

## In-Service Primary School Teacher Training Programmes in South Sudan



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**ABSTRACT:** During the war of independence, it was found that South Sudan had one of the worst educational indicators. About sixty percent of the teachers were untrained and many of them were primary school drop-outs. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan addressed this problem in various ways including pre-service, in-service teacher training and accelerated learning programmes. This paper investigates the in-service and accelerated learning teacher training programmes. Data was collected from various NGO reports, interviews with persons directly involved in primary teacher training in South Sudan and secondary literature. The in-service and accelerated teacher training programmes generally resulted in raising the level of education and training of the serving but untrained teachers in South Sudan.

### INTRODUCTION

In the Republic of South Sudan a teacher means a male or female person who regularly instructs learners in a school<sup>1</sup>. This definition is silent on whether the said teacher is trained or untrained. This is probably due to the fact that at the dawn of South Sudan's independence in 2005, many primary and secondary school teachers in the country had not completed secondary school education let alone receiving appropriate professional training<sup>2</sup>. Generally, by 2011, over 60% of the school teachers in South Sudan did not receive any training at all and even teachers who received training did not obtain a formal teaching license<sup>3</sup>. This is a result of the history of educational neglect of the then Southern Region of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan<sup>4</sup>.

To arrest this historical maltreatment leading to acute shortage of teachers, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan introduced in-service teacher training programmes throughout the country. These teacher training programmes included: Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), fast track, pre-service and In-service. The ALP and In-service programmes are aimed at training unqualified serving primary school teachers in order for them to obtain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).<sup>5</sup> In order to qualify for these training sessions, learners must show proficiency in English and some subject knowledge or take access courses. These trainings are sometimes called Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and often take place during school vacation.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of this study is to document the history of primary school teacher training in the Republic of South Sudan through the in-service training programme. Data for this paper was collected from many different sources. They include review of published and unpublished literature including reports of NGOs working in the education sector in South Sudan. Other data was collected through interviews of key informers from the South Sudan's Ministry of General Education and Instruction, University of Juba's School of Education staff, and NGO education partners. Due attention was paid to the validity through data checks and reliability of the data through cleansing and normalization.

### The In-Service Training

An in-service education or teacher training programme is an organized learning experience which is provided for a teacher after his or her appointment<sup>7</sup>. This is to enable serving teachers attain professional knowledge, skills, and competence in the teaching

<sup>1</sup> South Sudan. Ministry of Justice (2012). General Education Act, p6

<sup>2</sup> World Relief Aug 13, 2003

<sup>3</sup> JICA, Sept 2022 report, p1

<sup>4</sup> Winrock. Room to Learn South Sudan (2021). Lessons learned in addressing access to education in South Sudan. USAID, p13

<sup>5</sup> South Sudan. Ministry of General Education and Instruction (20 ). Part Time In-service QTS programmes CPD Implementation Guidance. AES policy,

<sup>6</sup> South Sudan. Ministry of General Education and Instruction (20 ). Part Time In-service QTS programmes CPD Implementation Guidance. AES policy,

<sup>7</sup> Alabi, FO and I Akindele (2014). Issues in in-service education provision for teachers for teachers in Nigeria: The way forward in this decade and beyond In: International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education 1(12), pp126

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profession<sup>8</sup>. It encompasses all forms of education and training given to a serving teacher. According to Osamwonyi,<sup>9</sup> in-service training generally includes:

1. Series of lectures to give participants as much information as possible in 1-3 days;
2. Conferences with opportunities to question others and discuss ideas presented;
3. Workshops – a moderate size group in which each person has a problem to solve in his or her field;
4. A committee meeting where five or more people work on a problem;
5. Staff meetings to enable them acquaint themselves with administrative procedures, subject or policies;
6. Professional readings with the aid of a study group;
7. Individual conferences – feeling of mutual understanding and support for teachers and supervisors;
8. Visits and demonstrations to observe a teaching technique;
9. Correspondence course – with or without physical contact between instructor and learners;
10. Exhibition or physical display of objects of interest.

In all fields, in-service trainings are carried out for the purposes of job satisfaction, career development, upgrading professional skills, and filling gaps of professional inadequacies<sup>10</sup>. In South Sudan in-service teacher training is carried out for upgrading the standards or qualifications of teachers with the aim of improving educational standards.

### **The In-Service Teacher Training in South Sudan**

The Global Forum on Education for All meeting in Dakar, Senegal, agreed that teacher supply and teacher quality are some of the most important constraints on education quality<sup>11</sup>. Many countries in Africa instituted in-service teacher training programmes as a means of reducing the number of unqualified teachers and improving the quality of teaching<sup>12</sup>. The aim of in-service teacher training is not therefore unique to the Republic of South Sudan. Although training models vary tremendously around the world, the main parameters remain the same - orientation to curriculum, improving teachers' knowledge and skills, upgrading professional qualification, and preparing teachers to new roles such as supervisors and inspectors<sup>13</sup>.

The education ladder in South Sudan is 8-4-4, eight years of primary, four of secondary and four of tertiary<sup>14</sup>. Primary school teachers are supposed to be people who had completed eight years of primary education, four years of secondary, and two years of tertiary education at a teacher training institute. As stated earlier, teachers in South Sudan came from various levels of education, starting from those who had not completed primary level of education to qualified primary school teachers who could teach in English effectively. Prior to independence, most trained teachers could only teach effectively in Arabic, the official language in the Republic of the Sudan. The in-service teacher training course is meant to upgrade teachers who had not reached qualified teacher status (QTS). As education cannot wait, in-service teacher training could only be carried out during vacations so as to enable teachers teach during term time.

The In-Service Teacher Training, according to the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) is a type of teacher training designed to cater for the current teachers in the education system. It is a blend of face to face, distance learning and self-study. The programmes developed 3 modules 1) learners handbook for one year divided into terms, one, two and three. 2) Community-based study - they do research and assignments 3) Tutors handbook for each subject – English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Religious Education, and Professional subjects. It addressed itself to various teachers' needs:

#### **(i) Teacher Training through Fast Track or Crush Programme**

As mentioned previously, one of the major challenges to education in South Sudan is lack of trained teachers<sup>15</sup>. During the war of independence, Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Secretariat of Education (SoE) and UNICEF developed teacher training materials for short or crush courses. It was seen as an alternative avenue for teachers to remain on the job and at the same time giving them additional knowledge and skills to enable them improve the quality of teaching<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Osamwonyi, EF (2016). In-service education of teachers: overview, problems and way forward. In: Journal of Education and Practice 7(26), p83

<sup>9</sup>Osamwonyi, EF (2016). In-service education of teachers: overview, problems and the way forward. In Journal of Education and Practice 7(26), p5

<sup>10</sup> Osamwonyi, EF (2016). In-service education of teachers: overview, problems and way forward. In: Journal of Education and Practice 7(26), pp83-87, p83

<sup>11</sup> Sifuna DN & JG Kaime (2007). In-service programme in Mathematics and Science on classroom interaction; a case study of primary and secondary schools in Kenya in: Africa Education Review 4(1), 105.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid p105

<sup>13</sup> Lynd, M (2005). Fast-Track teacher training: Models for consideration for Southern Sudan. American Institute of Research and the Sudan Basic Education Program, p16

<sup>14</sup> South Sudan. Ministry of Justice (2012). General Education Act, 2012, Chapter III, section 9, pp9-10

<sup>15</sup> WTI ( ) . Ensuring quality education for South Sudan; Challenges and responses. P1

<sup>16</sup> Alabi, FO and I Akindele (2014). Issues in in-service education provision for teachers for teachers in Nigeria: The way forward in this decade and beyond In: International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education 1(12), pp126-7

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This Fast Track training programme was implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), World Vision, World Relief, Wedveil, Japan International Development Agency (JICA), Episcopal Church of the Sudan (ECS) and Education Cannot Wait. World Vision (2019) with support from Education Cannot Wait trained or empowered 184 serving teachers through in-service training in Warrap state over a period of three years<sup>17</sup>. On its side, ECS trained 660 teachers and 112 head teachers between 2009 and 2010. These NGO training programmes did not lead to the issuing of recognizable certificates which is often frustrating to some of the trainees.

Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio trained and graduated 250 teachers through a programme lasting four months since 2013. In 2016 Wedveil trained 10 teachers in Aweil. In 2018 Wedveil worked with Aweil State Government where a one month intensive teacher training attracted 60 teachers. A second training in 2019 attracted 135 teachers. The Catholic Church of Ireland trained 77 teachers.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) focused on developing the professional skills of teachers by improving the quality of mathematics and science education (SMASESS)<sup>18</sup>. It started in 2009 and ended in 2022. It developed training models (2009 - 2013) for in-service training (IN-SET) for teachers<sup>19</sup>. The aim was to support primary school teachers across South Sudan through 9 national and 70 state trainers. Before it closed down, JICA was able to train 1,361 teachers through crush or fast track programme<sup>20</sup>. To ensure sustainability of SMASESS, the South Sudan Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) created a department of Science and Mathematics Development and Management (DMDS) in 2018 headed by a Director. The JICA programme faced problems that include limited time, inadequate facilities and classrooms, lack of labs and accommodation, lack of training centres in some states or counties, and limited content.

Although the NGO training programmes are important, they have problems of sustainability. Some of the NGOs provide scholastic materials, pay tuition, bedding and feeding to the trainees during training but problems of insufficient facilities, inadequate funding, shortage of training and learning materials, and lack of sporting or recreational facilities were persistent. As most NGOs work according to zones, there were problems of inadequate number of qualified teachers who could fit the various training programmes.

The NGO training lacked uniformity of the skills and knowledge being imparted. Time allocated for training was often limited and varied from one NGO to another. Trainees of different academic backgrounds were not segregated so that appropriate knowledge is imparted. There was also an issue with recognition of the training through the issue of certificates. Another problem with fast track or crush training programme was that the training was not sustainable. Most NGOs operate on yearly bases subject to availability of funds. It was not unique to note that an NGO which operated in one area was reported to have terminated its services due to funding shortfalls even a given training programme was completed.

### **Teacher Training in County Education Centres (CECs)**

In 2009 the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), Republic of South Sudan with funding from Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) planned to construct 20 County Education Centres (CECs), two (2) per state. Fourteen (14) CECs were built in 7 states. The cost of construction in Western Bahr el Gahzal, Unity and Upper Nile states was higher than estimated<sup>21</sup>. Construction work in these three states could not commence. Yet, of the ten (10) states of South Sudan, the states with least qualified primary teachers were 18% in Unity State and 22% in Upper Nile State.

Each of the fourteen CECs was equipped with 4 classrooms for an estimated 45 students with a small auditorium of 100 students, science laboratory, a computer lab, and a room for textbooks for learners, tutors and county education officials. There are also offices for the principals, their deputies plus a common room for tutors. A dining hall, dormitories for females and males and houses for 3 staff and a guest wing for 10 guests were part of the county education centres. There were solar and internet equipment. There were plans for the recruitments of workers such as guards, cleaners and cooks.

Untrained teachers were expected to report to their nearest County Education Centre (CEC) for a 10 -15 day training every vacation. When the researcher visited some of the CEC in the states where the cost of construction is relatively low, it was found that there were no facilities for physical education and agricultural practice. Lack of teacher training programmes and opportunities in the country has contributed to this problem<sup>22</sup>.

The training programmes in the CECs were meant to benefit teachers who have not completed secondary level of education. and teachers who have completed secondary. In each case they go for a 3 year and for 2 year training programmes. The University of Juba was charged with the moderation and certifications of the programme. Those from Arabic backgrounds were to go for a training that can enable them become proficient in English language.

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<sup>17</sup> World Vision (2019). report

<sup>18</sup> JICA, Sept 2022 report, p1

<sup>19</sup> JICA, Sept 2022 report, p1

<sup>20</sup> JICA, Sept 2022 report, p1

<sup>21</sup> Edward Kokole, Director General, Ministry of General Education and Instruction, South Sudan(20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023 ). Juba. Interview

<sup>22</sup> WTI ( ) . Ensuring quality education for South Sudan; Challenges and responses.p1

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While three states did not have County Education Centres, those that have been built are not used for the purposes for which they were constructed. Although a great idea, most of the CECs faced problem of lack of funding, insecurity or political inference arising from the location of the CECs. In Rumbek, the CEC was built at Aramwell, which is between two conflicting communities. War broke in the CEC and it was moved to Rumbek. CECs in Yirol and Pancong could not be used due to insecurity. Maiwut and Nasir training sessions are carried in a secondary or primary school respectively due to insecurity in the County Education Centres. In Kapoeta the CEC was built but the County Education Office decided to occupy it and now it is a primary school or secondary school which are being used for in-service teacher training.

Some of the on-going teacher training programmes are not being conducted in CECs but mobile training facilities. According to Otim Gama (31.03.23) the in-service teacher training programme is run by two NGOs, ADRA (Kapoeta, Chikdum, Nasir and Maiwut) and Jesuits Refugee Service (JRS) in (Maban) in Upper Nile and Eastern Equatoria states<sup>23</sup>. The course is run during vacations for three weeks and three times a year. University of Juba moderates, supervises the exams, marks and grades the exams, and issues certificates<sup>24</sup>. Teachers who are secondary school leavers are given in-service teacher training programme by four NGOs; Windle Trust International, Yei Teacher Training Institute, ACROSS, and ADRA. This training is also moderated by the University of Juba.

The County Education Centre (CEC) was resource for each county. Unfortunately they have not been put into use since they were built. The main problems were lack of funding and insecurity in the country. The Ministry of General Education and Instruction also trains teachers through a programme called Continuous Professional Development (CPD). It is for serving teachers who have no secondary school certificates. It is carried on between terms when schools have been closed. Potential candidates are those who do an English language proficiency test. It has 8 models and takes two years to complete. The Ministry of General Education and Instruction gives certificates to teachers who have completed this CPD course.

### The ALP Teacher Training Programme

Essentially, the alternative learning programme (ALP) targets children of 12 to 18 year who were enrolled in lower primary classes but dropped out or could not access education<sup>25</sup>. It uses the condensed form of the primary curriculum so learners can complete the primary cycle in four years instead of eight<sup>26</sup>. Alternative education system (AES) was also aimed at improving literacy levels and provide out of school population with a second chance to continue their education<sup>27</sup>. Learners join their appropriate grades or complete it in four years and take the South Sudan primary leaving exams and go to secondary school<sup>28</sup>. ALP centres are established and run in afternoon shift in primary schools for three hours a day with one teacher per level<sup>29</sup>.

In South Sudan there are many primary school teachers who have not completed primary level education. Those teachers are encouraged to join Alternative Education System where an adult does primary level in 4 years instead of 8 years and sit for PLE and enroll for in-service teacher training or proceed to secondary school through the accelerated secondary education level which they are expected to complete in two years; level five course covers secondary one and two, and level six courses cover secondary three and four. Teachers who have completed primary level of education enroll for 4 years for 10-15 more content in the first 2 years and the last two years is for the professional side of it.

In 2023 there are 51 centres across the country each with seven (7) tutors and a total 2,103 sat secondary school certificate<sup>30</sup>. Depending on their interests or grades, they go on to join NTTI or universities to do educational courses. They will have their salaries paid. Republic of South Sudan for teacher training through distance education programme: Teaching in schools: vacation they are set for training. This is a design to upgrade and professionalize the education sector. Among the NGOs dealing with ALP training, IBIS, working in South Sudan since 2007, has supported 45 ALP centres for 2,000 teacher<sup>31</sup>.

### Conclusion

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<sup>23</sup> Otim Gama (31stMar 2023).Head, Department of Education, University of Juba. Interview

<sup>24</sup> Otim Gama (31stMar 2023).Head, Department of Education, University of Juba. Interview

<sup>25</sup> Nicholson, S (Nov 2018). Evaluation of OXFAM's accelerated education programme in greater Ganyiel, South Sudan against global best practices, p6

<sup>26</sup> Nicholson, S (Nov 2018). Evaluation of OXFAM's accelerated education programme in greater Ganyiel, South Sudan against global best practices, p6

<sup>27</sup> South Sudan Education Study Team (2018). Report on the education in the Republic of South Sudan, p2

<sup>28</sup> Nicholson, S (Nov 2018). Evaluation of OXFAM's accelerated education programme in greater Ganyiel, South Sudan against global best practices, p6

<sup>29</sup> Nicholson, S (Nov 2018). Evaluation of OXFAM's accelerated education programme in greater Ganyiel, South Sudan against global best practices, p6

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Dem, Director General, Ministry of General Education and Instruction (20/12/2023). Juba. Interview

<sup>31</sup> Nicholson, S (Nov 2018). Evaluation of OXFAM's accelerated education programme in greater Ganyiel, South Sudan against global best practices, p1

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The Republic of South Sudan attained independence on July 9<sup>th</sup> 2011. At the dawn of independence of South Sudan in 2011, there were very few teachers or teachers who could properly teach in English, the language of instruction in South Sudan. This was one of the causes of many wars independence.

The shortage of trained teachers is the epitome of this neglect. This makes the quality of education being provided to children in South Sudan to be generally referred to as poor<sup>32</sup>. In order to address this shortage and improve the quality of teaching and learning, in-service teacher training became the best alternatives. This can enable the government run schools as well as address the acute shortage of teachers, and increase the provision of qualified teacher. After all, a good teacher needs appropriate competence, sound mastery of the subject matter, teaching skills and disposition, and ability to translate theory into practice<sup>33</sup>.

Perhaps to address the issue of funding, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction needs to liberalize the funding mechanisms. Individual teachers and states should be able to fund the training of teachers using funds from the oil revenue. The issue of quality control and certification should continue to rest in the hands of the University of Juba, as a teacher training institution of good reputation. These will raise numbers trained each year and yet maintain quality. In-service training is a concern of many countries as they aim to improve the quality of education<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Riak, P (7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010). Inception Report for pre-service training of primary schools teachers and capacity building of three ational teachers' training institutes (NTTIs). Project No: ERP/SSS/04/2010.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad, R (Dec 2017). An assessment of science technology and mathematics (STM) teachers' involvement in professional activities in Sokoto state, Nigeria In: International Journal of Science and Engineering Institution 6(71), pp157

<sup>34</sup> Osamwonyi, EF (2016). In-service education of teachers: overview, problems and way forward. In: Journal of Education and Practice 7(26), pp83-87, p84

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### Interview

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- 2) Otim Gama (31stMar 2023).Head, Department of Education, University of Juba. Interview
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