Parents, as their child’s first

Attending school is not a privilege, but a right that enables individuals to take advantage of other rights – to speak, to organize, to earn a living, to safeguard family health, and to contribute to society...education is what separates mere existence from the ability to live a full life, rich in dignity and understanding.

Samantha Power,

Former US Ambassador to the United Nations

From the Education Department

This has been a busy time for the PCOSS/S education community. As the social and economic climates continually fluctuate, we are called upon to make many adjustments and rethink strategies. The pressure this places upon our learners, teachers, administrators and parents is not unnoticed. We thank you for your continued perseverance.

As we look at the future educational needs in country and the diaspora, our focus is shifting from construction towards what happens inside the school’s “walls.” Thus, we will continue to engage in the training of the Education Board, Parents Council and School Management Committee members as well as head teachers and their deputies. Our goal is to increase their capacity so that they will be able to support their schools financially, morally, and administratively.

An instrumental part of many trainings for these groups and our classroom teachers has been and will continue to be trauma healing, especially as it relates to working with traumatized children and communities.

We will also seek to provide greater inputs to address the critical shortage of basic teaching and learning aids, sanitation, and classroom furniture. We still call upon parents to contribute to their children’s school success by paying the small school fees so that teachers may receive incentives and purchase basic supplies like chalk, pens and exercise books.

One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world.

Malala Yousafzai

Thanks to our dedicated school communities as we continue to do our best. To our partners, your support is a great blessing.

Hand-in-Hand With Parents

Schools exist for the intellectual, moral, social and spiritual education of our children. However, they cannot operate successfully without the support of parents, community, government and church. When one of these five essential components in a child’s nurture and development is absent, the responsibility shifts to the other groups who may already be overburdened. But when there are increased understanding and ownership, competences, and collaboration at all levels, there is a greater chance that the best education possible will be available to learners.

Parents, as their child’s first

Dreaming of School Under the Big Tree

More than half of the country’s primary and lower secondary school-age children, up to age 15, are not attending school.

Important Dates

August 12 - International Youth Day: “Bringing youth issues to the attention of the international community and celebrating the potential of youth as partners in today’s global society.”

September 8 - International Literacy Day: “To highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies.”

Facts to Think About: South Sudan has the highest rate of out-of-school children among 22 countries in conflict zones. More than half of the country’s primary and lower secondary school-age children, up to age 15, are not attending school. Only 27% of adults can read with 73% of men and 85% percent of women being illiterate (UN). By 2030, more than 60 million primary school-age children globally will still be out of school (UNICEF). There is a dramatic increase in the number of children who are aging out of primary school range and a decrease in the number enrolling in school (UNESCO).
Good Shepherd Nursery, Primary and Secondary School in Renk was founded in 2002 and is located in the country's northeastern area on the border with Sudan. Due to the lack of quality and accessible education in the area and the influx of people seeking security from the then North-South Sudan conflict, the school quickly grew to include the nursery and secondary levels. Later, to accommodate the older population with only eight classrooms and an office, the primary learners attended classes during the morning hours while the secondary learners began their school day at 2:00 p.m. An adult learning program made use of the property later in the day.

At the time the internal conflict began in December 2013, the school had grown to an enrolment of 2500 primary school-age children and 700 secondary school students. Forty-seven part-time teachers, a full-time head teacher and an active Parents’ Council worked diligently to help the school rise to a competitive level and be recognized as one of the best schools in the country. The 2010 through 2013 national school-leaving examination results for Class Eight (primary school) and Year Three (secondary school) placed both classes with distinction and a high percentage pass rate. In February 2016 the school reopened but with less capacity and a current enrollment of 900. In spite of the interruption of study and lives, bombardment damage, and looting of property, the school community continues to rebuild its physical structure, human capacity, and community commitment as well as strive toward academic excellence.

During a visit by the director to assess renovations, the administration and Parents Council pledged to honor the expected PCOSS/S schools’ commitment of 10% of fees to support the department’s work.

The real weapon for change, education!
Malal Yousafzai
Nobel Peace Prize Winner at Age 17

Upcoming Events
*Teacher Training
*Board Meeting
*Literacy Promotion
*School Visitations
*Trauma Healing & Play for Peace Camp
*School Leaders' Conference

Scenes of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Nursery, Primary & Secondary School, Renk. Above Left & Right: On-time arrival & preparedness for a full day of activities; renovations after conflict and teaching self-sufficiency (the school farm).

Below Left & Below: Headteachers and their deputies (representing seven ethnic groupings) looking at culture, its effect on conflict, and ways to bring healing to the communities. Each Juba-based school now has copies of the Healing Children’s Wounds of Trauma Healing Hearts Club facilitator’s and children’s story and activity books (co-authored by Rev. Dr. Debbie Braaksma, PCUSA Africa Office Coordinator).
teachers, are obligated to be part and parcel of the educational process for they play a monumental role in “shaping the child’s character for better or for worse.” They are in control of registering and preparing their child for school and obligated to support and follow up with what s/he has been exposed to during the school day. Regrettably, many think that the job of educating is solely that of the school and, thus, if the child fails, it is the faultiness of the school system, that is, the teacher, headteacher, school management committee, government, pastor, or Parents Council executive committee. While school administrators and teachers are appreciative of the parents’ desire for their children to be educated, it is also important that they participate more fully in its realization. There are many ways for parents to become involved. Here are four areas Room to Learn has identified.

- **Emergency preparedness:** Send early warning information in case of emergencies and develop plans for response to an emergency.
- **School management:** Support school management (Headteacher, SMC, Parents Council, etc.) in running school affairs; strengthen home and school relationships; and assist teachers in understanding learners and their home.
- **Learner and teacher well-being:** Develop plans/initiatives to ensure learners’ basic learning needs are met to enable them to succeed. Provide accommodation and other assistance for teachers, particularly for newly recruited teachers.
- **Sensitization and awareness creation:** Increase enrollment, retention and completion in schools, especially for girls and children with disabilities, to promote inclusive learning opportunities.

With all hands working together, our children can succeed!

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**Families should be involved in “academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities.”**

*Epstein & Salinas*

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According to Jo Bourne, “school equips children with the knowledge and skills they need to rebuild their communities once the conflict is over, and in the short-term it provides them with the stability and structure required to cope with the trauma they have experienced. Schools can also protect children from the trauma and physical dangers around them. When children are not in school, they are at an increased danger of abuse, exploitation and recruitment into armed groups.”

**Together, let us work hard to give our children the opportunities they need!**

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**Left:** A pastor, mother, presbytery executive secretary, & activist mobilizing for education, women empowerment, and development in her community. **Below & Left:** Headteachers & Deputy Headteachers sharing their expertise.

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**Right:** Good Shepherd Presbyterian Nursery & Primary School, Paloich uses locally-available materials to build classrooms. **Far Right:** Basic classroom needs; too often too difficult for teachers to acquire.

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**Photographs courtesy of PCOSS/S Education Department**