



Dobuol Riang – Gambella

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Child/adult [Dobuol Riang, 22, Male, Letichor Refugee Camp, Early Childhood Care and Education Centre (ECCE)]
Themes [Child Protection, Early Education]

Summary *(see end for more detailed background information)*

Dobuol Riang is a 22 year old young man. He came to Letichor camp on April 24, 2014 from a place called Malakal, from Nassir County in South Sudan. He fled his country due to the recent fighting that occurred in December, 2013. He was separated from his stepmother that was with him at the time. He also lost his father which was killed during the war. He walked on his knees for two weeks before soldiers helped him to get to Pagak and later transferred to Letichor camp in Gambella. He currently works for Save the Children as a facilitator in the Child Friendly Space that Save the Children has established.

Dobuol's story

I'm a 22 year old man with disability. Before the fight broke out in our village of Malakal State, South Sudan, I used to live with my step mother. My mother had passed away in 2004 and the marriage that my father had with my stepmother is a recent one. My father at the time was living in Juba, South Sudan as a soldier for the government. At the day the fight started, I was at home. As it got intensified, everybody started running for their lives and I was left behind in the house. I didn't see where my stepmother was as we were separated. I still don't know where she is or if she is dead or alive. I soon started walking to save my life also. I witnessed so many deaths on the road. It was very difficult to see so many dead people on the streets. I even saw families dead altogether outside their homes.

It was very challenging to walk on my knees which I did so for two weeks before I got support from the soldiers. The soldier that helped me to get into their vehicle was a friend of my father's. They were colleagues and close friends also. He broke the news that my father had been killed in the war. I was devastated. I know I probably would've died if it wasn't for my father's friend. However, I continued my journey with them up to the border to a place called Pagak. On the way, they were the ones that fed and gave me water as I couldn't provide for myself due to my disability.



Once I arrived in Pagak, people in the Adventist Church provided me with food, clothes as well as this bag pack that I still have now. I then got registered with the first level of registration and was provided with ration card. The following day, I was transported to Letichor camp where I'm currently living. Soon after my arrival in Letichor camp, I was given the opportunity to join Save the Children's ECCE program at the Child Friendly Space as a facilitator. I am helping children with activities that revolve around education as well as play. I help with teaching them alphabets, numbers and drawings. They have a range of games and toys to play with that helps them to recover from the trauma that they have experienced back home and on the way to the camp.

In Malakal, I was going to school. I was in grade eight transferring to grade nine to begin high school. When I was in school, I dreamed to be a doctor. Now after the fighting, I have been forced to discontinue my education but hope that in the near future, I will continue my education and fulfill my dream.

I know around three other people in the camp who are also disabled. I wish that more support could be given to people with special needs like us. It is not easy to get around in the camp without a wheelchair. I have to walk on my knees on rough surfaced ground which is very painful and can get difficult to get to the Child Friendly Space from my home. Sometimes it rains and the area gets very muddy and slippery to move around on. However, I'm happy that Save the Children has given me the chance to support other children from my community and I do what I do, willingly and happily even with the given challenges.

I remember when South Sudan got independence three years ago on July 9, 2011. It was a happy feeling and I remember celebrating this great moment that was a sense of liberation and hope to so many in my country. I can't believe that merely after two and a half years later, this big mess and displacement has happened to South Sudanese people that were hopeful about their new country and their futures. Although I wish that people will be able to return back home, I don't see how this can be possible for me as I have no support if I go back. My father was the one that used to support my education as well as my livelihood. With my stepmother out of the picture, as I don't know where she is, it will be difficult to go back and start over given my situation. Although I am angry about what has happened to me and other South Sudanese people, I am hopeful that I will one day continue my education and pursue my dream. In the meantime, I am very thankful for all the support that Save the Children has provided me.

Interview conducted by Amerti Lemma and Seifu Assegid, during a recent Communications assignment to Gambella Refugee Camp in June, 2014

Location and background [250 words max]

Nyingnyang woreda is one of the 13 woredas in Gambella Regional State. It is located at about 120 km distance from the region's capital town Gambella. Letichor is one of the largest among the three refugee camps that was established following the conflict in South Sudan and currently hosts 47,469 South Sudanese refugees out of which 70% are children. The livelihood of the host community is largely dependent on



gardening, livestock rearing, fishing, hunting and collecting wild fruits. The influx of refugees from South Sudan has continued to increase. At the time we visited Burbeiy, one of the entry points for refugees from Nassir County from South Sudan [on 26th June], 500 people [40 were unaccompanied children] crossed the border to Ethiopia and the next day we were told that this number has increased to 1000 people.

Project background

Following the influx from South Sudan, Save the Children was among the few organizations who made the initial response to address the need of the refugee communities.

Save the Children is committing to ensure that all children in emergency have access to education and protection. In view of this, Save the Children has deployed its staff and resources to the entry points and camps that have been established and continues to respond to avert the situation. In Letichor camp, we are currently implementing child protection through Child Friendly Space (CFS) and Identification, Documentation, Tracing and Reunification (IDTR) for unaccompanied, separated and orphaned children. We also implement Education programs through Education in Emergencies (EiE) which focuses on primary education as well as Early Childhood Care (ECCE) which works with children aged three to six years.