

Mylee Vocu  
West Central Area Secondary School  
Barrett, Minnesota, United States of America  
South Sudan, Education

## **South Sudan: Friendships Across The World For A Future Successful Education**

South Sudan has always been known for its lush diversity in terrain, including everything from savannas to swamplands. Their biosphere is thriving, and there are things there that can grow like nowhere else on earth. South Sudan is located on the northeastern side of Africa, (Britannica 2022) which is ironic because it has South in the name. This beautiful country gained its independence in 2011, from Sudan and South Sudan is listed as the “newest” country in the world. It struggles with hunger-related issues and government, but they struggle severely in the area of education and learning opportunities ( The World Factbook, 2022). On average, they have over 5 people in the small, thatched-roof huts, and most of them aren’t literate because of the limited education system, and cultural customs.

Since South Sudan gained independence from Sudan, religious diversity has become less of an issue. Sudan and South Sudan fought over religious choices if they are Muslim, Christian, or animist. Animism is a huge belief in spirit, creatures, sacrifices, and even the dead. They appreciate nature tremendously and look at everything in a way most people don’t (Britannica, 2022). Not only did they become a mostly Christian country but they switched Arabic to English as the language of instruction.

In 2011, when South Sudan got a new government and went into multiple wars, many people missed out on educational opportunities because of warfare and displacement. Millions of South Sudanese people sought refuge in neighboring countries because South Sudan has instability, lack of infrastructure, and social services. Sudanese have also fled to the borders of South Sudan to Sudan for refugee camps because of the multiple civil wars going on at this time. The civil wars affected the lack of people being literate, but this problem of no educational opportunities for so many ages can put a toll on people knowing the correct information on where, how, and if you can even grow fresh and healthy food. This civil war recovery problem has lasted over a decade, the people of South Sudan had futures stolen from them and they have all missed out on so much in their lives that it is very hard to recover when you have slim to nothing. South Sudan isn’t the only country hit by this problem, the lack of education or resources because of wars with other countries affects so many countries in Africa. Either way, they’re all dealing with it in some sort of way, countries like Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Central Africa, Ethiopia and so much more that could use a better system (Info Corpse, 2022).

Less than a third of the country’s population is literate (it is even less for women.) Over 70 percent of children are out of school (Unicef, 2022), which is putting their future and everyone around them at high risk. Some aren’t able to spend time out of their days going to regular classes because of things that can involve their families or cultural customs. Half of the country lives under the poverty line, and the other half is just barely over. Not only are students struggling but the teachers are as well, because education is a huge problem, but if you work together on it and do it right it can make a huge impact on the rest of their lives. South Sudan is very low in resources, not only just education but as well as getting food, getting protective living conditions, farming land, and getting out of poverty. There is a lot that we could do for them, but right now it is education, getting not only children into the education systems but teenagers,

younger adults, and even adults. A child born to an educated mother has a 50 percent higher survival rate, and the high risk of child marriage, trafficking, early pregnancy, and other cultural customs plummet for women in school (Unicef, 2022).

South Sudan is still recovering from all of these wars and attacks that they dealt with years ago, their people are still mourning their losses and wondering when they will get a miracle. Organizations like Unicef and GESP (General Education Strategic Plan) are working so hard on printing out textbooks for everyone from daycare to the end of secondary schooling, they are giving training to teachers, building and developing new ways to get children back into the education system. From October 2021 to today they have distributed over 5 million textbooks and over 600 training materials to newly found teachers and leaders, and there have been over twenty thousand teachers that have completed orientation because of these organizations (GESP, 2018). There are so many other organizations like these two but there is a major one that is sponsoring most of them, it's the Global Partnership of Education.

The GPE foundation has been a partner with South Sudan since they gained their independence, but a few years later when civil wars broke out they had to shut down operations because the program needed a new blueprint of the necessities and options they were able to provide to Sudanese citizens after this conflict is put to an end. GPE supports governments and councils to transform their education systems by using the strength of partnering and supporting other organizations all over the world. They are the largest funding organization that is mainly dedicated to transforming the education systems from everything from the best income for education systems to the lowest (GPE, 2022). They are working on giving every boy and girl an opportunity to have a light at the end of their tunnel. To have hopes, opportunities, and a look at different things in life. Not only can getting organizations and programs like this make a difference in the country's literacy percentage but it can change their entire lives, they have options to leave the country and start a new life, to learn new techniques for farming or weaving, they can even increase their lifespan just by being literate.

GPE has been in this game for nearly 2 decades, they have principles for their success. They recite 8 principles for every partnership they contract: Education as a public good, a human right, and an enabler of others. Focusing our resources on securing learning, equity, and inclusion for the most marginalized children and youth, including those affected by fragility and conflict. Achieving gender equality. Enabling inclusive, evidence-based policy dialogue that engages national governments, donors, civil society, teachers, philanthropy, and the private sector. Providing support that promotes country ownership and nationally identified priorities, and is linked to country performance and achieving improved equity learning. Improving development effectiveness by harmonizing and aligning aid to country systems. Promoting mutual accountability and transparency across the partnership. Acting on our belief that inclusive partnership is the most effective means of achieving development results. These organizations have shown that the education system is very complex and hard to manage (GPE, 2022). These principles have shown the world what GPE and the many other organizations and programs have done for many countries, they have shown that they are fighting for education like no one else has, and they believe that getting children to adults the opportunity to a better education is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing.

There are so many people trying to do things for South Sudan and other countries. What is needed is someone that just focuses on South Sudan, someone who stands with them alone. An organization could be focused on South Sudan's education system, working on building

more schools and getting more people into the schools. Most parents like to marry women off as soon as they get the chance and exchange it for a woman's dowry. Some of these women having child marriages would likely love to see what they could do with their life, not what their parents could make of it. Some of them would love to be educated, maybe get a degree in a profession they are passionate about, and see where that could get them. They could leave the country and travel or become one of the most wealthy and literate people in their country. There's so much someone could do with education than not having one.

One major roadblock to building the schools in South Sudan is the funding and how organizations will get enough money to get not only the schools but everything to fill the schools with. One potential source would be Non-government Organizations (NGOs). NGOs typically focus on helping groups, organizations, and different institutions that work on different social missions that stray away from any type of government. NGOs are everywhere in the world doing different things in different countries (NGO, 2022), they're called different things, and some organizations that are doing things for a certain country may not stand in that neighboring country, you just have to find what is good for you and your organization. Once the organization applies and if they can get an NGO, they would need to find the right people that are passionate about this just as much as they are. Look at the country's rules and regulations, then get to work. The schools would have to be built to fit the habitat of South Sudan, to give a comfortable setting for the kids, to have a desk to write on, a place to put all of their things, and the correct tools and supplies that will help them towards success, all of which will combine to give them a solid education.

Now that we have our school, we're going to have to talk about tools and supplies that are accessible for every kid throughout the day. The first thought would be textbooks, regular, old fashion textbooks. But how many schools do you see or hear about still using these thick and heavy textbooks? Slim to none, not only are they just terrible to lug around but they are expensive. These could easily cost around 100 U.S. Dollars a piece, with NGO's on a strict budget and having kids wanting to enjoy their school day, textbooks just have to be out of the picture. The next thought would be Wifi and mobile devices, but giving a computer to each kid would be risky. It would be expensive, it could break or get damaged and around 12-20% of the country has mobile ownership (Media Landscape, 2022) which defeats the purpose of having a computer for school if you're not able to use it any other place other than school.

So now we have to find something that could be useful to everyone, Wifi or not. One incredible and very affordable option for making learning mobile is called a Rocketbook. The Rocketbook is completely recyclable plastic and not made out of any trees or anything, it is based on an oil-based ink that can be written on this slippery kind of feeling paper that can then be erased with some cleaner and the microfiber towel they give to you as well as the pen. It can be used like any normal notebook, or you can circle a category of what you have written on your paper and scan a QR code that immediately puts your work and what you've written into a cloud or drive of some sort. It can range anywhere from 16 to 35 U.S. dollars a piece (Rocketbook, 2022), which is a lot cheaper than any textbook any school could get. Then, each school could be the source of Wifi and students could upload all their work right there at school. And along with the rocket book what if instead we don't give each student a computer but have school computers that are only able to be used on school grounds. Computers that are open to everyone, computers that could be hooked up to an account that could put the Rocketbook work on just in case it is lost or damaged of some sort. This is not only a cheaper option but a great alternative to every student getting computers and giant textbooks.

The main component that a school requires is the teacher. A teacher should make your learning fun and give valuable information that will carry on with you as you grow. Sometimes they're going to make life a whole lot easier and then out of nowhere it's going to be rough. The kids should not stay in one classroom all day with one teacher, there should be different teachers for certain subjects just like in any other school. They will be learning all the major subjects one needs to pursue college or get a job somewhere. Having classes a few times a week would be easier for the kids and the parents, like probably 3 or 4 days instead of all 5. This is a great option to have their kids get an education, so eventually, in the future, they can help with more things that need to be done. As they could learn about new ways to build their houses, have better ways to farm, and have a stronger success rate on the goods they grow, even teach and tell their parents and family about these new things they are learning.

This is a major problem, with a viable solution. A solution that can affect everything from eating and getting more resources to just simply living life longer. I believe that everyone gets a choice and if we can all stick to this and help one another out it will work, it could flourish like a blossom on a peach tree. The education system is made for creating solid foundations for our futures, and everyone in the world should deserve a quality education. It's a magical place full of many things besides textbooks. They can give you life lessons that can show you new friendships, and new shortcuts in certain subjects. You can come up with a blueprint for your future and make it possible with an education. Everything changes.

## Bibliography

Eperit D. (Retrieved 2022) Media Landscapes South Sudan  
<https://medialandscapes.org/country/south-sudan/telecommunications/mobile-ownership#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20International%20Telecommunication,have%20access%20to%20mobile%20communication.>

Get Rocketbook (Retrieved 2022) Rocketbook- About Us  
<https://getrocketbook.com/pages/about-rocketbook>

Global Partnership (Retrieved 2022) The General Education Strategic Plan  
[https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/general\\_education\\_strategic\\_plan\\_south\\_sudan\\_2017-2022.pdf?VersionId=BIHkjMAdxnGt9uOCdvjcP7uxVPyB\\_ky7](https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/general_education_strategic_plan_south_sudan_2017-2022.pdf?VersionId=BIHkjMAdxnGt9uOCdvjcP7uxVPyB_ky7)

Info Corpse (2021) Top 10 Countries with Worst Education System in the World  
<https://infocorpse.com/countries-with-worst-education-system/>

Little N. and Kalyoncu K. (Retrieved 2022) University of Buffalo Materials and Constructability: Questions of Availability, and Appropriations  
<https://www.buffalo.edu/globalhealthequity/global-projects/refugeehealthandwellbeing/uganda/architecture-students-explore-housing-solutions-for-refugees-in-.host.html/content/shared/www/globalhealthequity/research-and-development/refugee-health-and-well-being-uganda/evaluating-solutions/outlining-the-challenges/over-90--of-houses-in-south-sudan-are-grass-thatched--mud-huts-.detail.html>

NGO Source (Retrieved 2022) What is an NGO?  
<https://www.ngosource.org/what-is-an-ngo#:~:text=NGO%20stands%20for%20non%2Dgovernmental.all%20parts%20of%20the%20world.>

Psychology Discussion (Retrieved 2022) Education for Children: 3 Major Components.  
<https://www.psychologydiscussion.net/child-development/education-for-children-3-major-components/1155>

Psychology Discussion (Retrieved 2022) Education for Children: 3 Major Components.  
<https://www.psychologydiscussion.net/child-development/education-for-children-3-major-components/1155>

Rabbani F. (2020) GPE Education in time of conflict: South Sudan pursues quality education as peace moves forward.  
<https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/education-time-conflict-south-sudan-pursues-quality-education-peace-moves-forward>

Spaulding J.(2011) Britannica South Sudan <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan>

Spaulding J. (2011) Britannica Government and Society  
<https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan/Government-and-society>

Unicef South Sudan (Retrieved 2022) Education in South Sudan Briefing Note.  
[https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/media/9296/file/Education%20Briefing%20Note\\_2021%20Q4.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/media/9296/file/Education%20Briefing%20Note_2021%20Q4.pdf)

Unicef South Sudan (Retrieved 2022) Education  
<https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/what-we-do/education>

World Fact Book (Retrieved 2022) South Sudan  
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/#economy>

Wu R. (2021) Wiki How How to Register an NGO: 14 steps  
<https://www.wikihow.com/Register-an-NGO#:~:text=To%20register%20as%20an%20NGO,your%20country's%20rules%20and%20regulations.>