

South sudan energy storage for resilience

South Sudan faces several challenges, including armed conflict, inter-ethnic tension, sociopolitical instability and a refugee crisis, as it attempts to navigate a revitalised peace agreement and a transition leading to elections later in 2024. Meanwhile, it also grapples with severe impacts of climate change, which in recent years has primarily been in the form of extreme flooding and dry spells. Natural disasters compound the existing challenges faced by the population, including food insecurity and conflict.

In 2021-2022, several areas of the country witnessed the most severe flooding in six decades, affecting an estimated one million people. Unity State was among the hardest-hit regions, where the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) had been working with communities for several years. The massive flooding ruined nearly 90% of agricultural and forest lands in Rubkona County, rendering many areas permanently waterlogged.

The ongoing war in Sudan led to a sudden influx of nearly 287,000 returnees and 39,000 Sudanese refugees, placing additional strain on the country's already stretched resources and infrastructure, amplifying the humanitarian crisis. The war also contributed to severing trade supply routes that come into South Sudan, driving up the prices of essential commodities by as much as 60%.

Climate- and conflict-related displacement disproportionately affects women who provide most of the agricultural productive labour. Women already face dangerous journeys to fetch firewood, wading through flooded water, and exposing themselves to threats of predators or even various forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including rape. Women are also exposed to risks of GBV when displaced in camp settings.

Floating gardens, a traditional practice from Mesoamerica, offers farmers in South Sudan a means to maintain or boost agricultural productivity during flooding. The approach involves weaving together aquatic plants, primarily the invasive water hyacinth, to create floating beds that rise and fall with water levels. Crops cultivated in these beds evade waterlogging and benefit from nutrient-rich decomposing matter. As water levels recede during the dry season, the beds are ploughed into the soil for winter crop cultivation.

The DRC developed a floating garden pilot plot, adapted for the South Sudanese context, through experimentation with various floating materials and transplantation techniques. Local communities were engaged in the process, and the traditional practice showed great potential. In 2024, the DRC is set to scale up the floating garden initiative by working with 100 flood-affected women to establish an additional 50 floating garden plots.

Another challenge stems from the fact that the pilot initiatives introduced were foreign to South Sudan and borrowed from other contexts. Integrating and adapting these ideas at community level took time; they needed to be tailored to the unique local conditions and cultures, as communities were accustomed to conventional



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agricultural practices.

Additionally, many of the trees have been fruit-bearing, which has proven to be highly effective in addressing household nutritional needs, surpassing the original expectations of the project. By offering an alternative food source, these trees have significantly improved household dietary intake. This initiative benefits over 10,250 households, with 200,000 seedlings produced for distribution and planting within woodlots.

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WASHINGTON, DC / ACCESSWIRE / May 13, 2024 / A little more than 10 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution declaring the decade from 2015-2024 as "The International Decade for People of African Descent."

At the start of that decade, South Sudanese business leader Akol Ayii was a few years into building the company he founded - Trinity Group, an investment firm focused on energy, construction, technology, agriculture and finance.

Ayii and Trinity's goals were simultaneously bold and simple: Establish unprecedented socio-economic resilience in South Sudan by stabilizing the supply of petroleum products in the region. Through Trinity Group's subsidiary, Trinity Energy, Ayii has spent the past decade delivering on that vision.

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