Community Needs and Assets in Maar Village, South Sudan: Local Governance, Health and Fish Production

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1. Research took place between April and July, 2012 in the remote village of Maar, Pakeer and assets while taking into account political and ethnic factors at the heart of the region’s instability. The following resources in communities throughout South Sudan. Contributing research should simultaneously address community needs and how much is dropped in each area can be made without polarizing clan tensions. – Jonglei Field Officers Handbook, 1998

2. What is working in the community?

After gaining an understanding of community challenges, I employed an appreciative inquiry in order to assess the strengths of the community. Information was gathered through participatory methods including mapping tools, transect walks and assisting with the opening of the Maar Health Centre. Despite Maar’s recent and tragic history of war and isolation, they remain incredibly resilient, with robust social structures forming perhaps their greatest asset of all.

“Once needs are identified, knowledge of clan structure becomes important. When boundaries are crossed, then decisions of where and how much is dropped in each area can be made without polarizing clan tensions.” – Jonglei Field Officers Handbook, 1998

3. Which community assets have the greatest potential for enhancement?

One example is fish production as a means of enhancing income and nutrition. Why? Because some pioneering women from Maar are already struggling to do so:

- 34 fish bought for 250 SSP
- 5-7 days to collect and dry
- Transport: 100 SSP/person; 50 bundle; 100 return
- 1-3 days to sell in Bor for approximately 900 SSP
- Profits: 400 SSP ($80)
- Profits typically used for purchasing grain and oil

Methods and Objectives:
- Identify the most important needs of the community, “set by the free choice of the community;” this was conducted as part of a state initiated assessment of every community in Maar.
- Using appreciative inquiry, conduct a situation analysis of existing social and economic activities; further analysis was conducted as part of my personal research

1. Emerging from a long and violent war, what are the community’s greatest needs?

Needs assessment information was gathered through a series of four focus group discussions in Dinka with competent translation, composed of: 1) 15 youths; 2) 13 elders; 3) 14 women and; 4) 20 elders including chiefs from all of the surrounding homas.

To aid in development planning there is a great need for information on enduring social and economic constraints and resources in communities throughout South Sudan. Contributing research should simultaneously address community needs and assets while taking into account political and ethnic factors at the heart of the region’s instability. The following resources in communities throughout South Sudan. Contributing research should simultaneously address community needs and assets while taking into account political and ethnic factors at the heart of the region’s instability.