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hunger
hilfe

For a world without hunger



LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR CHILDREN IN AWEIL NORTH

It's an unusual quiet day at the Mojook Loop primary school in Aweil North Country. A glimpse into the classroom through the blue framed windows shows a picture of students following concentratedly their teacher who is writing a task on the blackboard. He is teaching English, an intensive grammar course that serves as preparation for the final exams, which are due in a few days. The students are busy taking notes, almost oblivious to their surroundings.

"These are not even our students," explains Machar Akoon, deputy head teacher at Mojook Loop. "Students and teachers come from all over the county to prepare for their exams but also to take them here, because our school offers proper classrooms, a blackboard and benches. It is a safe and

quiet place where students can learn and concentrate."

Just recently the school became the center for final exams in the whole county. There are 100 schools in the county but only a few can offer a safe learning environment. But it hasn't always been like this tells us the Andrea Akoon, head teacher at the school. "At the very beginning, we had no classrooms, no school materials, nothing. We taught the children under the big trees," he says while pointing to one of the huge trees in front of the school building. "It was a very difficult time for students and teachers. During the rainy season, we had to close the school for hours at a time, sometimes for longer periods. It was also a big problem to find teachers willing to work under these conditions. Sometimes they came from far away - they had to walk for hours to the school and then stand in the sun for hours again, which meant that we only had six teachers for 200 students.

But those weren't the only challenges he and his colleagues faced. At that time, the school

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was not fenced and protected. Animals and people were constantly running around the schoolyard, distracting the children from their lessons. There was also no way to safely store the school equipment. Everything they could afford was stolen sooner or later.

With funding from the German government, Welthungerhilfe built a school together with support of the community members and teachers with the aim to create a better learning environment and provide children with the educational opportunities they need. To increase community ownership and involvement, partners and teachers were asked not only to help out, but also to provide the materials needed for construction. Women and men gathered water, bricks and sand from the nearby riverbank, while others provided security to ensure the materials were not stolen during the nights. All participants received a financial incentive for their work and the materials they provided.

"Together, we built eight classrooms, a room for the teachers, a kitchen and proper fencing around the schoolyard. Classrooms were equipped with pupils' desk and blackboard," explains Machar Akoon. "Now our school grounds are secure and provide the environment a child needs to thrive.

The construction of the school has also led to a higher enrollment rate.



Before the construction of the classrooms, 625 pupils were enrolled. We now have 875 students and 17 teachers here at Mojook Loop. I myself moved closer to the school to be able to send my children here. Many other families are doing the same," adds Yusuf Joseph. He is the deputy of the parents and teacher association (PTA).

But that is not the only positive impact that the construction of classrooms and a secured schoolyard has. It also attracts many teachers, and the better learning conditions also have a direct impact on the quality of learning. Ustaz Santo, senior inspector of the county's Ministry of Education, tells us that the school ranks second in the county's annual pass rate. Just two years ago, it was ranked 16th. "The school has become a model school for the whole county. The school's average pass rate used to be 45%, but now it's up to 85%. The average for Aweil North is 75%. Parents, students and teachers are clamoring to learn and work here."

Adequate hygiene in schools and access to gender-segregated latrines are also crucial for the well-being, health of the students, and enrollment rates. Just one month after the completion of the school building in 2020, Welthungerhilfe built two blocks of so-called EcoSan toilets. Each block consists of four toilets - two for girls and two for boys. The EcoSan toilet is a closed system that does not require water, making it an alternative to pit toilets that, once full, can no longer be used. In EcoSan toilets, feces are collected in a tank accessible through a door behind the latrine block. When the pit of one of the 8 EcoSan toilets is full, it is closed and sealed. After a few days, the feces have dried, and the container can be removed and emptied.

The presence of suitable latrines and a kitchen also created the conditions for the World Food Programme (WFP) to start its school feeding program at the school. During 180 school days a year, the students now also receive a nutritious, hot meal each day. This is another aspect that encourages

many parents to send their children to this school.

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Schools are a magical place for children who dream of becoming doctors or teachers. They schools are not only a place of education, but can also provide a safety net for children whose lives are scarred by violence and poverty. Since 2014, the United Nations has verified over 3,600 incidents of grave violations affecting 98,000 children and adolescents. An estimated 900,000 children are suffering from psychological distress, having witnessed violence or experienced it directly during attacks on schools or similar violent incidents. The number of children out-of-school in the age

group 3–17 years has risen significantly, from 2.2 million in 2016 to 2.8 million in 2020, representing almost 3 in 5 children (59 per cent). Of these, 53 per cent are girls. Furthermore, more than one in five of enrolled children drop out of school. For this reason, Welthungerhilfe also works closely with Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) and offers trainings for its members so that they are better able to identify and solve problems as well as mediate conflicts that affect the pupils. “One of our main tasks is to find out why children drop out of school.

When we learn that parents are sending their boys to cattle camps or their daughters to farms, we point out to parents and community members the importance of education and the consequences for children's futures if they are denied a proper education. This is our most important task,” explains Yusuf Joseph.

Aweil North, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, February 2022



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Captions

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A student reading her notes at the window
of a classroom

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Top photo left & right
EcoSan toilet block for students and
teachers. Aweil North, Northern Bahr el
Ghazal, February 2022

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Top photo
Teacher is preparing his students for their
final exam. Aweil North, Northern Bahr el
Ghazal, February 2022

Bottom photo left

Machar Akoon, deputy head teacher at
Mojook Loop primary school. Aweil North,
Northern Bahr el Ghazal, February 2022

Bottom photo second from left

Yusuf Josph, deputy of the parents and
teacher association (PTA). Aweil North,
Northern Bahr el Ghazal, February 2022

Bottom photo second from right

Andrea Akoon, head teacher at Mojook Loop
primary school. Aweil North, Northern Bahr
el Ghazal, February 2022

Bottom photo right

Ustaz Santo, senior inspector of the county's
Ministry of Education. Aweil North,
Northern Bahr el Ghazal, February 2022

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WHH car parked under a tree that once
served as a classroom. Aweil North,
Northern Bahr el Ghazal, February 2022

