

THE EPISCOPAL UNIVERSITY :

A NEW UNIVERSITY

FOR SOUTH SUDAN & SUDAN

Creating a University in the Midst of Conflict: Why it is important!



If we want South Sudan to be stable and prosperous, we must invest in the education of its people at all levels. To make this happen in the present face of continuous conflict requires commitment, dedication and sacrifice. We need to be optimistic that wars and violence must not get in the way of investing in higher education and employment.

In 2013, the National Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNSECO, put South Sudan's literacy rate at 27%, making the new nation one of the least literate in the world. And we know that poverty of mind is more dangerous than the material poverty. The less literate we are, the worse we sink into the whirlwind of ignorance and conflict.

In October 2014, a survey by Save the Children observed that children, parents and community leaders affected by the crisis in South Sudan say that education is their number one priority. In fact, they rate it more important than food, water and shelter. One parent was quoted saying, "I am not educated and this makes me vulnerable. The only thing we want is for our children to learn so they are not vulnerable like us." This demonstrates that education is key to fighting ignorance, insecurity, corruption, tribalism, gender-based and sexual violence, and early marriages, among many other things. Education is in the crucial to peace building in South Sudan.

We are excited that our plans for the University have received overwhelming approval: 9 out of 10 people we ask say we should open it now rather than later.

Despite the recent fighting which erupted in July 2016, our university plans are on going. The security situation has not put the project on hold. We are getting on with the implementation of our action plan as agreed during the consultation meeting held on 15th -16th April 2016 in Juba. The report of the meeting has been distributed to stakeholders. We have started to create the university website and logo, developed the overall organisation chart and governance structure, and mapped out the foundation programme courses and plans for implementation. The foundation programme draft is under review and discussion.

In the next three months until Christmas, we will prepare a first draft budget to be reviewed by the Project Management Board (PMB) and ECSSUP (Partners) so that we can kick-start phase 1 of our fundraising plan. The budget includes employment of four additional staff to help run the university office, transport costs, government fees for the necessary land survey, and fees for the National Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to inspect the proposed university colleges. In addition, the task force and PMB will hold its first meeting to review the curriculum development, identify extra resources to deliver the curricula, and agree on a launch date for the foundation programme.

We pray that you take action to support us financially wherever you can and pray for us as we embark on our journey to make the dream of a new university a reality so that, when the security situation is more peaceful, our people will have the opportunity of the education they want. God bless you all.