

HISTORY

In June 2005, USAID's Famine Early Warning System Network warned of serious food shortages in Southern Sudan. In response, Lost Boys of Sudan from Bor, Southern Sudan, along with their American friends raised funds to help. Mamer Ajak and Ron Limb delivered \$8,000 to each of the five payams (regions comprised of several villages, similar to counties) of Bor that summer. The leaders of the payams, with a view towards the future decided, however, that the funds should be used for educational purposes instead of food.

Southern Sudan experienced 22 years of war before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in January 2005. The war left the country without an infrastructure and basic services, including education. The new government of Southern Sudan faces extraordinary challenges. From the signing of the peace agreement until today, the country is under great strain to rebuild itself, as expertise and resources are limited.

In December 2006, the Coalition of Willing commissioned one of its members, Samuel Garang Akau, a recent Stanford University graduate, to work in Bor on the schools project. He spent approximately six months there, building community support, securing land for the first school in Kolnyang, developing a plan and purchasing essential construction materials and equipment. He acquired a dump truck for transporting materials, five cement block-making machines, a satellite phone, and a motorcycle for transportation between the five payams. He also secured a site for the first school and formalized COW's relationship with the Bor Development Association.

COW planned at first to work with community members to build the school at minimal cost. COW soon realized, however, that local community members were not able to contribute as expected and greater expertise was needed. Since then, the Coalition of Willing has worked to secure the services of a contractor to construct the schools. Our intention is to begin the first phase of construction – building a four-room school – in Kolnyang in early 2009.