SPREADING MESSAGES OF PEACE THROUGH ESSAY WRITING CONTESTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH SUDAN

INTRODUCTION:
Empowerkids-South Sudan is a national non-governmental organization founded in 2014 by Edward Eisele and South Sudanese citizens. It is registered with Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) under registration number 169 (under Chapter 3, Section 10 of the NGOs Act, 2016). The purpose of this organization is to build a brighter future for South Sudanese children and to create an enabling environment as they grow and become contributing members of the South Sudanese society. Empowerkids-South Sudan strives to enhance the learning opportunities for South Sudanese children in Southern Sudan in order to equip them with needed knowledge, skills, and professional capacities and abilities. Beginning in February and continuing through December 2017, we conducted a new essay contest within Secondary Schools on the subject of PEACE. Based upon recent history and events in South Sudan, it seems that having an ongoing conversation about something almost all citizens of almost all countries today in the world enjoy (PEACE) can be a healthy conversation that hopefully helps to point us in that direction.

With this initiative, students in our Secondary Schools were given the opportunity to freely express their visions and opinions on the lasting PEACE they would like to see in their new country South Sudan. Indeed, all of the winning essays were eloquent, to say the least, and give us hope that we have many thousands of newly-educated young people maturing into roles where they are going to make a difference. 634 students from the fifteen schools participated in the contest last year and 150 of the participants were selected as their essays emerged as best of all following thorough reviews and the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee in each school in reference to the provided guidelines. We introduce to you herewith the best peace essays written by the South Sudanese children who cares about their future and with hope that there would be lasting peace in the country where they will enjoy learning and live decent life like citizens of other countries that enjoy significant freedom, peace and tranquility. It is hope that these essays will inspire each one of you in different ways and motivate you to care about these children by working together to bring lasting peace in our country.

My Vision: I Christane, begin by saying that a healthy and well-informed South Sudan is free from poverty and where there is social justice and where children’s and women’s rights are protected and where people live in harmony with one heart in suitable environment.

Many people always talk about peace, and according to my understanding the word peace is defined as a freedom from disturbances, or is defined as the absence of war. Or is happiness, joy, tolerance, love, charity, forgiveness, stability of mind, heart and kindness. Peace is the religion for both man and universe, because in peace good things are possible. While in the absence of peace, we cannot achieve anything of positive nature either as individual or community or international level. Peace is the universal law of the nature, that is because God love the condition of peace and disapprove of any state of unrest. When there is peace in the country, I think there would be respect for human rights, there is unity in the community where there is peace and sense of belonging to the country. When there is peace, people exchange experience and share knowledge. And peace can help in planning if someone want to do his/her needs. Peace leads to social unity through nationalism - the feelings of the high and low are banished from minds of people under which unity is achieved. For instance, good leaders make people with full force that our nation can progress and can have prestigious place in the world only when all disparities are removed. Peace leads to political unity and stability. Nationalism is great organizing force and through this force, the leader create political unity among the people and crash disintegrating tendencies to bring about stability in the nation. Nationalism helps in curbing mutual conflicts and quarrels and the attention of people is drawn towards a big problem.

We can bring a sustainable peace in the country when we understand ourselves, and in a peaceful way anyone would answer that she/he wants to live in peace. Even though there is plenty of love in the country, there is enough of struggle, war, problems, family disharmony, violence and intolerable behaviors. And when there is absence of peace, citizens are the people who have legal right to belong to a particular country. Because when there is absence of peace in the country, the citizens are the victims as well as the children under the age of five and sick people. When there is absence of peace, the people will be the most affected ones in the country that is to say these are the needed.

A sustainable peace can be brought in the country through globalization by encouraging the free flow of people, goods, information and knowledge. We can bring a sustainable peace through organized attempts of environmental protection and protection of human rights. And when we want to bring sustainable peace in the country, we should be patience in all aspects of life; forgive others even long time and not punish or not purchase weapons, trying hard not to judge others, avoid tribalism in the country, cultural differences, power struggle and injustices. It encourages colonialism and imperialism in the name of nationalism. South Sudanese race discover many things have been taken from the country and discover many new markets for their goods in the name of racism and established colony, when there is peace in the country aggressive nationalism lead to racism.

To solve peace we should understand every one’s interest. This is the solution the one that satisfies every one’s interest. This is a time for active listing, put down your differences for a while and listen to each other with the intention of understanding.

In all what I have written and what I have mentioned above, I think if we all follow the steps of bringing a sustainable peace in the country and listen or understand everyone’s interest or listen to one another in the country, I think we would achieve a sustainable peace in our country forever.

4. Organizing Sport Activities: Sport is very important in bringing peace, because when youth engage in sports, their families come to watch them which provides a rare occasion for communities to come together and interact among themselves, hence resulting to peace.

5. Prevention of Cattle Rustling among Cattle-Keepers: This is through top-down approach to traditional authorities and community policing. By providing farms tools and equipment to farmers and also constructing large-scale farms and also constructing irrigation in dry areas. These can results to enough food for the country as people are leaving the country mostly because of hunger (starvation). If this is done, peace will come automatically in South Sudan.

6. Improving Agriculture by Government: It is the backbone of South Sudan’s economy. By providing farms tools and equipment to farmers and also constructing large-scale farms and also constructing irrigation in dry areas. These can results to enough food for the country as people are leaving the country mostly because of hunger (starvation). If this is done, peace will come automatically in South Sudan.

7. Building of Social Service Infrastructure: For example, health center, education, safe water, as well as encouraging vital economic activities such as establishment of markets, trade and relevant financial systems to solve the needs of citizens, hence peace is brought.

Last steps I can take to promote peace are: a) Voluntary Participation for Peace Promotion: As peace need voluntary contribution by all citizens of South Sudan as I sometimes feel like to talk more about peace to other people. b) Church Life: Encouraging my fellow youths to like church (religion) life since it is a powerful connector between two competing parties sharing the same God. Respecting people and being kind to one another as well as helping elderly (in need) people.

In Conclusion: I hope that all the steps of bringing sustainable peace are followed or put in consideration by all of us South Sudanese children and mostly the government (GOSS), I am very sure we will experience sustainable peace as well as development of the Country.
My Vision for Sustainable Peace in South Sudan:

I envision a peaceful South Sudan where my, the citizens, will enjoy peace since it was formed. My vision for a sustainable peace in South Sudan is the ongoing conflict and famine because right now every South Sudanese either literate or illiterate, the deaf, the blind has realized the importance of peace and what wars cause. Peace is the forthcoming to South Sudan, I always dream about it and I am praying every day and for God to make my dream come true. In my eyes, a peaceful South Sudan looks like a developed and life-enhancing country cooperating politically, economically, and socially like that of United States, UK, and other developed countries.

To be honest with what God gave me, I might be an international artist in music promoting South Sudan to the next level there is peace and I am optimistic that will happen for my beloved county.

In order to achieve my vision, the following should be done:

- Sensitizing the local people about the importance of peace and dangers of war.
- Peace concerts in every village and towns.
- Media houses in South Sudan should have a Peace program
- National dialogue
- Agriculture
- Building of more schools especially in villages.
- Disarmament.
- Justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity
- Cooperation
- Reasons or Rationale
- Peace stories, drama and music shows about peace in every single villages and towns are held every month.

Media houses should at least bring this program up and make people discuss and give their views about peace in South Sudan.

Tribes in South Sudan hate each other, so there should be dialogue among them. We should forget about the past and reconcile. Without food, there will be no peace and that is why the conflict escalating due to the famine in the country. The government should find a way of improving agriculture in the country.

Eloquence leads to war. Honesty, there are people who are fighting without knowing the root cause of the war, so many schools need to be set up especially in villages to educate them.

To be honest, South Sudan is full of guns, drugs, weapons, and corrupt leaders who are in the market, rivers, hospitals, and it scares people. Civilians and soldiers without assignment should be disarmed.

These are the important things that guide a country but in South Sudan, they are not considered. That is why is corruption, robbery, killing, and bribery.

South Sudanese should cooperate with their leaders hand in hand and revert from the ongoing selfishness and solitary life of working for oneself.
South Sudan will be looking like the country where everyone respects the rights of women and children. A country where there is no fighting so that women and children will not run to the forest again and they have to enjoy their lives in a peaceful South Sudan.

My life will be different because I will study in a country where there is peace and if I finish my studies, I will have the opportunity for getting a job and my dream of becoming an engineer will come true.

To achieve a sustainable peace in South Sudan, we have to make awareness through the radios, TVs, and we go to the grass-root areas and tell them how about peace is very important to all of us and that war is destroying our future. The women and children are the victims of this conflict.

Through games and sports, I believe, we will promote peace and unity as they bring people together from different language groups and races. Many teams have been formed to compete in various games and sports for example soccer, volleyball, basketball, and athletics. This is to help the participants to share ideas and bring them together. Our national team is made up of players from different communities of South Sudan. This enhances a united South Sudan, and promotion of peace is achieved through game and sports. It also promotes teamwork, friendship, peace, and cooperation. During inter-school competition, students come together to support their respective teams and also to support the youth who come from different areas in South Sudan to meet and make strong friendships.

Games and Sports also bring sustainable peace as it creates a strong feeling of patriotism especially when our teams win and they come to have the right ideas. It also makes the people to share the word of God, this will help to spread the gospel and people will be converted to the grace of God. It also makes us to work together and drive away all the evil plans associated with war. Not only that but also the peace will destroy them. Not only that but also the peace will destroy them.

A sustainable peace is a type of peace where people live in a country or a place for a long time without any war or violence. In short terms, it can also be described as a peace that is able to continue in the same way for a long time. I think for South Sudan to develop and cure its wounds, which were inflicted by the war; there is a need for a sustainable peace in the country. I have a dream that one day South Sudanese will live in peace and harmony as one people and not divided into ethnic groups or tribes. A peace in which a cat and a rat can live together without harming one another, I mean a situation where people peacefully coexist, share their sorrows and happiness together and focus towards nation building.

In conclusion, I can promote peace by ensuring that I have a peaceful mind. I will avoid any kind of argument that will not lead to peace.

In conclusion, a sustainable peace is a very expensive item that can be attained if people accept what they have done to others, and those to whom they offended, should simply forgive and forget. Then, we will have a sustainable peace in South Sudan.

Interruption can promote peace because if couples from different tribes marry each other, they will be in-law and the relationship will be stronger than before. Opening peace clubs at every school in South Sudan because the children from different tribes of South Sudan are studying at one school and tell them about the importance of peace so that they will understand the meaning of peace so that they grow up with language of peace.

In conclusion, we should create awareness for peace because people in grass-root areas should be aware about peace. Games and sports promote peace. It brings different tribes from different areas together. Interruption can promote peace because if two people from different tribes marry each other, it will bring peace to our communities. Opening peace clubs in school will bring sustainable peace. If the young generation understands what is peace, they will not fight each other and they will be united.

The rule of law should be upheld and criminals should be held accountable and face the law in order to relieve the hearts of those whose houses were either burned to ashes, or their beloved ones shot to death. So, in this situation, such kind of people will never be willing to reconcile, unless they see the wrongdoers being taken to court and punished accordingly.

Thirdly, awareness raising and sensitization programs should be created from the grass-roots level on the importance of sustainable peace to make them know that war and violence only claims the life of an individual and brings suffering and poverty. Perhaps to make them understand that peace is like water that gives life to plants and conflict is like fire that destroys them. Not only that but also the conflicting parties should honestly reconcile in order to end the ongoing war because as the warring parties continue to fight, it will be a good example to the citizens to reconcile too. I believe reconciliation will produce a great effect towards sustainable peace.

For a sustainable peace, national dialogue should be advocated for and considered as a vital factor. As it is a formal discussion between two people or groups, it involves different categories of people like chiefs, community leaders, religious leaders, and politicians of who will give ideas and views that can lead to a sustainable peace.

I can promote peace by ensuring that I have peace first in my heart and in my family, this can serve as an example to others, as they will admire the kind of life we live and also try to adopt it, which results into a sustainable peace. It can also be by having Bible learning; sharing with others because as people tend to share the word of God, this will help to drive away all the evil plans associated with crimes, and change them with God’s plans which are always for peace.

In conclusion, a sustainable peace is a very expensive item that can be attained if people accept what they have done to others, and those to whom they offended, should simply forgive and forget. Then, we will have a sustainable peace in South Sudan.
First of all, we want disarmament; disarmament is the process of getting rid of weapons. Though this, we are able to solve the conflict through negotiation, dialogue, and debate. By being disarmed, there will be free movement of people from one place to another without any obstacle. Through this, we can achieve sustainable peace in South Sudan.

Secondly, there is a need to eradicate poverty since poverty is a threat to peace. Everyone, in a broad social, political, and economic sense should understand peace. The frustration, hostility, and anger generated by abject poverty cannot sustain peace in any society.

Thirdly, educating citizens. By doing this, there should be balanced education (male and female) and balanced infrastructural development, medical services, and quality education to all. By exercising all this, we can achieve sustainable peace in South Sudan.

Not only that, there is also a need to eliminate corruption, nepotism, tribalism, and robbery where people could have freedom of movement without anything hindering them. For example, If I go to Unity State, people of that state should consider me as if I am from there. If someone from Unity State comes to Imotong state, the people from Imotong state should consider him/her as one of theirs. By doing so we are able to achieve sustainable peace.

To continue with my view, I would like to go straight to some of the ways on how I can promote peace in South Sudan.

First of all, organized leadership: every extended family, clan, and community have to choose the elderly person who can help to solve the local disputes by punishing the offenders according to the law and compensating the offended. This helps in reconciliation. Through this, we can promote peace.

Secondly, educating the citizens on social values and norms; values such as respect, faithfulness, loyalty, and chastity, which should be highly rewarded, to avoid involving in social injustice like murder, rape, bribery, and cheating in business which are condemned in the Bible. According to James 5:4-6, murder is condemned.

Lastly, accepting political changes; following the fight that erupted in December 2013; it was brought by top political leaders who failed to accept their changes. Let us understand one another in any way through agreement in order to promote peace in South Sudan.

In conclusion, my message to all South Sudanese is “No peace with arms, No peace under oppression, Corruption, and Injustice, No fraternity without equality.” My wish is comradeship of all humankind. Let us unite together like children from one womb and fight against corruption, poverty, hunger, and starvation to achieve sustainable peace in South Sudan. “THANKS.”

1. Bridge2Rwanda: Empowerkids South Sudan from 2014, sponsored five 20 outstanding young men and women into the Bridge2Rwanda, a 10-month college preparatory school in Kigali, Rwanda. Our goal is to identify and select, with the help of an international agency with which we have partnered, 4-5 young men and women who scored very high on their national secondary education exams for gap-year education as they prepare for the entry examinations into well-respected colleges and universities around the world. 11 of these young potential South Sudanese have secured fully paid scholarships in best international schools in the United States and Abu Dhabi. Our recruitment process begins in January, and once we identified the top students who scored highest on the national exams, we invited them for interviews in Juba in February, at which time we spent a great deal of time evaluating those we interviewed on a number of factors. In 2017, Empowerkids-South Sudan for the first time, conducted interviews for young South Sudanese at Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya.

2. Solar Electricity: Following the successful installation of solar panels and related equipment at Nimule Model Secondary School several years ago, in February, 2016, we purchased the many solar panels and related equipment needed for installation at Juba Girl’s School. Also, in an effort to bring Juba Girl’s School forward, we have also purchased white boards for all of the classrooms to replace their outdated blackboards. In March this year, Empowerkids-South Sudan installed 24/7 solar electricity at Juba Girls Secondary School where lighting is currently provided for all of the classrooms and all of the offices. Our main aim is to create conducive learning environment for our children and help them excel in their academics so that they grow as strong and powerful leaders of this country.

3. Clean Drinking Water (By Aqua Africa): As we all know, clean drinking water is nearly non-existent in most areas of South Sudan. As a result, people spend much of their day walking to water sources to fill jugs, pots, and other containers—then return to their homes with the heavy water containers atop their heads. Not only is this a terrible misuse of our human capital, it is also unsafe. Due to the unsanitary condition of the water, it will then have to be boiled—which is an additional misuse of another raw material—our wood, not to mention the air pollution created by the fire. In 2017, in a partnership with Aqua Africa (a 501 C 3, organization formed in the United States by a South Sudanese individual), we funded the development and installation of a wonder full addition to Nimule Hospital: a fresh water well that now provides well over 100,000 liters of safe, clean drinking water to the many hundreds of patients at the hospital. In addition to the patients at the hospital, we have also been able to extend water distribution lines into the surrounding Malakia East and West neighborhoods in an effort to bring clean, fresh drinking water to nearly 5,000 men, women, and children on a daily and uninterrupted basis.