

“I know that the Lord maintains the cause of the needy,
and executes justice for the poor.” Psalm 140:12



An invitation to make a difference in God’s world with Presbyterian World Mission

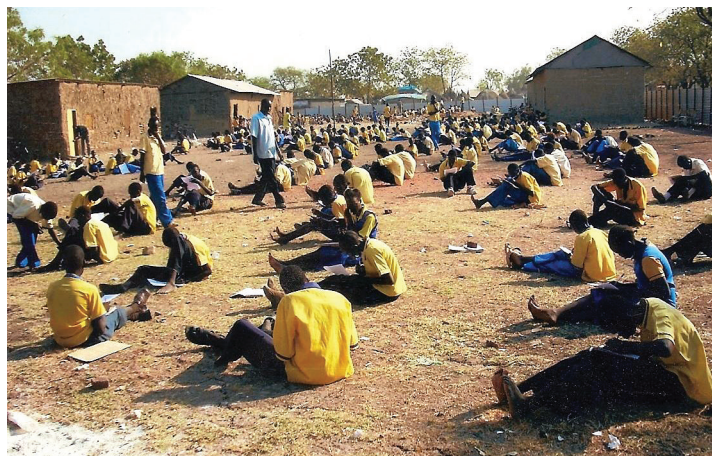
Pioneering education and working for reconciliation in South Sudan

With more than a century of work in the world’s newest and one of its poorest nations, Presbyterian World Mission, serving with committed Christian partners, is poised to help South Sudan move toward a brighter future.

Our partners are hard at work trying to give the South Sudanese people a better life, and they are asking for Presbyterian World Mission’s help. Decades of civil war have destroyed much of South Sudan’s infrastructure, including its educational system. Indicators on formal education in South Sudan are among the worst in the world:

- Less than 25 percent of primary school age children are enrolled in school.
- The Greater Upper Nile Region, the focus of this project, is among the least served areas of South Sudan.
- In this region only 12 percent of the teachers are trained and 40 percent are not paid.
- School facilities are inadequate with only 23 percent of schools holding classes in permanent structures and 36 percent meeting in the open air.

Fifty years of civil war left the South Sudanese people traumatized so there is a great need to address the widespread anguish that grips the population. A divided liberation movement fought against the northern-based Khartoum government during the civil war, and ethnic divisions were fueled by the northern government’s “divide and conquer” strategy. Divisions among ethnic groups inhibit the ability of this new country to provide education and other services critical to nation building. These tensions often lead to violence and our South Sudanese partners want to expand programs of reconciliation to help bring an end to hostilities.



Working with our South Sudanese partners

“All of this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18

Our partners, the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS) and the ecumenical group Across, feel a strong sense of call and responsibility to provide a quality education for South Sudanese children that instills Christian values. Likewise, our partner RECONCILE (Resource Center for Civil Leadership), another ecumenical group, is committed to making peace in the name of Jesus Christ. Presbyterian World Mission wants to assist and empower these partners in developing their capacity to respond to these needs. Mission co-workers, such as Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather and Leisa Wagstaff, play an important role in our efforts in South Sudan.



Lynn and Sharon Kandel

Lynn and Sharon are working alongside the Presbyterian Church in South Sudan (PCOSS) doing logistical work to build and rebuild school buildings, help organize a teacher training project, and assist with reporting on a peace and reconciliation project for our South Sudanese partners. They will also be supporting other mission co-workers in South Sudan with finding housing and some logistical needs. “We are praying that the education aspect of our work will help improve the rate of women and young girls entering school. With education, come more possibilities of jobs, better health and a more positive future,” they say. Lynn and Sharon go to South Sudan knowing that God holds them and the people they work alongside in His love and protection.

Leisa Wagstaff

Leisa has served in five African countries during her more than 30 years of mission service. While in college, she visited what is now South Sudan, where she experienced a call to global mission and fell in love with Africa. Leisa now helps the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS) strengthen its educational ministry by supporting the education department of PCOSS, developing in-service teacher training programs, and nurturing community participation in education. “I have been given the opportunity to help further proclaim the good news to all creation and use all of my educational training and experiences of living and working in Africa,” she says. While thousands of miles separate Leisa from the Presbyterians in the United States who support her ministry, Leisa tells Presbyterian audiences back home that they are never far from her mind. She says, “I serve as your representative, your mission co-worker, and the embodiment of your desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ in every corner of the earth.” Immediately before taking the position in South Sudan, Leisa taught at the Presbyterian Training College in Cameroon. She has also served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe.



The South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Project Manager will manage the overall project implementation, promotion, reporting, monitoring/evaluation and communications between PC(USA) global partners in South Sudan and PC(USA) constituents. Rev. Nancy Smith-Mather has been called to fill this position and is accompanied by her husband, Rev. Shelvis Smith-Mather, who is the principal of the RECONCILE Peace Institute.



Rev. Shelvis
Smith-Mather
with RECONCILE
graduates.