



MRDA update

Change agent for the community

OCTOBER 2010

MUNDRI

SOUTH-SUDAN

BASIC SERVICES FUND

Multiple Stakeholders in Greater Mundri To Benefit From New BSF Project



Members of the bidding committee: (From left) SSRRC Secretary James Smith, County Education Director Isaac Winton, BSF Project Manager Remijo Amule and County Engineer Christopher Kamitin during the opening of bids ceremony at the Youth Friendly Center, Mundri West County.

number of schools will also benefit from the establishment and training of PTAs.

As many as 120 primary school teachers are tipped to benefit through diverse kinds of trainings. Their superiors at both the Payam and County education departments are set to gain also. Project documents show that as many as 30 Payam School Supervisors and 30 County Education Department officials will get the chance to build their capacities through refresher trainings.

Also in the pipeline are plans to train 14 Adult Education teachers on the new curriculum, HIV/Aids awareness, hygiene and sanitation. The group will then be dispatched to train at least 300 adults on four different locations and to conduct 6 campaign meetings on HIV/Aids, Hygiene and sanitation.

Tough New Rules

Meanwhile, tough new rules have been put in place to mitigate any breach of contract during construction work. Unlike in the past when all supervisory obligations were vested in NGOs due to the lack of representation from the local authority, this time around, MRDA will work hand-in-hand with representatives of the three counties to ensure the quality of the structures are up to standard.

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By Moses Bukachi

Multiple stake holders from the three greater Mundri counties are set to gain significantly from the fourth round of the Basic Services Fund which began in earnest following an announcement by MRDA of successful bidders for the construction of four primary schools.

Students, teachers, parents, school supervisors, county education supervisors and the general public are poised to receive an across-the-board consideration during the implementation of the £1.3 million (sterling pounds) project which aims to improve the quality of education in the region, according to BSF Project Manager Remijo Amule.

A Reason to Smile

Residents of Milikalanga, Kporolo, Lanyi, Dari, Meyewe, Dotiraba, Bahr Grindi and Bangolo will soon have a reason to smile as their children will no longer have to sit under trees during class hours. Thirty-two permanent classrooms along with 6 offices, 12 latrines and a teachers' quarter are due for construction in these areas.

In addition, as many as 250 girls are due to receive scholarships and comfort kits in a drive aimed at keeping girls at school. This will be complemented with campaigns to encourage school attendance by the girl child.

Also in the offing are plans to distribute learning materials to 15 primary schools. The same



Light Wilson
Aganwa,
MRDA Director

“It was in this month that we transitioned from being an NGO of local repute to one of national standing. This happened during the implementation of our HIV/Aids Project.”

From Indigenous Status to National Standing

By Light W. Aganwa

October 2010 was undoubtedly a watershed month in the history of MRDA. During this month, four key events helped shape a new and promising course for the organisation.

First, it was in this month that we transitioned from being an NGO of local repute to one of national standing. This happened during the implementation of our HIV/Aids Project.

Having launched and distributed 44,000 books on HIV/Aids and Gender throughout Southern Sudan, and having trained 170 teachers on how to use them, MRDA activities are now being felt in all the counties of Southern Sudan. This is strategically a process of introducing our activities to other states in the country. Looking back, we can aptly say that MRDA is no longer a community organisation as many people have often stated.

Basic Services Fund

Secondly, it was in this month that we, along with our partners, began to implement the 1.3 million sterling pounds Basic Services Fund (BSF) project among the people of Greater Mundri.

Right from the beginning, during the tendering process, the BSF project presented us with the opportunity to reflect our core values of transparency and accountability in all our dealings. It also presented

us with the chance to work hand-in-hand with authorities in Mundri West, Mundri East and Mvolo Counties. This has had the effect of ensuring that all our dealings are completely above board and that good quality services are rendered to the people of the region.

Kotobi Institute of Teacher Education

Thirdly, it was in October that our very own Kotobi Institute of Teacher Education (KITE) reached an important milestone when it established formal relations with the University of Juba. This is one of the most important landmarks in the history of MRDA. We are pleased to say that this process has the full backing of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology at both state and Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) levels.

KITE plans to become one of the leading teacher training institutes in Southern Sudan. This means that KITE and its partners must strive towards improving its teaching standards and physical infrastructure. In order to develop, KITE must also work towards sustainability. Ultimately our goal is to make KITE a semi-autonomous institution complete with its own board of directors, in the same pattern as that of WOYE Micro Finance Institution (MFI).

Change Agent for the Community

Fourthly, it was also in October that MRDA lived up to its reputation as a change agent

for the community when we brokered peace and reconciliation among leaders of all walks of life during a consultation workshop that we organised in collaboration with the local authority in Mundri West County.

The workshop was important because it provided us the opportunity to bring together participants from the different political forces, NGOs, local government departments, community and church leaders for the first time since the April 2010 elections.

The opinions and discussions held during the workshop were genuine and open-minded for reaching reconciliation and uniting ranks for socio-economic and political development. The interest for organising another very inclusive workshop is of paramount importance, and MRDA will be in a position to facilitate the process.

MRDA WEEK Contributions

Lastly, MRDA takes this opportunity to express gratitude to all who contributed in cash and in kind during the recent MRDA Week season. The funds raised will be used for the construction of a dam on River Royi as stated during the fund raising week. Details of the implementation scheme are under development and will be communicated to all MRDA constituencies as soon as they are finalised.

In this edition, we bring to you an in-depth look into these issues. Do enjoy your reading.

Interview With Mundri West County Commissioner

IN LIGHT OF THE CRUCIAL ROLE THAT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY WILL PLAY in regulating and supervising the construction of the BSF-sponsored schools in the county, *MRDA Update* paid His Excellency the Commissioner of Mundri West County Samson Arap a visit for an interview. The following are excerpts:

MRDA Update:

With the financial support of the Basic Services Fund (BSF), MRDA plans to construct a total of 32 classrooms in Mundri East, Mundri West and Mvolo Counties. As Commissioner of Mundri West County what does this mean for the county?

Commissioner:

That is a very good question. I have always been supportive of MRDA activities in this county. By measure, MRDA has done a lot in this county than some International NGOs especially in the fields of education and health, not forgetting agriculture.

As for the construction of the 32 classrooms, that is a commendable effort. It is an initiative in the right direction because of fighting illiteracy and building permanent educational infrastructure which was never here since the time of Ibrahim Abud. Areas that have never seen corrugated iron sheets and permanent buildings have now seen these in all of the three Mundri Counties. So, MRDA has a track record in the three counties.

MRDA Update:

As you are aware there is a bidding process going on as we speak. Yet for years, bidders of questionable background have easily won bids resulting in the collapse of buildings or breach of contract. What went wrong?

Commissioner:

People learn through mistakes. There were mistakes on the part of [NGOs]; there were also

mistakes on the part of the county. That is why contracts were breached and the standards were not met. By then, there was no county engineer to supervise the building of facilities being constructed by NGOs. And the NGOs themselves were semi-independent of government authorities. There was no serious link between government and NGOs because government structures and the local government act were not there.

So with the local government act, all NGOs have a duty and responsibility to the local authority. Therefore, this time around, this duty and responsibility is now being realised through this contractual process in which the commissioner, the executive director and the county engineer have been officially invited to attend the contractual proceedings and to have a say to the contractors.

MRDA Update:

So, what measures have been put in place at county level to ensure this does not happen again?

Commissioner

MRDA as the contractee has its terms of reference and the government as supervisor has its conditions also to be met by the contractor.

We will need them to produce valid certificates of registration from GoSS or any of the [neighbouring] countries, evidence of physical contacts on the ground, a company profile supported by past experiences, collateral in case of breach of



H.E The Commissioner of Mundri West County Samson Arap during the interview.

contract and a valid bank statement from a local bank in Southern Sudan to mitigate any breach of contract.

MRDA Update

As an important stakeholder in this project what is your message to the donors?

Commissioner:

I appreciate their effort in developing Southern Sudan. In so doing they are building the manpower. I commend their effort and call on them to do more because these facilities are not enough ... it is like a drop in the ocean. There are many areas where these facilities have not reached. So they need to sustain funding of these projects so that the facility reaches where it has not reached, mindful that our many thanks to them are unlimited.

" It is an initiative in the right direction because of fighting illiteracy and building permanent educational infrastructure which was never here since the time of Ibrahim Abud. "

Demystifying HIV/Aids, Sexuality and Gender Issues

By Moses Bukachi
and Emmanuel Juma

It is a Friday morning on the twenty-fourth day of the month. The time is 9:46 a.m., and the place, Kotobi Institute of Teacher Education. At this hour some 40 people are gathered in a classroom to recap on lessons learned during the previous day.

Leading the class are two facilitators working under the auspices of MRDA. Peter Ngeso and Anne Thuku are manifestly eager to find out how much their students have grasped about HIV and Aids.

The reasons are clear. The recap, says Peter, is essential for gauging the level of understanding of the participants before they can proceed to subsequent lessons. "We want to know where they are because we are building on initial lessons so that they can easily relate them to each other," he explains.

Dispelling Old Myths

As the session begins it is not lost to the keen observer how significant the workshop has been in shaping new attitudes and dispelling old myths about HIV and Aids among the training teachers.

"I used to think that mosquitoes spread the HIV virus," admits a participant, "but now I know that this is not true."

"Yesterday I learned that HIV is not spread through the shaking of hands or the sharing of food and water," reveals another participant.

"I used to think that HIV came from sexual relations between humans and monkeys in USA, but now I know that the origin of the virus is yet to be discovered," says yet another participant.

For the better part of the hour, the class comprising 35 men and 5 women candidly share lessons they



Mundri West County Commissioner H.E Samson Arap holds the HIV/Aids booklets aloft during a graduation-cum-handover ceremony at the Kotobi Institute of Teacher Education in Western Equatoria State.

have learned about the subject and myths they have each had to dispel as a result. At the end, a visibly happy Peter tells participants to give themselves a pat on the back for a job well done. Shortly after, a new class begins.

Baseline Survey

The story above which happened in Mundri West County is illustrative of what MRDA is doing together with partners all across Southern Sudan in their joint effort to demystify HIV/Aids and to shed light on ways of mitigating its impact among communities of the region.

According to May Kilemeko, MRDA's HIV/Aids Project Officer, the *Gender & HIV Education in Southern Sudanese Schools project* was the outcome of a baseline survey in Southern Sudan whose findings revealed shocking details about how children as young as 7 already knew about sex despite the culture of silence pervading their communities. The survey found that much of what was known about HIV/Aids, sex, sexuality and gender among both children and adults was riddled with grave misconceptions that have over the years helped to perpetuate gender prejudice and by extension the spread of HIV.

Seeking to set the record straight, MRDA, in consultation with the Curriculum Development Center, Maridi and experts from Kenya embarked on the task of developing learning materials for both adult learners and school pupils plus corresponding guidebooks for use by school teachers. While the adult learners and school pupils would be the primary beneficiaries of the project, the school teachers would be instrumental in passing the message to them.

On 14 September 2010, MRDA launched the booklets on HIV/Aids and gender alongside the teachers' guidebooks in Juba, in a landmark ceremony attended by senior Government of Southern Sudan officials from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, The Directorate of HIV/Aids & STIs, The Directorate of Gender and Social change, NGO representatives and teachers.

Shortly after, MRDA in collaboration with consultants held a workshop for teachers from both Central and Eastern Equatoria states. The three-day workshop focused on facts about HIV/Aids; Sex and Sexuality; Gender, and how gender prejudice is responsible for the spread of HIV. This was to be replicated in Western Equatoria's

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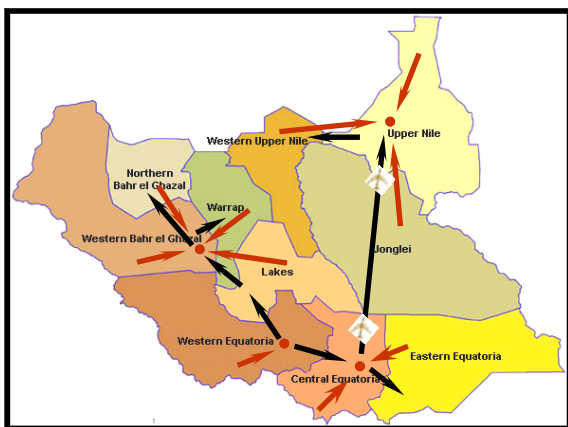
Anne Thuku demonstrates the use of the female condom during a training session in Mundri West County, Western Equatoria State.

Teachers from Warrap, Lakes, Northern and Western Bahr El Ghazal States in Wau County following presentation of certificates.



The DG of the State Ministry of Education Mr. Lul proffers a certificate of participation to a teacher at the end of training in Malakal, Upper Nile State.

MRDA Executive Director Light W. Aganwa (in suit) and Project Officer May Kilemeko speak to teachers during a follow-up visit to Rumbek, Lakes State.



KEY

- Inter-state travel by MRDA Staff to launch HIV/Aids booklets, handover the booklets to governments and mobilize teachers for transportation to selected points of training.
- Transportation and convergence of 170 teachers from 10 states for training at selected points.
- Selected points of training: Juba, Mundri, Wau and Malakal.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- In late 2008, the project "Gender & HIV Education in Southern Sudanese Schools" is designed following a baseline survey involving adult learners, pupils, teachers and parents.
- The survey findings reveal grave misconceptions about HIV/Aids, Sexuality and gender issues among the target groups.
- For a period of two years, MRDA in consultation with the Curriculum Development Center Maridi, and experts, develops two booklets targeting adult learners and school children and two guidebooks for teachers.
- In September 2010, the books are officially launched in Juba (Central Equatoria State) in the presence of senior GoSS officials.
- Similar hand-over ceremonies are conducted in numerous other locations.
- In four specific locations, i.e. Juba (Central Equatoria), Mundri West County (Western Equatoria), Malakal (Upper Nile State) and Wau (Western Bar el Ghazal), each hand-over ceremony is followed by an intensive 3-day training of trainers course on how to use the booklets.
- A total of 170 teachers are trained and 44000 booklets are distributed among the ten states of Southern Sudan during the mission.

Demystifying HIV/Aids, Sexuality and Gender Issues

Continued from page 4

Mundri West County and the capitals of Western Bahr-el-Ghazal state (Wau) and Upper Nile state (Malakal) where teachers converged from the neighbouring states (see map above) for the workshops. A total of 170 teachers were trained and 44000 books distributed among the ten states of Southern Sudan.

Positive Impacts

Billed as the most extensive mission ever undertaken by MRDA, the project is a significant milestone for both the people of Southern Sudan and the indigenous organisation which has for the first time

since the signing of the CPA extended its services to the four corners of South Sudan. Already, reports have emerged about positive impacts that the project has had in some areas. In Western Bahr-el-ghazal for instance, the trained teachers have already passed their knowledge to 50 others while in Lakes State, teachers have shared the information with 81 fellow teachers, 444 adult learners, 2,173 children and 8 cooks. Also, throughout the mission, reception at all levels of government has been positive with many leaders pledging support for the project and asking MRDA to extend its services to their region.

Meanwhile, back to Kotobi Institute of Teacher Education, the hours went by swiftly and the day's lessons came to an end. At 5:00 p.m. all the workshop participants gathered for a graduation ceremony where each was conferred with a certificate of participation and given a guidebook for teachers. They were then commissioned to take the lessons learned to their communities.

This is just but the beginning. The baton has been passed; the responsibility now rests with the teachers. But ultimately it will rest with the communities they will reach.

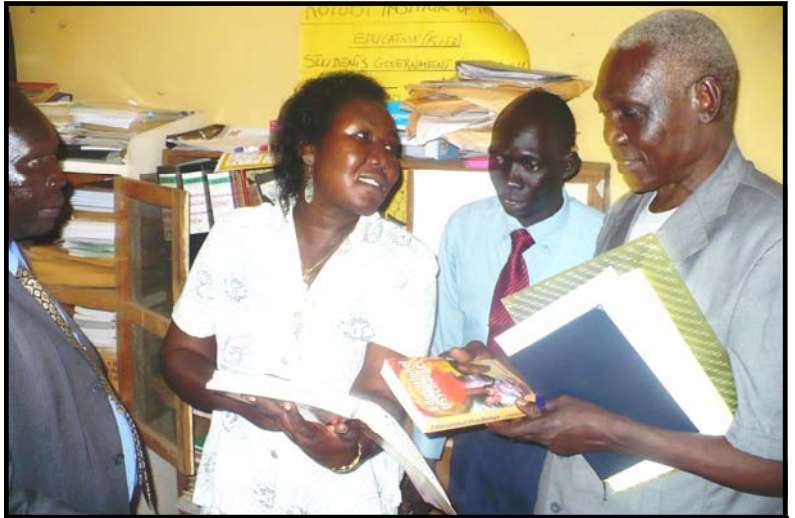
KITE In Talks With University of Juba Over Standardization of Tests and Affiliation

By Moses Bukachi

Efforts to transform Kotobi Institute of Teacher Education (KITE) into a centre of academic excellence went a notch higher in October following a visit by two lecturers from the University of Juba to conduct an assessment of its training standards.

Senior lecturer Nathaniel Baya and Assistant Professor Dr. Jack Jabi Ngalamu, both from the College of Education, were at the institute from 16th to 22nd October at the invitation of MRDA during which they assessed the curriculum in use and supervised student teachers during teaching practice.

According to KITE's principal Peter Bay, the purpose of the visit was to develop a working relationship between the two institutions that would facilitate the introduction of standardized tests for KITE students and foster a possible linkage between the two institutions that would enable KITE to offer a diploma course for



From Left: KITE's Director of Education Nicholas Gyrima, Deputy Principal Margaret Lindrio and Principal Peter Bay take Senior Lecturer Nathaniel Baya through the institute's curriculum during a recent visit to assess the capacity of the college.

prospective teachers in future. Currently KITE offers a two-year pre-service certificate course, a nine-month intensive English course and a forty-two day fast track course.

During a customary introductory meeting with the Mundri West County Commissioner at the county head quarters, Senior

lecturer Nathaniel Baya said University of Juba is keen to assist institutions to raise the standards of teaching in primary schools.

"Indeed our main concern as a university has to do with what is happening in primary schools. Our aim is to raise the teaching standards in schools," he said.

Multiple Stakeholders in Greater Mundri to Benefit From New BSF Project

Continued from page 1

This was revealed at the Youth Friendly Center, Mundri West County during the opening of bids ceremony that was attended by company representatives, County officials and MRDA staff members.

During the occasion both the MRDA Executive Director and the Mundri West County Engineer who also chaired the bidding committee, Eng. Christopher Kamitin were unequivocal in their counsel to the bidders.

"I am sure many of you may not be happy about it (the rules). We want quality work that is sustainable," said Mr. Aganwa.

Eng. Kamitin followed suit with a word of caution: "As far as I am concerned, as County Engineer I will follow this law and if anyone does not like it, he can cancel his contract," he said.

Elsewhere during an interview, Mundri West County Commissioner H.E. Mr. Samson Arap termed the BSF project "an initiative in the right

direction." (For full interview see page 3).

The Basic Services Fund project is a 17-month joint venture between MRDA, New Sudan Women Federation (NSWF) and Oxfam Novib.

The fund is supported by the UK Government (DFID), the European Union, the Norwegian Government, the Dutch Government (DGIS) and the Canadian Government (CIDA).

"Indeed our main concern as a university has to do with what is happening in primary schools. Our aim is to raise the teaching standards in schools"

Greater Mundri Residents in Reconciliation Bid Ahead of the 2011 Referendum

By Moses Bukachi

With the clock ticking fast towards the January 9, 2011 referendum, various states all across Southern Sudan have of late witnessed intensive activities designed to bolster up public support for the much touted plebiscite.

Amid all the activities, one particular strategy that has stood out noticeably is the push for reconciliation between various stakeholders of the communities. This approach was used recently in Yambio where top leaders of Western Equatoria gathered in September for a peace conference designed to settle differences among themselves.

The basis for this strategy goes back to the April 2010 general elections whose immediate aftermath resulted in the souring of relations between various interest groups. Such was the outcry then that some members of the public, disappointed by the self-centred politics of the day were overheard vowing never to participate in any future elective politics.

It is against this background that the Center for Democracy and Peace Studies which oversees MRDA's Building Local Democracies in Southern Sudan (BLDSS) project organized on 30th October 2010 a consultation workshop on South Sudan's upcoming referendum and issues related to it.

The workshop which took place at the Youth Friendly Center in Mundri West County was attended by a host of leaders representing various local, regional and national institutions including the Legislature, Local Authority, Judiciary, Civil Society, the Church, Traditional Leaders, Organized Forces and Aid Agencies.

Also present were representatives of the Youth, Women, Elders and the Business Community.

During the workshop, discussions centred on a number of issues including: Raising awareness about the upcoming referendum; identifying the root cause of problems of post-election Greater Mundri; creating a framework for reconciliation among stakeholders of the county; and sensitizing people in positions of authority on the need to dedicate themselves fully to the principles of peace, democracy and development.

Among the problems identified during discussions were: The negative role that politicians played;



feelings of discontent among the youth who felt sidelined; considerable public disillusionment that was brought about by unfulfilled development promises; and the use of the military to quell the post-election disturbances.

At the end, participants resolved to put aside their differences and forge a strategic alliance during the referendum campaigns for the sake of South Sudan.

Among the recommendations given was the need to: Strengthen existing government structures and to put in place long-term conflict resolution strategies to ensure future crises do not get out of hand; Bring more discussions on conflict resolution to the county level and involve the grassroots; Ensure that there is equitable distribution of the peace dividends to prevent discontent among the poor; Hold regular meetings between the local authority and NGOs to address security concerns; Involve the police only and not the military in solving future conflicts.

Key speakers during the workshop included the former Deputy Governor of Western Equatoria who is currently M.P. in the South Sudan Legislative Assembly Hon. Joseph Ngere Paciko, H.E. the Commissioner for Mundri West County Mr. Samson Arap and the MRDA Executive Director Mr. Light Wilson Aganwa.

Top Picture: Flanked by Hon. Joseph Ngere (left) and MRDA Director Light Aganwa (second from right) and former Commissioner Bullen Abiatheir, H.E Mundri West County Commissioner Samson Arap drives home a point during the consultation workshop as participants (Bottom picture) listen.

HOSPITALITY

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WELCOME

MRDA Week Acknowledgement



MRDA Executive Director, Light Wilson Aganwa displays MRDA Week contributions during a staff meeting in October.

We, the editorial team, on behalf of the General Assembly, Board of Directors, Executive Director and Members of Staff of Mundri Relief & Development Association (MRDA), warmly extend our sincere and heart-felt gratitude to members of the public, well-wishers and friends for the collective efforts in raising funds for the construction of a new dam on Royi river at Kotobi Payam. We salute your generosity and urge that you continue in the same spirit of sacrifice and participation.



Mundri Relief & Development Association



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