

Refugees Originating from South Sudan

Primary Languages: 60+ Indigenous Languages – largest include Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Acholi, Bari, Zande, Juba Arabic

*Many languages of South Sudan do not have a written alphabet

Primary Religions: Majority are Christian, some Muslims, animists, and other traditional folk religion practitioners

Major Holidays: Christian holidays (Christmas, Easter), Independence Day (July 9th), Martyr's Day (July 30th)

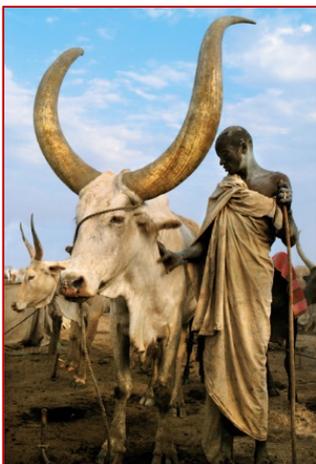
Traditional Mourning Period: 40 days at home

Historical Background

- South Sudan is currently the world's youngest country.
- Sudan, once the largest and one of the most geographically diverse states in Africa, split into two countries in July 2011 after the people of the south voted for independence.
- Decades of conflict had existed between the two regions for religious, economic, and political reasons.
- The north is majority Muslim while the south is majority Christian and Animist.
- When Sudan gained its independence from colonizers in 1956, it was with the understanding that the southerners would be able to participate fully in the political system. When the Arab Muslim government reneged on its promises, a mutiny began that led to two prolonged periods of conflict (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) in which perhaps 2.5 million people died - mostly civilians.
- Disputes still remain between South Sudan and Sudan such as sharing of the oil revenues, as an estimated 80% of the oil is in South Sudan but they lack the necessary infrastructure to monetize this resource.
- After gaining independence, civil war has since broken out in South Sudan between the largest tribes, the Dinka and Nuer. In 2018 alone, more than one million refugees from South Sudan fled to camps in Uganda seeking safety.



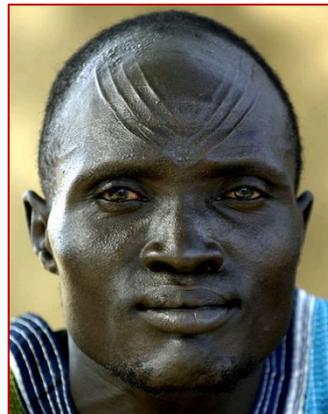
Size Comparison to U.S.A.



Cattle are at the center of many rural cultures



Some tribes practice coming of age rituals involving scarification that identifies them as a member



Stylish beadwork in traditional colors

Classroom Considerations

Education is mandatory for children between the ages of 6 and 13, yet less than 50% of children attend primary school and only 21% attend secondary school. Most schools are located in urban areas even though more than 80% of the population lives in rural areas. Many rural schools were destroyed as a result of the war, and also children sometimes do not go to school for fear of abduction. The country is experiencing a severe teacher shortage and many teachers are untrained. There is often not enough space in classrooms for learning, so children are taught outside. The educational situation in refugee camps is equally strained.



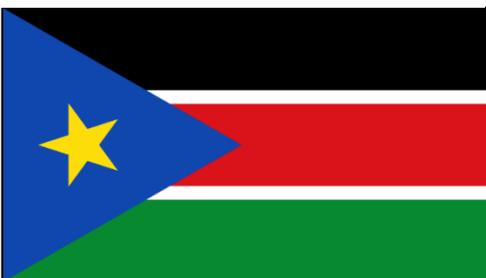
Traditional homes in rural areas



Snapshot of a refugee camp



Dancing at a celebration



Flag of South Sudan

Family Engagement

Stand to greet people. It is common to greet people with a handshake in South Sudan. People may pat each other on the shoulders before shaking hands and close friends or family may embrace. It is usually appropriate to address someone by their first name unless they are an elder, teacher, or religious leader. For superiors, use their title and surname. People from South Sudan typically maintain at least a foot of personal space, especially if the individual is of the opposite sex. Consistent eye contact is uncommon; instead people glance at the other's eyes periodically during conversation. Family members will likely have an interest in the child's education but may feel shy or intimidated because of a lack of schooling themselves. Advise guardians on ways they can support the student aside from academic tasks, such as supporting them in extracurricular activities. Many languages from South Sudan are only oral (75% of people in South Sudan are illiterate), so even if parents can speak English they may not have learned to read and write proficiently. There is no official language of Sudan or South Sudan, so there is no such language as "Sudanese" – if you need an interpreter for family meetings, please know which specific language to request. Also note that South Sudanese traditionally view time as event-based rather than clock-based, so schools should reiterate the importance of being "on time" by explaining how tardiness may put their child at a disadvantage or negatively impact other students and families.

Naming Standards

There are more than 60 South Sudanese tribes, each with their own culture, language, and dialects. More than half of the people are Nuer or Dinka, which are also the largest populations in Omaha. Many South Sudanese have been exposed to missionaries and carry a Christian first name with a tribal name for the second. The father's name follows, which is then followed by the grandfather's name, and so on. Many people can easily recount ten generations of paternal lineage because they carry those names themselves. Upon immigration to the U.S. it is custom to assign their first name followed by their father's name as their middle name and their grandfather's name as their last name.

Dinka Tribes

- Generally chosen from the names of ancestors and clan totems
- Children's names often reflect the circumstances of their birth.
- Upon attaining adulthood, men traditionally ceased to refer to themselves by their birth names. In its place they adopt 'ox-names', derived from the characteristics of their favorite cattle.

Nuer Tribes

- Both men or women may choose to be called by an 'ox-name'.
- "Nya-" meaning "daughter of" is a standard prefix for female names. Americans commonly mispronounce this as two syllables (Ny-uh) when it should be said as one. Think of the country Kenya; do we say Ke-ny-uh? No, it's Ke-nya. The same fluid sound applies here. "Gat-" meaning "son of", is a common prefix for male names.
- Children are commonly given names to mark historical events (ex: "Mac" meaning "fire or gun" given to a child born during war; "Nhial" meaning "rain").