



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Education is Light: A Summer in Marial Bai, Sudan **Name:** Nicole Moore

Other Team Members:

Program: Oakland Program

Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** Marial Bai, Sudan

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 02

Project Summary: The country of Sudan has experienced decades of strife and hardship as a result of a brutal civil war that divided the Muslim north from the Christian and Animist south. The government of Sudan employed the murajaleen to burn villages; kill men of soldiering age; and capture women and children for sale into slavery. A group of young men escaped, walking across Sudan into Ethiopia and then Kenya, and spent many years waiting in refugee camps, hoping to be relocated to safer countries. One of these young men, named Valentino Achak Deng, later befriended author Dave Eggers, and the two collaborated to tell Deng's story in the book *What is the What*.

After reading this book, I endeavored to teach my twelfth grade students this important story. I wanted my students to be able to make sophisticated arguments for both how to prevent future genocides, as well as how to assist in the rebuilding of a society after the demolition of its population.

This summer, I visited Marial Bai, Sudan, the hometown of Valentino Achak Deng, and the site of the Marial Bai Secondary School (MBSS). This school is funded by the Valentino Achak Deng Foundation, created as a result of Eggers pledging to give all proceeds from the sale of *What is the What* to the Foundation. I joined a team of volunteer teachers, and we worked with the teachers of the Marial Bai Secondary School, as well as with neighboring primary school teachers and headmasters, to improve curriculum and instruction in Southern Sudan.

Each volunteer teacher focused on assisting the curriculum and instruction of teachers within their own subject area, and so I assisted the English teachers of the MBSS. We worked together to create a vertically integrated curriculum plan for the English department. I also conducted workshops to train local primary English teachers and school headmasters in best practices in teaching.

Most importantly, I learned about the lives of Sudanese teachers and students, and about the challenges facing this still-struggling country. I heard the difficulties faced by those who left as refugees, and who have returned to help; I saw the need for governmental infrastructure that will enable the continuation of positive change; and I felt the genuine passion of each and every student to fulfill their potential and gain a quality education. These students inspired me, their boundless enthusiasm for learning absolutely contagious.

Career Impact: One cannot help but be inspired by the dedication and focus of the students in Southern Sudan. I witnessed a group of forty students crowded around a single light bulb, powered by a generator, from the time the light clicked on to the moment just after it clicked off, diligently studying notes and helping each other understand concepts. Personally, I was reminded of the intense reward that follows perseverance as I witnessed students' faces lighting up as they successfully grappled with their studies.

Professionally, I gained experience collaborating with teachers whose culture and teaching philosophies were vastly different from my own, and in working together to create curriculum and instruction plans. I also practiced workshop facilitation skills as I delivered several presentations to various scholastic audiences. I also gained perspective in creating lesson plans and activities that require few to no resources, and became appreciative of the resources in my own classroom that I had started to take for granted.

Classroom/Community Impact: I cannot wait to share my experiences with my school and community. First and foremost, I will integrate the myriad of photographs and video footage taken in Marial Bai with my students in an elective class entitled "Global Community Service." My own summer experience will serve as an example of how to research a cause; determine the area of need; construct a plan for assistance; implement that plan; record your efforts; and report back to your community about what the next steps can be. It is my hope that students will be inspired to construct and implement their own research projects and service learning projects that show their own interests and passions, after seeing how deeply my own experience has impacted my life. Students will also have the opportunity to be pen-pals of students at the Marial Bai Secondary School, and an exchange of ideas and culture will inevitably follow.

Secondly, I will present artifacts of my summer experience to the faculty at my school, and share the tangible impact this trip will have on my teaching through improved curriculum and lesson plans.

Open Response: I am currently revising curricula from my previous teaching of **What is the What**, and adapting the reading and activities to suit the elective course I will teach on Global Community Service. I plan on teaching selected readings from the novel that can be supplemented with photographs, video footage, and artifacts from my trip. I will also use material taken from the trip to inform my instruction of the novel *Night*, as part of a collaborative unit between the English and History classes on WWII and the Holocaust. Students will create videos that demonstrate their understanding of genocide, and the effects of genocide on a culture.

Quote: "One cannot help but be inspired by the dedication and focus of the students in Southern Sudan."

Photos:



The staff, student body, and summer volunteers of MBSS



Myself and another volunteer teaching an educator workshop in Aweil



The group of educators who attended the workshop in Aweil



Girls' Education Day celebration



Addressing an assembly at Marial Bai Secondary School



Assisting a local primary school teacher during a workshop



Market day in Marial Bai



The group of volunteers and students