

# Spring 2008 Sudan Trip Update

*CASS's January 2008 trip to south Sudan opened up new fields of opportunity in education and healthcare, brought on new challenges for Darfur refugees, and reminded us that our older programs are filling with new life.*

A Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2008

### CASS's Work

*It's been a decade of influence now in south Sudan and CASS's work has become more foundational to the future prosperity of the region. Working in close partnership with key stakeholders in Canada and Sudan, successes are growing.*  
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### An Unexpected Gift

*On the most recent trip, CASS makes a surprising discovery.*  
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### Issues of Health

*With the arrival of peace between north and south Sudan, numerous efforts are being made to build community clinics. In the company of a former federal minister and key partners, CASS makes moves to expand into healthcare.*  
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### 2008 Team Members



*Discover how the life of key individual volunteers can make a significant difference.*  
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### A Time to Learn

*The construction of schools in south Sudan takes a new turn as CASS builds on the flourishing success of the Canada School. The time has now come for a new venture that will permit Canadians to leave a permanent memory of compassion.*  
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### Ideas For Help

*Various projects provide unique opportunities to have a key effect half a world away. Help build a region one step at a time.*



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## CASS's Influence Expands

*15 Canadians joined CASS's President, Jane Roy, and Executive Director, Glen Pearson, in south Sudan and the results speak well of future developments in the Aweil East region.*

Since the arrival of peace between north and south Sudan, CASS has attempted to provide Canadians with firsthand experience to the region's modern realities. This was the third trip for some of the individuals, who are now assisting with oversight of various programs. The team consisted of two members of federal parliament, a high school student, two university activists on Darfur, musicians, artists, health specialists and individuals interested in launching the Water School project.

### Canadian visitors and the benefits

Those accompanying CASS to south Sudan are inevitably moved by what they witness and return to Canada intent on staying involved and raising resources to assist various projects. The results of

their efforts have been key to the development of the region. They have documented the story for television, overseen micro-enterprise programs, run music and art camps and prepared local villagers for the expansion of a clean water program. And the amount of money these individuals have raised has stabilized CASS's operations.

And there is one lasting effect that deserves consideration. The sight of so many of these Canadian ambassadors has convinced the local population that our country is with them for the long haul, and that is no small matter to these communities. After feeling forgotten for two decades during a brutal civil war, they are now coming to grips with the fact that Canada itself will be there to assist them as they transition into a world of peace and stability. As one local commissioner put it:

**"Our people have realized through the presence of so many Canadians that the outside world is aware of their sorrows and challenges. Average citizens from the West never come here, but Canadians have, and that has filled this region with a sense of promise for the future."**

### An Integrated Approach

This will remain part of CASS's ongoing plan and it has received wholehearted support from the government and civil society leaders of Aweil East. And by working closely with the Ministry of Education in south Sudan, we are providing seeds of hope for an educational renewal in the region.

We thank all those individuals, groups and, as you will discover, the Government of Canada, who have made the past decade a kind of a renaissance to the people of south Sudan.



*Glen Pearson and Jane Roy*

*For the recently discovered internally displaced people of Darfur, a surprising boost of resources has altered their future.*



### **A Moving Surprise**

You will recall that in the trip to south Sudan over a year ago, CASS officials discovered a group of 100,000 Darfur refugees who had fled that conflicted region, moving eastward until they camped in an area close to where CASS operates its programs. The situation was so dire that many died within the next few weeks.

Upon returning to Canada, the organization's Executive Director, Glen Pearson, a member of parliament, stood in the House of Commons and asked the government to intervene in the crisis. CASS had worked out a budget with the International Organization of Migration (IOM) and presented it to the Prime Minister. Following numerous meetings, it appeared as though little help would be forthcoming.

We were surprised on this most recent journey when we were informed by IOM officials that they had been in dialogue with the Canadian government for the past year and that a total of \$3

million would be granted to the Darfur refugees by the end of March 08.

This will be "life and death" money and will not only keep people alive but also provide them future tools for development, such as a primary school, rudimentary health care, water and farming implements. It will also help to relieve the mounting pressure placed upon the existing community who were unprepared for such an influx of people. CASS wishes to thank the Canadian government for their willingness to respond to the original challenge.

### **STAND**

Students Tacking Action Now on Darfur (STAND) is a student action group spread throughout many universities and high schools in Canada. CASS's work with the emerging Darfur people flooding into our region provided STAND with a unique opportunity to personally provide assistance in a direct and immediate way. The organization Executive Director and Director of Advocacy

accompanied us this past January and were able to camp directly with the internally displaced Darfur people.

The number of these people continues to grow and on the day STAND arrived, 30 new families entered the area with nothing but the clothes on their backs. STAND worked with CASS to purchase mosquito nets, emergency food and cooking utensils. The experience has assisted STAND in moving ahead with efforts to get Canadians to speak out against the horrors of Darfur and they are partnering with CASS to hold a series of cross-Canada events this spring. Cities ranging from Halifax to Vancouver, Winnipeg to Whitehorse will hear of the opportunity to both speak out and demand action on Darfur and also to donate to CASS programming designed to assist those who have fled that conflicted area into south Sudan.

The flood of such families into the south will only continue. If you wish to assist in providing emergency supplies, you can make a donation online at [www.casscanada.net](http://www.casscanada.net).

# The Need for Healthcare

From the time of CASS's very first trip to south Sudan in 1998, it has been obvious that disease and related death in the region has been a major preoccupation.



**Carolyn Bennett - up close and personal**

One of the key medical clinics in the region, run by Doctors Without Borders, has pulled up stakes and moved deep into Darfur, leaving the small clinic CASS supports desperately undersupplied and overburdened.

The clinic itself is run by the Diocese of Rumbek (one of our partners in the area) and has focused on all manners of disease and illness, including leprosy. Each time CASS visits the clinic it brings along small amounts of needed medical supplies and seeks to assist in any way it can. But with the closure of the Doctors Without Borders clinic, we realized the DOR clinic would be swamped and so the decision was made to concentrate more of our efforts this year on the medical needs of the community.

CASS was greatly helped by the presence of former Canadian Health Minister Carolyn Bennett on the journey. Though this was her first trip to Africa, Carolyn is no stranger to the concept of administering health care from the "ground-up," at the community level. Properly administered public healthcare is her passion and she was able to apply her skills as a doctor and former minister to the region.

Ms. Bennett camped out with the Darfur refugees and saw their health needs firsthand. Her visit to the DOR clinic encouraged the local staff but it was obvious they were overworked and fatigued. The former minister's skills in the community healthcare field will be of great assistance to CASS in the future, as we seek to assist the clinic.

In our last newsletter you learned about The Water School, a unique concept that uses the sun's ultraviolet rays to remove deadly organisms by placing plastic bottles of local water directly in the sun for a day. CASS has now partnered with The Water School and this past trip saw us building the foundation for a vital



**Alex Lau testing the waters**

new public health component in the area.

For Alex Lau, a financial investor, this was his third trip with CASS, only this time he sought to provide leadership in launching The Water School project. Alex visited local water supplies, testing the quality of the water and laying the groundwork for providing clean water to the area. The key component is public education and CASS will be working with The Water School to make sure the process is implemented properly

and eventually put in the local school curriculum. It's easy to invest in providing clean water for a family - \$50 - and you'll hear more about the opportunities in future newsletters. When you consider that 80% of diseases in the region come from unclean water, it becomes obvious that providing clean water could well become the main method of providing effective healthcare to the needy families of the area.

But medicines are still important, especially to a small clinic facing insurmountable demand for assistance. To our assistance this year came, Janet Tufts, Executive Director of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. Janet assisted in collecting \$20,000 worth of quality medicines to take on the trip and donate to the clinic. This was done in partnership with Health Partners International, where 4 physician packs (assortment of medicines for Africa) were donated and delivered. These packs were filled with \$5000 worth of needed medicine each. Some of the antibiotics were used immediately, as the supply had run out in the clinic.

Ahok had walked over three hours to Gordhim with her 10-month old baby boy Dend. Dend arrived at the clinic on January 16, 2008 malnourished and dehydrated. He had been sick since June 2007.

The next day Dend went into crisis. The doctor (Sylvia from Slovakia) prescribed Cetril which had just arrived from Health Partners the previous day. Unfortunately, Dend was unable to keep the medication down - he was constantly throwing up and continued to get weaker, to the point where his life was in danger.

Sylvia and the nurse (Harriet from Uganda) agreed that Dend needed IV. Getting IV into little Dend's hand was a huge challenge for Sylvia who had only been in Gordhim for one week and had received only minimal training on caring for malnourished children. The latex gloves provided by Health Partners came in handy during this procedure.



**Janet Tufts**

Poor little Dend suffered through two attempts with the IV - one in each hand. It was clearly very painful for him but he was unable to shed tears due to his dehydration. His cries were mere whimpers as he had not an ounce of energy.

The only "tool" the health care professionals had to comfort their little patient was one of the dolls from Health Partners. It provided a glimpse of hope and calmness amidst the commotion and uncertainty of this medical crisis. Thankfully, Dend survived the ordeal. This story was repeated numerous times with so many people requiring assistance. Thanks to Janet's hard and determined efforts, there was measured success.

Laura Tripp, a lawyer in London, Ontario, assisted on the visit in many ways and accompanied Carolyn Bennett on her visit to the local DOR clinic. For Laura it was an emotional occasion, as the young children in the clinic suffering from numerous health complications touched her in deep ways that will be long-lasting and challenging.



**Londoner Laura Tripp**

Participating in so many different ways, Laura came away convinced that the best solutions for Sudan are community based and done in conjunction with local leaders and indigenous NGOs. But for all her hard efforts, the precarious plight of the children of south Sudan is the thing that will remain with Laura.

If it wasn't for the help of all these concerned Canadians, the work of CASS could not expand into these new necessary endeavors that are destined to improve the quality of life in the Aweil East community. A special thanks to all of them, many of whom have visited Sudan frequently and whose efforts lead to long-lasting effects.



## Image capture

Part of making Sudan real to Canadians back home is the effective use of pictures and video to relay the story of the remarkable transformation taking place in the Aweil East region in the last decade. CASS has been very fortunate in the last couple of trips in having the help of two very experienced women communicators.

Lynn Blumas, pictured above, has spent a lifetime using film and digital imagery to tell stories, but when she first visited Sudan over a year ago she discovered more images and remarkable human stories than she bargained for. The official photographer for the last two trips, Lynn discovered compelling human images representing the despair and hope that is modern Sudan. But to get those images required numerous journeys on foot, on a bicycle and in a truck. The result of her efforts was worth it all and her images will tell a remarkable story for some time to come.

Kathy Mueller, below, is co-anchor of the six o'clock news on London's A-Channel and a seasoned reporter. Her efforts on the last three trips have produced compelling documentaries and news clips on CASS's ongoing work in the Aweil East region. Her work has become a labour of love for the people of south Sudan and their stories have captured her own imagination. And her presence on the trips has become a staple for the Sudanese themselves. Recognizing her instantly, they comprehend that her work has been effective in recounting their respective stories and been largely responsible for bringing much needed resources to a land that suffered two decades of war. High fives to all.



## Connecting through music and art

A year ago, Denise Pelley and Lucy Ogletree, pictured above, spent their first time in Sudan teaching music and art to local children. They returned this year and experimented with new ways to teach the kids. The results were even more impressive.

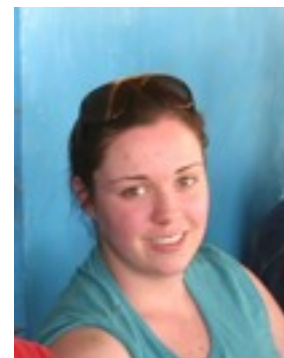
A year ago, Lucy Ogletree asked the children in her art camp to draw some of their experiences on paper. The results were something of a rude awakening. Instead of blissful domestic scenes, there were crude drawing of guns and bombings, severed limbs and people in tears. After so many years of civil war it was only natural that the children recalled such images so clearly.

The experience prompted Lucy to return to Sudan again this past January, spending a week doing different arts and crafts with the children. The kids were ecstatic making popsicle and yarn animals, drawing pictures with materials and they would normally never get to use. The session started with 35 kids but quickly swelled to over 70.

Denise worked her usual magic with the young singing voices. Working with Lucy Ogletree, their music and arts camp became another huge hit this year. The sound of the kids' voices floating across our camp in the early morning, singing the songs they had learned, is an experience we'll long remember.

Another moving moment came when Denise sang for a gathering of the Darfur refugees. These people who had been through so much and who had arrived with only the clothes on their backs, suddenly caught a sight of Canadians not only bringing needed resources but also feeding their souls and spirits as well through music.

These two remarkable women - Lucy and Denise - have formed a fast friendship through their shared Sudan experience and, combined, they have brought an entirely new dynamic to the work of CASS. Arts and culture often come as an afterthought in the development world. Thanks to these two individuals, CASS's work has gone to deeper and more inspirational levels. You'll be hearing more from them in the future.



## A high school student reaches out

The blooming of peace in Sudan has made it possible to take Canadians of different backgrounds to the region. In the most recent trip, Allison Dale, a high school student from Ontario, decided to put her humanitarian beliefs into action and accompany CASS to a new frontier of struggle and opportunity.

In her final year of high school, Allison Dale opted to travel half a world away to assist the struggling people of Sudan. She planned well and long, working in various ways to pay for her trip and prepare her family for such a major development. Her school also offered strong support and she pledged to report back to her schoolmates all that she would see and experience.

A budding photographer, Allison assisted documenting numerous developments whenever the team split up in order to get everything accomplished. That responsibility took her to Nairobi during the troubling days there. She also accompanied CASS representatives as they spent time with the Darfur refugees and in figuring out how best their emergency needs might be met. She was there in meetings with the local commissioner and other leaders and acquired digital images of the numerous CASS programs operating in the area.

Allison took a remarkably mature approach to the struggles in the area, seeing in them opportunities and challenges for development as opposed to a sense of hopelessness at the daunting tasks ahead.

Now that she's back in Canada, this future leader is documenting her recent journey and doing what she can to draw attention to how students can have a direct impact in Africa. She already planning fundraisers in her high school, with the help of the school administration and student council, with the first event being held at the end of April.

With young and dynamic Canadians like Allison showing this kind of determination and creativity, a new generation of leaders is emerging that will have their own direct impact on the continent of Africa. Thanks to Allison, the people of Sudan have seen a Canadian influence in their future and they are hopeful.



# A Time to Learn

*With teachers' salaries finally assured, CASS's two primary schools are overflowing. And there's an exciting new development . . .*



## The Canada School

The team wasn't quite prepared for what we witnessed immediately upon our arrival in Aweil East. School is not usually in session in January, but as we journeyed passed the Canada School, constructed by CASS last year, we were surprised to see hundreds of bicycles surrounding the structure.

And so we were delighted to discover that the Canada School had been chosen as the site for teacher's exams for the entire southern region. The reason was two-fold. First, the unique brick structure of the school (pictured above) has made it a place of honor and pride for a region that had been largely neglected for development work. And second, it was a gift from the Canadian people to the people of Aweil East and the locals regard it as a signature symbol of compassion.

The school was designed to house 600 students but is presently filled to overflowing, with 1200 students attending on a regular basis. With teachers now receiving the equivalent of \$500 salary a month, a quiet educational revolution is occurring in the region as both the Ministry of Education and the students prepared for long-term efforts to teach the populace. Deep appreciation was expressed by local



leaders to both the government and people of Canada for this gift of a new future. When we first came to the region in 1999, classes were being held under trees and small craters had been dug in the ground for children to jump into when bombers were heard overhead. Those difficult times are now long gone and in their place is a kind of consistency and regularity that permits the people of Aweil East to consider their future in terms of decades and not just months.

More girls can now go to school and because the southern Sudanese government has developed a new curriculum, standardized testing is now possible.

## Diocese of Rumbek school (below)

The need for primary education was so pronounced that Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan committed to constructing schools in the immediate area. The second school was built in conjunction with the Roman Catholic diocese in the region. It, too, is now largely completed, with latrines and an office/kitchen and classes are running at overcapacity, like the Canada School.

## A Dream Long Held

On CASS's very first trip to Aweil East, Commissioner Victor Akok provided a tour of where the region's only secondary school had existed before it was destroyed by bombings and raids over two decades previous. He asked the organization to consider assisting in rebuilding the education centre, stating that without such a higher school there would be no hope for a future for those completing primary school.

It has been almost a decade since that visit but CASS has determined the time is right to begin the project. With primary schools now filled to capacity, the need for a high school is urgent. The nearest secondary school exists over 600 kilometres away - too far for anyone from Aweil East to journey, leaving students with no alternatives.

Former Prime Minister Paul Martin met with CASS officials Jane Roy and Glen Pearson in March and donated \$100,000 to get the project started. With the organization hoping to collect \$300,000 to complete the project, there is still some way to go. But we have now started and the presence of this school will revolutionize the entire region.

You can be a huge help to us by considering donating to the project. With Canada's influence now a decade old in the region, the time has come to place higher education front and centre in community life. Consider donating online at [www.casscanada.net](http://www.casscanada.net). No other project could be so timely or leave such a permanent mark of Canadian commitment and compassion.

# CASS Projects

*From assisting returned slaves and child soldiers to expanding educational opportunities and assisting refugees from Darfur, Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan continues to enhance life in Aweil East.*

## Abuk's Herd

The concept is simple and yet it has worked to great effect in southern Sudan. Families returning from slavery or exile are provided a few goats from which they can start their own herds. This enables them to have a sustainable beginning in their home communities. For the cost of \$60 per goat (\$30 per baby goat), entire families have a chance at a new life. CASS secures the goats from local markets, assisting the local economy and community development at the same time. Abuk's Herd has

quickly become CASS's most popular project.

## Smart Aid

Life for the women of south Sudan is onerous and burdensome, but through new small business initiatives, life for many has begun to change. Whether it's starting their own sewing business, operating a grinding mill for grain or opening a business for the recycling of water bottles, women have a chance to improve the lives of their families while at the same time acquiring status and leadership within their own

communities. As peace has continued to spread throughout the region, CASS has used it's "Smart Aid" program to energize the local economy and elevate the status of women in their respective communities.

## Darfur

In January of last year, CASS representatives discovered 100,000 Darfur refugees hiding in the region to escape the conflict. CASS worked with Senator Romeo Dallaire to bring the plight of these people to the knowledge of the Canadian Parliament. As

their numbers increase the need for action has become urgent. CASS has been working with Belinda Stronach and Rick Mercer to provide mosquito netting to protect these families from malaria. The disease is the largest killer of small children in Africa and something must be done. A net costs \$10 and can protect an entire family. As the Darfur crisis worsens, CASS has been working with Canadian parliamentarians to develop some kind of appropriate and timely response. Yet the hour is late and any more delay could result in even more devastation. We will be

pursuing our options throughout this coming year and will keep you updated.

**100%**

**Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan** is a fully volunteer organization. This permits us to donate 100% of all donations to our programs in the Sudanese south. A generous benefactor has helped cover the costs of such things as mailings and administration. While based in London, Ontario, CASS's board is also made up of individuals from Toronto and Victoria, British Columbia.

## Want to Help?

Some Great Ideas That Make a Difference

*CASS's programs can only remain effective with your ongoing support. Here are some practical ways you can assist. And remember, because we are a fully volunteer organization, 100% of all money donated goes directly to the programs in Sudan.*

### Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan

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London, Ontario N6C 1G5

(519) 679-1429

email: [cass.can@sympatico.ca](mailto:cass.can@sympatico.ca)

web: [www.casscanada.net](http://www.casscanada.net)



Brick for secondary school - \$10



Baby goat - \$30



Goat for Abuk's Herd - \$60



Clean water for family - \$50



Helps send a girl to school - \$100



Starts a sewing business - \$500

Charitable Receipt Number - BN 86394 8212 RR0001