

RECONCILE



ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008



Our Mission

To facilitate processes for equipping communities in Sudan with knowledge and skills for peace building, trauma healing, good governance and social transformation.

RECONCILE at a Glance

Overview

Five years ago, August 2003, the churches of the Sudan were inspired to create an institution - RECONCILE for promoting community trauma healing, reconciliation and social transformation from war shortly before the final peace agreement was signed. Through awareness creation about the six protocols and two annexes of the peace agreement, trainings in civic education, psychosocial rehabilitation, interfaith and intercultural awareness; the churches wanted to enlighten Sudanese about their rights and thereby support reconstruction of their war-torn nation. Since its small beginning five years ago, RECONCILE has expanded in the following ways: from four workshops in three locations in 2004 to twenty activities in sixteen locations by 2008, from four program staff to ten by 2008, from renting office space to having its own training complex, a six office block, a twelve- room dormitory block and five staff houses in Yei with plans to build a similar centre in Malakal, Upper Nile State.

Accomplishments

At its inception, RECONCILE sought to nurture and reinforce unity and democracy where the people of southern Sudan learn are empowered to speak out and act for themselves in the common and best interests of the peoples and their communities. Through this new initiative known as People for People Peace Building, in 2007-2008 RECONCILE was able to train and build the capacity of 500 individuals into advocates and leaders for their own people, of whom 150 were women. 45 community volunteers we call Key Mobilizers based in five of the ten states of Southern Sudan were equipped to support their communities in trauma healing, conflict mitigation and resolution, respect for rights and disseminate information about the peace agreement. Alongside international experts in educational institutions, trauma, conflict and peace studies, RECONCILE developed a curriculum to be used for 3-months in the RECONCILE Peace Institute starting February 2009. 5 Staff houses were constructed and a goat project initiated to distribute a small goat herd to the Key Mobilizers to supplement their income as a way of appreciation for volunteering their time for RECONCILE.

Facilities

RECONCILE training centre situated one and half miles from Yei town centre on a 2 acre beautiful quiet compound offers an ideal setting for trainings, staff retreats, meetings and other special events. For information Call +256-477-238-957 or email info@reconcile-int.org

Staff

Twelve program staff, ten support staff based in Yei and two field coordinators one based in Tambura and another in Torit. Additionally, we maintain a constant link with communities where trainings have taken place through the self-sacrificing efforts of the forty five Key Mobilizers volunteers.

Civic Education and Peace Building Program

The Civic Education and Peace Building program took the lead in five activities and held four joint activities with the Psychosocial Rehabilitation program in 2007. In 2008, the department led eight activities and held five joint activities with the psychosocial program. The activities it led were: Seminars on Parliamentary procedures for the legislative assemblies of Upper Nile and Eastern Equatoria states, Conflict Resolution workshops for chiefs, headmen and headwomen, Key mobilizers training, Parents, teachers and theatre artists civic education workshops and schools as instruments for peace and promoting respect for human rights theatre festivals. While the joint activities centered mainly on civic education that is the information about the peace agreement, rights and responsibilities of a citizen, democracy, good governance and the rule of law.

The impact of the parliamentary procedures has been a more informed legislative assembly understanding its role in formulating laws and passing legislation that can promote respect for human rights and the rule of law. In one instance, the members of Upper Nile legislative assembly took action to replace the speaker who was not performing his duties as per the assembly's procedures. The speaker is reported to have remarked "I lost my job after the members received training from RECONCILE."

The conflict resolution workshops were held in Upper Nile state in the areas of Fangak, Baliet, and Adong, a total of 171 participants attended as a part of trust building among community leaders. In Yei the workshops were held to enhance the capacity of 6 chiefs, 60 headmen and headwomen - the lowest level administrative unit in the county administration to resolve household conflicts and also forward those that are criminal cases to the police. This unit receives a lot of challenges as households take cases of dispute to them ranging from theft, rape, land grabbing to accusations of witchcraft. There has been great appreciation for this training which involved using role play to teach the seven-step procedure of resolving conflict. During a monitoring visit to 36 headmen and women after three months they reported that they were able to settle conflicts about



land disputes and refer cases of poisoning to the police. Previously they faced tremendous challenges in resolving such cases but now they know that with a structure in place criminal cases must be reported to the police to go through the courts of law.

*Key community Mobilizers
trained for the communities Nov
2008-Yei.*

One of the highlights of the civic education program has been the testing of the voter education manual in preparation for the awareness campaign for election processes in 2009. The manual covers key aspects of elections, the conducting of elections and the role of various individuals during the process. During one of the workshops where it was tested for twenty one Key Mobilizers in 2008 only two had taken part in one election in their life time and these individuals were in their mid- forties. This reflects the great need for civic and voter education that exists because 95 percent of the population has never taken part in an election or even witnessed one. It will be exciting to see how this manual contributes to greater voter turnout during the elections in 2009 and minimizes violence before, during and after the elections.

Another highlight in 2007-2008 has been the use of theatre for promoting respect for human rights, good governance, democracy and peaceful co-existence. Three music, dance, drama, poetry and speech festivals were held in Yei, Tambura and Malakal. This brought together eighteen primary and secondary schools with 450 students participating. The performance drew parents, government officials and the communities reaching up to three thousand people. It was considered one of the best events to have happened for the schools in Southern Sudan in the post peace era and there is interest to introduce performance arts as part of the curriculum in schools and have the festivals include more schools to run annually.



Students perform a play during the Schools Theatre Festival Aug 2007

The broadcasting of a one hour serialized twelve episode radio drama ‘River Yei Junction’ on respect for human rights and the rule of law was another highlight of the program in 2008. It drew a lot of positive commendation from the public and request for it to be performed in Arabic and other local languages to reach even more people. By using radio programmes RECONCILE is endeavoring to reach the vast population of Southern Sudan in the fastest possible way before the elections are held. Dramatization of the civic education program ensures that all communities are reached.

There is still great need for civic education and at present a much greater need for voter education as such the Civic Education program continues to respond to the call from the communities and their response to our efforts motivates us to continue. The chief of Pibor Yoniss Gayiin expressed appreciation following a workshop in his area as follows:



“I am so happy, what you are telling we are taking to heart. Before this workshop there weren’t teachers to teach us... We are in darkness. We need our eyes opened. Why are people fighting when we are one race, one nation? We are all children of God. We must follow the law and give rights. There is no stranger. What you brought us we will try to follow and implement. People of human rights are people who can make others live peacefully”.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program

2007 was a year in which the Psychosocial Program experienced great growth in terms of the numbers of programs it was engaged in as well as the quality and depth of training it offered. In addition to providing much needed training in the area of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, we greatly strengthened our capacity to provide training at a deeper level by development of additional training resources and increasing our personal skills.

In January 2007, members of the police and military participated in a trauma healing and civic education workshop in Ezo, Western Equatoria State. Testimonies from the workshop were very positive. “The participants were grateful for the workshop for it came to them at the right time of need”. Their comments included: “We now know about good governance right from our families to the places of our public services”. We have learned what is in the C.P.A.... We will try to follow and act on it.” “Trauma healing is like a medicine found for an incurable wound. Now our wounds which were caused by many bad events are being healed. We have got the medicine!”

In Tambura the people were ready to move forward in reconciliation as they formed an inter-tribal fellowship to coordinate sports, drama and music programs between the youth of different tribes and to address in a positive manner the tensions between soldiers and the community members. At the workshop held in Tambura members of the Zande,

Dinka, and Ballanda communities focused intensely on how to heal the tensions between their communities.

In March 2007, Catholic Relief Services contracted with RECONICLE to do two, 2 week trainer of trainer (TOT) trainings in Trauma Healing in Magwi County and Bor Counties using Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience methodology.

In October 2007, a two week Curriculum Development Workshop was held in Yei to develop materials for 3 month courses in Community Based Trauma Healing as well as Peace Studies & Conflict Transformation. Professional Consultants with experience in curriculum development were brought in from: Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation's Peace Studies Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance International Trauma Team, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Mennonite Central Committee/Uganda. These professional consultants joined RECONCILE staff and consultants, resulting in a curriculum which is contextualized to (and meets the needs of) the Sudanese context. Initial drafts of this material were presented to the RECONCILE board at its November meeting. The 2 week Trauma Healing Overview Module has become our course manual for workshops.

In March and in June 2008 a trauma healing workshop was carried in Tore, Central Equatoria State. This workshop brought together 45 participants in which 15 were women leaders. Tore which is forty miles from RECONCILE centre was visited by the rebel out fit Lord's Resistance Army on their way to the Garamba park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo-DRC at the beginning of the year. The people were threatened to the extent that they slept in the bushes during the night and came to their houses only during the day. The telling of these stories helped release some tension that was mounting among the communities and it also attacked care and support for each other between those who were directly affected and those who were not. Not only was trauma still fresh but during the time of the workshop, there was information that the LRA was about to cross again through Tore Payam. This caused panic but the elders calmed people and gave leadership.

The highlights of the psychosocial program in 2008 have been the 7 day workshops which brought together church and community leaders from Jonglei to Bor town. The workshop discussed issues of trauma, analyzing the blame effects, traumatic effects, healing journey and also the process of reconciliation. There was opportunity for sharing of experiences and group work. This workshop followed a 5 day workshop in Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Civic Education requested by the leaders of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan as the 1st step of a process of building peace and reconciliation between the Murle and Dinka Bor communities. There has been a continual cycle of violence and revenge between the Murle and Dinka for at least 5 decades. This has been exhibited in cattle raiding, killing and abductions. The recently ended civil war in which these communities were on different sides of the liberation movement and the associated proliferation of small arms has exacerbated the problem. As both communities have been severely traumatized and denied basic human rights they need intensive help in the process of reconciliation. There had been a recent escalation in the severity of the conflict evidenced by the December 2007 killing of 7 injured Murle who were recuperating in Bor hospital by SPLA soldiers of the Dinka community, resulting in a heightening of tensions.

The two workshops were followed by exchange visits in July between Dinka and Murle church leaders who visited each other in Pibor and Bor inter-changeably. 5 Church Leaders were flown in from Pibor to Bor and were received by another 5 Church Leaders from Bor and 2 RECONCILE staff. After spending 9 days in Bor instead of 5 due to bad weather in Pibor, the Church Leaders from Pibor were accompanied back to Pibor by 5 Church Leaders from Bor and the two RECONCILE staff. The visit entailed:

- Hosting of local church leaders by local church leaders.
- Visiting sites/projects/institutions of interest.
- Introduction to the civil authorities.
- Cultural program given by the host community displaying the dance, song, poetry and explanations of other traditions which they would like to share.
- Attend Church activities and worship services together.



Murle Traditional Dance in honour of their Dinka Bor Guests during Dinka –Murle Exchange Visit to Pibor- July

2008.

The exchange visits was a success as the church leaders resolved to do the following:

- 1) Commit themselves to constantly open the channel of communication between their two counties to enable smooth freedom of movement of people and domestic animals.
- 2) To report any criminal acts to the nearest authority concern in the area and immediate action should be taken to ensure that justice is done under the rule of law.
- 3) Commit themselves to preach in our various Churches and communities the removal and disarmament of all illegal small arms in the hands of elders, young people and cattle keepers.

The people of Magwi have been severely traumatized by the LRA – the commissioners’ office reported 1,149 cases of deaths by the LRA since the conclusion of the civil war. The have also been very serous conflicts between the host community and IDPs and refugees who have returned to the area contributing to a generally high amount of violence in the community. Many of the people are traumatized and it was evident that a “culture of violence “had taken root in this community. A workshop held in October 2008 helped 51 participants identify trauma, learn basic skills in trauma healing and as part of the trauma healing process to promote reconciliation in their communities. The County Commissioner concluded the workshop by encouraging RECONCILE to train more people in the area and urged the government employees to take the participants who have been trained with them to the field so they can spread the word.

Advocacy and Networking

During 2007 two advocacy trips were made by RECONCILE. One was to advocate for security in Tore after the LRA attacked Tore and the other was to share the Sudan story internationally.

With the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) the Executive Director of RECONCILE accompanied a group of community leaders from Tore and Members of Parliament from Yei to meet the Vice President of the GoSS in Juba and the Governor of Central Equatoria. The team brought to the attention of the Government the plight of the people of Tore and asked the Vice President who is also the Chief Mediator of the negotiations between the LRA and the Government of Uganda for Kony the Leader of the LRA to release the abducted children. The Government responded by the promise that they will press Kony to release the abducted children. The Governor of Central Equatoria responded by providing agricultural tools and seeds to the people of Tore as they had lost their properties. The other thing that was achieved was that the Government beefed up the security in the area which brought security to Tore.

RECONCILE also made advocacy trips to the Germany and USA in 2007. In these trips the Director made the story of the Sudanese people known to the Churches and also some Government institutions. The aim has been to bring the stories that the people tell during the workshops to be heard by a wider constituency so that pressure can be brought to bear to the parties concerned. During these advocacy visits it was clear that there was learning for RECONCILE and those to whom there was interaction. RECONCILE was able to learn how things were done by the others and how they saw the Sudan problem and it was educative too to the people what the situation was as seen by a Sudanese eye-the eye of the victim.

RECONCILE Executive Director; Emmanuel LoWilla participated in the Sudan Ecumenical Forum in Juba, Sudan September 2007. The Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF) brings together the Sudanese churches with their international partners under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. This year, the theme for the forum was “Building a spirit of unity, forgiveness and healing.” More than 50 delegates from sixteen nations on four continents discussed issues relating to advocacy and peace. The Sudanese churches were represented by the heads of churches as well as the newly-constructed Sudan Council of Churches. The SEF Assembly urged governments and inter-governmental bodies, including the UN, AU and IGAD, to have a holistic approach to the inter-connected conflicts and peace processes in Sudan, recognizing the importance of the full and successful implementation of the CPA for the entire country.

In late October early November 2007, Rev. John Khamis and Rev. Debbie Braaksma traveled to Monrovia Liberia to learn from and establish a mutually beneficial learning relationship with the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Program (THRP) of the Lutheran Church of Liberia. Key points of understanding for RECONCILE were in the areas of: development of programming for victims of gender based violence, complimenting training in trauma healing with counseling, and administrative

procedures. THRP would like to send participants to the three month courses RECONCILE is developing.

RECONCILE staff made a visit to Mindolo Ecumenical Centre in Zambia in April 2008. As a Church inspired organization established by the Sudanese Churches, RECONCILE wants to strengthen its Ecumenical linkages but more so to learn from older Ecumenical training Centre such as Mindolo how they established courses and training in Peace Building. In this visit RECONCILE staff was able to appreciate the facilities that Mindolo had and how they developed them. The staff engaged in dialogue to learn strategies of such development. It also became clearer that RECONCILE needed one basic facility-Library to be able to kick start the courses. It was also agreed that Mindolo would mentor RECONCILE for a period not less than five years and an MoU was reached in which there would be exchange of training staff between Mindolo and RECONCILE, Mindolo could send some of their Diploma students for field work in Sudan hosted and supervised by RECONCILE, and Mindolo would issue its certificates to students trained at RECONCILE centre in the Sudan.

For RECONCILE to establish the Peace Institute that is intended to kick start at the beginning of next year 2009, it was of great necessity that it sought advise and guidance from experienced Institutions such as the THRP program in Liberia and Mindolo in Zambia.

As an associate member of the Sudan Ecumenical Forum RECONCILE represented by the Executive Director participated in SEF Core group meetings during 2008 and also in the yearly Sudan Conference in Hermannsburg,-Germany. The Sudan Ecumenical Forum brings together the Sudanese churches with their international partners under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. The core group meetings were to implement some of the resolutions of the SEF General Assembly 2007 in Juba. One of those Resolutions resulted in the start of Peoples' Forum. The first forum was in Juba and a follow up to that in Southern Kordofan, Nuba Mountains. On the trip to the Sudan Conference, LoWilla the Executive Director and his wife met with EED officials to explain the state of the projects of RECONCILE and particularly seeking understanding on the Civil Peace Service. Also during that meeting LoWilla and EED agreed on the assessment of RECONCILE's work for the last five years.

The Executive Director accompanied by his wife, represented RECONCILE in the Reformed Church of America (RCA) General Synod in June 2008 where he presented a key note speech at Dinner. He also visited the Presbyterian Church in Louisville Kentucky and other partners in Washington D.C. including the USIP and NED.

National advocacy was also carried out by the Director including meeting the Vice President of GoSS to present the findings of the assessment mission to Southern Kordofan.

Institutional Development

In early 2007, the Institutional Development coordinator began construction on the dormitory project. During the construction of the dormitory, RECONCILE hosted 24 volunteers who helped with construction from the Reformed Church in America over a 6 week period. We greatly enjoyed their company and especially all the hard work they put into helping the walls go up. Construction continued with RECONCILE receiving another group of 5 volunteers from the Reformed Church in America in June. They came to assist with painting and plumbing for the dormitory. In July and August furniture was purchased and the electrical and septic systems were installed. In September, RECONCILE hosted its first workshop with accommodation for participants.

Later in the year, the goat project for the Training Centre as well as for income generation for the 45 Community Mobilizers began. Survey trips to Mbale and Masaka in Uganda were carried out to determine an appropriate milk goat for the centre as well as surveying other organizations in the way of housing and management of dairy goats. A breeding unit consisting of 4 does and 1 buck of the Toggenburg breed from Farm Africa Project near Mbale was acquired and successfully transported to Yei, Sudan. The purebred Toggenburg herd has been doing well.



Toggenburg goat with its kid

The big event was the birth of our first purebred buckling born on September 19th 2008. In addition four local does were purchased to begin the cross-breeding program. To integrate the goat project at the Training Centre, an extensive area was cultivated for vegetable production utilizing fertilizer from the goats. A portion of this area is set up with low-tech drip irrigation such that some production can continue during the dry season.

In June 2008 the main structures were completed for 5 staff houses – 2 duplexes and 1 single dwelling and the staff moved in. This has been a great achievement from the tents that had worn out and could no longer provide adequate shelter for the staff.



A collapsed tent- the remains of what was staff accommodation (left) and completed duplex house (right)