

MAKING CHILDREN OUR PRIORITY

WORLD VISION CANADA
FRAGILE CONTEXTS
CASE STUDY

SOUTH SUDAN



THE CONTEXT FOR CHILDREN IN SOUTH SUDAN

In 2011, the people of South Sudan celebrated their newly won independence after a peace agreement ended Africa's longest-running civil war—but the new country fell *back into crisis* only a few years later.

While a renewed peace agreement signed in September 2018 reignited hopes for a brighter future, there are still enormous challenges to overcome.

Ongoing cycles of conflict and recovery have left South Sudan's people exposed to civil unrest, food insecurity and chronic inflation.

More than 2 million people are internally displaced, and more than 7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Today, more than 30% of South Sudanese children under age five are moderately or severely stunted, and, despite an enrollment rate of 57% in schools across the country, only 14% of learners complete their primary education.¹

OUR WORK IN SOUTH SUDAN

World Vision has been working in South Sudan since 1989. In 2018, World Vision reached 1.5 million of the most vulnerable people in the country. World Vision employs 1,200 women and men—most of whom are South Sudanese—in the Greater Upper Nile Region, the Equatorias and Greater Bahr el Ghazal. Our work in these areas focuses on food security, livelihoods, health, nutrition, WASH, education and protection.

Flexible, Layered Programming

To address South Sudan's cycles of active conflict and fragility, we prioritize programming that is agile and flexible. In our current Fragile Contexts Program Approach pilot in Fashoda and Renk in Upper Nile, we are using models that bridge the traditional divide between humanitarian and development work.

During periods of active conflict or high humanitarian need, we focus on providing life-saving interventions and community support including emergency nutrition and water provision.

Change and Impact

Through our involvement in the South Sudan Health Pooled Fund² we worked to strengthen health systems and the delivery of essential health services at the *boma*³, county and state level between 2016 and 2019. We continue to provide curative consultations to nearly 300,000 children under five and antenatal visits to over 45,000 pregnant women annually.

Through FEED (Fortifying Equality and Economic Diversity), funded by the Government of Canada, we've worked with partner organizations to empower women and reduce vulnerability faced by girls and boys in seven of South Sudan's ten former states. We prioritized gender-transformative programming that engaged communities while 'layering' humanitarian and development programming.

As a result, the proportion of vulnerable households decreased significantly, from 32.67% to 11.4%. The percentage of women in community leadership roles increased from 55 to 67%. Also, the perception of women's ability to take active roles in decision-making increased from 59% to 72% (women) and from 50% to 88% (men). Thanks to increased parental income, girls are being encouraged to start or return to school, extending the impact of FEED to the next generation.

By providing these direct services, we're increasing the likelihood that communities will benefit from our engagement and empowerment work for years to come.

¹ UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019, UNDP Human Development Report for South Sudan, and World Bank Country Profile for South Sudan.

² The Health Pooled Fund is supported by the Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program (AusAid), the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the European Union (EU), the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

³ Boma is the word for a low-level administrative division. Bomas may contain several villages.



WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Throughout our 30 years in South Sudan, we've adapted our programs to shifting contexts and community needs. We've continuously improved our work according to best practices in the sector, and learned critical lessons along the way.

1. **Successful work requires creating space for dialogue with both men and women, as well as local religious and community leaders.** Our approach helps communities reflect on, accept, own, and meaningfully sustain new and positive social norms.

2. **Multi-sectoral approaches must combine life-saving service delivery with opportunities for economic growth and livelihood development.** In South Sudan, integrating **FEED** with WFP programming where possible enabled us to combine immediate and long-term support. This helped to provide vulnerable families with a safety net and adequate food for their daily needs, while also providing them with high-yield vegetable seeds and training on business planning and marketing.

3. **Programming should be rooted in a gender-transformative framework.** FEED integrated advocacy initiatives focused on the rights of women and girls into projects focused on food security, livelihood and agriculture. This led to transformational change, increasing women's participation in community meetings, as well as family and community decision-making.

Community-Driven Partnerships

World Vision's strength lies in our partnerships. We connect with *boma* representatives, chiefs, faith leaders, teachers and health professionals to understand their contexts, needs, and visions for the future. We support children and community members in identifying their priorities and engaging

their government. We create channels within governments to receive and incorporate citizen voices into their priorities. Finally, we work with civil society partners, from local women's organizations to the World Food Programme, to build coordinated and collaborative approaches.

ABOUT WORLD VISION

World Vision is a global relief, development and advocacy organization working in nearly 100 countries and in partnership with 650,000 Canadian supporters. We have 65 years of experience working alongside communities across development, fragile and humanitarian contexts. We seek to ensure that girls and boys are healthy, educated, protected and empowered to be change agents for more equal, inclusive, peaceful societies. World Vision is committed to gender equality as foundational to life in all its fullness for every child.

This is a series of four case studies, each highlighting World Vision's work in a fragile context, developed to accompany our white paper: [**Making Children Our Priority: How Canada Can Do Better For The World's Most Vulnerable Girls and Boys \(2019\).**](#)