

South Sudan: The unseen emergency?

Spring 2015 Action Guide



Simon Rawles/Oxfam

INTRODUCTION

South Sudan is the world newest country.

After decades of conflict South Sudan finally voted for its independence from Sudan in January 2011. The world's newest country became independent in July 2011. However, despite international help, South Sudan remained poor, fragile, and tensions remained high with Sudan.

In December 2013, a civil war broke out in South Sudan between followers of the President and his Prime Minister, both of whom come from the two largest ethnic groups in South Sudan. It turned into an ethnic and very violent conflict. More than one in ten people has had to leave their home. The country is now facing a severe food crisis, high rates of mortality and vulnerability to disease.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

International aid agencies have been successful in delivering humanitarian aid for many refugees and internally displaced people. However, in November 2014 the conflict was continuing after several attempts at peace making had failed. South Sudan faces a severe food crisis in 2015 if more is not done to end the conflict and solve the country's serious food shortages. Seventy per cent of the land is suitable for farming, but not enough has been done over the years to develop the potential of agriculture. The need to build peace exists alongside the need to improve agriculture and bring development.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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Hand washing demonstration

Kieran Doherty / Oxfam

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Women queuing for charcoal vouchers at Juba IDP Camp.
Photo: Kieran Doherty/Oxfam

1. Learn about South Sudan's crisis

Begin by learning about the issues and then strengthen your learning by teaching others. The South Sudan crisis is complex, so you should do some thinking to work out your own opinions first.

Your first aim is to deliver an assembly and/or workshops at your school or college to make young people more aware of South Sudan's 'unseen emergency.'

You may wish to practice by doing the activities with other members of your group first.

Why do you need to learn first?

If you're going to speak with young people, teachers or your MP about South Sudan, you're going to need to understand the main issues before you begin. One of the best ways to learn about a topic is to teach it to others first.

Plan how you will do this. You could begin by dividing your group into two, with one half teaching the other half. This will help to build your knowledge and confidence before you present the topic to other young people.

What to do

STEP ONE

Download the 'South Sudan: The Unseen Emergency' PowerPoint presentation and workshop plan from this resource.

At a group several of you should present the PowerPoint to the rest of the group.

If you need assistance, ask a teacher to help you with writing the script.

STEP THREE

Reflect on the how well your group has presented and taught the assembly and the workshop.

Are there any areas you need to improve?

Is there any further research you need to do?

STEP TWO

Do the South Sudan workshop as a group. This should take one or two group meetings.

There are two activities. Try to do both but if you have limited time aim to do one.

Discuss and agree upon the most important new things you've learnt

STEP FOUR

The next step is to teach these activities to other young people in your school or college.

Plan which groups or classes you will teach. Will you do a large assembly or do the presentation to smaller groups? How will you fit the workshop into your plans?

For support with taking action or setting up a Youth Ambassadors Group, get in touch with Oxfam's Youth & Schools Team:

education@oxfam.org.uk



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Rebecca and her baby arrive in Mingkaman Camp.
Photo: Kieran Doherty/Oxfam

2. Raise awareness in your school and local community

Now put your learning into action, so make sure you:

- Understand the issues and can explain them to others.
- Identify opportunities in your school and community to raise awareness.
- Teach other young people. This could be face-to-face, a display, or even through your school's social media.
- Plan an event such as an assembly, a play, or a stall and invite as many young people along as possible.
- Take a photo or make another creative record of your actions. You can send this to your MP along with your letter.

Why this action ?

South Sudan's crisis is often called an 'unseen emergency.' (You could test this idea by asking how many young people already know about the situation in South Sudan). The more people who become aware of the crisis, the greater the opportunity to make a difference.

What to do

STEP ONE

Plan your actions: try to find opportunities to reach the largest number of young people, people from your community and even the local media. Try to get more young people to join you. The more of you there are, the bigger your impact will be!

Set some goals. For example, to make 500 young people aware of South Sudan.

STEP THREE

Organise promotion to make sure people know about your event. Think about how you can inform the largest possible number of young people.

Finally, hold your campaign. Good luck!

STEP TWO

Next plan the most effective ways to reach your target audience. For example:

- Put up a display in a prominent place. There are photographs you can download with this resource.
- Make a display or news item to screen on your school TV. Write a blog post.
- Have a stall at the school entrance and speak with young people as they arrive.

STEP FOUR

Take a photograph (make sure you have permission) or think of some other way of recording the number of young people your campaign has reached.

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Students at Deptford Green School meet their MP
Photo: John McLaverty/Oxfam

3. Influence your MP

Politicians can hold the government to account, build public awareness and give issues a media profile. They can help raise the profile of South Sudan's 'Unseen Emergency' so it remains a top priority for humanitarian and development aid.

You could:

- Write to your MP about your South Sudan campaign.
- Invite her or him to an event at your school or college.
- Send her or him a petition or other evidence of your campaign, such as a photograph.
- Contact her or him on social media. (Make sure you follow your school or college's safeguarding policy).

Why this action ?

Your MP's role is to represent your interests in Parliament. Showing your MP young people that young people care about South Sudan helps to persuade MPs to take the issue seriously.

WHAT TO DO

STEP ONE

Let your MP know about your campaign. Write a letter, make a video or communicate creatively about the challenges South Sudan is facing and send your message to your MP.

You can find out how to contact your MP at <http://bit.ly/1h18fuZ> or search for your MP's name on the internet.

STEP THREE

MPs are most likely to be available on Fridays, when Parliament doesn't sit.

Be politely persistent when sending an invitation to your MP. If you don't hear back, follow up it with a reminder.

STEP TWO

You could invite your MP to meet you in school or college.

Carefully plan the event you'd like to invite your MP to. For example it could be a large assembly or a smaller meeting with young people.

Make sure your meeting is well organised, tightly scripted and creative. Rehearse with a teacher playing the role of your MP so you can iron out any glitches before your big day.

STEP FOUR

Ask your MP to take an appropriate action—for example asking a question in Parliament or writing to DFID—and ask her or him to feed back to you. You can also track your MP's actions in Parliament at <http://bit.ly/1h18fuZ>

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