



November 27, 2024



Dear Friends,

I would like to tell you about the day I met a young Sudanese mother, many years ago. It has never left me. Her story shaped the way I understand our work. I have told it many times, but it bears repeating.

It was 2004, and I was visiting War Child's programming in West Darfur, Sudan. It had become the epicentre of violence in a country that had been plagued by civil war for decades.

War Child was running a literacy and numeracy program for women and girls in a camp for displaced people. They would come with their children because it was safe and protected from the violence of the camp.

Despite the good we seemed to be doing, I couldn't shake a feeling of frustration. There was a question I could not adequately answer: "What is the point of all this?" The crisis seemed so big compared to the impact of our programs and the injustice insurmountable.

On this afternoon the team introduced me to Nadia, who had been a part of the program for three months. She was sitting on a mat on the floor with her baby by her side.

She began telling me her story. She had been in her village shortly after giving birth to her first and only child, when she heard the militia arriving on horseback. People were screaming. Her parents and her husband shouted at her to take the baby and hide. She covered behind the house, trying to keep her son quiet, while inside the militia set about murdering her entire family.

She was one of only a dozen women and children who survived the attack. They walked for days to get to this camp.

Like all the girls from her village, she was completely illiterate when she joined our program. I had to ask her, "After everything you've been through, has anything we are doing actually helped you?"

She quietly leaned forward and wrote her name in the sand. She turned and said: "Now that I can write my own name, I am going to learn how to write my son's name."

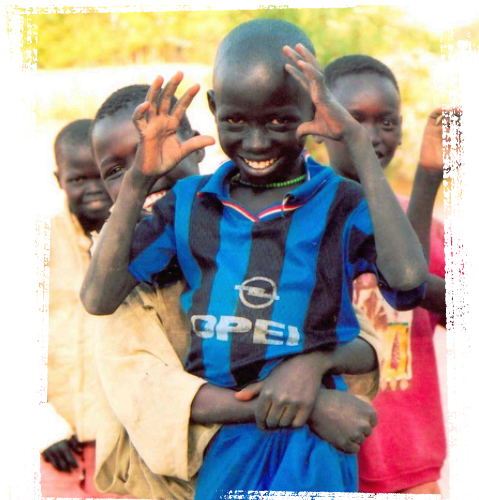
It was one of the most profound moments that I have experienced doing this work. I realized that this was the point: we all just need a reason to put one foot in front of the other. We all need to aspire to a better day.

If we can invest in that sense of hope and possibility, then we can really change lives. For 25 years now, War Child has been making that investment with your help. What started in the 1990s as an idea to develop a new, more inclusive approach to aid, has grown into a leading global organization providing a humanitarian bridge between emergency relief and lasting peace, through programs that change the circumstances of people's lives.

We also believe communities living through these treacherous times are best equipped to identify what they need to get to the other side. 99% of our staff are local to the countries in which we work and have a personal stake in their community's rehabilitation.

They work in partnership with local groups and community leaders, ensuring that every service we provide is designed and implemented by the very people who will feel its impact and recognize its value.





This work has never been more urgent. Now, more than ever, we need the support and generosity of you and our incredible community of donors.

In recognition of the challenges we face, an anonymous donor has stepped forward to match gifts received by December 31, 2024.

I have never believed that there are quick fixes or short cuts to addressing the grief, destruction, and agony of war.

This is reflected in the fact that War Child has been present in most of the countries where we work for twenty years or more. Far too much aid comes in the form of handouts – short term band-aids that can foster dependency and increase vulnerability as communities start losing the knowledge and tools to rebuild for themselves. This is not our approach.

We have faith in the ability of those affected by conflict to create a new and more stable future. We work to empower them in that effort. By letting communities take control of their own destinies, and staying the course as they do so, we ensure that our presence in their country leaves an enduring legacy. But it is their legacy, not ours.

Earlier this year, I was back in the region, just across the border of Darfur in South Sudan. In April of last year, after a period of relative peace, Sudan erupted into violence. Mass atrocities are occurring across the country, but especially in the Darfur region.

More than 12 million are at risk of acute starvation and ten million are displaced. Tens of thousands have died. The communities we were working with twenty years ago are once again caught in the crossfire.

It is a monumental tragedy that has been largely overlooked, amplifying people's suffering. I was with our South Sudanese team as we met with refugees flooding into the country. It was a truly heartbreaking scene. As we stood there, a girl came running up to our team, recognizing the War Child name.



She had been a participant in our education program in Darfur and had gone on to medical school. She was just weeks away from graduation when the fighting started.

Despite what she had been through, she had not given up. She looked us in the eye and said, "I know War Child. You were always there for us in Darfur. I knew you would not forget us. I knew you would come."

I felt the same emotions that day as I did all that time ago with Nadia. There it was again – that spark, that belief that all was not lost, that there was a way forward despite it all.

It is 25 years since we at War Child began this journey, with a vision for how to build a new kind of organization, one that focused on helping people not only survive but prosper once again.

We know that this is the only way to promote a more peaceful world, even in the face of extraordinary odds. It has been a privilege and a struggle to bear witness to our progress, but I am more convinced than ever that hope is war's greatest adversary: we are, collectively, lost without it.

At a time of great global upheaval and uncertainty, this is something we all need to remember. You too can inspire hope and help us empower mothers like Nadia to claim authorship of their own stories.

Your gift of whatever you wish to give will be matched through the generosity of an anonymous donor.

Join me – let's make a difference.
Sincerely,



Dr. Samantha Nutt, MD, MSc, CCFP, FRCPC, C.M.
Founder and President
War Child Canada and War Child USA

P.S Please consider giving now to have double the impact on our work with at-risk children and their families. Click the Donate button below.

Donate Today

