

# PCOSS EDUCATION NEWS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTH SUDAN  
(PCOSS) EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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## From the Director's Desk

As we begin this new year, I am joining you in the prayer for peace and the resumption of educational activities throughout the country.

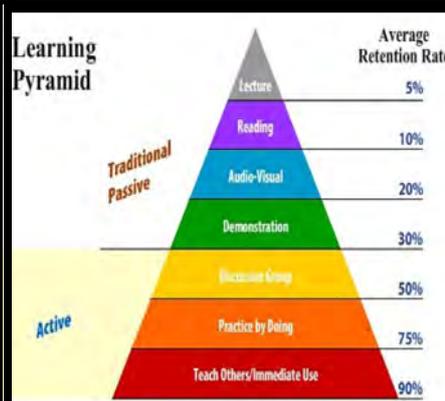
I know, however, that in times of chaos and uncertainty, it is hard to make plans for the future. But if we are to succeed in this very important ministry, we must try. Therefore, we are asking each of you to join hands with the PCOSS Education Department to help rebuild our school environments and make them conducive to the teaching and learning of all. I know that with the interest of the entire community and the activeness of the Parent Councils, everything is possible.

There are many activities that the Education Department will be engaged in this year to build the capacity of the department and the success of our learners, head and class teachers, Parent Councils and local communities. We will be sharing these throughout the year.

As a reminder to School Management Boards, all schools are required to submit 10% of school fees to the PCOSS Education Department to subsidize the department's work. This policy was instituted in 2013 by the PCOSS Board of Education and approved by the Church's General Assembly.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

*"Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world."*  
Nelson Mandela



## PCOSS SCHOOL STATISTICS

Since December 2013, many of the PCOSS primary and high school furnishings, infrastructures, learning materials and equipment have been partially or completely destroyed. 99% percent of PCOSS schools were operating in the most conflicted parts of the country, namely Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity States as well as in the Greater Equatoria State.

Number of PCOSS Primary Schools: 19  
Number of PCOSS Secondary Schools: 3  
Number of schools currently in operation: 7  
Number of schools destroyed: 7

## Trauma Healing For Children

Just like adults, children, including child soldiers, are affected by the bad things they experience.

1. Their emotions are affected. They easily become:

- Fearful, clingy to parents and what is familiar to them, afraid of strangers and of the dark; fearing that the bad events will happen again.

- Angry and aggressive towards family and friends, becoming rebellious and disobedient in class and at home.

- Sad because of no hope, mourning the loss of the familiar, or do not see an end in sight to the suffering and pain.

- Depressed. Children may lose an interest in life because of preoccupation with the pain in their hearts. This depressed state drains their energy in life.

- Confused by the sense of guilt that they survived while others did not, feeling that they did not do all that they could have done to help save more people or things. They may even think that they have contributed to the problem.

2. Their bodies are affected:

- Their speech may be hampered by stuttering or they may become mute.

- There is a loss of appetite due to anxiety or overeating to kill the pain.

- Development of head and stomach aches, hives, asthma, etc.

3. Their behavior is affected and they may:

- Regress to bedwetting, thumb sucking, crying easily, temper tantrums.

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## Personnel Development

Teaching can only be as effective as the efficiency of the teachers and school administrators. As such, efforts are being made to build the capacity of PCOSS school personnel so that they can provide quality education and discipleship in our primary schools. One avenue of upgrading is through scholarships to Yei Teacher Training College (T.T.T.C.) in Yei, either in its In-Service or Pre-Service Teaching Training Programs. Both programs follow the curricula of Kyambogo University in Uganda and the South Sudan Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). After successful completion of studies, students are awarded the Primary Teacher Certificate.

The first batch began the three-year In-Service program in August 2014. This program differs from the Pre-Service in that teachers attend classes during the primary school holidays. PCOSS teachers undertaking this course of study are Simon Kollen Dapu, Monywach Ngor Mel and Athiel Deng Dau. Eight persons have received scholarships for the 2015 two-year Pre-Service training.

**Teaching can only be as effective as the efficiency of school teachers and administrators.**

Announcements for these scholarship were made through the Education Department, Church office, local congregations, and presbyteries. The scholarships are a component of the South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Project (SSEPP), a partnership between the Presbyterian Church (USA), PCOSS, ACROSS and Reconcile. Application dates for the 2016 SSEPP Teacher Training Scholarships are November 1 - December 31, 2015.

## Training in Juba & Gambella

In order to take advantage of school personnel's time out of the classroom due to schools being closed, two training events were implemented in August and September 2014. Without interrupting pupils' learning, 25 PCOSS head and lead teachers underwent four days of training as part of a larger in-service teacher training program.

For those unable to attend the first training event in Juba owing to the restriction of certain groups' safe movement in this area, a five-day workshop was held in Gambella, Ethiopia for 36 participants.

A variety of teaching methods (lecture, Socratic, small and large group discussions, debate, discovery, hands-on, Bible study, games, role-play) was employed not only to ease the grasp of information presented but also model effective classroom techniques for teachers and administrators.

Aims of the training were to empower PCOSS school personnel to:

- 1) Work more effectively within the PCOSS and government educational system.
- 2) Identify the roles and responsibilities of the head and class teacher and the code of conduct that guides his/her behavior and work ethic.
- 3) Keep efficient and up-to-date financial and pedagogic records.
- 4) Learn techniques for developing leaders within the learner, staff and community and in handling conflict.
- 5) Employ effective techniques in selecting appropriate methodology, teacher training, and evaluation and motivation of learners, staff and self.
- 6) Identify the role of the PTA and how to build community support.
- 7) Equip teachers and head teachers with alternative models of classroom management and discipline at all levels of the school.

The PCOSS Synod and Presbytery leaders participated in the opening and closing of each training event.

**PCOSS EDUCATION NEWS** is published quarterly. We invite your comments, letters to the editor, school and personnel updates and news, stories, articles on education, and advertisements.

**Laugh:** A child comes home from the first day at school. Mom asks, 'What did you learn today?' Child replies, 'Not enough. I have to go back tomorrow.'

**Through education, poverty - a root cause of violence and conflict - can be alleviated, and have a multiplier effect upon the creation of a peaceful and prosperous nation.**



Juba & Gambella Participants



## PC(USA) Mission Worker Seconded to PCOSS Ed.

Leisa Wagstaff, a Mission Co-Worker of the PC(USA) was seconded to the PCOSS Education Department in October 2013 as an Education Facilitator. Leisa comes to the department with thirty years of experience working at all levels of education in Africa and holds M.A. and M.Div. degrees.

The main focus of Leisa's work is the South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Project (SSEP), a joint initiative of the PCOSS, PC(USA), ACROSS and RECONCILE Peace Institute in Yei. The four objectives of this initiative are increasing community participation in development, training educators, developing the educational leadership of the PCOSS education personnel, and peacebuilding in South Sudan. Leisa looks forward to working with the PCOSS education community of learners, teachers, administrators and parents.

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- Scream in their sleep or have nightmares and bad dreams.
- Play war all of the time; or have a fixation with guns and other weapons.
- Fight and become irritable.
- Become upset at the loss of things that matter: toys, books, clothes.
- Perform poorly in school due to lack of concentration.
- Indulge in alcohol, illegal drugs and smoking.
- Take dangerous risks (riding fast on botabotas, become a soldier, hunt for or play with dangerous animals)
- Start self-hurting such as body-cutting, suicide and starvation.

## Helping Traumatized Children

1. Parents, pastors, teachers, etc. need to reunite the children with their caregivers or get them into a loving home.
2. Maintain or reestablish predictable routines to restore a sense of security (going to school, doing chores, playing with pals, praying, Sunday school participation, doing things at the normal or usual time, etc.).
3. Listen to their pain with our ears, eyes and heart. Remember, they may not be able to verbalize their thoughts and feelings. We must correct misconceptions about what happened, who is to blame, etc. We must also encourage them to verbalize their feelings and to share their burdens, problems, hopes and dreams for the future. Some ways to express their emotions is to let them sing, dance, draw, cook, write poetry and stories, and build models with clay as a way of expression.
4. Gently tell children the truth about the situation. Use words and a way which is suitable to his/her age. Do not exaggerate the danger or constantly speak of all the bad things that could happen. Make a plan of what to do in case the event should happen again.
- 5) Pray with and for children. Have devotions with them so that they can state their prayer requests. Encourage them to talk to and trust in God and to memorize Bible passages such as Psalm 121:4; 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 23; and Proverbs 3:5.
6. Understand that youth (aged 12-20) already have a difficult time in life as they transition from childhood to adulthood. At thus age they are trying to find themselves and deal with puberty.
7. Teachers & parents need to help one another to understand and promote positive growth and development. This means that you must be patient, understanding, and good listeners.
8. Serious cases of traumatization should be referred to professionals. (Summarized from Healing the Wounds of Trauma)

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