

“YOUTH ORGANIZATION FOR THE EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN UNION”. SOUTH SUDAN OFFICE

THE COUNTRY OVERVIEW.

Concept note.

Introduction.

On the 9th of July 2011, South Sudan gained its independence from the Sudan through a popular referendum after a long protracted civil war. The war that started with the Anya – Nya movements in the early 1950's and the Sudan's peoples liberation movement/ Army (**SPLM/A**) in the early 1980's lead to the death of millions of people as well as displacing tens of thousands as refugees in the neighboring countries like Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopian and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In 2013, what appeared to be a power struggle between and among members of the Sudan's people's liberation movement (**SPLM?**) further spark into violence in Juba and other major towns of the Country such as Malakal, Bentiu and Bor among others? Thousands of South Sudanese civilians were further displaced and took refuge to the **UN** protection of civilian sites (**PoCs**) with many more others fleeing to the neighboring countries as Refugees. This time around the war took an ethnic dimension between the majority Dinka and Nuer Communities. In 2015, a peace deal was brokered by the inter-governmental authority on development (**IGAD**), a regional body of the East African communities that provided for the formation of government of National Unity between President Salva Kiir and his former deputy turned rebel Riek Marcher, this peace agreement could not withhold as fighting erupted in July 2016 in the capital Juba between forces loyal to Salva Kiir and those allied to Riek Marcher, the UN estimates that around 3000- 4000 civilians were killed with more than 3000000 others displaced as refugees to the neighboring countries.

Following this second strip of violence, a peace deal was also negotiated by the (**IGAD**) head of States between the Sudan people's liberation movement in government SPL/IG and those in opposition. The Revitalized peace agreement provided for power sharing between Salva Kiir and Riek Marcher as well as security agreements (security sector reform among all the organized forces.) On 22nd of February 2020, a unity government was formed in Juba with president Kiir being the head of state and government and Riek Marcher becoming the first vice president deputized with four others among them a woman vice president as represent of former detections.

These wars of power struggle among South Sudanese leaders lead to the collapse of the economy. The country relies heavily on oil production as its main source of revenue, as such oil production was shut down in the oil producing areas of the greater upper Nile and Unity States where fighting was heavy. The South Sudanese Pounds (SSP) further depreciated against the dollar, this lead to high inflation and increase in the price of basic goods and services. Production of local consumer goods went down, infrastructure and communication systems destroyed and shut down, Health services and learning institutions were further affected as the few existing once were destroyed and lacked skilled personals to carry out their daily duties. The Sudan's Population Census of 2008 estimates that 75% of the total population of Southern Sudanese are Youth who are marginalized in decision making process and unemployed.

South Sudan is composed of over 64 tribes with diverse ethnic communities. The country was estimated to have around 12,000,000 people according to the Sudan's census of 2008, however these figures might be higher than that because of demographic changes. In South Sudan, Gender discrimination remains a major challenge to development and prosperity of men, women, boys and girls with the female gender who suffers most, this is because of cultural practices and norms that favors the male sex, most often women and girls are discriminated from attaining schools, accumulating wealth and lack of decision making both at the households levels, in the community as well as at the political level. They are referred to as **“source of wealth”** (dowry after marriage) domestic violence and gender based violence hampers people's ability to develop their human intellect. Racism is not a common practice among the South Sudanese people, however the country faces tribalism as a hindrance to development the element of superiority complex remains an issues among South Sudanese tribes that has contributed to inter and intra communal violence ever since independence to date especially among cattle keeping communities, it further fuels cattle raiding and thefts.

High illiteracy rates among the youth especially those in the rural areas and cattle camps remains a challenging factor to the development of the country , it is estimated that 80% of the South Sudanese people do not know how to read and write either in English or their local languages. As a remedy to this high levels of illiteracy, government and other development partners have step up efforts to improve accessibility of learning to rural areas, this includes mobile schools for young people as well as the girls education program for South Sudan (**GESS**) that particular targets the high enrolment program for girls in lower and upper primary schools. In the past years governments and development partners have increased access of the young people to scholarship opportunities in foreign countries to further their education both at tertiary and university levels. South Sudan has no secessionist movements, however the country have tribal youth movements who are formed to defend their communities from external aggressions, the case of Monyomiji in Eastern Equatorial, Galweng in Lakes and arrow boys in Western Equatorial States

The recent political violence of 2013 and 2016 have a massive effect on the lives and prosperity of the youth in South Sudan as many of them were engaged in the battle files fighting on tribal basis, many of them lost their lives in the battle to either win or lose the war. the youth defend their political agendas because they constitute the large population of the country who could have contributed positively in the development of their communities. The recent Revitalized peace agreement of Feb 22nd, 2020, provided for an affirmative action for the young people as well as women, however this affirmative action's only favors those youth allied to political parties neglecting the majority of the youth who leaves both in rural and urban areas who are often un educated, unemployed, have no say in the decision making process on the issues that matters most in their lives

Since its independence, South Sudan has a malty system of governance, it should however be noted with concern that the ruling Sudan's peoples liberation moment (SPLM), the movement that brought the independence of the country has a lion's share in all levels of the governments, democracy and good governance remains obstacles to development as the young country is engulfed with massive corruption and lack of accountability

Development partners such as the United Nations Development program (UNDP) United Nations Mission in South Sudan have engaged the government on the security sector reform right from 2005 through training of the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS) on professionalism, adherence to Human

Rights principles and rule of law, these trainings contributes a little Fraction to improving the security of the people, knowing very well the challenges that faces a country that has emerged from a long civil wars

Proposed areas of operations

The young EU-AU South Sudan program would propose the following as their areas of work based on the context analysis of the current situation in South Sudan

1. Gender and Youth Empowerment program, targeting the
2. Organizing Town Hall Style meetings between Youth/ Electorates and Politicians
3. Lobby and advocate for Youth Inclusion in decision making process
4. Youth engagement in peace building/ development and social co- existences