

On the road to a new beginning

By Allen Poni

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New skills could go a long way in empowering people and Juac Lueth Apac, a DDR Participant is determined not to let go of that benefit. He joined the SPLA on 1st April, 1986 and was put in the intifada (uprising) battalion where they fought many battles in various places. By the time of his demobilisation in April 2010, he had risen to the rank of Sergeant Major. He was very proud to have been in the army, he also enjoyed driving and maintaining vehicles. "My main objective was to contribute to the liberation of South Sudan," Juac Lueth told UNDP's public Information Officer during an exclusive interview at Kaumbwa auto garage and driving school in Rumbek.

According to him, life in the army is different from civilian life, in the army, he used to follow orders from his commander without question, the commanding officer took care of them as a father takes care of his children, and he was always responsible for their food, medication and general well being. This is not the case with civilian life as one has to struggle to provide for his family. One is also responsible for their actions and always thinks critically before taking decision. It was difficult for him to adjust to the new situation.

After being demobilised, he left the army to join the DDR program which facilitated his transition in to civilian life. He underwent a soul searching process to decide which livelihood option to take on. He chose Auto mechanics as his economic integration option. According to him, this choice was meant to compliment on the driving skills he acquired during the period when he was in the army.

Juac has now attended and completed training at Kaumbwa auto garage and driving school, where GTZ, the lakes state implementing partner enrolled him for training in auto mechanics. He graduated on Friday 9th December 2010 with a certificate in mechanics. Out of the three ex-combatants that chose mechanics, he was the only one retained at the garage to continue practising his newly acquired skills.

This was because of his good behaviour and willingness to learn during the training. The garage manager Mr. Kaumbwa described him as a committed, hard working and delightful man.

While he has the opportunity to get practical and every day experience, Juac is also paid per day worked depending on the amount of work he is assigned. This enables him to provide for his family and also maintain himself while at work.

He hopes to open his own garage after receiving his start-up kit from GTZ. According to him there is a lot of demand for mechanical services and he plans to take advantage of the available market to provide mechanics services and also serve his people. "DDR programme is an opportunity for me to reach my career, the skills I have learnt are very important and I am



looking forward to using them to the maximum potential to improve my livelihood" said Juac. Juac is just one of the 599 ex-combatants who attended and completed training in various courses in lakes state

under the DDR programme. The DDR program is a Sudanese government owned and led programme that supports soldiers of SPLA/SAF who have been selected or may volunteer to become civilians.



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