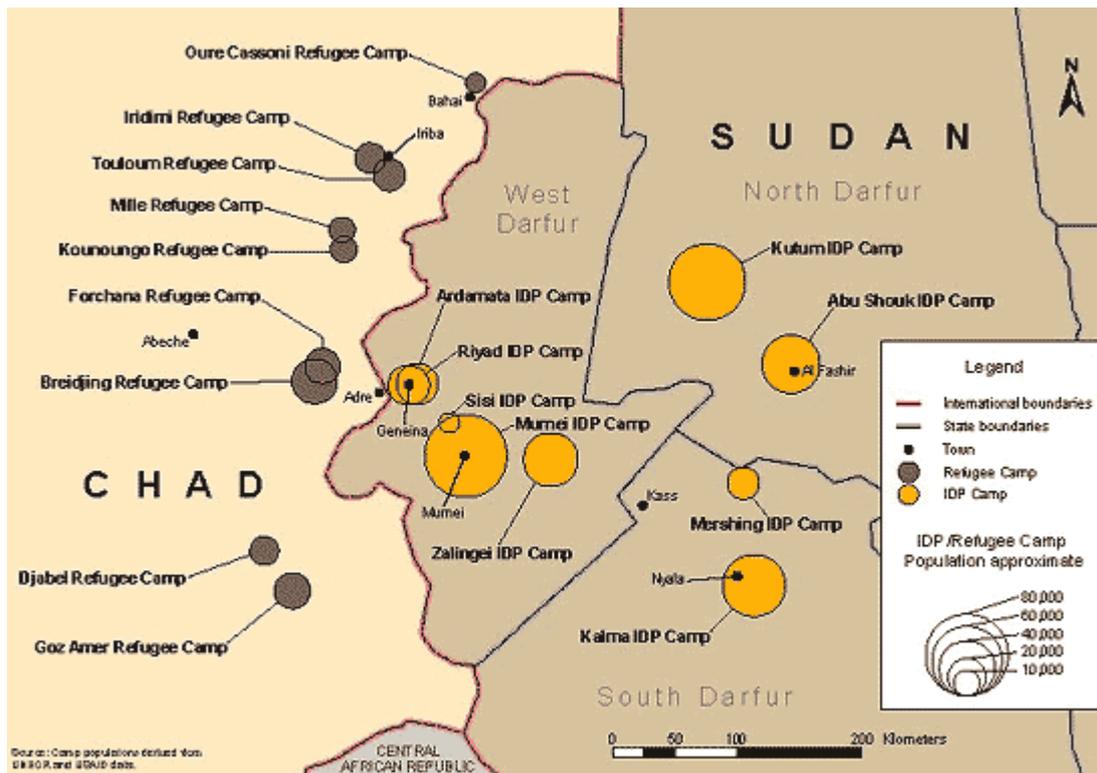
Much of Africa is divided by tribes of warriors that today align themselves with political parties. Sudanese look to names, as do the Northern Irish, to determine a person's origin. During the recent political crisis in Kenya, the country was divided by tribal allegiances, with individuals identifying themselves with their tribe and not with the state of Kenya. The borders used by colonial powers to carve up much of Africa made little sense to the tribes, which were not traditionally concerned with political borders. Unlike most Americans, who consider themselves to be US citizens regardless of ancestors heritage, the Sudanese identify themselves by tribe. The Dinkas, one of three river tribes, are well known and consider themselves to be one of the strongest tribes, if not the largest, in Sudan. Troubles in the south of the country revolve around tribes fighting one another. This is an internal conflict that the South must learn to contain, or risk finding itself torn into factions like Darfur.

The situation in Darfur is a clear case of conflict along a state line: that between Sudan and Chad. Some would also argue that the Libyan influence over the past hundred years still plays on today in North Darfur. Tribes have lived along the border since long before those lines were drawn, and this complicates the situation. Chad has often been accused of assisting rebels; some Sudanese militia has been accused of attacking Chad. There are renewed tensions between Sudan and Chad that could result in conflict. Sudan has severed diplomatic ties with Chad after accusing it of backing the Darfur rebels, and Chad has since formally closed its border and cut off economic ties with Sudan.<sup>5</sup> While complicated, and although they can make the situation even more unclear, tribal links must be observed. Some have described the physical and human composition in Darfur as similar to that of Afghanistan. An insufficient transportation system has impeded internal communications and, as a result, economic, social and political integration has been slow. On an ethnic level, members of an ethnic group, in particular within a tribe, share a “common ancestor, a common leader and a common territory in a positive way and harbour negative attitudes towards members of other tribes”.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> BBC Radio World Service, Africa Today Interviews, 13 May 2008. Available at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/2008/11/081120\\_interview\\_a-f.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/2008/11/081120_interview_a-f.shtml) (accessed 17 July 2009). It should be noted that the BBC and Al Jazeera news coverage of Sudan has been the most current.

<sup>6</sup> Neamatollah Nujumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region* (Palgrave: NY, 2002).



USAID Sudan<sup>7</sup>

### III. THE ALTERNATIVE TO INACTION: A WIDER ANGLE VIEW

Deeply affected by the complexities of the Darfur crisis are the Sudanese youth, who are not only bored but overwhelmingly restless and angry, a sentiment that can turn to destructive action if not tackled constructively. While there is no proven link between a lack of education and youth participation in extremist groups, it is true that a lack of educational opportunities can lead to few opportunities for income generation. This creates the desperate conditions which present young people with little option but to turn to banditry and other illegal activity to support themselves and their families. Delinquent groups can also provide them with a sense of community that may very well be lacking in their everyday lives. Giving civilians

<sup>7</sup> USAID Sudan, 'Satellite Imagery', available at [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan\\_africa/sudan/images/satellite/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/sudan/images/satellite/index.html) (accessed 17 July 2009). The involvement of USAID has largely been in food relief and programming peace initiatives through various community based organizations or contractors such as Development Alternatives Inc. John Granville, USAID staff member from NY, was assassinated in January 2008 after calls for *jihad* by al-Qaeda. USAID continues today to play a large role in Darfur aid as well as programming for the south of Sudan.

the tools to determine *how* to think rather than *what* to think is the opposite of what many extremist groups like the Taliban want. Neglecting to provide education, trade or ideas cross borders maintains a culture of ignorance and fear. I am not arguing that a lack of education for youth in Darfur would create terrorists, but it is not a far-fetched idea that extremist groups, like al-Qaeda (which have been reported in areas near Darfur) could offer young men an alternative to the poverty and desperation found in internally displaced people (IDP) camps. From a security point of view, Marg Sageman offers data which proves that youth who have joined radical movements such as the new post-9/11 al-Qaeda cells have no alternative livelihood or cause to which they can turn. These newcomers are generally poorly educated, home-grown, and tend to join the movement around the age of 20.<sup>8</sup> Yet David Hoile, an academic expert on Darfur, states that parts of the Sahel – and in this case Darfur – could become al-Qaeda’s next Afghanistan. There are many all-too-familiar ingredients: Darfur’s physical inaccessibility, its Islamic heritage, its proximity to several failed or semi-failed states, porous borders and its inaccessibility to Western intelligence services make it a very attractive location in which to hide and from which to attack.<sup>9</sup> The *New York Times* reported on 21 December 2008 that the youth in Darfur are losing respect for their elders and running out of patience with the dire situation. Be it from despair or anger, young men see few alternatives for a better lifestyle and view their battle as one which must be fought against the government. The report cites youth or *shabab* (in Arabic), who form groups as vigilantes, and notes the need for stronger options before violence erupts within IDP camps and trickles out across the region, and the unsafe conditions hinder aid.<sup>10</sup>

In July 2006, the Darfur Joint Assessment Mission (DJAM) was established in support of the Darfur Peace Agreement in an effort to address the most urgent needs in Darfur by focusing on early recovery and long term development and reconstruction needs in the region. Furthermore, the UN 2007 Work Plan for Sudan gives high priority to recovery activities in

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<sup>8</sup> Marc Sageman, *A Strategy for Fighting International Islamic Terrorists*. Annals. AAPS. 818 (July 2008). Marc Sageman has contributed to many articles on terrorism and written extensively on the links between poverty, lack of development and growth in extremist ideologies.

<sup>9</sup> Hoile, *Darfur in Perspective*, above note 4.

<sup>10</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, “Angry Youths Become a Force in Darfur, *New York Times*, 20 December 2008 (US Edition). Neil MacFarquhar’s column is also supplemented by an online video, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/21/world/africa/21darfur.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&th&emc=th](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/21/world/africa/21darfur.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&th&emc=th) (accessed 17 July 2009).

Darfur in the context of transition from emergency to recovery and development. Among the early recovery needs identified were the provision and scaling up of basic social services and the building of local capacity at all levels, while simultaneously promoting community capabilities with regard to peace, reconciliation and conflict resolution. The Work Plan suggests that humanitarian agencies should focus on creating conducive environments for young people by providing good quality vocational skills training in a range of locally suitable trades, along with peacebuilding and conflict reconciliation techniques. For displaced populations, primarily youth, these activities have the potential to restore a sense of normalcy to their lives and to help build a stable future for them as individuals and members of their communities.

In terms of literacy rates (measured as individuals aged 15 with the ability to read and write), Sudan is ranked as 145th in the list of countries surveyed in the 2005 UN development report, with an illiteracy rate of about 41%; statistics from 2006 indicate little improvement.<sup>11</sup> In rural and underserved areas of Sudan, like Darfur, the illiteracy rate is much higher still, and the majority of young people do not even have the opportunity of attending primary school. This in turn affects the opportunity these young people will have for employment in their areas, especially as conflict has often damaged potential resources at both the community and household level. In terms of the specific educational needs of the affected population it has become apparent that, due to the conflict, there is little opportunity in the IDP camps for an adequate and complete education. A 2004 study conducted by the International Red Cross states that:

In South Darfur it is estimated that nearly 257,000 conflict-affected children are of school age, two thirds of them IDPs. South Darfur has the largest population of school age children not enrolled in school. Government capacity to provide education for these children is limited by lack of resources... education provision for children and youth in South Darfur is still beset

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<sup>11</sup> The adult literacy rate is 60.9%, according to the World Bank Development Indicators Database for 2006. In 2000, the figure was 58% (69% for males, 46% for females). Schools are mainly concentrated in urban areas, with many in the south and west destroyed or damaged by conflict. More information can be found at IRIN, "Country Background: Sudan", at <http://www.irinnews.org/country.aspx?CountryCode=SD&RegionCode=EAF> (accessed 17 July 2009).

with difficulties such as insufficient and delayed payments for teachers, lack of resources and inadequate infrastructure.<sup>12</sup>

IDPs from Kalma camp in Nyala represent a major portion of the beneficiaries. There, the same report noted that “schooling in Kalma is provided by UNICEF and its partners but does not extend beyond completion of primary school at age 13”. In such situations, it is commonly thought that poverty, unemployment and a lack of an education lead to increased crime – and in Darfur, an increased chance of joining an armed movement, further propagating the violence and threatening the lives of young people.

In addition to the International Red Cross study, the European Community's country strategy paper for the period 2005-2007 indicated the need for vocational training in this region of conflict:

The Government's objectives in the area of human resource development, as stated in the Ten-Year Action Programme 2001-2010, include disseminating vocational education and training in all states, starting with those suffering from the consequences of war. Vocational training will offer opportunities for those who did not get a formal primary education to acquire skills that will enable them to enter the job market or to establish [their] own micro-enterprises.<sup>13</sup>

#### **IV. FIELD OBSERVATIONS IN SUDAN**

Programs that target young men, particularly young men who are not ex-combatants, are not typically seen as a priority for the international community. Most relief efforts focus on women, children and infrastructure development. However, perhaps an even larger group that needs opportunities is young men. This is not a new concept, but is one that does not receive the attention it deserves. Although there has been an increase in funding to male youth projects in recent years, these are still not receiving what they need.

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<sup>12</sup> Author Katherine Reid's concise but very well stated findings for the IRC in conjunction with UN agencies and consultants: Katherine Reid, “Right to Education in South Darfur”, available online at [www.migrationforcee.org/textOnlyContent/FMR/26/34.doc](http://www.migrationforcee.org/textOnlyContent/FMR/26/34.doc) (accessed 17 July 2009).

<sup>13</sup> The full text of the European Community's Sudan Country Strategy Paper can be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/delsdn/en/eu\\_and\\_sudan/agreement\\_2.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/delsdn/en/eu_and_sudan/agreement_2.pdf) (accessed 17 July 2009).

Post-conflict countries in need of reconstruction often lack the personnel to begin such projects. Efforts to use vocational training in development have been initiated in many regions, and many NGOs, such as the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) are noted for their work on this:

CHF's income-generating activities (IGAs) give IDPs the opportunity to receive training in basic business and marketing skills as well as specific vocational training in a skill useful in their communities such as mat weaving, traditional handicraft production, tailoring, tool production and carpentry, etc.<sup>14</sup>

NGOs such as Catholic Relief Service and Plan International have participated in efforts by the Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre (DBVTC) in El Obeid, Sudan, and throughout other parts of western and southern Sudan to assist poor and marginalized youth by teaching them vocational trade skills. NGOs that work together in this way have the ability teach a variety of skills, many of which are outside traditional vocational training. For example, Plan International's conflict resolution team helped coordinate a workshop for youth at the DBVTC to encourage dialogue regarding communication, and to teach ways of addressing anger and conflict between young people of different tribes in IDP camps. A majority of the graduates (97%) felt they benefited from the peacebuilding assemblies that they attended during the afternoons of their vocational training period. They listed the main benefits of their stay in El Obeid as follows: having the opportunity to study and live with members of different tribes and thus build better understanding of each other (58%), respect, understanding and acceptance (19%), problem solving, entertainment, knowledge of others, learning new things from others and friendship-building (19%). When asked about the usefulness of the peacebuilding discussions held in the afternoon assemblies, about 97% of the graduates said it was valuable and interesting.<sup>15</sup>

UN agencies have also sought to augment peace by promoting entrepreneurship in vocational education and in facilitating the reconstruction of abandoned vocational training centres in Sudan. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has taken on this role in Sudan, continuing the work of others such as the Japanese private development

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<sup>14</sup> CHF International, Darfur, Sudan: Providing Developmental Relief to Displaced People, available at [http://www.chfinternational.org/files/4182\\_file\\_Sudan\\_Darfur\\_OCT\\_07.pdf](http://www.chfinternational.org/files/4182_file_Sudan_Darfur_OCT_07.pdf) (accessed 17 July 2009). CHF is a US based NGO; however, there are more than 50 registered NGOs working in Sudan in addition to the UNMIS, UN agencies, IOs and government related development and aid offices working out of Khartoum.

<sup>15</sup> Survey conducted by Catholic Relief Service- Khartoum Office (Jan/Feb 2007).

agency, JAICA. Norwegian academics from Akershus University College are also at work on the ground.<sup>16</sup>

Vocational training and life skills education are important for several reasons. First and foremost, these trades provide the target group with transferable skills that they can use for the rest of their lives to find meaningful, sustainable employment wherever they reside. Furthermore, these newly acquired skills will be much in great demand in south Darfur during the reconstruction and recovery stage, following cessation of the protracted conflict. Additionally, should they so desire, young people can use their skills to become teachers in other technical schools; these will presumably need to be opened in the Darfur region to rebuild infrastructure which either never existed or was destroyed by years of conflict. Education also empowers young people to be more confident in their interpersonal interactions and boosts their self-esteem.

Vocational education serves as an alternative to university learning. Where there is no option of studying at university level or no opportunity to travel elsewhere for educational, vocational training is the best chance to earn a living, and may well form an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction. Actors in international organizations, NGO and the UN, as well as local and religious organizations who have been involved in Sudan for decades, deliver a clear message of realistic action, not intervention, which serves the needs of the area. In post-conflict areas like Bosnia and Herzegovina or Sudan, and in other areas in the world where development is part of daily life, there is a clear need for trades such as carpentry, construction, electricity, welding, mechanics and cooking. These basic trades can assist communities by creating infrastructure which allows ingenuity to spread and trade to flourish. UNESCO's vast library cites numerous resources that draw links between vocational training and poverty alleviation, and that support vocational training as a tool for building a viable workforce for reconstruction. In addition to these expert reports and statistics, the locals

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<sup>16</sup> Professor Trond Smistad at Akershus University College has been working in the field (South Sudan) with various organizations and with the University of Kyambogo in Uganda to produce vocational pedagogy that fulfills the needs of the local population. This program funded by the Norwegian Development Agency currently has an exchange program with students from South Sudan and Uganda. More information is available from the Akershus University official website, at <http://www.hiak.no/index.php?ID=1850> (accessed 17 July 2009).

themselves have chosen to push vocational training to their governments as a priority. This has prompted governments to seek World Bank funds for vocational training programs. Educational programs work, as long as they provide inclusive structure at little cost to students.

## V. SEEKING THE TRUTH: WHAT WORKS

Just as the international community wrestles with political issues and the specific vulnerabilities created by the conflict, it must also continue to look at ways of doing more than merely providing emergency aid in Darfur. Following the most recent financial crisis, aid will eventually subside. The UN and its partners now require \$2.18 billion to support the people of Sudan in 2009; of the total, \$619 million has been secured, leaving a net requirement of \$1.56 billion.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the use of funds must be administered effectively to organizations that can show the best results. Most students in development have studied the recent thoughts of former World Bank economist and now New York University professor, William Easterly. His thesis revolves around two kinds of development specialists, planners and searchers.<sup>18</sup> Easterly argues that it is often searchers who come up with the best solutions, not planners. While there are criticisms of Easterly's work, he raises many valuable points that question failed development in Africa over the past 50 years. In *White Man's Burden*, Easterly shows IMF schemes that have produced a very small percentage of results. Moreover, the conclusion he makes for local strategies to local problems is very much substantiated:

History proves just how much good can come from individuals who both bear the costs and reap the benefits of their own choices when they are free to make them. That includes local politicians, activists and business people who are groping their way toward greater freedom, contrary to the Developmentalists who oxymoronically impose freedom of choice on other people. Those who best understood the lessons of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not ideologues asking,

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<sup>17</sup> From the Executive Summary of the 2009 Work Plan for Sudan, presented at the Geneva Launch, 20 November 2008.

<sup>18</sup> According to Easterly, 'Planners', such as Jeffrey Sachs, try to solve large scale problems but lack innovation and resort to methods that have not worked because these methods take a top to bottom approach. 'Searchers', on the other hand, seek to find solutions for local problems using bottom up methods and are subject to scrutiny and local ownership.

“What is to be done?” They were those asking, “How can people be more free to find their own solutions?”<sup>19</sup>

There is no need for experts to tell people how to sell. However, what are needed are schools, trainers of technicians and new equipment. There is one excellent example of what is needed: Toyota automobiles can be found all over Sudan, but the technicians who fix these vehicles cannot. The Toyota Corporation understands the need for qualified technicians. Their main office in Khartoum offers free technical classes to teachers who want to come to the city and learn. This is a benefit to both the teachers and to Toyota, as the company has a large sales business in Sudan. Another example is the women’s groups who own small stands around town that offer an impressive tea service to those willing to pay. With the right opportunities, the level of innovation among Sudanese people has proven very impressive. Donors agree that funding for programs in vocational training programs has been very slow and the bureaucracy of multilateral channels is a major obstacle. Bilateral funding from one country to another or direct donations to certain organizations allows for flexibility of implementation staff and searchers. While the fear of corruption and high administrative costs surrounds many organizations on the ground, the work of NGOs such as Don Bosco illustrates how funds can be used efficiently and how these organizations can function with little bureaucracy.

## VI. PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

A well known proverb states that if you give a man a fish you feed him for today, but if you teach him to fish you have fed him for a lifetime. However, teaching people how to fish is only one part of the puzzle. There is also a responsibility to provide fishing boats, to build roads to access the market place and to educate the fishermen on new methods for storing the fish. The Darfur crisis is complicated by a number of different actors who are using civilians to advance their political interests. The matter is not as simple as a fight for control over oil

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<sup>19</sup> William Easterly, “The Ideology of Development”, *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2007). Professor Easterly’s *White Man’s Burden* explains in more depth the different actors in development and wastes. His critique of Jeffrey Sachs can be researched further. While both make valid arguments, Easterly’s practical approaches are highly admired by many expats and locals in developing countries. New York Times co-op columnist, Nicholas D. Kristof’s review of William Easterly’s *White Man’s Burden* (5 October 2006) is very comprehensive: *Aid: Can it Work*, and can be found at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19374> (accessed 17 July 2009).

rights; it extends to a conflict of ideologies. As a consequence, people are suffering and their basic needs are not being met. The assistance of United Nations agencies on the ground provides temporary aid for those most disrupted by the conflict, but more must be done at a political level. Simultaneous to the diplomatic mediations underway, policy-makers should look at the programs that are making a difference on the ground and develop ways to facilitate their funding as expediently as possible.

The Sudanese I have had the good fortune of working with have been very entrepreneurial and have had a keen desire to learn and be educated. They yearn to be taught *how* to think, not merely *what* to think, and providing them with education is a means towards that goal. With a turn in US politics and a more in-depth look into the real causes of conflict, and at the actors who facilitate it as well as those who work for peace, we must encourage the prominence of searchers in development work. However, as we measure reconstruction, hunt for searchers and look for programs that may help to augment the peace process, let us remember that it is not only action that has created the biggest conflicts in world history, but inaction. We should always keep in mind, therefore, that the most effective way to peace is through conflict prevention, not conflict resolution.