

EDUCATION IN WAR - SUDAN

Case Study: Darfur, Sudan

The United Nations has described Darfur as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. About three years on, more than 200,000 people are feared dead and close to three million are living in camps, having been forced to flee their homes from violence.

In 2006, scores of students living in a displaced settlement in southern Darfur attempted state examinations, despite having to dodge fighting between warring factions. The students at Mershing High School gathered to complete testing in English language, mathematics, health sciences, Arabic and religious studies.

During their preparations many students were forced to take cover or temporarily relocate as fighting rocked Mershing and neighbouring areas. For most of them, staying in school amidst all the chaos was a real test.



Mohamed (left) and Abdulhalim are determined to sit their exams despite the war-torn environment around them.

Students completing their eighth year of primary education are eligible to take the exams, which mark the end of primary education and allow admission into secondary school. To assist the students, NGOs like World Vision provided books, teaching materials, student supplies, sitting mats and blackboards to schools across South Darfur.

Student Abdulhalim Mohammed, who wants to be an engineer, believed he was ready for the exam. "Despite the upheavals in Darfur, I have been preparing for the past six months."

Many of the students are traumatised by the Darfur conflict. "Whenever I think of what is going on around me, tears start stinging my eyes," says Abdulhalim. "But I have to remain focused and determined to pass."

World Vision in Sudan

World Vision's office in northern Sudan provides education for thousands of children in refugee camps. It also provides ongoing relief activities, including food aid and emergency feeding:

- In partnership with World Food Programme, food aid is distributed to over 250,000 people in more than 20 camps.
- Seeds and tools are distributed to help hundreds of vulnerable farming households grow their own rice.
- More than 9,000 children, pregnant and lactating mothers are put on supplementary nutrition programs.
- Children under five suffering from malnutrition are given special feeding.

For you to do

- Armed conflict is a major obstacle to education around the world. Research the internet to find other regions or countries where armed conflict limits the education of children.