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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Food for the Hungry Receives UNICEF Grant to Expand Access to Schools in South Sudan

Education offers positive alternative for children

PHOENIX (March 26, 2015) – Food for the Hungry (FH) recently received a UNICEF grant in the amount of \$1,004,221, including a match of \$286,792 from the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), which will enable FH to provide access to life-saving, inclusive education to girls and boys affected by the crisis in South Sudan.

Last weekend, up to 250 child soldiers were released in South Sudan from an armed group, the Cobra Faction, as a result of a peace deal. War has raged since December 2013 and armed groups have successfully recruited thousands of child soldiers. In many cases, these children are easy prey, after being separated from their families or orphaned from the conflict that has killed over 50,000 people, displaced nearly two million people and sent over 275,000 people to flee to neighboring countries.

“The children of South Sudan have been subjected to experiences no child should ever know. The conflict has robbed these young people of their childhood,” said FH President and CEO Gary Edmonds, “and that is not OK.”

The grant will support the opening of nine semi-permanent schools and 22 early childhood development centers. FH staff will also distribute backpacks, school supplies and hygiene kits to thousands of children and will train teachers on specialized topics such as peace education, psycho-social support, HIV/AIDS awareness and disaster risk reduction.

“The challenges facing the schools in South Sudan is staggering,” said Edmonds. “Combatants have damaged schools or burned them to the ground. School supplies have been looted, schools occupied by displaced families or armed forces, and unpaid teachers have been forced to abandon their work.”

The schools that will be opened this year will provide classrooms, playground space, latrines with hand washing facilities and clean drinking water to 3,600 students. For children living in a crisis environment, these schools not only will serve as a place of learning, but also provide an oasis of hope and an alternative to anti-social behavior, early marriage and recruitment as child

soldiers. More information about the work FH is doing in South Sudan can be found at <https://fh.org/work/countries/south-sudan>.

About Food for the Hungry

Founded in 1971, [Food for the Hungry](https://www.foodforthehungry.org/) provides emergency relief and long-term development programs with operations in more than 20 countries to help the world's most vulnerable people. Learn more by visiting [fh.org](https://www.fh.org/). Social connections include [facebook.com/foodforthehungry](https://www.facebook.com/foodforthehungry) and twitter.com/food4thehungry.

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