

SOUTHERN SUDAN

After approximately 40 years of civil Southern Sudan seems to have a chance for peace now by signing a peace agreement. The province Darfur on the other hand still experiences much fighting, but there are also negotiations in this region. As a result of this war, 80% of the five million inhabitants of Southern Sudan are displaced. Continuing violence has impeded the development of a durable health care system. In spite of the continuing power struggle the Southern Sudanese 'rebel movement' (SPLM) developed a 'health policy' for a 'New Sudan' in cooperation with foreign aid organizations. This policy supports the Sudanese with the rebuilding of a new health care system. In South Sudan the new South-Sudanese government has started to set up new structures. HealthNet TPO contributes to this set up by looking for sustainable solutions. In the past the emphasis was on the reduction of River Blindness (Onchocerciasis) and Kala Azar (Visceral Leishmaniasis, see Somalia), strategies that meanwhile are incorporated in the departmental health care and other NGOs. At this moment the spearheads are primary health care and the integration of refugees through psychosocial support.

The current situation in Sudan is the result of the continuing conflicts and badly functioning health supplies. Since 1996 HealthNet TPO has been coordinating the activities of NGOs for the reduction of River Blindness in Somalia and Southern Sudan. The aim of the project is not only extending facilities concerning diagnosis or medication, but also the quality increase of existing services to cover more areas fighting these illness. As there already exists much experience in the field of diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research, HealthNet TPO wants to stimulate the exchange of successful strategies and methods to develop handbooks and guidelines focused on the situation in Southern Sudan.

Health Care Development

With the local health services in the Wau district, the primary health care is being rebuilt and developed. The basic health care demands the construction of a basis clinic, a programme of visits and reinforcement of the involvement of people in the villages. The Wau County Health Systems Support Project, supports the transition from emergency aid to the development of an approach with long term health care systems in Wau County, Bahr-el-Ghazal. Its aim is to put the management of primary health care in hands of the new local government. For this reason there is cooperation with the new government representatives. There is cooperation with women organizations to make health care in remote villages accessible and to fight against, for example, malaria.

Psychosocial Care

HealthNet TPO Sudan uses a community based approach in psychosocial care, with specific attention to refugees and their return. All programmes of psychosocial care are aimed at the integration of refugees that are now starting to return to South Sudan, but also the communities that continued living there and that sometimes needed to change their places of residence within the country, the so-called internally displaced people. Work has been done to reinforce the communities to improve the mutual aid and to develop the capacity of the local governments for more understanding and knowledge about psychosocial problems. HealthNet TPO is looking out to the extension of the programmes, as the people in South Sudan are in need of new hope after 30 years of Civil War. Our focus is on the rebuilding of the primary health care, including the psychosocial and mental health care.