



# Spring Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3

May 1, 2009



*"We want to say that we are happy with SSWEN and you came at the right time. I will say that you are the only active group that is bringing women together."*

Mr. Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth,  
Head of GOSS Mission, DC

## Staff Greetings

Dear Friends, Family and Fellow Supporters of the South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network,

We have much positive news and progress to report in this brief Spring Newsletter!

Since our last contact we:

- ▶ Formed a new SSWEN group in Warrap, giving us access and representation in this region.
- ▶ Conducting a Community Problem Solving session which trained 26 women in Western Bahar El Gazal State. That chapter also elected new officers.

▶ In April, we completed an intensive strategic planning process which helped us to refine our goals, and our activities to meet those goals, over the next few years.

Much of our effort in the coming months will require hard work and dedication from our staff and volunteers. **Everyone can do something** to help us advance our cause. So as you read through the following pages, take note of the activities and programs that interest you and let us know how you can help.

In the coming months you will be hearing more about our specific activities and programs.

With an election on the horizon and the Referendum vote less than two years away, it is time for decisive action to empower the women of South Sudan.

We invite you to track our progress on our website at [www.sswen.org](http://www.sswen.org). Our European-based donation website is at [www.betterplace.org](http://www.betterplace.org).

Thank you again for your support, guidance and your donations of funds, time and talent that make our work possible!

—The SSWEN Team—

## Meeting with the GOSS Mission—DC

On April 11, 2009, SSWEN members had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, the head of GOSS Mission in the US and Mr. David Boum Choat, Public Relations and Congressional Affairs Officer in Washington, DC.

This was a chance to discuss SSWEN's mission and programs, and to determine how our activities fit into the broader picture of South Sudan's political landscape. The GOSS Mission was formed after the 2005 peace agreement as one of 18 offices worldwide. Mr. Ezekiel serves as the GOSS "ambassador" to the US.

We discussed issues ranging from investment relations and internet communication, to the challenges we face in getting other nations to understand how crucial elections and the referendum vote are to the future of South Sudan.

The GOSS Mission was pleased to learn about our efforts to provide voter education and grassroots training

to mobilize women in South Sudan and in the Diaspora. They are currently working on the voting system and procedures to ensure free and fair elections in February 2010.

As a nonpartisan and nonpolitical organization, SSWEN looks forward to working with GOSS Mission to make the NGO sector a vibrant part of South Sudan's civil society. We have a unique opportunity to impact history

through our Civic Education program and our efforts to ensure full representation of women in government.

Overall, our meeting was productive and informative. Regardless of the outcome of the election and the referendum vote, SSWEN will remain true to its mission and its vision for Sudanese women. GOSS Mission is a valuable partner in our quest to advance human rights for all.



SSWEN Members meet with GOSS Mission in Washington, DC

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# SSWEN Formation in Warrap State

On December 8, 2008, a great reception was organized by the women of Warrap State to welcome SSWEN's delegation that consisted of translators, Norwegian Church Aid and UN Mission in Sudan representatives, and Ms. Lilian Riziq.

More than 150 women gathered at the National Assembly Hall in Kuajok, Warrap State to welcome the delegates. This was one of the first times that women from this region had the opportunity to meet and share their concerns about local issues with an organization that could help.

They sang and danced happily during a special meeting that lasted for more than eight hours! As a result of our discussions with women from throughout the state, SSWEN formed a local group in Warrap consisting of seven women representing the seven counties of Warrap State.

The new Warrap delegates will meet periodically to discuss local issues and to present SSWEN programs and information to women in the region. They are now part of our network of grassroots groups linking women and delivering services throughout South Sudan.

Welcome to our newest members!



*SSWEN's delegates were received by the minister of Social Welfare and his Staff, who encouraged SSWEN to form a local organization in the State of Warrap.*





## SSWEN Chapter Elections in Western Bhar El Gazal State



SSWEN enlighten meeting with the women of Western Bhar El Gazal State was successfully held on November 29, 2008, at WATOP Center. Several women's groups attended the meeting, including Women's Development, Sawa Sawa, Ekaou, St. Bakheta Association, Bent Al Baled and others.

The vision of SSWEN was shared and emphasis was placed on the importance of the Networking among the women groups. By establishing local "chapters" of SSWEN, we offer them opportunities to lead local efforts and activities that improve the lives of women and all Sudanese people.

The election was held and facilitated by Kaidi Rial, Naema Abbas and Lewi Mursal (the civil society coordinator- NCA, Norwegian Church Aid.)

Mrs. Florence Abina was elected as SSWEN-VBGS Chairlady and Mrs. Lucia Remigio will serve as her deputy. Mrs. Ledia Henry Tadiwe was elected as the Secretary General. Also Mrs. Angelina Akile was elected as a Treasurer and Mrs Rosa Bawila will serve as her deputy. Ms Monica Ilario was elected as a Secretary of information and Ms. Margret Ernest will serve as her Deputy.

Congratulations to the new leaders of this chapter.

## Women in Project Management and Design



December 9-14, 2008, SSWEN hosted a training session on Women in Project Management and Design at Palica Hall in Wau. The five day event was facilitated jointly by SSWEN and Norwegian Church Aid which provided funding for the session.

The goal of the training session is to enable participants to:

- \* Identify the challenges facing communities in their counties.
- \* Develop a project proposal that addresses a current challenge.
- \* Apply basic skills related to effective project implementation and sustainability.

The focus was on the life cycle of conducting community-based projects. The training concluded with a graduation ceremony at the famous Greek Club in downtown Wau.

The ceremony was attended by Government officials including Wau County Commissioner Mr. Anthony Charles Ngbrende, and several agencies such as the UN Development Programme and UN Mission in Sudan. Family members of the graduates and representative from other women's groups were also present

SSWEN was able to graduate 26 women as **project managers** in community based projects!



# What We Learned About Ourselves.....

## The Strategic Planning Process

*"A **Strategic Plan** provides guidance to an organization in fulfilling its mission with maximum efficiency and impact. It identifies the specific goals, action steps and resources needed to accomplish the organization's vision."*

Following the Weaving Together Conference that was held last year, we set out to ensure that SSWEN was addressing the challenges of the women currently living in Southern Sudan and the next generation. Our aim was to produce a set of strategies that look forward to the frontlines of social change.

This collaborative effort has resulted in a recommitment to the mission, vision, and values that define SSWEN. We identified three new "values" that express the ideals behind our work and which guide us going forward.

We took the time to reflect on SSWEN's role within South Sudan and how our mission must change and evolve to meet the needs of the people and region.

Unlike many NGOs that just provide services, SSWEN must focus on *solving problems* within communities. If we do our job well, you could say that we will put ourselves out of business! More realistic for us, however, is to evolve our mission and our focus to keep South Sudan moving forward.

The Strategic Planning Meeting allowed us to group and organize each of our issue areas into three broad programs, with specific strategies to accomplish our goals. In addition to outlining the significant social justice issues on which our work will focus, we tried to determine how we will measure the impact of our work. *How will we know if our programs are successful?*

The strength of SSWEN lies in our **passion** for our mission and in our **network of women** in local communities and in the Diaspora who conduct our ongoing programs. We identified numerous opportunities to partner and collaborate with other NGOs and organizations to strengthen our work and to develop a strong, independent NGO sector essential to a civil society.

We are pleased with our progress so far and we recognize that planning and evaluation will be an ongoing process. Please review our Mission, Vision and Values and re-dedicate yourself to SSWEN by taking an active role in our programs and activities.



Members of the SSWEN Strategic Planning Group: Lillian Riziq, Nyakan Gile, Agnes Oswaha, Caroline Faria, Asia Awad, Apol Parek, Rachel Arol, Martha Bec, Kamana Khadka, Zeinab Yassin, Theresa Rudacille (facilitator) and . Mrs. Zeinab Yassin (not pictured).

### **MISSION**

The mission of SSWEN is to empower Sudanese women through programs that support and encourage women's rights, education, policy advocacy, and organizational development. We are committed to helping Sudanese women achieve economic, social, and gender justice in Sudan's civil society sector by building healthy and peaceful communities within our country, with human rights for all.

### **VISION**

SSWEN strives to alleviate the factors that contribute to poverty and social distress, and to improve communication and the dissemination of information that will lead to social inclusion and equality. We dedicate ourselves to support for the poor, vulnerable women in Sudan, and those impacted by the Diaspora.

In pursuit of this vision, we provide interpersonal assistance and information to women about education and social services; we organize instruction and develop trainers who will teach organizational development and women's advocacy; and we raise awareness among local, national, and international leaders about the plight of Sudanese women.

### **SSWEN VALUES**

*The core values that guide our work are inherent in everything we do. These values shape our work, and ensure that our approach is consistent with our results. We list them without reference to priority, because they are of equal value in how we live our professional and personal lives.*

**Respect** - We are each unique individuals and as we grow and explore our individuality, we also respect the unique qualities and contributions of others.

**Teamwork** – By definition, 'teamwork' is the ability and the willingness to work together toward a common vision. A commitment to teamwork demands that individual accomplishments are directed toward organizational objectives. Teamwork is the ingredient that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

**Responsibility** - We are not responsible for the attitudes and programming we inherited in childhood. However, as adults, we are 100% responsible for changing negative attitudes and behavior and improving our relationships and interactions with others. We become wise not by the recollection of our past, but by taking responsibility for our future.

**Empowerment** – We conduct programs and advocate for policies that give women the tools to solve their own problems and take personal responsibility for issues affecting their lives.

**Commitment** – SSWEN recognizes that change requires a personal obligation to take action. Declaring intentions and reaching agreement are not enough. We must take deliberate action and demonstrate tenacity in achieving our goals.

**Integrity** – In all things, we will demonstrate honesty of thought and deed. SSWEN will model integrity through transparency, personal and professional accountability, and acting in the best interests of those we serve.



# SSWEN Workplan

Based on the final report from the *Weaving Together Conference* held in August 2008, SSWEN members reviewed the issues, recommendations, and action steps from each of the working groups.

We were able to narrow down the focus of our program activities to three major areas:

1. Education
2. Health
3. Civic Education

Under these main issues headings, we identified specific programs to address the education, training, advocacy, and empowerment needs of Sudanese women. We spent several hours discussing SSWEN's strengths as an organization and what types of resources or expertise we need to find in partnering agencies and organizations.



Fortunately, our list of allies operating in South Sudan or who work to benefit our region is a long one! There are numerous opportunities to combine our grassroots network with other NGOs or agencies that possess services or programs matching our values and goals.



After identifying our programs and activities, we faced the difficult task of prioritizing exactly what we could accomplish in 2009 and 2010. Based on the critical issues facing South Sudan and the resources (financial and technical expertise) currently available, we agreed that CIVIC EDUCATION was the most pressing need for the rest of the 2009 calendar year. This decision was reinforced during our discussions with GOSS Mission representatives that same weekend.

For the other issue areas, 2009 will be a time for planning activities and securing the resources to conduct specific programs during 2010. By October, our Board will approve our detailed operating plan for 2010 which includes an ambitious agenda for providing training and information at the grassroots level.

In developing specific plans for each of our issue areas, we emphasized evaluating and measuring the impact of our programs. We must demonstrate that the programs and activities we conduct at the community level are having the intended impact on attitudes and behaviors. That means that SSWEN will have to develop and train local members and representatives to administer and evaluate programs throughout the year.

SSWEN staff is finalizing the detailed plans for 2009 activities. The chart below summarized our programs and objectives.

All of our planning and discussions led to the acknowledgement that SSWEN as an organization must quickly grow in terms of trained staff and volunteers. In order to provide the quality services and programs we envision, we must find the resources to make it a reality.

If you are reading this newsletter right now, you are a part of the SSWEN Team! We need your ideas, your time, your expertise, and your financial support. Please review the **Call for Volunteers** on the next page and let us know how you can help.

The fate of South Sudan will be determined in 2011 with the referendum vote on independence. Our actions to educate, train, and empower Sudanese women will not only affect our lives and the lives of our children, but generations of people in this region who are striving for equality, justice and freedom.

**It is time for ACTION!**



Program	Activity	2009 (May – Dec)	2010
Education	1. Community Problem Solving Seminars - Certify Project Managers / Partner with local government	*Plan 9 sessions for 2010	*Conduct at least 9 Seminars
	2. Adult Education Centers - Business Education/adult literacy/mentoring	*Plan programs for 10 communities	*Conduct topic sessions
	3. Standardized Curriculum - Advocate for standards, bilingual teachers, gender sensitivity	*Monitor government efforts	*Monitor Government's progress
Health	1. Health Education - Provide classes and information on ten major issues/areas	*Plan programs for 10 communities	*Conduct 10 Health fairs/ongoing classes
	2. Community Health Centers	*Determine locations; Form partnerships.	* Open at least 3 Community Health Care facilities; Operate mobile programs
	3. Health Advocacy - Equal treatment, training/licensing, medical equipment, rural treatment programs	*Research programs and resources. Form partnerships.	* Advocate for health quality, especially in rural areas; facilitate training
Civic Involvement	1. Assessment - Conduct assessment and develop tracking system	*Determine barriers to voting and form partnerships. * Determine best role for SSWEN	* Adjust and amend assessment and demographic information
	2. Voter Education - Provide information/instruction for election/referendum - Increase/document voter turnout, prevent violence	*Develop bilingual Voter information guides and presentations *Assist with training/staffing poll workers	* Mobilize volunteers to assist with election. Conduct exit polling. Develop information for referendum education
	3. Leadership Training - - Increase women's involvement in government/civic issues	*Conduct Leadership training in August 2009 * Plan 4 training session for 2010.	*Conduct at least 4-10 leadership training sessions. Formalize "Campaign School."
	4. Policy Advocacy - Compliance with existing laws, establish Equal Opportunity program	*Meet with members of GOSS; form partnerships. *Monitor compliance with existing law	*Monitor and advocate as needed. *Work with women holding public office to mentor next generation of women leaders.



## South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network

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Visit us on the Web at [www.sswen.com](http://www.sswen.com)



In order for SSWEN to provide programs and activities, we need volunteers and staff who believe in our mission! We are currently seeking trainers, counselors, facilitators, and people with the technical knowledge to help us plan and develop our Education, Health, and Civic programs.

As we raise financial and other resources, some of these volunteer positions will become part of our paid staff. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer and helping us to develop our programs, please send a brief email message or letter to:

**Agnes Oswaha, SSWEN**  
14817 15th Ave NE #18  
Shoreline, WA 98155  
USA  
[oswaha@gmail.com](mailto:oswaha@gmail.com)

Tell us what programs or activities interest you and how you would like to help. Training is provided for most positions.

*Founded in 2005, SSWEN is recognized in the United States as a 501(c)(3) organization based in Arizona. SSWEN is also registered with Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in Khartoum, Sudan, and South Sudan Relief and the Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) in Juba, Sudan. In addition to representatives in 7 states (AZ, MN, NJ, SD, TX, WA, and Washington, D.C.), SSWEN has volunteers and advocates located in Toronto-Canada, Cairo-Egypt, London-England, Berlin-Germany, and Juba and Khartoum, Sudan.*



## Help us to grow!

*Share this newsletter with a neighbor, a friend, or an organization in your community. Membership forms and information can be found on our website*

**[www.sswen.org](http://www.sswen.org)**