



# Starting from Scratch: The Challenges of Including Youth in Rebuilding Southern Sudan

Women's Refugee Commission  
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## Executive Summary

In June 2010, the Women's Refugee Commission undertook a field mission to Southern Sudan as part of its Displaced Youth Initiative, a global research and advocacy project focused on strengthening educational and skills-training programs for young women and men in displaced settings.

Five years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended decades of fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Government of Sudan, access to education and skills-building opportunities remains minimal across Southern Sudan.

Existing skills-training programs have generally been supply-driven and designed under the assumption that any and all types of trainings are desirable where provision is so limited. A lack of common standards and a formal certification system, extremely low literacy rates among participants, language barriers and a general failure to systematically determine local demand for skills have all impacted the quality of training.

## Key Findings

It is challenging to evaluate the success of training programs because of a general lack of attention to graduates' progress post-training. However, through interviews with current and former trainees and trainers, the assessment found that:

### 1. Training programs that achieved the best results:

- provide a realistic overview of what to expect from the course;
- admit students of all educational backgrounds and accommodate lower literacy levels by providing supplemental literacy and numeracy classes;
- establish a relationship with current and prospective employers in order to link graduates to jobs and gather feedback on the training.

### 2. Sectors with potential high labor demand for Southern Sudanese youth include agriculture, auto mechanics, carpentry and the service/hospitality sector.

## Key Recommendations

The following key recommendations are based on interviews with young women and men, and staff of the Government of Southern Sudan, UN agencies, international and Southern Sudanese nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local businesses. **For a complete list of recommendations, please see page 19.**

### **Vocational training providers**

- Ensure that courses offered are market-driven by conducting pre-program market assessments, including an assessment of the skills level required in each trade, to determine local skills needs.
- Strengthen current training programs by providing supplementary courses in literacy, numeracy, life skills and employability skills, such as time management and communication.
- Monitor graduates' progress post-training (type of employment, increase in income post-training, satisfaction of employers) and use feedback to improve courses.
- Partner with local businesses to train young people in demand-driven skills and to combat the negative perception of vocational training by demonstrating its value in securing jobs.

### **Government of Southern Sudan**

- Establish a national cabinet committee to coordinate the nine ministries involved in the provision of vocational training and the promotion of entrepreneurship in order to standardize the curriculum and certification system, as well as to eliminate duplication and maximize resources.

### **Donors**

- Continue to provide capacity-building support for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resources Development, particularly for curriculum development and the establishment of a standardized accreditation system.
- Prioritize funding for programs where deliverables are measured in terms of number of trainees employed post-training, rather than in terms of number of youth trained. Support programs that provide a comprehensive package to students with supplementary courses in literacy, numeracy, English, business skills and "life skills."



Auto mechanics are in high demand in Southern Sudan. These young men are participating in a training program run by Don Bosco in Wau.

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## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify young women and men's skills-building needs, challenges and opportunities, extract lessons learned from existing training programs and document current and emerging demand for skills in the Southern Sudanese labor market. The assessment sought to establish how vocational training (VT) and alternative education (AE) programs could be designed to better suit the demands of the Southern Sudanese economy and accommodate the specific needs of different sub-groups of youth.

The objective of the report is to encourage donors, current and prospective skills-training providers and Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) line ministries to focus greater attention on market-driven and context-appropriate AE and VT programs for Southern Sudanese young women and men. It further seeks to inform these actors' efforts in helping young people in Southern Sudan garner the necessary transferable skills to earn a safe and dignified living, and to contribute to the (re)construction of their communities.

## Methodology

The three-week field mission was conducted in June 2010 in three Southern Sudanese states—Central Equatoria (Juba), Lakes (Rumbek, Akot) and Western Bahr el Ghazal (Wau). Information was collected through individual interviews with more than 60 key stakeholders from the GoSS, UN agencies, international and Southern Sudanese nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local businesses. Eighty-five young people (31 girls and young women, 54 boys and young men) were consulted through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

This field assessment forms part of the Women's Refugee Commission's Displaced Youth Initiative, a global research and advocacy project that aims to increase the scope, scale and effectiveness of educational and job training programs for displaced, conflict-affected young people ages 15-24 years.<sup>1</sup> See [www.womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/youth](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/youth) for further information.

## Background

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan and the Southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in 2005 marked the end of two decades of civil war and established a federal system of governance comprising the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the GoSS. Five years on, the autonomous region of Southern Sudan remains heavily impacted by the legacy of violence, which left as many as 2 million dead and more than 4 million displaced, and which devastated the region's physical, political and social infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> Despite five years of peace with the North, the South remains marred by inter-tribal fighting. In 2009, the death toll from these clashes exceeded the number of casualties in Darfur.<sup>3</sup>



Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/sudan.pdf>

## Southern Sudan by the Numbers

Despite efforts of the young government and considerable support from the international community to restore basic services, particularly outside of the state capitals, Southern Sudan's development indicators remain among the lowest in the world.

- Average under-five mortality rate: 135.3 (per 1,000 live births) (roughly 20% higher than for Sudan as a whole).<sup>4</sup>
- Net enrollment in primary school: 48% (55% of boys of primary school-age enrolled compared to 40% of girls).<sup>5</sup>
- Only 2% of girls 14-17 years old are in secondary school.<sup>6</sup>
- 50.6% of Southern Sudanese live below the national poverty line.<sup>7</sup>

## Livelihoods

The two most important drivers of development in the region since the establishment of the CPA have been official aid flows and oil revenue.<sup>8</sup> However, high oil revenues have not translated into a large-scale provision of jobs for the local population. Even when jobs are created, they require a skill level that cannot yet be met by Southern Sudanese. Apart from the oil sector, the agricultural sector has the greatest potential for growth. More than 90 percent of Southern Sudan's land is suitable for agriculture, yet the vast majority remains uncultivated except for subsistence activity.

Traditional livelihood systems in Southern Sudan rely on a combination of cattle rearing

(around 65 percent of households own cattle), agricultural production (around 85 percent of households cultivate land), fishing, gathering of wild foods and trade.<sup>9</sup> The reliance of individual households on each of these activities varies from state to state, and the majority of households rely on multiple sources of income.<sup>10</sup> The 2010 Draft GoSS Growth Strategy states that "broad-based economic growth must focus on growth in the agricultural sector."<sup>11</sup> It identifies insecurity, poor infrastructure, multiple taxation and "lack of skills and tools," as well as "traditional attitudes to gender," as key constraints to growth and productivity. However, one of the principal obstacles in the implementation of the strategy is the lack of empirical data on the sectoral make-up of the Southern Sudanese economy, including figures on employment and unemployment.

## Education

Though great advances have been made since 2005, restoring an education sector that was all but destroyed during decades of war remains a challenge. Primary school enrolment is still staggeringly low (net enrolment is 48 percent) and of those enrolled in primary school only around 20 percent complete all eight years. The average student-teacher ratio for primary education in 2009 was 52:1, while the student-classroom ratio was 129:1. Most classes are taught in "under tree schools," often lacking basics such as books, writing materials and chairs.<sup>12</sup>

## Government Aims for Lifelong Education for All

*"We cherish education for all our people equally and aim to provide a lifelong education for all children and adults of Southern Sudan, an education that is relevant and based on the needs of the people, to enable them to be responsible and productive citizens."*

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology,  
Government of Southern Sudan.

## National Frameworks

The interim constitution of Southern Sudan prescribes that GoSS and state governments should "adopt policies and provide facilities for the welfare of children and youth and ensure that they develop morally and physically, and are protected from moral and physical abuse and abandonment...[they should] empower the youth to develop their potentials."<sup>13</sup> With only half of primary school-aged children currently accessing education, the government has made basic education its main priority in the years since the war. A multitude of NGOs has stepped in to fill the void in skills training. However, the many training programs are operating without any overall framework, using different curricula, varying durations (between three months and three years) and diverse methods of certification.

### **Case Study: Increasing Girls' Access to Education**

The NGO BRAC runs its accelerated learning program under the Community Girls School component of the Alternative Education System (AES) directorate (five years of primary school are covered in three). Seventy percent of places (30 per school) are allocated to girls. BRAC prioritizes attendance over students' performance, and the program's approach to ensure attendance is twofold:

**Ensuring physical access:** Schools are "brought to the community" by renting suitable facilities within catchment areas. This creates access to education in remote areas and prevents students from dropping out due to very long and taxing walks to school. This is important for girls in particular as a common fear among parents is of their girls being "spoilt" on the way to school and becoming unsuitable for marriage. Teachers, all female, are also recruited from the community so that they know their students and their parents and can check up on individual girls should they not attend. Classes run for three hours per day, and the community is consulted on which time of day is most suitable. The aim is to prevent girls from dropping out due to responsibilities such as fetching water in the morning, which can clash with typical school hours.

**Tackling social attitudes against educating girls:** This is done by holding regular meetings with parents to discuss issues such as girls' rights and early marriage. The teachers come from the local communities, speak the local language and assist with the parent trainings. The BRAC girls' schools specifically target the children of beneficiaries in the BRAC microfinance program, thereby impacting entire households and having a greater influence on affecting social attitudes.

Job-oriented education is now increasingly being prioritized. In particular, the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resources Development (hereafter, Ministry of Labour) is working towards the standardization and harmonization of VT curricula, and the creation of a standardized certification system. The current lack of such a standardized system and the wide variation of standards among the courses currently on offer make it difficult for employers to trust qualifications obtained within Southern Sudan. It was brought up in discussions with youth that employers prefer to hire people from neighboring countries where standards are generally much higher. The International Labour Organization (ILO) currently provides technical support to the Ministry of Labour in developing a VT curriculum that will serve as a common standard for VT across Southern Sudan.

While the design and standards of VT fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Labour, technical education falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (hereafter, Ministry of Education)). The division of responsibilities between the two ministries is not entirely clear, however, and there appears to be a lack of clarity on these responsibilities within government departments themselves. For example, GoSS draft

### **President Recognizes Need for Vocational Training**

*"In this day and age, an uneducated society is a doomed society. Countries which had made it through the lifetime of a generation were only able to do that by giving the pride of place to job-oriented education, to domestication of technological innovation and to ensuring the right balance between academic and technical education, on the one hand, and vocational training, on the other. Truly, our society needs engineers, doctors, agronomists, but it also needs competent mechanics, masons, plumbers and farm technicians. The cult of work and principles of good citizenship must be ingrained in the minds of our youth from an early age and there is no better way to do this than through education."*

Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of Southern Sudan, Inaugural Address, May 22, 2010.

legislation stipulates that all vocational training centers (VTCs) should be registered with the Ministry of Education, despite VTCs officially falling under the Ministry of Labour's mandate. In addition to a technical education department, the Ministry of Education also has a department for vocational education. However, the Ministry of Education department for vocational education was described by staff as "not at all functional"<sup>14</sup> due to lack of funding, given that GoSS funding for VT is largely designated for the Ministry of Labour. Lack of communication among these government departments is creating inefficiencies and duplication of efforts that are apparent in, for example, the Ministry of Education's drafting of an independent VT

curriculum parallel to that being developed by the Ministry of Labour.

In addition to the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (hereafter, Ministry of Culture) also has a directorate concerned with VT. A further six ministries have departments dealing with small-scale VT provision.<sup>15</sup> As of yet there is no mechanism that allows ministries involved in VT provision to discuss VT issues directly and to coordinate program planning and implementation.

Following the elections in April 2010, the GoSS created a Ministry of Human Resource Development and a Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The precise mandates of these new ministries and their respective responsibilities regarding VT and technical education are yet to be determined.

## Skills Building

### *Alternative education programs*

The Alternative Education Systems (AES) Directorate of the Ministry of Education targets youth and adults who did not have access to formal education due to such barriers as wartime displacement, early marriage or having no school in their area. Table 1 sums up the current formal education structure and levels of enrolment.

<b>Table 1: Formal Primary and Secondary Education</b>								
	<b>Level</b>	<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Number of boys enrolled in age bracket</b>	<b>Total male population in age bracket</b>	<b>Male net enrolment rate</b>	<b>Number of girls enrolled in age bracket</b>	<b>Total female population in age bracket</b>	<b>Female net enrolment rate</b>
<b>Primary</b>	P1 – P8	6 – 13	561, 668	1, 024, 889	55%	355, 849	896, 822	40%
<b>Secondary</b>	S1 – S4	14 – 17	14, 614	377, 417	4%	6, 921	328, 991	2%

Source: Education Statistics for Southern Sudan 2009, GoSS Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. All figures as of 2009.

Southern Sudan's literacy rates—12 percent for women, 37 percent for men—demonstrate the magnitude of the government's task in delivering alternative education. Yet despite the extensive AES program being rolled out by the Ministry of Education, only 217, 239 of Southern Sudan's under-26-year-olds are enrolled in AES programs. Dividing finite resources between formal education and AE systems can be a source of frustration among those in government charged with addressing the issue.

The Ministry of Education administers the following seven AE programs:

- the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), which condenses eight years of primary school into four years;
- a two-year adult literacy program;
- community girls' schools, where five years of primary school are covered in three years;
- a pastoralist education program, which targets pastoralist youth by sending teachers out to travel with the cattle camps (currently being piloted);
- the Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction Programme, which runs educational programs for adults;
- an intensive six-month English program aimed primarily at teachers and government officials;
- a program that aims to introduce agro-forestry classes as a component of formal education (currently being piloted in Central Equatoria).

The implementation of all these programs is heavily dependent on the engagement of the state line ministries, which varies widely among states. The Ministry of Education officials cite the slow dissemination of funds through such pooled

funding modalities as the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) as a further impediment to a timely rolling out of AES programs. Generally, however, the government looks to NGO partners to implement these programs. Currently NGOs implement approximately 80 percent of the AES programs.

Challenges faced by training providers in this field include negative attitudes within the community towards alternative learning programs. Encouraging students to enrol in AE programs has proven difficult as neither students nor parents consider AE to be "real" education and they believe that it "labels students and teachers" <sup>16</sup> as failures in the formal education system.

A further difficulty lies in reaching out-of-school youth. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) is approaching the problem in Eastern Equatoria by employing a peer-to-peer strategy, where life skills, geared towards promoting self-confidence and the concept of gender equality among young people, are taught in after-school clubs. Club members are then encouraged to communicate these basic skills and ideas to out-of-school youth they know. The peer-to-peer network ultimately encourages students to rejoin AE programs and formal education.

### ***Vocational training***

Vocational training and technical education first began in Southern Sudan during the colonial period.<sup>17</sup> During the first civil war in Southern Sudan (1955 – 1972) those early technical schools were shut down and the Juba Technical Secondary School was converted into military barracks until 1972. Sudan's second civil war (1983 – 2005) devastated Southern Sudan's educational facilities. All technical schools and VTCs were shut down for all or part of the war, and some were badly damaged and looted.

Several new centers have been opened since 2005 and government VTCs are being reopened with donor support. For example, the Multi-Service Training Centre (MTC) in Juba was reopened in 2008 with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Plan International supported the renovation and re-equipping of the Juba Technical Secondary School (JTS), which was reopened in 2009. The UN Joint Youth Employment Programme will be supporting existing government training centers in Juba, Wau, Warrap, Torit and Jonglei to provide more comprehensive programs that include a life skills component with emphasis on literacy, gender and peace-building, as well as career guidance and business skills for trainees.

The signing of the CPA and the consequent shift in donor strategy from relief to recovery paved the way for numerous interventions in the field of training. Programs were generally set up under the assumption that where there are no training opportunities at all, any and every type of skills training is beneficial. Consequently, with very few exceptions, courses were set up without prior studies of the local labor market and the courses offered were driven by supply rather than demand. The lack of efforts to systematically assess market demand has resulted in young people being trained in skills that do not meet the needs of the local labor market, or being trained in a trade that is in demand, but to a standard that is not adequate for the local market. Most programs have made no systematic attempts to follow up on graduate employment rates and any increase in incomes post-training, making it difficult to assess program impact.

Where needs assessments have been conducted in the inception stages of training projects, they tend to be based on trainee preferences rather than on labor market research. Negative social attitudes towards trades that require physical labor, a recurring point raised in discussions with youth, employers and training providers during this study, can skew participatory assessments, resulting in participant choices that are not reflective of market demand. For example, under the ongoing reintegration program for demobilized soldiers in Central Equatoria, the German Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) has registered approximately 500 individuals and provided counseling on the types of trainings available to them under their program. None of those registered have chosen to receive training in vocations involving manual labor. Similarly, in Lakes state, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) registered the preference of "coffee shop owner" for 82 individuals to be reintegrated in Rumbek Central alone.<sup>18</sup>

Current training opportunities for young people range from the few large, state-run VTCs, to the many NGO-run facilities, to training outside of established training centers (see Table 2, page 8). These are largely in the form of workshops, clubs and short courses on life skills such as sanitation, health, gender and conflict resolution, but

	<b>Multi-Service Training Centre (Government-run)</b>	<b>Save the Children VTC</b>	<b>Agricultural Livelihoods Training by the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)</b>
<b>Location</b>	Juba, Central Equatoria	Akot, Lakes State	Western Bahr el Ghazal
<b>Capacity</b>	25 students per course 3-5 instructors per trade	30 students per course 1 instructor per trade	One Agriculture Committee per village to pass on skills to the rest of the community
<b>Courses offered</b>	Automotive Metal fabrication and welding Building and construction Carpentry and joinery Electrical installation Plumbing Secretarial	Carpentry Masonry Agriculture Tailoring Hairdressing (Literacy, numeracy and "lifeskills" component to all of these, as well as 4-day business skills workshop at the end of the training)	Crop management Rotational systems Sustainable agricultural practices Vegetable farming (All skills transferred to committees as one package)
<b>Educational prerequisites</b>	Completion of Primary 8	None	None
<b>Course duration</b>	3 – 12 months	9 months	Ongoing

also include capacity-building workshops for individuals within various professions.

Southern Sudanese government-run VTCs follow the Northern Sudanese policy on VT in that the minimum entry requirement is the completion of Primary 8 (P8). However, in the South, the number of people who have completed P8 is so low (out of 48 percent of 6- to 13-year-olds enrolled in primary school, only 20 percent complete P8) that those who have reached this level are educated, relatively, to a high standard. Aspirations within this group are therefore high and interest in VT, except for courses like computer and secretarial work, is low. Those who have not completed P8 are the ones most in need of skills training, but they do not meet the entry requirements set by government-run VTCs.

To avoid excluding those most in need of skills training, most NGO-run facilities do not enforce the P8 standard. However, teaching skills to a largely illiterate audience of trainees who lack primary school education presents a significant challenge. Save the Children's VTC in Lakes state, for example, accepts students from all educational backgrounds and teaches the basic literacy and numeracy required in trades like carpentry and tailoring in weekly classes alongside training in the core skill. Although training methods here are being made as practical and hands-on as possible, trainers agreed that students' illiteracy slows the pace of teaching and can diminish the quality of even practice-based lessons. Don Bosco VTC in Western Bahr el Ghazal does not provide supplementary literacy and numeracy classes, but adopts the approach of admitting those who have not completed P8 into the practical trades such as construction and metal work, which require only minimal literacy and numeracy, while still enforcing the P8 standard for courses like printing and electrical work.

Trainers and students at VTCs that enforce the P8 entry requirement, as well as those that do not, reported that they felt that supplementary literacy and basic numeracy classes would greatly enhance the quality of VT courses. All training providers, including those at VTCs already offering some form of basic literacy training, said they would welcome a partnership with an organization that could provide basic literacy training to supplement the existing program.



**Lily Peter, 21****Housekeeper at Paradise Hotel in Juba**

"I lived in Uganda, in the Ajumane District with my family during the war. We were living in a refugee camp. I went to school there and I was in school up to the senior level.

In the Ugandan camps the rebels disturbed us so much. We moved from the Maati camp to the Alere camp and to one other camp.

I returned first to Nimule and then I came to Juba in 2007 because I needed to find work.

I have one daughter, she is two years old. Her father is gone. My mother takes care of the baby when I am away for work, and she was taking care also when I was still doing the training.

The training opportunity here [at Juba Catering Services] was good for me because it improved my life. My friend told me that there was training being offered with the Juba Catering and this is how I found out. Before I started with this work [at Paradise Hotel] I had no income because my father is only a farmer, he is living outside [of Juba]. Me, I don't want to farm. I want to do something different.

During the training [JCS, 3 months] I had no support and I walked many hours to come every day. Even now that I am working I have little money and so I have to walk.

Before this training, when I came to Juba, I received training in electrical at MTC [government-run training center]. The training was one year. After the training I found work with Dott Services, but the contract was only for two months and they did not give me a new job when this ended.

I failed to find another job working as an electrician. I supplied my application to organizations for a long time but I was never invited for interviews. Then I heard about this training and so I joined so that I could earn money. That is the most important thing. During the training I was not earning any money and even now that I am working it is very little.

I would do more trainings if they would improve my skills and make it easier for me. I am fine with doing many different types of work and doing training but the most important is to make enough money."

**Challenges to skills building in Southern Sudan**

Key challenges besides illiteracy faced by training providers are a lack of "employability skills"—social competencies such as time keeping, the ability to work in a team and verbal communication. The explanation most commonly given for the lack of such skills among Southern Sudan's youth is a crumbling of the social fabric during the war years and the sense of isolation developed by people who were "always running."<sup>19</sup> When speaking about the challenges of teaching good verbal communication, the director of Juba Catering Services noted that "after twenty years of fighting, you don't have anybody saying things like 'please' and 'thank you.' You need to teach these youth how to even speak to people."<sup>20</sup>

The language barrier poses a further problem. Arabic has been widely taught across Southern Sudan, particularly in the northern states, where Arabic remained the language of instruction in schools until 2007. Those who could not access formal education tend to speak only local languages. GoSS policy states that English is now the language of instruction in all areas of education, but implementing this policy is a struggle for VT providers, who cope by teaching in a mixture of English and Arabic. All respondents felt strongly that supplementary English classes would greatly enhance the quality of training.

Finally, a lack of motivation among students was brought up consistently as a key challenge for training providers. This was considered by some to be the result of decades of receiving aid handouts, which potentially decreased the motivation to earn income. The NGO BRAC's microfinance and business skills trainers noted that it can be difficult to make beneficiaries understand that the money given to them is a loan and not relief, and said that some beneficiaries even react angrily at the suggestion they should repay the money. Negative social attitudes toward VT may also contribute to this lack of motivation. Some VT providers felt that the push by the government and the NGO sector to encourage young people to rejoin formal education and the strong prioritization by government of formal education programs reinforce the idea that VT courses are a "last resort" and associated with not having "made it" in the formal education system. The small number of applicants to the new Irene Dud training center in Lakes may be indicative of this. The center is well equipped but has started its first year running at less than half of its capacity. After initially enrolling for the course, more than half of the students dropped out when they realized that the training course was to be purely vocational. The Don Bosco VTC in Wau fills its courses in construction and welding overwhelmingly with street children referred to them by Enfants du Monde Droits de l'Homme (EMDH), as the number of applicants for these courses is otherwise low.

Most VTCs have no boarding facilities, and students frequently said that having to walk long distances every morning was a reason for students dropping out of trainings. The Save the Children VTC in Akot is located far from major towns and attracts young people from across the state, who walk up to nine hours to reach the center. Even where boarding facilities were available, transportation was still an issue as students would frequently return to their villages to attend family funerals or celebrations, and in the case of women, to see young children who stayed with relatives during the nine-month training.

A notable feature of training programs is the underuse of training facilities. Government training centers close for

### **Case Study: Combating Negative Attitudes**

Juba Catering Services (JCS), which offers a six-month program to develop hospitality services, conducts a two-day induction at the beginning of its program to give trainees a sense of what to expect from the course and from a potential career in the hospitality industry. Included in this induction are presentations by managers of the large hotels in Juba. One trainee recalled being deeply impressed by these presentations:

*"Here in our community, when you work in the hotels people disregard you, but I noticed from what they told us that this is respectable work. After some time you can be a manager and you can make a lot of money and even work all over the world. ... In the beginning I thought that this work would not be decent, but now I have started bringing in others for training."*

JCS trainee, interview with author, Juba, June 7, 2010

Former trainees are also invited back to give presentations on the challenges they have faced and how they have progressed since the course. Lemi Agrey, a former JCS trainee who now works as a receptionist at a Juba hotel, believes that this approach is very effective:

*"It impresses them when I say that I am working at the front desk of a nice hotel now and I came [back to Southern Sudan] with no shoes."*

Lemi Agrey, receptionist, interview with author, Juba, June 8, 2010

(See page 18 for a full profile of Lemi Agrey.)

Finally, to further elevate trainees' perception of the course, Ministry of Labour officials are invited to lecture on the importance of VT and the service that strengthening the private sector in this way is providing to the country.

The JCS approach is proving to be successful, with very low dropout rates, high numbers of applicants (capacity is met every year) and currently over 800 graduates of the courses employed in Juba hotels.



Although skilled construction workers are highly sought after by employers and are in high demand, young people are not keen to participate in such training programs, as social stigma is attached to manual labor. Many participants in carpentry, metal fabrication and construction trainings, such as this one run by Don Bosco in Wau, are street children.

Wau and Juba all expressed interest in hiring skilled graduates, particularly from the fields of auto mechanics, construction and carpentry. There appears to be a gap in linking graduates of vocational training courses with employment opportunities and at the same time a failure to recognize the capacity of private businesses as training providers. Businesses that were training apprentices said they would take on more trainees if they were supported with tools for training and, in some cases, a larger space in which to train.

### ***Lessons learned in skills training***

As noted above, the lack of systematic tracer studies of former trainees makes identifying, promoting and expanding the most successful practices difficult. Based on feedback from current trainees and trainers, as well as former trainees in the few instances where follow-up took place, trainings achieve better results when they:

- provide induction sessions that give a realistic overview of what to expect from the course and present positive role models for students;
- admit students of all educational backgrounds but accommodate low educational levels by providing supplementary classes in literacy and numeracy;
- supplement their training package with training in life skills in areas such as health and hygiene;
- employ trainers from within the community who can address students and their parents in local languages;
- establish a relationship with current and prospective employers in order to link trainees with upcoming vacancies and to more effectively collect feedback to inform course content and teaching methods.

three months over the summer period during which the large facilities remain completely unused. Heads of centers explained that teachers were unwilling to teach additional classes, and that long summer breaks were necessary as students would otherwise be tired and complain.

### ***Post-training needs***

Very few attempts have been made to link graduates with employment opportunities, particularly in the form of apprenticeships or introductions to growing businesses willing to take on new staff. Some training centers noted the lack of large employers with whom formal agreements could be signed as a constraint to linking graduates to employment opportunities and apprenticeships. Others did not find it necessary to assist graduates in accessing employment opportunities as “they go to the market equipped with skills. It is then their responsibility and that of their parents to find work.”<sup>21</sup> Juba Catering Services (JCS) has a good track record of linking graduates to potential employment opportunities, as the director has established a network of contacts with employers in the Juba hospitality industry. Students are placed with employers post-training and regular follow-ups are made to check on graduates’ progress. JCS also uses these follow-ups to receive feedback from employers and to spot gaps or a failure to meet standards in the training.

The Women’s Refugee Commission found that the informal sector throughout Southern Sudan is growing rapidly and that private businesses are facing a shortage of skilled workers and are bringing in young workers from neighboring countries. They are also taking on local youth as apprentices as demand for their services increase. Employers interviewed in Rumbek,

## Challenges Facing Specific Groups

### *Women and girls*

Responsibilities in the home, social attitudes towards girls' education and the widespread practice of early marriage all act as barriers to girls receiving an education. Female secondary school students in Rumbek all cited marriage as the greatest obstacle to achieving their career goals. One AE provider in Central Equatoria noted that "when a young woman is educated, she wants to have a say in who she marries and if the parents are not the ones making the choice, this can mean that they do not get the highest dowry possible for her."<sup>22</sup> Female trainees interviewed in Akot had not been permitted to attend primary school due to parents' fears over their being "spoilt" by men at school, or on the long walks to and from school. Trainees said their parents thought that "girls must remain within the house and work there until they mature. Then they will get a dowry and that is their purpose."<sup>23</sup>

Girls who do remain in school or return to school after marriage often drop out once pregnant and find it difficult to return after giving birth. Apart from the responsibilities and challenges of childcare, girls find it difficult to return to school due to social stigma attached to school girls with children. This was reflected in discussions with youth union members in Wau: "When a girl has given birth, if she comes back to school the other students call her 'mama.' This is like bullying for them and often, because of this, girls are embarrassed to come back."<sup>24</sup>

The polygamous lifestyle practiced in many areas can leave married women living by themselves, often without any support from their husband, for months at a time. As social norms prohibit sex for women who are still breastfeeding their children, many men will move to stay with another wife during this period. This, in combination with social attitudes in some areas that prohibit women from running businesses outside of their homes, means that women can face difficulties in pursuing income generating activities.

Social attitudes concerning "male" and "female" professions are still very strong in Southern Sudan. However, at the Don Bosco training center in Wau, two young women have entered the construction course this year, along with 57 male students; one woman is currently enrolled in the welding and metal work course along with 44 male students. At the Save the Children VTC in Akot there is almost a 50:50 gender balance in the tailoring course. Due to the lack of graduate monitoring there is no information on how women taking up perceived "male" professions and vice versa are perceived by their communities. These examples do, however, show that social attitudes are not entirely rigid and that young women can be encouraged to join male-dominated courses.



It is unusual, but not unheard of, for girls to enrol in training courses for traditionally "male" professions, such as this participant in a Don Bosco vocational training center.

Where young women are receiving training one habitually finds young children. All training centers visited said they allow children to accompany their mothers to training as long as they were not so young they required constant care. None of the centers, however, provide day care or supervision for these children that would encourage young mothers to attend. Female trainees aged 17-26 who were interviewed in Lakes state all had children. One was keeping her child with her at the VTC, which has boarding facilities for all its students. Others had mothers and husbands who cared for the children during training.

### *Returnees*

Around 1.9 million Southern Sudanese are estimated to have returned home in North-South and South-South return movements between 2005 and 2009.<sup>25</sup> A further 300,000 former refugees are estimated to have returned from other countries in the region during this period.<sup>26</sup> The large return movements have put tremendous pressure

on already stretched resources, but in many cases have also introduced new skills and attitudes to a region where both economic and social development were effectively on hold for decades.

Education and training programs often target returnees as a default vulnerable group, yet the experiences of returnees are varied, and treating them as a homogenous group can result in an inefficient allocation of resources. When consulting training providers it emerged clearly that in terms of vocational skills as well as "social competencies," former refugees and those IDPs returning from the North tended to be at an advantage compared to the host community members. Many of the returnees were exposed to functioning cash economies in Kenya, Uganda or Khartoum, and returned to Southern Sudan with a relatively high educational standard and new skills. Those young people who were returning from refugee and IDP camps had generally had regular access to school, had spent more time in school and had been taught according to a standardized curriculum. Problems with English, though, remain a challenge for returnees from northern Sudan. Generally, however, rather than a lack of skills, a problem facing many young returnees is lack of assets in terms of livestock, agricultural tools, land and financial capital.

Organizations such as BRAC, operating in Lakes state, encourage returnees to function as community organizers in their programs. In the GoSS ministries there is also an expectation that those returning can and should act as role models to the local youth.

A challenge brought up by young returnees in the context of this study was unfair treatment in the job market in the larger towns. They felt that Sudanese employers were biased against them on the one hand because of a perception that returnees from the North or neighboring countries had "abandoned their home" while the rest stayed behind "fighting and suffering,"<sup>27</sup> and on the other hand because those hiring felt threatened by young applicants with higher qualifications than they themselves had.

### ***Ex-combatants and children affected by armed conflict***

Training programs that target ex-combatants as part of the reintegration effort tend to have high drop-out rates. A JICA-funded reintegration program in Juba in 2009 averaged a 17 percent drop-out rate across courses. As one training provider puts it, this is due to a feeling that former combatants "have served their country and now expect to be compensated for their efforts."<sup>30</sup> In order to reintegrate young people successfully they must be given sufficient incentives to prevent them from trying to rejoin the army. Since they are accustomed to receiving a wage under the SPLA, the challenge is to make them see the benefits of education and training. UNICEF provides food to the families of reintegrated youth for three months to relieve the burden of an additional non-earning family member and aims to rapidly link reintegrated youth to AE programs as well as apprenticeships with local businesses where possible.

Several training providers that include ex-combatants among their beneficiaries noted that beyond a necessary psychosocial support component, there is a need for additional training for these youth in the areas of conflict resolution and, in particular, verbal communication as "they have difficulty communicating with ordinary people."<sup>31</sup> Training providers, such as Juba Catering Services, which are successfully training ex-combatants, note their difficulties with adapting to schedules and communicating.

Targeting girls associated with the military through reintegration programs has been particularly problematic as so many are simply absorbed into the SPLA as wives of soldiers. There appears to be a shortage of programs targeting these girls for educational programs.

### **Case Study: Returnees Face Difficulties in Finding Jobs**

Richard Juma returned from Uganda with completed O-levels<sup>28</sup> and a diploma in community development. After looking for work in Juba for several months he now works as a "boda" (motorbike taxi) driver and blames his failure to find work on hostile attitudes towards returnees and nepotism: "When we come from Uganda and they see it they know you have a high level of education and they will dodge you and take someone less educated because they are fearful that you will take their job from them. Then because we were outside of the community we do not have the necessary connections."<sup>29</sup>

### ***Pastoralist youth***

Pastoralist migration makes this group extremely difficult to target with training programs and very few attempts are being made to target these youth with educational programs. Oxfam has previously provided para-veterinarian training to pastoralist youth in Lakes state during the months when the communities settle close to the villages. This window of opportunity could be taken advantage of for other types of training.

Organizations operating in affected areas generally assume that young cattle herders would show no interest in vocational training and a settled lifestyle. However, focus group discussions with youth in Lakes suggested that many of the young men who move with the cattle camps may be growing tired of the inter-tribal fighting that result from escalating conflicts over cattle, as well as the current violence tied to ineffective civilian disarmament attempts by the government, and would leave if they had an alternative. Robert Marian, Secretary General of the Lakes State Youth Union, said “We know them well. They’re having enough of [the fighting] and many of them now want to leave. They have seen that there is a good life in the towns and because of [the fighting] they now want to go there. But they do not have any education and there is nothing for them here to help them make a life outside of the camp.”<sup>32</sup>

Several of the young people interviewed in Akot had left the cattle camps due to loss of their livestock through drought or raiding and due to insecurity. Although there was no agreement over whether the pastoralist youth would be interested in vocational training, they insisted that development in the villages and towns would increasingly lure these youth toward a more settled life.

Although the above indicates a possible future shift away from the traditional livelihoods of these communities, immediate mass adaptation to settled lives by former pastoralists is unlikely. An agricultural training program by ACTED in Western Bahr el Ghazal found that pastoralists who had lost their herd due to drought or raids preferred to sell the seeds and tools provided after the training rather than use them, as farming was perceived as undignified.

## **Current and Emerging Labor Market Demand**

As mentioned previously, growth in the oil sector has not created employment opportunities for Southern Sudanese workers and cannot be expected to provide largescale employment in the near future. The Southern Sudanese oil industry is limited to export and so demands a very small specialized and highly skilled workforce.

Apart from the obvious potential in the agricultural sector, the lack of data on the Southern Sudanese economy's sectoral makeup allows only speculation on emerging sectors and consequent trends in labor market demand and skills needs. While the formal private sector is practically nonexistent, the markets in Juba and in the state capitals demonstrate that the informal economy is flourishing. In the market research carried out for this study, the following sectors were found to be rapidly expanding and showed potential to absorb youth into employment in all locations visited.

### ***Agriculture***

The 2010 Government of Southern Sudan Growth Strategy and the World Bank's Country Economic Memorandum<sup>33</sup> both identify the agricultural sector as having the greatest potential for increasing incomes. Training farmers in more efficient modes of production is a vital step to improving food security and to moving from pure subsistence farming to surplus production. Lack of technical knowledge is just one of the barriers, as insecurity and displacement continue to impede agricultural development. Other constraints include unreliable rainfalls, a lack of boreholes and irrigation pumps, a lack of tools and machinery, an absence of marketing and business skills and a lack of access to capital and access to markets due to extremely poor physical infrastructure. While it is the role of government to create an enabling business environment, the NGO sector can provide micro-level support in the form of skills training, microfinance and provision of seeds and tools for agriculture.

Several organizations are already providing training through farmer field-schools to increase farmers' efficiency, with the principal objective of increasing food security. Few, however, are coupling training with business skills or working with farmers to move from subsistence activity to surplus production for sale.

## Construction

Construction is booming in Southern Sudan.<sup>34</sup> It appears that the vast majority of contractors in the towns are brought in from Uganda and Kenya due to a lack of skilled locals. The issue is not merely that of training but of standards. In Wau, even trained builders were struggling to find work as most had not received training in the type of roofing being used on houses there. As a result, people are hiring Ugandan and Kenyan contractors who have the appropriate training in roofing. One contractor in Wau who employed four staff, all Ugandan, said he would consider hiring local youth but did not think they had the basic skill level for him to even train them in new techniques.

## Auto-mechanics

While in Rumbek there are only four large garages offering car repairs, in Wau and Juba there are now too many to count. Businesses in all three towns are growing fast and cannot keep up with demand. One Tanzanian car mechanic opened his workshop in Rumbek with five employees in 2006 and now has 26 people working for him (this includes trainees who are paid in food only). The majority of his staff are from other East African countries. As with the other mechanics workshops in Rumbek, they are struggling to meet demand for repairs.

One of the few Sudanese business owners interviewed learned how to fix cars in Wau as a boy by helping people whose vehicles broke down in the area, at a time when he says there were no mechanics at all. In 1966 he opened a garage and now employs 20 staff and takes on around five apprentices at a time.

A challenge is that the level of technical knowledge required to service the off-road cars common throughout Southern Sudan, many of them brought in by the UN and international NGOs, is far beyond the level available in garages and also beyond the level taught at the government-run centers. Still, the demand for mechanics, even with a skills level only suited to do patch-up jobs, is extremely high. In the long run, however, a scaling up of the skills level and equipment will be necessary in this sector.

### Work Is Available for Those with the Right Skills

*"The problem is that the young people here don't know how to do the work. I am training some but it is difficult to get them. I have already trained six boys and they have all found work as engineers in Rumbek and in Wau. Right now I am training two boys and one young lady, but she has a baby so the challenge is great for her because often she cannot come to work. The rest of my workers are from outside, from Uganda and from Tanzania. But I don't mind taking more Sudanese workers if they are good in the job. I would even take more as apprentices if I had more tools because there is enough work for them."*

Nicholas Paul Marigana, car mechanic, Lakes state

Interview with author, Rumbek, May 18, 2010

### Construction Skills Essential in Peacetime

*"A construction boom will follow the arrival of peace as night follows day and so right from the start of the peace a shortage of construction skills can be anticipated. A priority is thus at an early stage to establish training facilities for basic construction skills and target training on precisely the young men who might otherwise be recruited into the reversion to violence."*

Paul Collier, *Post-Conflict Recovery: How Should Strategies Be Distinctive?*

## Carpentry

The majority of furniture being sold in the markets in state capitals is still imported. The quality and variety of imported goods is still generally higher than that of locally produced furniture. Nonetheless, all the carpentry businesses visited were growing and taking on apprentices. Michael Ali, who runs his carpentry shop in Rumbek from under a large tree, returned to Southern Sudan in 2005 and started his business with three other returnees. He now employs 15 staff and has another 10 trainees working for him.

## Hospitality

The growing hospitality industry is opening up employment opportunities in housekeeping, catering and front office work. The majority of managerial jobs in hotels and restaurants are still done by foreigners, but several of the young Sudanese employed as reception staff had aspirations to move into management. The frequent travel of

## **Emmanuel Maniol, 24**

**Trainee student in carpentry at the Save the Children Aterio Vocational Training Center**

"I am 24 years old and I was born in Khartoum. My family left Lakes in 1983 because of the war. In 1995 my uncle came to Khartoum and my parents decided that I should return to the south so that I could receive education in English, because in Khartoum the schools teach only in Arabic.

We took a plane from Khartoum to Wau. This was possible because the government was helping the IDPs [internally displaced people] to return and so they arranged our flight. We reached Wau by plane and they left us there. The only way for us to reach Lakes state was on foot, so I walked with my uncle from Wau to Rumbek. Many others were walking with us, and the journey took us fifteen days because I was still small and could not walk very fast. There were many challenges for us along the way. There were still many wild animals in the bush then and I was very afraid, and there was never enough food.

When we reached here I lived with my uncle's family outside of Rumbek. I attended school there from 1996 to 2005. I took my final P8 exam in 2005 and was a candidate for Senior 1 in 2006. But I had to leave school in Senior 1. I had to leave because I did not have a permanent home in Rumbek. All my relatives live in Rumbek East where there is no secondary school and no one could support me to stay and attend classes for my senior years.

After I left school I became a teacher for English and science in Dreik Primary School for three years. In 2009 I was screened out because I did not have any official teacher training and no certificate. I enjoyed teaching very much and I was paid regularly by the government. My salary was SDG 1,500 per month. I know that teachers are being paid much less now but I would still like to be a teacher. If there was a course to train as a certified teacher in my area I would join. I like to teach but I would like someone to teach me properly first before I teach others again.

I am now doing a course in carpentry at the Save the Children Vocational Training Centre in Aterio. A man from Save the Children came to my area. He came to our community by car and told us that there would be training in Aterio for free and we would receive accommodation there. Our chiefs and the *payam* [district] administrator selected three boys and two ladies to be sent here for training. I was chosen because they saw that I have few skills but that I can learn, and that I can go and receive training and come back to develop our *payam*.

The reason I chose to be trained in carpentry is because I have seen people in Rumbek who are selling lots of furniture—I want to be like them. I want to make chairs and beds and roofing for the houses in my community. If I become very good in this skill I think I will make a lot of money. The people in my community will buy my furniture, but the challenges I think will be lack of timbers. It is difficult to obtain the timbers.

I would have liked to continue with teaching but I also enjoy the carpentry. I would have liked teacher training most of all but the important thing is to make a living and I am happy with any training that will help me to do that."



Emmanuel Maniol, 24, wanted to be a teacher, but is learning carpentry at a Save the Children vocational training center.



international NGO, UN and government staff for meetings and workshops in different southern states has created strong demand for high-end hotels in the state capitals. In Juba, these are being served by graduates of the JCS course, though JCS say they are still not meeting demand. In other states, finding competent staff is not easy. The manager of a large hotel in Wau maintained that “what this place is screaming for is some sort of hospitality college. I’d like to employ locals but finding skilled staff is extremely difficult. It took me a long time to find a local chef and waitstaff is also hard to find because many here lack basic literacy and numeracy.”<sup>35</sup>

### ***Hairdressing***

Going to hair salons was considered foreign until recently. Salons were set up by Ugandans and Kenyans catering mainly to the demand of other East African women in Southern Sudan, or Sudanese returnees from those countries. Increasingly, however, the practice has been adopted by locals. Salon workers in the state capitals say they are seeing more and more locals using their services and demanding elaborate and pricy hairstyles. Rosa Kon, a trainer in hairdressing at the Save the Children VTC in Akot, says this practice is now also spreading to the villages. “Traditionally the women would just shave their heads. Spending money on something like your hair would not be something to even think about. But now the women are seeing the hairstyles of those coming from the towns and they want to have this for themselves. The men like it too, so they don’t mind spending the money.”<sup>36</sup> Hairstyles taught at the center are provided in the villages at a cost from SDG 5 to SDG 100 (approx. USD 2 to USD 42), of which up to SDG 70 (approx. USD 29) is for labor only. In salons in the towns, hairstyles can cost up to SDG 200 (approx. USD 84).



The market for hairdressers is new in Southern Sudan. This young woman is an apprentice at a salon in Rumbek.

Salons visited in Juba, Rumbek and Wau were all foreign owned and less than 50 percent of their staff were Sudanese. One Kenyan salon owner in Rumbek said she had enough customers to open a second store and was making enough money to do so, but was constrained by having to send money back home. However, despite the noticeable rising demand, salon owners also saw an increase in local women teaching themselves the skills and coming to the salon only to buy the necessary hairpieces and materials for certain styles.

## **Training Preferences of Young Men and Women**

Social stigma attached to certain professions can influence young people’s training preferences, and this is reflected in the number of students enrolled in different courses at the various training centers. At the MTC in Juba, courses in construction, carpentry and metal fabrication have run far below capacity since reopening of the center in 2007, while courses in auto mechanics and computers have reached capacity every year. Auto mechanics was a very popular course among all young people consulted. Despite involving manual labor, this kind of work is highly respected as there is potential for high earnings. Around 70 percent of applicants to the MTC apply to this course, and in Lakes, where there is no training center offering auto mechanics, the majority of young men receiving training said they would prefer a course in auto mechanics over their current training.

Respondents’ training preferences varied significantly with their educational levels. A recurring issue in discussions with youth still in school or unemployed was the very high level of expectation of students who had completed P8 and any secondary schooling. The most common career ambitions among these youth were “government worker” and “NGO worker.” Youth who stated these preferences recognized that computer skills are essential to obtain such jobs, and computer training was the most popular skills training young people of

## **Lemi Agrey, 21**

### **Receptionist at Quality Hotel in Juba since January 2010**

“My name is Lemi Agrey. I am 21 years old. I am from Lanya in Central Equatoria state. My family left from our town in 1994 because there was much violence in our area. All of us went to Uganda and we were living in a camp there, but we did not stay in the same camp. When we were living there other people came, we called them guerrillas or rebels. They were Ugandans. They would come and cause problems. They would come and steal and kill people and sometimes they would burn down a whole camp so the whole camp would have to go and find another place. My family went to a different camp four times because of problems like this. I had to join a new school every time, but as refugees we were lucky because the school system in the camp understood the situation and they found the right class for us and we could join immediately when we came to a new camp.

My family came back to Southern Sudan in 2008 after I finished my O-levels. When I came back in the beginning I was looking for work to make money to go back to school, but I was struggling to find work because I was lacking skills and qualifications. After five months I had still found no work so when my friend told me about this course I decided to join. I first completed the course in food and beverage services. Then I completed the front office and receptionist course. I decided to do another course to make sure that I could always find work in this sector. Now I have several skills that are necessary in hotels so I hope that I can always find work.

The training was very hard. I was able to do all the things that I had to learn, but we were not paid during the training period and I had no money for transport, so every day I had to come all the way from my house into town on foot. During the second part of the course when I was placed with a hotel I was able to collect some money from the tips. In the first three months where we were only training I would go to the market whenever I had time to push wheelbarrows and do some small jobs for the traders there to get some small amounts of money to support me during the training. My parents are only doing some farming outside of the town and my family cannot support me.

Now that I am working at the reception I am receiving more money, but it is still difficult. I have arranged my working hours so that I can attend classes at the university because I want a diploma in information technology. I want to do this because I can see that this is a skill that is lacking in my area. What I am learning is already useful in my work here at the hotel because I am helping our guests to connect to the Internet and I can use the computer here. Right now all the people who are working with computers in the government offices and in the businesses are from outside of the country so I think I will be able to help my community and the nation as well. My aim is even to continue so that I can encourage my people and train them. We are still depending on other people from the outside to train us but it is now time for us to train ourselves so it is my hope to continue and be able to train in the future so that we do not have to depend on others.

My diploma is a two-year diploma. My biggest challenge to complete it is that I have to use 80 percent of my salary for the fees, but I also have to support my family with this money. My biggest worry is that my contract is ending in May. I am worried that I might not be extended and so will not be able to pay for the fees anymore.”



Lemi Agrey, 21, is attending information technology classes, as he recognizes this is an area with good prospects for employment and advancement.

this educational level expressed interest in.<sup>37</sup> Two trainees in the agricultural program of the Akot VTC had both completed P8, but it emerged that both were taking the course in the hope of finding employment in the state Ministry of Agriculture. Although GoSS is Southern Sudan's largest employer by far (18,767 individuals are currently on the GoSS payroll, with an additional 93,841 workers in state ministries<sup>38</sup>), positions are usually awarded for life, so there are clearly limits on the number of people GoSS can employ. Competition for these jobs is therefore very high and the sector is not large enough to absorb all who aspire to this type of career.

Other popular choices with those who had attained an educational level up to or beyond P8 were doctor and engineer (referring to auto mechanics). However, none of those questioned knew what the requirements were to enter into such professions, or where and how such qualifications would be obtained. At the same time, all participants of a focus group in Wau acknowledged that construction was the sector in which there was the most work, and each of them knew someone who was working in this field. However, they considered this only an option to bridge the gap until they found work in an area they considered more suitable to their level of education.

Young people with a more limited educational background were generally much more open to the training opportunities offered. Muwir Bol, a 15-year-old from Warrap state, attends the carpentry and mechanics courses at the Don Bosco VTC in Wau. He came to Wau with no formal education but participated in an EMDH-run AE program before joining the course at Don Bosco. Muwir has no family in Wau and with nowhere to stay; he sleeps on the street. He sums up his training preference as "the most important thing is that I am making enough money so I can live somewhere, not on the street... I want to specialize in building because everywhere you go you will find a job."<sup>39</sup>

For young women who came from the villages to attend trainings in Akot, becoming certified in any skill mattered more than the specific skill they were being trained in. Nearly all the female trainees interviewed in Akot had been performing some sort of income generating activity before attending trainings, but they were barely making any profit from these activities as relatives and friends, effectively all their customers, expected to receive their services free of charge. Suali Thomas, 20, ran a beer brewing business in her village before attending training in hairdressing in Akot. "I failed in my business because my relatives just came and always took everything for free... Now it will be different because if people know I have been formally trained they will respect my business."<sup>40</sup> All women at the center expected that once they were certified in any skill this would give them the authority to insist on payment for their services and products and would give them greater respect in the community.

## **Recommendations**

### **To All Actors**

#### **Be site specific**

Vocational training programs should be tailored to the specific context of respective Southern Sudanese states. All actors need to increase efforts to share knowledge on local context and lessons learned in providing training to local communities. Particular practices and social norms can impede the success of programs if not considered in program design.

#### **Use available data**

All actors should make full use of existing data before commissioning new studies. The labor and vocational training component of the 2009 National Baseline Household Survey will be published in September 2010. The Census Long Form Questionnaire, also available in September 2010, will include labor force estimates. These will provide data at the state level on a scale that will be impossible for individual studies to collect.

### **To Government of Southern Sudan**

#### **Coordinate actors**

GoSS should establish a Cabinet Committee for Vocational Training comprising representatives from all nine

ministries involved in VT provision or the promotion of entrepreneurship, as set out in the Draft 2008 Southern Sudan Vocational Training Policy.<sup>41</sup> A coordinating mechanism for all VT providers, bringing in UN agencies and NGOs, will enable relevant departments to work together efficiently on commonly agreed upon, realistic goals. These goals must then feed into GoSS planning and budget processes.

Government must act on its own plans laid out in the 2010 GoSS Growth Strategy to strengthen security and infrastructure and to remove illegitimate and multiple forms of taxation. Barriers to commercial agricultural activity, chief of which are lack of access to markets due to poor infrastructure and regional insecurities, need to be tackled to create a sustainable, lucrative agricultural sector.

### **Increase utilization of training centers**

Government-run training centers should offer trainings during the three-month summer holiday, as well as during weekends and evenings. If teachers at the centers are unwilling or unable to provide further trainings during these times, agreements with existing training providers, NGOs or from the private sector should be sought in order to ensure full use of facilities. Priority should be given to training providers offering courses to supplement and raise the quality of training offered at the centers. This includes English classes and classes in basic literacy and numeracy. Underutilized facilities should also be used to support informal sector training by allowing established businesses to use the workshops on weekends to train their apprentices.

### **Tackle negative perceptions of technical and vocational education and training**

the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Culture should tackle negative attitudes toward vocational training by promoting the importance of VT in schools and youth groups and talking to new trainees at induction sessions of NGO-run trainings and at state-run VTCs. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Culture should initiate a public awareness campaign targeting young people to try to destigmatize technical and vocational education and training (TVET). This should involve role models, especially young women, talking about prospects in different fields, as well as government representatives emphasizing the importance of these professions to the development of the country.

### **Increase access to government VTCs**

Government-run VTCs should revise their entry requirements by abolishing the P8 standard for admission to allow youth from all educational backgrounds to access trainings. Supplemental courses in literacy and numeracy prior to and alongside the core vocational courses should be introduced to enable students to fully participate and gain from the training and to prevent a decline in standards.

## **To Donors**

### **Focus on measurable results rather than pure numbers**

Donors should prioritize funding for programs in which deliverables are measured in terms of the number of trainees employed post-training and percentage increases in salaries of skilled versus unskilled youth, rather than in terms of the number of youth trained.

### **Support capacity strengthening**

Donors should continue capacity-building support to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, particularly in the fields of curriculum development and the development of a standardized accreditation system.

In addition to supporting the establishment of new training facilities, donors should support programs that raise the standards and effectiveness of existing training courses. Where training provision is limited to vocational training in a core skill, donors should support programs that provide a more comprehensive package to students with supplementary courses in literacy, numeracy, English, business skills and “life skills.”

Donors should support studies where information on the Southern Sudanese labor market is missing, such as data on employment, unemployment and underemployment, and the current livelihood situation of young people, in particular. Data must be disaggregated by sex, age and nationality. Research needs to be sensitive to the diversity of income sources for many families.

## **To Vocational Training Providers**

### **Offer market-driven courses**

Skills offered in trainings must be chosen on the basis of a local market assessment that includes an assessment of the skill level required locally in each trade. Trainings that fail to lead to employment are discouraging to youth. This impedes recruitment and participation in an environment where motivating young people is already a challenge. The Women's Refugee Commission provides a market assessment toolkit for training providers and youth on their website at [http://womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/ug\\_ysl\\_toolkit.pdf](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/ug_ysl_toolkit.pdf).

### **Include basic literacy, numeracy and life skills**

Illiteracy is so endemic that all training provisions should be used as an opportunity to include basic literacy and numeracy classes. Though the short duration of most training courses would not suffice to make someone fully literate, it will support those with already a basic grasp, and will provide a starting point for those who are completely illiterate. Similarly, new training programs should be designed with a comprehensive skills package of literacy, numeracy, life skills and employability skills to complement the core skill being taught.

### **Ensure market linkages**

Agricultural training providers should work with state ministries and county commissioners of agriculture to identify markets where farmers can sell surplus produce. Organizations should target areas for training that have market feeder road access so that produce can, in fact, be brought to market. Cross-border markets, such as northern Uganda, should also be considered when identifying skills in which to train young people.

### **Support private sector trainings and apprenticeships**

The majority of skills training in Southern Sudan is taking place through informal on-the-job training. Businesses, which through their expansion are teaching marketable skills, should be supported in providing such training in the following ways:

- Encourage employers to pay trainees a stipend rather than just providing lunch, to ensure they understand the benefits of their training and reduce the risk of their dropping out.
- Supplement the core skills being learned in context of the business with training in English literacy and numeracy, in life skills such as hygiene, as well as employability skills, such as time keeping and verbal communication.
- Provide training equipment and space.

### **Link with businesses**

Some businesses are already recognized in the local community as places that produce competent workers. This functions like informal accreditation. Businesses successful in training their apprentices should be identified in any local market assessment.

All training centers should provide a notice board where local businesses can advertise relevant vacancies to graduates of the program. Local business owners must at the same time be made aware of the skills being taught at the center and of the possibility to advertise vacancies on the center's notice board.

### **Link with microfinance**

In addition to providing ways in which graduates can find employment with established businesses, training providers should link with microfinance institutions operating locally, such as BRAC or the Sudan Microfinance Institution (SUMI), and refer graduates who are interested in starting up their own business.

### **Promote access for girl mothers and girls associated with fighting forces**

Since returning to school after giving birth is considered embarrassing by young women in some areas, training providers should consider running AE and training courses exclusively for young mothers, where they can be educated without fear of ridicule or bullying and can socialize with other young mothers who may face similar challenges. Reintegration programs should specifically target young women associated with fighting forces and include a strong education component.

**Provide childcare**

Training providers should accommodate the difficulties women with young children face in pursuing income generating activities and attending training outside of the home. Where the principal obstacle is childcare, this can be addressed by providing childcare at the training facility. Where women fear being stigmatized, pre-program market assessments should look out in particular for income generating activities that can be run from women's homes.

**Expand outreach for pastoralists and other hard-to-reach groups**

Training programs should be initiated that target pastoralist youth, either by providing short courses during the months when the pastoralist communities are settled close to the villages or by employing mobile training units.

The approach of bringing schools to the communities adopted by AE providers such as BRAC should be extended to skills training. Mobile training units, for example, would make it possible for youth far from urban centers to access skills training, and would in particular allow women to access training opportunities while still being able to fulfill their roles as caretakers in the home.

**Include orientation for prospective students**

Trainings should be advertised to young people in schools and in youth groups through presentations on what they can expect from the courses and on their career prospects post-training. Graduates of the program should be invited to speak to prospective trainees to act as positive role models.

**Next Steps**

The Women's Refugee Commission is sharing these findings and recommendations with policy makers, donors and service providers working with displaced youth worldwide to help better prepare young people for life during and after displacement. These organizations and agencies are encouraged to use these recommendations as they make decisions about funding and develop programs to support young people affected by conflict.

Information gathered from this mission will help to shape pilot projects in which the Women's Refugee Commission will partner with operational agencies to try out innovative practices and build on these recommendations to strengthen education and job training for displaced (or previously displaced) young people. Lessons learned from these demonstration projects will feed into the Women's Refugee Commission's global Displaced Youth Initiative.

Over the next year, the Women's Refugee Commission will visit other conflict-affected countries to build on these recommendations and compare how the situation varies in different locations. Advocacy briefs will be developed after each assessment.

Lessons learned from field visits to displaced settings, global desk research and pilot projects will culminate in tools and guidance for donors, policy makers and practitioners that will offer practical steps to improve programs and policies for displaced youth.

Read more about our youth program at [www.womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/youth](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/youth).

## **Organizations, Agencies, Government Bodies Consulted**

Africa Educational Trust (AET)  
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)  
CHF International  
Diocese of Rumbek  
Don Bosco Vocational Training Center  
Enfants du Monde Droits de l'Homme (EMDH)  
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)  
Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)  
Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Commerce  
Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (Ministry of Culture)  
Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Ministry of Education)  
Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning  
Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development (Ministry of Labour)  
International Labour Organization (ILO)  
International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
International Rescue Committee (IRC)  
Ireneo Dud VTC  
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)  
Juba Technical School  
Lakes State Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport  
Lakes State Ministry of Agriculture  
Lakes Youth Union  
Malteser International  
Multi-Service Training Centre  
Oxfam  
Plan International  
Save the Children  
Skills for Southern Sudan  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
War Child Holland  
Western Bahr el Ghazal State Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport  
Western Bahr el Ghazal State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology  
Western Bahr el Ghazal State Ministry of Labour  
Western Bahr el Ghazal State Ministry of Social Welfare  
Western Bahr el Ghazal Youth Union  
Women for Women International  
Women Help Themselves Society

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AE	Alternative education
AES	Alternative education system
ALP	Accelerated learning program
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
EMDH	Enfants du Monde Droits de l'Homme
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GoNU	Government of National Unity
GOSS	Government of Southern Sudan
GTZ	Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
ILO	International Labour Organization

IRC	International Rescue Committee
JCS	Juba Catering Services
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JTS	Juba Technical Secondary School
MTC	Mutli-Service Training Center
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VT	Vocational training
VTC	Vocational training center

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport of the Government of Southern Sudan defines "youth" as aged 15-30 years.
- <sup>2</sup> The United States Department of State, *Background Note: Sudan, 2006*, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm>.
- <sup>3</sup> International Crisis Group, Africa Report #154, 23 December 2009, "Jonglei's Tribal Conflicts: Countering Insecurity in South Sudan", available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/154-jongleis-tribal-conflicts-countering-insecurity-in-south-sudan.aspx>.
- <sup>4</sup> The Government of National Unity Ministry of Health (MOH) and Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) with the Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE), *The Southern Sudan Household Health Survey (SHHS), 2006*.
- <sup>5</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Government of Southern Sudan, *Education Statistics for Southern Sudan 2009*.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE), Government of Southern Sudan, *National Baseline Household Survey 2009*.
- <sup>8</sup> Whereby revenues from oilfields in the South are split 50:50 between the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), and revenues from the northern fields go entirely to GoNU.
- <sup>9</sup> World Food Programme, *Annual Needs and Livelihoods Assessment (ANLA) 2009/2010*.
- <sup>10</sup> World Food Programme, *Sudan Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)*, May 2006.
- <sup>11</sup> Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Government of Southern Sudan, *Government of Southern Sudan Growth Strategy*, forthcoming 2010.
- <sup>12</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Government of Southern Sudan, *Education Statistics for Southern Sudan 2009*.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan*, available at [www.goss-online.org](http://www.goss-online.org).
- <sup>14</sup> Civil Servant at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, interview by author, Juba, Southern Sudan, May 7, 2010.
- <sup>15</sup> Ministry of Health; Ministry of Social Development; Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Ministry of Environment, Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism; Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development.
- <sup>16</sup> Participant in focus group discussion led by author with students and youth union members in Juba, Southern Sudan, June 10, 2010.
- <sup>17</sup> S. Abdelnour et al., *Technical, Vocational, and Entrepreneurial Capacities in Southern Sudan: Assessment and Opportunities*, York University Centre for Refugee Studies and Plan International Canada, 2010.
- <sup>18</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Southern Sudan, *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Analysis 2009/2010*, unpublished.
- <sup>19</sup> Tomash Obura, Deputy Director for Youth, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, interview by author, May 12, 2010.
- <sup>20</sup> Richard Mwixya, Managing Director, Juba Catering Services, interview by author, June 7, 2010.
- <sup>21</sup> Trainer, Juba Technical Secondary School, Plan International workshop on technical and vocational education and training in Southern Sudan, Juba, Southern Sudan, May 13, 2010.
- <sup>22</sup> Alternative Education provider, interview by author, Juba, Southern Sudan, May 11, 2010.
- <sup>23</sup> Participant in focus group discussion led by author with female trainees at the Save the Children VTC in Akot, Southern Sudan, May 16, 2010.
- <sup>24</sup> Participant in focus group discussion led by author with secondary school students and youth union members in Wau, Southern



Sudan, May 26, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> IOM Tracking of Spontaneous Returns Project, *Total Returns to South Sudan Post CPA to June 2009*, available at [http://www.iom.ch/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/countries/docs/tracking\\_returns\\_annual\\_report.pdf](http://www.iom.ch/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/countries/docs/tracking_returns_annual_report.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> R. Drichi and K. Shimizu, *Number of Returnees to South Sudan Passes the 300 000 mark*, UNHCR News Stories, February 10, 2009, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/4991a8de2.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Participants in focus group discussion led by author with former trainees of Juba Catering Services, Juba, Southern Sudan, June 7, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Secondary education in Uganda is divided into two stages: Upon completion of Senior 4 (S4) students sit their O-level examinations. Those who pass successfully may then proceed to S5 and S6, which constitute the A-level period.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Juma, "Boda" driver, interview by author, Juba, Southern Sudan, June 11, 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Training service provider, interview by author, Wau, Southern Sudan, May 26, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Mwixya, Managing Director of Juba Catering Services, interview by author, June 7, 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Marian, Secretary General of the Lakes State Youth Union, interview by author, May 17, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Both unpublished.

<sup>34</sup> P. Collier, *Post-Conflict Recovery: How Should Strategies Be Distinctive?*, Centre for the Study of African Economies, Department of Economics, Oxford University, Oxford, 2009.

<sup>35</sup> Wau hotel manager, interview by author, Wau, May 27, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Rosa Kon, trainer at the Save the Children VTC, interview by author, Akot, Southern Sudan, May 16, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> The demand for computer courses has resulted in these becoming commercially viable and some centers have sprung up offering courses in computer skills that vary widely in standards, price and duration.

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning, Government of Southern Sudan, *Approved Budget 2010*, February 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Muwir Bol, trainee at Don Bosco VTC and beneficiary of the EMDH alternative education program, interview by author, May 26, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Suali Thomas, trainee at the Save the Children VTC, interview by author, May 15, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, Government of Southern Sudan, *Southern Sudan Vocational Training Policy* (final draft), December 2008, in possession of author.

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Since 1989, the Women's Refugee Commission has advocated vigorously for policies and programs to improve the lives of refugee and displaced women, children and young people, including those seeking asylum—bringing about lasting, measurable change.

