INTRODUCTION:

The ‘Lost Boys of Sudan’ is a group of young orphaned refugees forced from their villages by war to trek hundreds of miles through Africa. Thousands died along the way — they drowned, were eaten by wild animals, and were shot by military forces or overcome by hunger, dehydration or fatigue. Thousands of others survived to tell the story. It is a story about the courage of these young refugees and the kindness of those who have helped them. However, it also is a story about all refugees who travel through unimaginable conditions and survive against all odds - American Red Cross.

Kerubino Kang, President, Lost Boys Foundation and Dut L. Deng, Former President of the Lost Boys Foundation along with another colleague gave a brief account of the problems they faced as small children due to the outbreak of civil war in Sudan and the horrific time they passed through in their journey to camps in Kenya and thereafter. Their stories of camp life and narratives on the pain, agony, fear, identity and longing to see their families and hope for a better future for their people gives an insight on the emotional perspective of the conflict and how such stories can contribute towards meaningful engagement in dialogue for conflict resolution. The topics that were discussed included:

1. Their life experiences in regards to the civil war
2. Living in refugee camps
3. The move to the US
4. Pros and cons of establishing a life in the US
5. Perspectives on lasting peace in Sudan
6. What should individuals interested in IR, Conflict Resolution, etc. think about in considering policy and action in regards to Sudan, to Africa

The topics discussed in their narrative can be analyzed in context of all the four perspectives viz. Emotional, Cognitive, Interest and the Structural.
CONTEXT
The people of Sudan especially the Children in Sudan have never known peace. Sudan’s 20-year-old civil war, waged mostly in the south of the country, is one of the world’s longest-running wars; the conflict spread in 1986 to the central Nuba Mountains and in 1995 to the east of Sudan. It is estimated that the war has caused over 2 million deaths either directly or indirectly by famine, illness and other threatening situations. Sudanese people comprise the largest population of displaced persons in the world. Like other displaced populations, it is estimated that more than 75 percent of the displaced Sudanese people are women and children. The war encompasses north-south hostilities and various localized conflicts within different regions. Religion, ethnic identity, colonial history, land, food and desire for control over natural resources, particularly oil, water and grazing land, all play a role in the outbreak and perpetuation of the conflict. The government has often employed strategies of pitting different groups against each other, manipulating allegiances and enlisting proxies against the main rebel group. Parties to conflict and arms traders have increasingly armed young boys with modern automatic weapons, intended to help the boys protect themselves or their villages from traditional conflicts or to engage them as proxies for one side or another. There is little accountability for the use of these weapons. Hundreds of thousands of young people have been born and raised surrounded by this violence. Policies that exploit civilians by denying them access to food and basic social services or hope for peace and security in the future leave children with little opportunity to escape the conflict or stop the cycles of violence when they grow into leadership positions. In addition, children are suffering the loss of their diverse ethnic identities, as displaced ethnic groups find themselves living on the periphery of their new communities. These children and their families have limited options to make a living and are forced to adapt to the dominant culture and lifestyle in order to survive. In contrast, in some instances the government has encouraged sharpening certain ethnic identities in the South to prevent unity against the central government. Sudanese children, particularly refugee children in northern Uganda, are also subject to massive abuses of their security and rights by the Lord’s Resistance Army, which has operated in northern Uganda and southern Sudan.
**WHAT THEY TOLD:** The narrative by the members of the Lost Boys of Sudan gives a panoramic view of the context and the causes of the conflict over the years and the sufferings faced by the people in general and the children in particular. The starvation, diseases, loss of ethnic identities, violence and struggle for survival are the key issues that have been highlighted. The concern of these boys for a brighter future and their attempt to sensitize people, media and the U.N. has opened doors for actions towards peace building.

The members of the Lost Boys of Sudan narrated their plight in the refugee camp in Kenya where they hardly got adequate food and on many occasions had to remain without food. Their health had deteriorated and most of them had anemia. The hospital services were far off and difficult to have access. Many suffered in silence and died or committed suicide. Getting education was also difficult not only because of access but due to hunger also. Hungry can not read and so life became from worse to worst. There was no hope. Rains made life more deplorable. Sometimes would eat the twigs of plants and due to scarcity would get attacked for food. The absence of parents was hard hitting. The traumatic experience of seeing people die due to starvation, killings, famine etc has left a deep mark in life. The dying persons would warn and say if you do not have the courage to face the life you would also die like this. This has made us strong and the man what we are. The life in refugee camp is no life as you have no choice. Unless there is choice life has no meaning. We came to US with the help of U.N. We studied here and want to achieve something in life and contribute in bringing some difference in the lives of the people back in Sudan. The presence of around 7500 lost boys in U.S. has made an impact in bringing about a change in perception. Many problems relating to transport, health etc are being improved. The discourses here help in sending message to international organizations like U.N. to give pressure on the government there in resolving the conflict. This has helped in opening the doors of communication for problem solving.

**ANALYSIS:** Based on the context of the conflict and the narratives made by the members of Lost Boys of Sudan the main aspects and issues need to be considered are as follows:

1) Story telling helps in framing the conflict and opens channels of communication
2) Managing Emotions and Emotional perspective
3) Human Need as a source of conflict.
4) Cognitive perspective in terms of framing the concept of life in refugee camps
5) Religious and Ethnic identity and identity crisis
6) Role of humanitarian organizations and the interest perspective
7) The struggle for resources-oil and land and the structural perspective.

A brief description of the issues stated above is given hereunder:

**STORY TELLING:**
Story telling is on reflection and trust. It helps to understand history, culture and sufferings. It is towards healing and understanding. The emphasis is on listening the story of the enemy and learning to contain the stories, to hear their pain and to legitimize their narrative while not negating your own pain and story. The stories play a key role in both escalation and potentially the descalation of inter group conflict. The stories must engage the self and the other and provide a narrative that is cognitively and emotionally compelling. This can open doors for peace building and coexistence. (Julia, C, 2001). Each story conveys a different view of reality and represents a special way of seeing the things and constructs its view of social reality through a complementary process of naming and framing. (Schon and Rein, 1994). It is clear that the narrative by the members of Lost Boys of Sudan helps in reflection and building trust and triggers a sense of empathy with responsibility for resolving the problems. The Frame it sets in is that of miseries and pains and calls for concerted actions.

**MANAGING EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVE:**
Emotions are both a cause and an escalator of conflict and positive feelings are often a key component of resolution. The emotional needs are love, status, recognition and belongingness. Emotion also helps in framing the way the parties understand and diffuse their disputes. In terms of relationships, emotions serve as a forward looking communication functions and express people’s agenda, desire and goals. The resolution of conflicts arising due to emotional human needs can occur only after relationships have been realigned and re-examined. (Tidwell, Alan C., 1998). The first step in dealing with strong emotions is to acknowledge them and try to understand their source. Fear, loss and grief, rage and pathology are the core concern in emotional perspective. Here the Goal is
the Healing the victims through truth telling, stories, public acknowledgement and forgiveness as the management techniques. (Class Notes). The narrative given in the event highlights their emotional concerns and opens doors for understanding and appreciating the problem.

**HUMAN NEEDS:** Burton (1986) argues that conflicts concern only situations where needs satisfaction is denied and resolution of such conflict occurs only after relationships have been reexamined and realigned. Morton Deutsch (1973) emphasizes the subjective nature of the conflict by stressing upon the values the parties ascribe to a cause or the situation. Sometimes social or religious values can become more dominant psychologically than the hunger need or the desire for survival or vice versa. The occurrence or the outcome of the conflict is not determined by the objective circumstances. Hobbes (1974) stated that humanity is characterized by ceaseless and relentless thirst for power. Freud (1990) argued that fundamental view of humanity is the contending life and death instincts. The contending life has within it the desire for pleasure. The death instincts turn in to destructive instincts when directed towards the objects. The narrative throws light on the origin of the conflict and its consequences which can be explained based on human need concept. The struggle for survival and non satisfaction of needs is explicit in their story which builds the frame for conflict understanding and resolution.

**COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE IN TERMS OF FRAMING THE CONCEPT OF LIFE IN REFUGEE CAMPS:** Beliefs, schemes, and frames are the core concerns in the Cognitive perspective and its main goal is the Reframing through facilitated contact. The despair and loss of hope in the refugee camps as expressed by them compels to find the meaning of the camps. The squalid living conditions and rampant poverty, lack of food, crowded classrooms, diseases and sexual violence calls for reframing as what the refugee camp stands for. The UNHCR perspective and that of the refugees would require a fresh look to avoid further conflict between the two. The psychology of the victims and their narrations are important tools for developing the frame.

**RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC IDENTITY AND IDENTITY CRISIS:** The children had left their home at an early age. They do not remember about their family, friends and relatives. The question they ask is about their identity. It is a situation of social identity and crisis which puts them in conflict with themselves. The religious conflict between the Arab Muslims
and African Christians had been an important cause of this long war. The anger and rage against such religious hegemony by a particular religion aggravates the situation. This problem can be analyzed in terms of interest and emotional perspectives. The oppressor has the interest of increasing the religious domain and the oppressed are under fear, pain, rage and pathology. Truth telling, forgiveness and apologies can only heal the wounds and pave way for lasting peace.

ROLE OF HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE INTEREST PERSPECTIVE: Different humanitarian agencies and organizations have working to bring peace in the region and succor to the lives of millions of victims. The narrative explains the role played by UNHCR, Red Cross, UNICEF, and World Watch in contributing to build the nation again. During the crisis only Red Cross acted as the contact conduit with the families. The camps organized by the UN provided some relief, though with immense hardships for the victims. The Interest perspective analyses the underlying interest, goals and objectives with an aim for integration or compromise between the parties to achieve a negotiated situation.

THE STRUGGLE FOR RESOURCES-OIL AND LAND AND THE STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE: The story told by them touches upon the fight for land and oil as one of the causes of this conflict which killed millions of innocent people and brought hardships to many more. The widespread poverty, miseries, diseases and poor living conditions reflect the inequitable distribution of resources leading to built in inequalities. The structural perspective looks at this aspect as the core concern with the goal to provide justice by adopting appropriate management techniques like redistribution or revolution.

CONCLUSION: The narrative made by the members of the Lost Boys of Sudan provided a clear perspective for the analysis of the origin, causes and consequences of the conflict and also suggested ways to resolve it. It also corroborate the view that story telling, narratives, truth telling etc can help in framing and reframing and open doors for engaging in communication and dialogue towards problem solving. The boys away from home can also meaningfully contribute in this endeavor is also clear from the discourse. The conflict can be primarily analyzed in terms of different perspectives simply by a narrative and it strengthens the utility of story telling.
I found the event interesting and rewarding because the first hand experience of the victims gave a thought provoking insight on the scenario in Sudan. Their words, language, gestures and expressions could tell much more than it would have been otherwise. It taught me on the importance of **listening** the pains and sufferings of others and **reflecting** upon them for deep appreciation and finding solutions by appropriate framing.

**REFERENCES:**


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