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**Yvonne:** This is "6 Minute English", I'm Yvonne Archer and thanks to William Kremer for joining me again today. Hello William!

**William:** Hello Yvonne.

**Yvonne:** William, what type of stories would you say we generally hear about the country Sudan?

**William:** Umm – not very positive stories. We hear a lot of stories about the war and about refugees in Darfur.

**Yvonne:** ...But not everyone in Sudan is involved the conflict or the war. So in today's programme, we hear about something different!

**William:** Yeah!

**Yvonne:** Yes. I met - during a British Council trip to Nigeria – a gentleman who's a volunteer at a very special school in Sudan

**William:** Right, so what's special about the school? Is it that it's open even though there's a war?

**Yvonne:** Well that's part of it, but as we'll find out, there's even more to it than that. But first, you'd better answer today's big question. William. Are you ready?

**William:** Yes.

**Yvonne:** Okay. What age was the world's oldest student when she got a college degree in the United States? Was she

a) 91

b) 95 or

c) 101

**William:** I'm going to go for one hundred and one.

**Yvonne:** I like that age too, but - we'll find out whether you're right or wrong later on! Now following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, some ex child soldiers – people who used to be soldiers when they were children - were disarmed. Their weapons were taken away so that they could become a part of society again. And this included going to school, something they hadn't done during the country's twenty-one years of war.

**William:** Gosh.

**Yvonne:** Hmm. Santo Khamis is a volunteer teacher at a primary school in Sudan which was specially set up in 2006 for ex-child soldiers. He describes his students as 'aggressive' and 'stubborn' when they first begin school. William, what does he mean by that?

**William:** Well, someone who is described as 'aggressive' behaves in an angry and forceful way – and a way that makes other people feel threatened, uncomfortable, maybe even afraid sometimes. So being 'aggressive' is a negative quality.

**Yvonne:** And 'stubborn'?

**William:** That's another negative quality – to be 'stubborn'. Someone who is described as 'stubborn', continues to do or believe exactly what they want to even if they're wrong. So a stubborn person can be really annoying and difficult to deal with because they refuse to change their mind.

**Yvonne:** Thanks William. Now as we hear from Santo, try to find out how long it takes before the students at his school begin to change.

### **SANTO KHAMIS**

You get them aggressive in the classes. There are times, (they) threaten teachers because they are used that military life where things are done by command. They will (be) so stubborn and very hard to approach but after a year, they change for the better and I'm proud of that.

**Yvonne:** The students at Santo's school, who are between 25 and 40 years old, sometimes threaten the teachers if they don't get what they want. But how long does it usually take before students change for the better?

**William:** Well, it only takes about a year – which isn't very long at all. So Santo is quite rightly proud of that.

**Yvonne:** Santo and the other teachers spend time talking with and questioning new students to help them. But they also talk about what students will learn, how going to school will help them become a part of society again and bring peace to Sudan. But they also talk about the great future students can have!

**William:** And what subjects do they learn at the school, Yvonne?

**Yvonne:** Santo told me that the students really enjoy history, geography and environmental studies. But learning languages, including English, really helps them to get jobs!

## SANTO KHAMIS

Most of them get employed within the organisations as security guards, others work in houses of the foreigners within the country as cleaners, others work as messengers in offices...

**William:** That's great. So do they go onto secondary schools?

**Yvonne:** Well sadly, no – not at the moment because they're too old to go to school with young people. But Santo and his friends and colleagues are trying to set up a special secondary school for them so that they can learn agriculture and become farmers. And of course, lots of them would like to go to university. So that's great, isn't it?

**William:** Yeah – it is. We wish them lots of luck with that and let's hope that they get lots of donations and more volunteers to help them start those new secondary schools.

**Yvonne:** Absolutely. But now, it's time for the answer to today's big question. William, what age was the world's oldest student when she got a college degree in the United States?

**William:** I said, maybe a hundred and one.

**Yvonne:** And you'd be really pushing it! She wasn't. She was ninety-five.

**William:** Aww...!

**Yvonne:** So - still a good age, isn't it?

**William:** A very good age, yeah.

**Yvonne:** But that's all we've got time for on today's "6 Minute English". Join BBC Learning English again for more!

**W/Y:** Goodbye!