

CHANGE STORIES: MORE QUALIFIED TEACHERS FOR SOUTH SUDAN



Samson Bruzii, 15-year-old student, Tambua Nursery and Primary School, Yambio, South Sudan

“When the teachers from Solidarity Teachers Training College come to teach us, I am so happy because I know that I will get a good chance to learn a lot of things. They are always in class and on time. They really know how to teach well.”



Tambua Nursery and Primary School, Wau

Samson’s school, Tambua Nursery and Primary School in Yambio, South Sudan, has more than 600 students. Some of them, who are hardly two years old and not yet registered at the school, follow their brother or sister to school - eager to be in class where they can sing nursery rhymes and chant so as to learn ABCD.

Samson stands out in his class as he is quite outspoken and is only mildly shy. He is in Primary 8, the final class in which he will have to do a final national exam that will allow him to go to secondary school. “I am not sure how I will perform in the national exam because the teachers in the school are not enough so not much learning is going on.” There are not enough primary school teachers and a majority of the ones teaching are untrained high school graduates, some of who do not have a good understanding of the subjects that they teach; others find it difficult to manage the classrooms and a majority are highly demotivated. “Right now, we don’t have a teacher and even yesterday, we only had only one lesson in a whole day because there is only

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one teacher who could teach us.” Samson and his classmates end up having to just sit in class and read their books. For some, their minds seem to have wandered far away while others are irritated by the stream of young ones constantly peeping in the classroom windows and make a lot of noise as they constantly hassle each other.

During the teacher-training course, the teacher trainees are given the chance to practice their teaching skills at local primary schools while being monitored by their tutors.

“When the teachers from Solidarity Teachers Training College come to teach us, I am so happy because I know that I will get a good chance to learn a lot of things. They are always in class and on time. They really know how to teach well. They teach in a way that I can easily understand and remember what I have been taught. When they left, I cried. I cried real tears. I felt very bad because I had been enjoying classes when they were here.”

All of Samson’s classmates agreed in unison that they really enjoyed being taught by the teachers from Solidarity Teachers Training College and look forward to being taught by them again. In the meantime, when the teacher-trainees graduate, they go back to their communities all over South Sudan and are tasked with the challenge of bringing new and much needed changes to their communities. It is a step-by-step process towards re-educating the children of South Sudan.

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE the trained teachers are going out into their respective communities, that either lack teachers or have untrained teachers - a situation which has been made worse due to the many years of civil war, to competently and professionally give knowledge to their students and therefore raising the level of education in South Sudan, which is crucial for South Sudan’s future.

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Teacher Simon Gaaniko Bendere, Assistant Head Teacher, Makpandu Primary School in Makpandu, Western Equatoria, South Sudan

"In the future, if this training trend continues, South Sudan will have many literate people and this is important for development because we will have a greater number of trained personnel in different fields. If quality education is not made available, then this country will sink into even lower living standards."



Simon and other STTC graduates, all teachers at Makpandu Primary School, Makpandu, South Sudan

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Teacher Simon Gaaniko Bendere is the Assistant head teacher of Makpandu Primary School that has over 1,000 pupils. He is one of 7 graduates of Solidarity Teachers Training College at the school. The school has a total of 15 teachers.

Simon is very keen on keeping time and prefers to have meetings by appointment, as he does not want to keep his students waiting. He has also ensured that the activities and lessons at the school are well planned to make maximum use to time and to ensure that the teachers teach effectively.



Simon in action at Makpandu Primary School, Makpandu, South Sudan

“I come from Ezo, approximately 193 km from Makpandu. It was there that an announcement was made in church about training that was being offered by Solidarity for primary school teachers. We have had many years of war in South Sudan and so many teachers are not trained. Most qualified teachers come from Uganda. I had always felt and seen the need for South Sudanese teachers to be trained. I personally, before my training, was not teaching well at all! I did not have the ability to properly impart knowledge to my students. I didn’t know about lesson planning, scheming, how to do student reports and so much more.”

“At Solidarity Teachers Training College, I had a really good experience. Most importantly, I learned about school administration – planning and supervising school activities, discipline, supervising teachers and implementation of the South Sudan school syllabus. This knowledge is really helping me in my current role.”

“I was also able to brush-up on my computer skills and again, this knowledge is really proving to be important in my current work life.”



Makpandu Primary School, Makpandu, South Sudan

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As a teacher, Simon faces many challenges but has learned to deal with them including lack of textbooks especially for the upper classes and a high student to teacher ratio per class whereby a teacher can have more than 65 pupils in a single class which makes it difficult to handle the class.



"I am grateful that I am now a qualified teacher and this is an advantage for the government as they can now have qualified teachers in the school, which is slowly raising the quality of education in our country. On the other hand, my family has also benefitted because I now earn a better income."

Simon and his students at Makpandu Primary School, Makpandu, South Sudan

"In the future, if this training trend continues, South Sudan will have many literate people and this is important for development because we will have a greater number of trained personnel in different fields. If quality education is not made available, then this country will sink into even lower living standards."

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE through the training of teachers, the number of qualified teachers available to teach has been increased. The teachers being trained come to the training college from all over South Sudan and when they can go back to their various communities, they are helping to improve the current education standards by not only teaching the pupils better but also by assisting non-qualified teachers to improve their skills.

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Christine Baptist, Parent, Sunrise Nursery and Primary School, Yambio, South Sudan

(From left, 12 year old Christine, the mother/parent also Christine, 16 year old Evaresto and 10 year old Kubako)

"My children hope to be 'important' people in the future: governors, presidents, doctors... because the young generation will take over the country in the near future and if they are well educated they will fight to end poverty in South Sudan...and this can only happen when qualified teachers teach them."

Christine Baptist has enrolled all her three children, 2 boys and a girl at Sunrise Nursery and Primary School in Yambio, a community school of 300 students set up by parents within her community. The parents ensure that the teachers, majority of who are high school graduates, are paid.



Sunrise Nursery and Primary School, Yambio, South Sudan



Christine Baptist and her children at Sunrise Nursery and Primary School, Yambio, South Sudan

"At home, my children would talk about the teachers that come from Solidarity College. They like how those teachers use pictures to teach them. This is really good because when the children look at those pictures and talk to their teachers about what they see, they understand the subjects much better."

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Untrained teachers mainly use the teacher-centred method of training whereby there is hardly any or no interaction with their students. In addition to that, not many teachers are creative in their teaching. They mainly arrive in the classes, write a lot of notes on the blackboards and walk out of the class for the students to write in their notes without much interaction with the students.



Sr. Jacinta assisting a level 1 student at Solidarity Teachers Training college, Yambio, South Sudan

Teachers at Solidarity Teacher Training College are taught to use a learner-centred method of teaching whereby interaction with students is highly encouraged to promote the students to be proactive and participate in the learning process. The teachers are taught how to be creative using items within their environment to make tools that are useful to help the students understand better.

“My children hope to be ‘important’ people in the future: governors, presidents, doctors... because the young generation will take over the country in the near future and if they are well educated they will fight to end poverty in South Sudan...and this can only happen when qualified teachers teach them.”

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE there is a shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred method of teaching, which is especially important to cater for the different learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students and groups of students. Additionally, students learn by doing!

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Innocent Abdalla, English teacher and graduate of Solidarity Teachers Training College (STTC) at the same college

Innocent Abdalla is a graduate of Solidarity Teachers Training College (STTC) and is currently an English teacher for the bridging course offered to non-English speaking students.

When he was young, Innocent used to admire his father who teaches Arabic and has always dreamed of being a teacher like him. "Since I was in Primary 5, I used to imitate my father. I would teach my brothers and sisters under a tree at home. I would teach them ABCD and numbers and they would understand me well." After finishing secondary school, Innocent started teaching English as a volunteer in Ezo, a town on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Teacher Abdalla assisting a student at Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

He joined STTC in 2014. "Being at the college was a very good experience that I will never forget. The administration welcomed me so well and I knew right from the beginning that it would be a good learning environment. I met people who came from all over South Sudan, from different ethnicities. After graduation, when I meet an STTC graduate in any location, I feel as if I have met a brother. I can go anywhere and we can live as brothers and sisters. Even now, I avoid friction with my neighbours and workmates. If I have a problem with someone, I know that as human beings we are not perfect and the best way is to handle the problem in a civilised way that maintains peace, before it

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becomes a bigger problem. This kind of socialization will bring peace and development to South Sudan.”

Innocent graduated in June 2016. He taught at St. Mary’s School in Yambio for 6 months and then at a school in Tambura town where he was the only qualified teacher.

After Tambura, he is now teaching at STTC in the English bridging class for students originating from Arabic-speaking regions of South Sudan, which is necessary as the course is offered only in English. This ensures that opportunity is also given to non-English speakers and therefore catering for all of South Sudan.



Teacher Abdalla assisting a student at Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

“When I am teaching English at the college, I can use the same teaching methods that I was taught with. A good example is a ‘talking class’ whereby the walls *talk* to you because they have many illustrations, pictures and words on them. I use these to help my students understand English better.”



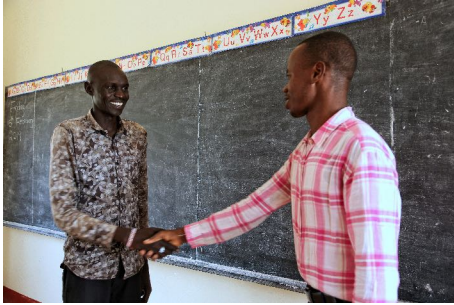
A class at Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

“Teaching at STTC has been a good and interesting experience for me. Teaching adults is quite different from teaching children. The younger ones

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mostly understand things faster and they are less shy. How you handle an adult is quite different from how you handle a child.”



Teacher Abdalla and his student doing role-play in an English bridging class

“I really thank Solidarity for bringing me up from the low level that I was. They really went out of their way to help me even when I had a problem at home after the war broke out and I had been stuck in Ezo with completely no way out. I felt motherly love from St. Margaret and her team. They showed me kindness, love and support. Now, I have been enabled to give hope to others in the same way that STTC have given me hope for my life.”

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE an opportunity is also given to individuals from Arabic-speaking regions through the bridging English course before the actual teacher training can begin. The impact is therefore even greater in terms of availability of qualified South Sudanese teachers who are familiar with the regions that they will finally be sent to in terms of language, cultural norms etc, all which is important for a country that has been in a political crisis for a long period of time and where development is non-existent or very minimal in most of South Sudan. Furthermore, the graduates through interaction with people from different communities or nationalities at the college are better able to teach in other parts of South Sudan.

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Josephine Kuol, 22 years old, current student at Solidarity Training Teachers College, Yambio, South Sudan

Soft spoken Josephine Kuol, 22 years old, is currently a student at Solidarity Training Teachers College, Yambio, South Sudan, in level 3, her final year at the college. She comes from Abyei from a family of 5 girls and she is the second born.

She is currently the head girl whose roles include enforcing lights out in the girls' dormitories and representing the female students. She comes from Abyei, a town currently disputed by Sudan and South Sudan.

"In Abyei, most of the girls get pregnant and married very early and end up dropping out of primary school. On the other hand, majority of the teachers are male and most of the female teachers come from Uganda. Not many girls want to become teachers. I have always wanted to be a teacher. My sister, who graduated from this college, really encouraged me. Right now she is a teacher back home in Abyei and is the one financially supporting me."



Josephine and her friends at Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

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A "talking classroom" with pictures and flash cards on the walls

Josephine was determined to train as a teacher at Solidarity Teachers Training College (STTC) in Yambio despite the fact that she only understood Arabic. Upon arrival at the college, she first had to study English. "When I arrived here, I was unable to speak any English because I had done my primary and secondary schooling in Arabic. The college administration encouraged us to be confident about our abilities. The debates are the best because you end up learning a lot of English."



Josephine at Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

"I used to be even shyer than I am now but my self-confidence has really grown. How the tutors teach has really contributed to this because you can go to them and ask them to teach you something until you understand it well. You can borrow many different kinds of books from the library. The tutors also use good examples for teaching that can be found in our environment."

"When I graduate, I hope to go back home to Abyei and hopefully I can be able to help other unqualified teachers and more importantly, help to reduce the number of girls that are getting pregnant and married early and then end up dropping out of school."

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE according to the Strategic National Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Sudan, one of the ways to bring about change in the fight against child marriage is by ensuring access to education and promoting girls' empowerment. Additionally, through the training, teachers in the Arabic-speaking areas will be able to use English as the language of instruction.

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Nidal Yusuf, 20 years old from Nuba Mountains, current student at Solidarity Teachers Training College in Yambio

Nidal Yusuf, 20 years old is from the Nuba Mountains. At the college, she seems to be everywhere, either studying or busy talking to the many friends she seems to have made. She is currently in Level 1. She is constantly smiling and keen to do her best in class.

“My father passed away when I was only 8 years old and so my mother has been supporting my brother, sister and I as much as she can through primary and secondary school. She is only a small farmer.”

Due to insecurity and lack of proper schools, Nidal and her older brother had left the Nuba Mountains for Yei, a city in South Sudan's southwest, close to the Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo borders. Again, due to fighting, she and her brother had to flee Yei for Juba, the capital city of South Sudan. While in Juba, her brother helped her to apply for Solidarity Training Teachers College, which she joined after passing an entry exam. While at the school, her brother passed away leaving her on her own, yet he used to support her financially for her basic needs. She worries a lot about her situation and the fact that she will not be able buy such things as sanitary pads, soap and other things she needs. “The girls have been really good to me here at school. So far, they share their lotion, sanitary towels and other things we also sit together and share our



Nidal in her classroom at Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

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problems. Another thing that has helped me to calm down was the trauma healing workshop where we were taught how to deal with stress, headaches, lack of concentration and such things. For example, if I am stressed and need to concentrate on reading, I used the head tapping technique, which calms me down after some time plus I am also able to remember things much easier. It really works for me.”



Nidal at the college

“At STTC, I have learned so much that I never imagined that I would ever learn for example the use of teaching aids when teaching in class; how to counsel anyone who is having trouble; how to teach by interacting with students and making the class lively instead of just giving them notes on the chalkboard and I also met people from all over South Sudan. Now, we have the opportunity to make our lives better than that of our ancestors and we will be able to teach the younger generations so that their lives are much better than ours.”

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE the Solidarity Teachers Training College has provided a learning environment where people from all over South Sudan can interact positively, an aspect that is important for promoting peace in South Sudan. Armed actors have forcibly recruited many youth and many have also had traumatic experiences. Through the trauma healing workshops, students get help with dealing with trauma, which then gives them a chance to concentrate on their studies, graduate and go back to their homes where they can be productive members of society.

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John Dau, 30 years old, from Abyei, current student, Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

"I used to believe in corporal punishment but in STTC I learned that the best solution in disciplining is through positive reinforcement. We used to use what was almost similar to military punishment where a child would be sent outside to kneel with their hands up in the air. After all, harsh punishment affects the children psychologically and they may end up violent, unforgiving and traumatised plus their choice of problem resolution may be through the use of force. They could end up dropping out of school if they develop a fear of being in school, as they would associate it with caning. The best is to promote positive reinforcement in the form of praise, which can be quite effective in changing their behaviour. Teachers are role models and peace builders – they are the ones who understand the learners and are the ones who are at the grassroots, in the communities, and are able to bring change through education."

John Dau, 30 years old, from Abyei, a violently contested oil-rich land on the border between Sudan and South Sudan. He is married and has 4 children.

He stands taller than his college-mates and his thoughtful, decisive mannerism stands out. He is currently in Level 4, the last level before he graduates from Solidarity Teachers Training College (STTC) Yambio. Before joining the teachers training college in Yambio, John was both a farmer and a teacher in Abyei where he taught for 8 years. His parish sent him for teacher training to Yambio.



John Dau at Solidarity Teachers Training College, Yambio, South Sudan

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"Deciding to join the college was a bit tough for me because I had to leave my family behind. The good thing is that my wife encouraged me to come. She believes that I am doing a good job. She said that when people meet her on the street, people recognise and appreciate the working I am doing for the community by teaching their children. I am proud that my former students have joined university while some are here at STTC."



John Dau with Br. Methodius a tutor at Solidarity Teachers Training College in Yambio, South Sudan

"STTC means so much to me because I am not only receiving quality education from committed teachers but I am also getting to think about my prayer life. I wasn't a committed Christian before, but now, I am part of a group that does the rosary prayers every Saturday, we pray for peace and also pray for the sick. I am also a former student guild president and this experience challenged me and taught me how to be a leader. Apart from learning how to solve problems between people, that experience taught me how to face the challenges in my life."

"During my 8 years of teaching, I wasn't a good teacher. For one, I had a poor knowledge of the subjects especially Mathematics. My English was also poor because of my Arabic background. I am quite good in Mathematics now and can write English essays in any subject! I also learned the importance of a teacher being creative in the classroom and the need to actively involve students so that they are able to be more attentive and the subject can be more interesting for them."

"I used to believe in corporal punishment but in STTC I learned that the best solution in disciplining is through positive reinforcement. We used to use what was almost similar to military punishment where a child would be sent outside to kneel with their hands up in the air. After all, harsh punishment affects the children psychologically and they may end up violent, unforgiving and traumatised plus their choice of problem resolution may be through the use of force. They could end up dropping out of school if they develop a fear of being in school, as they would associate it with caning. The best is to promote positive reinforcement in the form of praise, which can be quite effective in changing their behaviour. This is especially important in a country where children have mostly grown up in war – you can see it in the small mud models they make. They make guns, tankers and other weapons of war. Teachers are role models and peace builders – they are the ones who understand the learners and are the ones who are at the grassroots, in the communities, and are able to bring change through education."

While in Level 3, John went for his practical in a school near the college. After one month of practice was over, the children cried, as they did not want him to stop teaching them! They even escorted him back to STTC. "Even now, when I

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meet them on the streets, they are always happy to see me and when they greet me, they appreciate my work.”

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE a qualified teacher is one who is not only able to impart knowledge from school books to his or her students, but one who is able to manage the students in a positive manner so that their character can develop through the positive influence of a confident teacher whose behaviour can be emulated by the children and inspires them towards meaningful lives. This is especially important in a country where children have mostly grown up in war that has had a very negative impact on their development.

Religion is also an important part of daily life at Solidarity Teachers Training College, which has proven to be very much needed and appreciated especially because of the many traumatic experiences faced by almost all the students.

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John Juma, parent, Lutheran Primary School, Yambio, South Sudan

Education is important for South Sudan and any country because without education, the people will be poor. On the other hand, when someone is educated, he will know what's right and what's wrong and so will not just go and kill his brother. He will be more thoughtful about what he is doing."

All 4 of John Juma's children are studying at Lutheran Primary School in Yambio. They are aged 11, 12, 12 and 13 years old. "I made sure that all my children are in school because I do not want them to suffer like I did. I never completed primary school. Most of my life, I have been in the military and it is tough. I do not want the same for them. There, anything can happen to you. I hope that one day, they can become leaders and will be able to sustain themselves even when I am not around."

Lutheran Primary School in Yambio is one of the schools that welcome teachers under training from Solidarity Teachers Training College (STTC) so that they can do their practical in a 'real' environment for a period of 1 month. "When the one month is over, the children are really unhappy. Last year, I came to the school and found them crying when one of the teachers was leaving. They even escorted the teacher up to the college!"

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"I thank Solidarity for bringing trained teachers who are able to teach much easier and when those teachers are here, you can see improvements in the children. For example, on the last day of school before the children went for school holidays, they gave speeches in English. This was great! It is good that they have learned another language because this way, they can travel and would be able to communicate."



Lutheran Primary School, Yambio, South Sudan

"On the other hand, those teachers come from all over South Sudan, which is good because the children have a chance to interact with people from other communities. Having people from different tribes at the college is a sign of unity."



Students at Lutheran Primary School, Yambio, South Sudan

John appreciates that the teachers under training usually use teaching aids such as pictures, maps, drawing etc. because the children are able to learn faster.

"Our community is very grateful for the teacher training because development is being brought to South Sudan. We have been in war for a long time and the level of education has really gone down but now there is hope for the future, especially because we are not all rich to afford taking our children to Uganda, Kenya and other places to study. Education is important for South Sudan and any country because without education, the people will be poor. On the other hand, when someone is educated, he will know what's right and what's wrong and so will not just go and kill his brother. He will be more thoughtful about what he is doing."

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE the number of learner-centred qualified teachers offering quality education is being increased therefore paving the way to a more sustainable future for the children of South Sudan. Through education, people learn what is right and what is wrong and how live together and this will hopefully help South Sudan work towards living in harmony.

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Joseph Dut Dut, 26 years old, graduate of Solidarity Teachers Training College Yambio, currently teaching at Wau (A) Boys Primary School

“Before the training, I neither used to do lesson scheming which ensures that the syllabus is completed within a given period of time, nor did I used to do any lesson plans that allow a teacher to have a step-by-step guide outlining the objectives of the specific lesson. I really never used to be effective in my teaching. If you don’t plan, you are simply gambling!”



Joseph Dut Dut and his students at Wau (A) Boys Primary School, Wau, South Sudan

26 years old Joseph Dut Dut is a graduate of Solidarity Teachers Training College Yambio and is currently teaching at Wau (A) Boys Primary School in Wau. He paid for his primary school by selling groundnuts and tobacco. While in secondary school, he would teach in the morning and be paid a small salary and then in the afternoon he would do his secondary school studying.

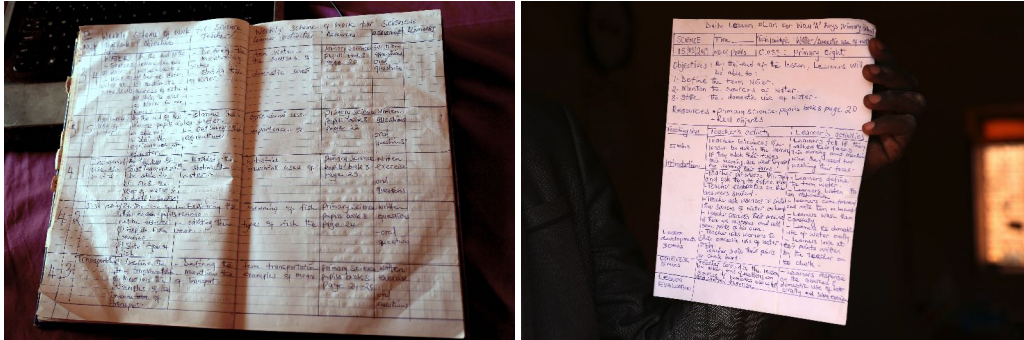
Joseph dresses very smartly and is especially proud of a suit that was gifted to him by a tutor at STTC at the time of his graduation. He makes sure that he is well groomed so that he can be an example to his students. He teaches the older children in Primary 7 and Primary 8. When you walk into his class, you cannot help but be surprised to see how



Joseph Dut Dut at Wau (A) Boys Primary School, Wau, South Sudan

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well behaved the students in his class are, quite unlike the scenario you would find in other schools. They also have a very good command of English and when he calls them to the front of the class to write a word on the board, they write it in perfect English. His students like him and enjoy the fact that he engages them while teaching, instead of just dictating notes to them.



Shown on the left is a scheme of work and on the right is a lesson plan as prepared by Joseph Dut Dut

Before his training at STTC, Joseph taught at the same school, Wau (A) Boys Primary School for 2 years. “Before the training, I neither used to do lesson scheming which ensures that the syllabus is completed within a given period of time, nor did I used to do any lesson plans that allow a teacher to have a step-by-step guide outlining the objectives of the specific lesson. I really never used to be effective in my teaching. If you don’t plan, you are simply gambling!” When you sit down to talk to him, he proudly displays his schemes of work and lesson plans. He says that it has immensely helped him in ensuring that his teaching is effective.



Joseph busy in class

In the morning, Joseph teaches primary school and in the evening he teaches adults. “Adults are returning to school so as to be an example to their children and also because they are having difficulties at work so they need to upgrade their skills.

“There were many positive things for me at STTC. I got the chance to interact with people from other communities; we had to pray every morning thanking God for his blessing and to this day, I continue to pray and to read the Bible.”



Joseph supervising a student

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The trauma-healing workshop they took us through was very helpful. Just before I came to STTC in Yambio, some armed people attacked the house where I was living with my brother and nephew. My nephew was shot dead and my brother was shot in the stomach. Then they grabbed me and took me outside, ready to shoot but one those armed men told them to stop because I was a teacher and that he knew me. Just because I was a teacher and known, saved my life! Trauma healing helps me to forget my troubles. It helped to relieve me from these painful things.”

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE access to education in South Sudan remains a challenge since education workers have been displaced by the armed conflict. On the other hand, the available teachers are mainly high school leavers with no form of teacher training. Their knowledge of the syllabus is minimal and their ability to instruct students is minimal. After training, the different individuals return to their homes and are able to use their skills in for example lesson scheming and planning, therefore ensuring that the students cover the whole national syllabus allowing the students to receive a much more wholesome education.

Additionally, by taking the teachers under training through the trauma-healing workshop, they are better able to understand the behaviour of some students in their classrooms. The teachers are able to detect certain behaviours that are as a result of trauma due to the many years of armed conflict and can then help the students as needed.

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Kuerich Majok Kuch, Solidarity Teachers Training College graduate, head teacher at John Paul II Primary School in Wau

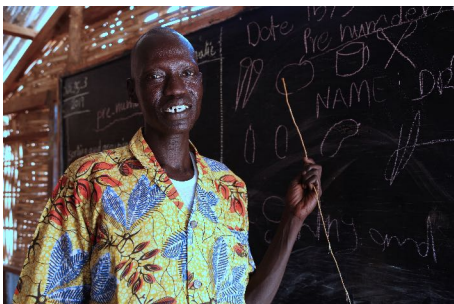
Kuerich Majok Kuch, a graduate from Solidarity Teachers Training College (STTC) is the head teacher of St John II Primary School in Wau, a school that has 777 students.

Before going to STTC, Kuerich was teaching at the same school but as a normal teacher. He was promoted to head teacher after his training and it has been 2 years since he graduated.

Kuerich interacts well with the children – he is gently with them and uses methods of teaching that make it easy for the students to understand.



Kuerich pays attention to a student at John Paul II Primary School in Wau



Kuerich at the blackboard at John Paul II Primary School in Wau

“We are also making use of teaching aids. For example, when you are teaching social studies, you can use Manila paper to draw a map and this will help the students to understand better. You can also use flash cards for teaching English. You can also draw pictures on the board.”

When you walk into the staff room at John Paul II Primary School in Wau, Kuerich

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proudly points out to you sample schemes of work and lesson plans. He explains that he has taught the untrained teachers in the school how to use them and this had made teaching more efficient. 65% of the teachers at his school are untrained – they are mostly high school graduates. Some teachers graduated in other fields of study and have no teacher training and so passing on knowledge to students becomes problematic for them. In most cases they do not engage the students in the class, as their teaching method is more passive than learner centred.

When he was at STTC, Kuerich was a student guild president for two terms, a position that prepared him for his current job. “When I was still studying, I remember that a teacher once told me that being a teacher is great. Your name remains in the hearts of people for a long time to come. I also really enjoy teaching.”



Kuerich and his students at John Paul II Primary School in Wau

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE teacher training is increasing the number of teachers available to teach. As the trained teachers return to their schools after training, they help the untrained teachers to teach better, for the benefit of the teachers and most importantly or the benefit of the students.

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Tereza Peter, graduate of Solidarity Teachers Training College in Yambio, currently teaching at St. Michael's Primary School in Wau

"In general, my experience at STTC changed my life – I came to really like teaching and I love being in class with the kids. I can interact with them and talk freely. I also gained so much self-confidence. Just then I arrived at the college, I was so timid that I could not even dare raise my hand in class to contribute. One day, I presented at the morning assembly in front of the whole school and everyone was shocked. I was even given a gift by the administration as a form of encouragement. This really built my confidence!"

Tereza Peter is from Wau and is a graduate of Solidarity Teachers Training College (STTC) in Yambio. She had two children when she was studying at the college and she currently has three of them.

"I really liked it in Yambio. That experience changed me. I used to pick a book and go teach without any planning but now, I can do my scheme of work, which is an overall plan that is based on the syllabus and a lesson plan which is a detailed guide for each lesson. At my current school, I am the only STTC graduate – the rest are either untrained or they graduated in another field and were not originally supposed to be teachers. I usually try to help anyone willing to accept my help – not everyone accepts the help but I try."



"Before my training at STTC, I used to teach the upper primary classes but after the training, I was changed to teaching lower classes so that I can help to give

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them a good foundation because I am now better skilled to do so and I can manage them better.”



Graduates of Solidarity Teachers Training College

“I never used to pray at all. I liked how we used to pray at the college and we also used to go to church on Sundays. When you pray, you realise changes in your heart. This is especially good for us who come from areas of tribal conflict such as where I come from. At the college, all of us from different tribes used to pray for peace in South Sudan.”

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“Education is the key to everything in this world and without a teacher, nothing will go well. A teacher changes lives – a student comes with nothing, and leaves with something.”



A primary school in Yambio, South Sudan

THIS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE the training college is building confident, qualified, caring and spiritually rich teachers that will take up the task of educating and giving hope to children who are born into and are living in war, many of who have lost hope.