



Continued Teacher Training Impacts Teacher Retention

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Teachers During Training Session—Yambio County, South Sudan
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“The RtL teacher training has enabled me to prepare a variety of hand-made teaching aids which is currently the key factor in motivating learner’s interest in my lessons.”

- Kuyang Esther Ali; Teacher Dwani Primary

In a county of continued economic uncertainty, it’s a difficult time to be a teacher in South Sudan. As the value of the South Sudanese pound drops with growing fears over the future insecurity, many teachers have not been paid in months – for those that have received their pay, its equivalent value can be as little as \$5 per month. As teachers struggle to justify staying in education, the USAID funded Room to Learn (RtL) project continues to roll out its teacher training initiatives and Instructional Material Packages (IMPs) across South Sudan; providing a glimmer of hope to those teachers who need it most.

South Sudan as the world’s youngest country has 70% of the population under the age of 30 years old. That means that South Sudan’s future depends in large part on its ability to educate its young population. This task of educating South Sudan’s population remains formidable right now, as a chronic shortage of qualified teachers is a serious challenge

that directly impedes learning. Only around 40% of teachers in the country have been trained and many lack the support and qualifications necessary to provide quality learning.

Godi Jackson Alison, a Payam Education Officer, commented “We face a lot of challenges. Many of the teaching staff do not have formal training and thus are not qualified teachers. Their work can be ineffective. We also have challenges in getting reading materials - like books for both teachers and pupils, materials for lesson preparation are also hard to get”.

John Martin Ngeraango, a teacher attending one of the trainings, commented “I’ve looked for jobs, but it’s been in vein. I have not been promoted in the teaching profession as I am not qualified, I was being paid only 300 ssp” (currently equivalent to \$9.50).

In early 2016, RtL started the highly anticipated training over 1,500 South Sudanese teachers, across 11 counties, in the five components of reading instruction, plus English language acquisition. The training content also focuses on the use of educational materials supplied by RtL, plus skills training for the creation of teacher-made and learner-made materials. To accompany this training, targeted schools also received the IMP package. This package consists of substantial supplies of essential school equipment, ranging from black boards and chalk, to learners reading materials, stationary supplies, and teaching aids.

For many teachers who have not been paid in months, suffering from low morale, and giving serious consideration to leaving the teaching profession, these provisions have been the boost desperately needed to reinvigorate and inspire them to continue

teaching the future generations of South Sudan.

John Martin, continued “Personally, I feel great and happy with the training that I attended, I got a new change in my life... at times, I think about leaving teaching, but after this training I think I have all the skills and knowledge to teach pupils very well – plus, with all the psychosocial support I was offered, my mind is now settled”.

Denya Alex Michael, an English teacher at Leikor primary school, added “The skills I learned from the training helped me to deliver child-centered lessons through the use of hand-made teaching aids. Children now report to school on time because they find my teaching interesting. As a result of the training provided by RtL, I feel I now have good knowledge and skills to deliver effectively in my classroom”.



Teachers creating teaching aids—Terekeka County
Image Copyright Winrock International, 2015



Children utilizing learning aids- Kajo-Keji County
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RtL Helps to Raise Education Up and Out of the Dirt

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Pupils of Magwi Central Primary School sit on rocks and tin cans during class.

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“I really appreciate RtL so much. They are helping education - I am so grateful to them”

**- Onek James Peter,
Head Teacher;
Magwi Central
Primary School**

A chalkboard, a pencil or student desk are all educational technology materials. As with most technology, they have evolved with time. In many parts of the world, there are interactive whiteboards instead of chalkboards, tablet devices instead of notebooks, e-books instead of textbooks. Now, for the first time for the primary-level pupils of Magwi Central Primary School, education is evolving from sitting in the dirt and on stones, onto new, specifically designed, hand-crafted furniture; helping to keep pupils more comfortable and focused on their learning.

Magwi Central Primary school is located in Magwi town, in the southern State of Eastern Equatoria of South Sudan. For the 1,000 enrolled students, their classes take place in the dirt – or if they're lucky, sitting on a pile rocks or an old tin can. Many of the young children are often injured while sitting on sharp,

unstable stacks of stones and rocks that the children themselves must provide.

Achiro Grace, Magwi Primary's PTA Chairperson, commented “Pupils sitting on the floor and on rocks is a major problem – it often harms the children. Recently, a young girl fell when a heap of rocks she was sitting on toppled, she seriously injured her leg”. Showing off a cut on her ankle, 11 year-old Anna Adyero, added “sitting on the stones is not good, it hurts. I get injured on the stones all the time”.

Inappropriate provision for seating has negative impact on learning and teaching. It affects learners' health, hygiene, cognition and posture. The seats that learners use can hamper blood supply to the brain and impede attention; impacting learning.

The Head Teacher, Mr. Onex James Peter, commented “It takes less than an hour for the children to become uncomfortable and tired in the classroom. If the children have a good place to work, the learning will improve”.

Because of this stark reality, the USAID funded Room to Learn (RtL) project is prioritizing helping schools to create effective learning environments that promote discussion, interaction and impactful learning. RtL will be building and distributing approximately 8,000 desk and chair sets to 66 primary-level schools across 11 counties of South Sudan; providing seating for up to 30,000 children.

Achiro Grace, added “children struggle to work when sitting on the stones. The new desks will help them to work better, to learn better”.

The desk and chair sets are designed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and will be produced in two different sizes, helping cater for the different age groups within the target schools. Crafted by local carpenters, the initiative is also helping to support local businesses.

Finally, Anna Adyero concluded “I like coming to school. I feel very happy to have a new desk, I will be able to write better, my hand writing will definitely improve”.



Pupils test out prototype desk - drawing a large crowd of hopeful spectators.
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Achiro Grace, PTA Chairperson, Magwi Primary.
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Anna Adyero - 11 years old.
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RtL Empowers and Harnesses Local NGO Efforts to Enhance PTA Capacity

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Members of local PTAs assemble to receive training - Nimule County, South Sudan
Image Copyright Winrock International, 2016

“...i’m seeing new children attending school - this is very exciting for me!”

- Mr. Tobias Abuchan; PTA Member

Education as a social institution demands efforts and contributions from a range of stakeholder groups. Education takes place most efficiently and effectively when these different groups of stakeholders cooperate and collaborate; essential to this collaboration is the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). In societies that are trying to recover from decades of conflict, capacity and fragmentation are often the biggest challenges. Thus, the USAID funded Room to Learn (RtL) project, in partnership with locally operational NGOs, are enabling PTAs to build a bridge between these stakeholders and empowering them to maximize contributions and improve educational outcomes.

In order to achieve truly impactful change at the community level, RtL understands the need to utilize those

structures closest to the community. Given their work at the grassroots level, NGOs are best placed to understand the realities on the ground. With this knowledge, their local language skills, and understanding of the local culture and traditions, the selected NGOs have a unique capacity to create an active society by enhancing social capacity.

Professor Manassh Mudanyi – African Education Trust (AET) lead trainer from Magwi County, commented “Local NGOs are well placed to provide longer-term support to communities – that is what RtL is doing, they have structured it so that school communities can receive support when necessary; that is what we, as local NGOs, are helping with”.

Through a series of structured learning initiatives, over 2,300 PTA members and local government education officials, will be better able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the creation and maintenance of healthy school community relationships. Additionally, they will be well placed to spearhead development in their respective schools, helping to ensure all children are enrolled and complete high-quality primary and secondary education.

To guide this learning process, RtL has developed and distributed a PTA training manual. This PTA Training Manual focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the PTA and explores school community involvement in improving education service delivery so that more children are enrolled, stay in school and learn better. The manual seeks to create awareness among PTAs, parents, and communities at large to harness the

resources available in their communities that can be used to promote and improve education service delivery.

Professor Mudanyi continued “In my professional opinion, I’m really truly happy with the manual that RtL has developed. It’s really well designed, up to date, and in line with the policies of MoEST. It provokes PTA thinking and participation so much because it speaks to them and their needs directly”.

Having completed a training session, Mr. Tobias Abuchan, a 37 year old PTA member, commented “The training has been very very great. We didn’t really know our roles or how to function. This training has clearly outlined what we are supposed to do and what tools we have at our disposal, to ensure we are able to find our own solutions to the problems our school faces”.

The co-existence of school communities, schools, and the management structures



Prof. Manassh Mudanyi; AET Lead Trainer
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Mr. Tobias Abuchan; PTA Member
Image Copyright Winrock International, 2016

can only be achieved when people are able to fulfil their potential. PTAs are an indispensable component of the school management process. By facilitating the capacity building interventions and providing a platform for dialogue, RtL, through the local NGOs, has contributed positively to PTAs and therefore the quality of education in South Sudan.

Ms. Opia Rachale Joan, Head Teacher of Molitokuro Primary School, said “as a head teacher, its important to for the school to have a strong PTA so that we can have cooperation to help solve the problems of the school... as a result of this training, our PTA will improve and they will have the skills to respond to our needs and problems”.

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