



## Case Study August 2017

### WPT from Wau Shilluk to Aburoc – Josephina Edward Sedwa

Josephina Edward Sedwa is a 46-year old mother of seven from Malakal, South Sudan. After fighting broke out in Malakal in December 2015, Josephina was among thousands of people who fled to Wau Shilluk. In Wau Shilluk, over time, she was able to re-established her life and continue her work as a nurse.

Josephina first heard about Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) when they were working in Wau Shilluk and mobilized the community for Early Warning/Early Response (EWER) training. Josephina accepted to participate in the training with about 30 other community members. Josephina also later became a member of the Women's Protection Team (WPT) in Wau Shilluk before the fighting disrupted their activities.

At the start of the EWER training, NP explained the general concepts behind EWER and the objectives of the training. The community members were engaged with the training and the information because it had strong relevance to their situation. The training showed the community members how to consider the risks and/or threats that they might be facing and create an action plan together in case of certain scenarios or how to mitigate some potential risks. The participants were also encouraged to share their own knowledge of their specific situations and help their community to prepare for potential threats. Upon the completion of the training, the participants divided themselves into pairs and shared the most important points of the training with others who were not in attendance.



Josephina with NP protection officer, Wilson Rosmann Kur in Aburoc.

Josephina found that the most important point of the training was to take some time and make a plan. As an individual, one of the most important things you can do is prepare your quick-run bag. For the community as a whole, it is most important to create an action plan which includes ways to support the most vulnerable segments of the population should a threat reach the area.

In partnership with her fellow WPT members in Wau Shilluk, Josephina conducted an awareness raising campaign in the community to disseminate the information that they learned during EWER training in order to ensure that people were prepared in the event that there was conflict. The local authorities challenged the activities of the women as they accused them of creating alarm and panic in



the community. Despite this, the WPT persisted and at the same time engaged with the local authorities on the importance of being prepared, leading to an acceptance of the work of the WPT on EWER.

### **Preparation into Practice**

In February 2017, the day came when fighting reached Wau Shilluk. Josephina faced the challenge of putting her plan into action. She took her quick-run bag, and her important documents, which she always stored together, as well as her stock of food, water and cash. This allowed her to escape the fighting. Many in the community looked to her as a leader as they moved in groups together away from the fighting. Josephina proudly explains that as the group moved towards safety, many individuals were discussing the positive benefits of the information they learned from the EWER training.

Josephina says that many people who did not heed the information disseminated about EWER left many important things behind, got lost or were separated in the chaos of the violence or were not prepared for all of the potential risks. Yet, those who were prepared supported the others as best they could. She explains that everyone in the group had the same feeling of responsibility to share what they had with others. Those in Josephina's group took the escape route they planned and reached Kodok, a temporary safe-haven, in less than two days after fighting broke out in Wau Shilluk. She then continued on with many others to Aburoc, where she is now living.

### **What is next for Josephina?**

Josephina's harrowing experience has taught her and others in the Shilluk community to be united and proactive in the face of potential threats before they become real. For Josephina, there is no end in sight to the fighting in South Sudan, therefore she will continue her work as a nurse and encourage the community to prepare for the potential risks ahead. If there is one message she would like to spread to others is to always be prepared and careful to avoid as many risks as possible. Even the road to safety can present new dangers, so it is important to be vigilant at all times.