

Frontline *Action*

WCF Street Feeding Program reaches abandoned children in war torn Juba, South Sudan

The World Food Program has warned that 2022 may be the most challenging year for food insecurity in South Sudan since the country declared its independence from Sudan in 2011.

In response to the ongoing crisis, World Children's Fund is implementing a feeding program to reach children living on the streets of Juba, the capital city of South Sudan. Thousands of homeless children roam the streets of the city. They eat from trash bins. They sleep and live in partially constructed buildings, underneath parked lorries and alongside the busy roads and markets. These children are collateral damage from South Sudan's civil war.

At night, these homeless children search for a place to sleep. *"It is a hard life,"* says Yabi Sebit. He thinks he is around 14 or 15 years old. Yabi says he sleeps in a grassy field not far from the market. He used to sleep on a nearby street each night but says he relocated to the field because his friend was killed by a passing taxi one night while sleeping on the side of a main road. Yabi was born in Kapoeta, Eastern Equatoria. His mother died when he was a baby. As he became older, his father was unable to care for him or provide any food. Yabi travelled to Juba alone in 2021 where he has been living on the street.

"A hot nutritious meal provides hope, strength and survival for many of these children."

"I am very happy that you have come to help us," says Yabi in response to the feeding program. *"I thought life would be better for me here in Juba, but it has been difficult."* Yabi describes scrounging for food that has been thrown in the garbage and the violent illness, stomach cramps and vomiting he has endured after eating meat and rotten food filled with parasites. He wishes he could go to school. He hopes he can get new sandals.



*Helping Children in a
World of Need*



Thousands of homeless children—collateral damage from South Sudan’s civil war—roam the streets of the city

World Children’s Fund is dispatching 40-foot ocean cargo containers to South Sudan in response to the crisis and to support the street feeding program and other vulnerable communities impacted by food shortages. The cargo containers hold an estimated 250,000 rice meals. Each rice meal contains key nutrients specifically formulated by food scientists to address the nutritional needs of children suffering from malnourishment. The ingredients consist of rice, extruded soy nuggets, which provide protein, twenty vitamins and minerals and dehydrated vegetables. The meals can be prepared in minutes and only require boiling water.

The food is prepared off-site by the WCF team and transported to Zahara square for weekend feedings near the Konyo-Konyo market, the largest market in Juba. At each feeding, about sixty street children gather near the square where food and fresh drinking water is disbursed.

More than half of South Sudan’s population is facing severe hunger. Many communities are at risk of famine. More than two million South Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes and villages and have been internally displaced inside South Sudan because of the civil war and the on-going violence. These internally displaced people are constantly moving within the borders of their own country seeking safety and refuge. Many of the homeless children in the feeding program have been separated from their families in the chaos or their parents have died from violence or illness.

“It is our privilege to help meet the basic needs of these forgotten children of South Sudan,” says WCF International Program Director, Kathryn Hess. *“A hot nutritious meal provides hope, strength and survival for many of these children.”*

South Sudan has insufficient government social services and lacks capacity to manage the orphan population in South Sudan. Thanks to WCF donor support, the street children in Juba can count on a hot nutritious meal. Children whose parents have died, abandoned adolescents and children separated from families can count on these life sustaining meals served with love by the WCF supported ground team.

“It has been like a bomb of happiness,” says Alec, one of the program implementors. Alec, an orphan was raised by his older brother. Now, a young man, he counts it a blessing to support the abandoned youth. *“We’ve got much work to do, but it’s start. It has been a great joy to establish relationships, let them know they are not forgotten and serve meals to these hungry children.”* ■



Website: www.worldchildrensfund.org

Email: info@Worldchildrensfund.org