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**Higher Education's Ethical Commitment as a Base for Quality Teacher Education and Training in South Sudan**

By

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to examine the level of ethical commitment Higher Education in South Sudan has for improvement of quality of teachers' education. Identify the challenges that Higher Education, encounter in provision of quality education to teachers. Propose solutions that tutors and policy makers may adopt to improve teacher education. To ensure that the country produce qualified teachers who in turn can impart quality, and improve primary and secondary school system. It is crucial for a country to develop qualified human resources. The conceptual framework of quality education was used to argue that South Sudan Higher Education should be committed to examine their teacher education system. The literature review method was employed to collect information. Findings and recommendations have been provided for South Sudan's Tutors, and policy makers for improvement of teachers' education.

**Key words:** South Sudan, Higher Education, Ethical Commitment, Quality Teacher Education

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### **Introduction**

South Sudan government made effort to plan and make programmes and policies that, would improve education system in the country given its significance to development of human resource. But it met a lot of challenges in the process that even the teachers' education was hampered (Beleli, 2007). Teacher education is fundamental in development of any country in the world, since teachers are the one forming and imparting ethical values to the future human resource. Main, Brogolia and Bonfanti, (2019) argue that, higher education institution play a crucial role in formation and transformation of learners, most especially the universities. But in the context of this study, we examined the teacher training colleges as part of the higher educational institutions. Since teachers are the foundation of all learning and moral change in human beings.

The higher education is a level where learners are expected to make their contribution to the process of learning or imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes, show their innovation and creativity. In this case the definition of higher education will not only refer to universities but to all Tertiary institutions of learning (South Sudan Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Policy Framework, 2012).

A brief history of teacher professional development in South Sudan shows that prior to the war period, which was 1980s there were about six teacher training institutes spread in various parts of the country. But by mid 1980s the government decided that all primary teachers must be university graduates, so the Teacher Training Colleges were attached to operate under universities. By the 1990s war intensified in the country so teacher training institutions were shut down and only two remain operational but could not serve the entire country due to insecurity in roads (Hewison, 2009). In 2005 there was a spell of peace period and schools reopened but there was shortage of trained teachers.

Brinkey,(2016) stated that after South Sudan's independence, one of the crucial project that government embarked on was education, most especially basic education. There were very many primary schools opened but most of the teachers were untrained. Not much was done on training of teachers although a few teacher training institutes were opened but could not solve the problem of the overwhelming numbers of pupils. The quality of education offered to teachers was also wanting. Yet if South Sudan is to develop; teachers' are the pillars that can lay a foundation for the development of the country. Teachers are core of professional human transformation because they don't only impart knowledge but moral values. Therefore, it is significant that teacher education is taken seriously, because teachers can only impart what they have, if they are not educated they cannot impart morals or ethical values for the production of ethical professionals (Amollo and Ganira, 2017). It's against this back ground that this article attempts to discuss the significance of ethical commitment to quality teacher education.

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### **Statement of the Problem**

The higher education ethical commitment is very significant because the achievement of any education system is determined by quality of teachers, and effective teaching methods and learning. Teachers play a central role in development of society because the foundation of every profession is based on education which is provided by teachers (Nagoba and Mantri, 2015). Currently in South Sudan the value of the teaching profession has depreciate in the sight of the society. There are many factors that seems to have influenced it, factors such as corruption, political agitation, low remuneration and lack of commitment to ethics in teachers' education. According to Brinkley, (2016) the quality of education that is offered to teachers is rather poor thus, teachers graduate but still lack competence in the field. The stakeholders, parents and the students complain of the type of training that is being provided at the higher educational institution most especially for the teachers. Today many young people in South Sudan express their desires to become business people but not teachers. Complains of the stakeholders, parents and Students provoked the interest of the researcher to investigate the reasons behind the deterioration of the value of teaching profession. Higher Education level of commitment to ethics is very crucial in provision of quality teachers but unfortunately the case is not true in South Sudan.

In the twenty first century society is talking of competence base education, where learners are taught skills of creativity, application of skills practically where the teacher is only a guide and the learner is the center of the teaching and learning. But in the case of South Sudan, although the Competence based curriculum was introduced in 2012, teachers still practice teacher centered teaching and learning methods. The failure of the higher educational institution to get committed to training teachers on the method of learner center education is the other problem that this article is examining.

### **Ethical Commitment**

Ethics and commitment are two values that have close relationship. In our discussion we first defined the two terms and later discussed their significance in relation to production of educational professionals and Quality of teachers' education. Ethics refers to moral principles that govern a person's behavior. It is a branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles. Morals describe a person's particular values concerning what is right and what is wrong, while ethics refers to broadly moral principles (Webster, 1828).

According to Hussen, Tegegn and Teshome, (2016), commitment is a positive, affective attachment to one's work. Commitment is the result of one's satisfaction with the activity or the job that he/she does. It is a feeling of dedication towards one's profession and job. Commitment just like ethics is a value that influences one's behavior. A committed teacher for instance can be identified from how he/ she does her work, is punctual to duties, diligent in accomplishing tasks, is patient in enduring challenges faced in account of task or job he/she does and so on.

In the twenty-first century, Ethical commitment has become a central aspect in the role that teachers play in education of future professionals. Teachers around the world face a challenge of balancing local, national, global norms and morals as well as ethical values

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(Shobana, and Korathinam, (2017). In most cases in the teacher training colleges the ethical norms are not emphasized or in some instances are not taught at all. This leaves most teachers with a dilemma of how to handle new emerging ethical issues in schools. For instance, the issues of drugs, girl child pregnancies, homosexuals, lesbianism, satanic practices like devil worshipping etc that destabilizes the school community. Ethics lies at the center of the teaching profession, because the future prospects of nations depend on the moral values imparted to student during their college life. It is very important to emphasize ethical commitment in education because it constitutes the bases for social and cultural values and at the same time acts as source of historical memory for contextual issues, for instance political issue on citizenship, democracies, relationships of nations and others (Gluchmanova, 2015).

Broglia and Bonfannti, (2019) argue that research has shown that ethical commitment in Universities and colleges has emphasized availability of code of conduct in the institutions and failure to implement the code resulted in to punitive rewards. The result of such practices in most cases lead to avoidance of practice of the code of conduct or ethical values and people having negative perception of ethical code. This has led to challenges facing institutions of higher learning regarding the practice of moral values in the institutions and in turn the outcomes of the institution have negative behavior not fitting well to society. In order for the institutions of higher learning, most especially the teachers' training colleges to produce ethical professional they need to emphasize the practice of the ethical values in the teachers themselves and then for them to also impart to the learners, it should become a part of college life style so that when the learner comes out of college he/she is already socialized to moral behavior. The picture of Ethics should be repainted as a positive tool for good behavior and not as for punitive action.

There is a misconception about the teaching of ethical values to professional; people tend to think that the teacher knows it all. As such ethics is only limited to the specific disciplines of the learners' choice, but learners should be made to appreciate the position of ethics in the human social, economic and political life. Commitment to ethical practice enables us to develop up right professionals and have up right society which is values directed ( Ozolin, 2005).

Today there are issues of corruption in institutions of higher learning, abuse of laws, of scorn from duties, mismanagement of institutional funds, nepotism, tribalism, racial discrimination, disrespect for community properties and issues of suicide are rampant. Learners have a great power to observe their parents at home and their teachers at school how they behave. They are very sensitive to their environment to copy what is there and the media is also playing a vital role in the life of learners; the adverse effect of the media had made learners accept unrealistic approaches in all sphere of life (Shobana and Kanakarathinam, 2017). The explanation to these sad situations can be found in adherence to teaching and practice of ethical values. Values are utilized to characterize individuals and society and to explain the basis of attitude and behavior (Oluwagbohunmi, 2013). Hawkes, (2009) argues that teaching about values affects teachers' thinking, and consequently the way they teach. It is fundamental that teachers practice values as values are embedded within human attitudes and exhibited through their behavior. Hawkes continued and said teachers are reported to have said that teaching values has a positive effect on the inner world of the learner. They think that by talking about values learners express themselves more clearly, control their behavior and empathize with others. The result of the

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practice of values depicts the call and need for ethical commitment in our teacher education today.

Walker and Donlevy,(2009) stated that ethical commitment deals with human conscience, interprets the human action and it has interactive set of qualities which influences human emotion and behavior. They continue and argue that ethical commitment is fundamental to education leaders and teachers because they influence a big number of people, the teachers, learner, parents and community. Therefore, this suggests that in order for the 21<sup>st</sup> century society to have moral influenced professionals, ethical commitment must be emphasized in the programmes of teacher training so that they can impart to learners. And teachers must cherish ethical values as they deliver their duties. The significance of ethical commitment cannot be limited only to tutors and student teachers. But it applies also on the quality assurance policy makers that as they make policies and supervise the performance of teacher training institutions, they must be guided by ethical values that will help them enforce the quality of education that teachers should have in order to deliver quality. The discussions above all point to the fact that in order for us to have morally upright society, ethical values must be upheld in all sectors of life and that there will be no ethical professionals produced if ethics is not emphasized in the teacher education programme.

### **Quality Teacher Education**

The term quality education is elusive, it has no precise words to define it but scholars attribute certain experiences and values to mean the result of quality education (Haseena and Mohammed, 2015). For instance, values like competence, innovativeness, and practicality, intelligence, and moral values these all if found in an education system, then the system is said to be of quality. Quality education is a crucial concern for most African countries today. But quality has not been effectively achieved in the education system of many countries in Africa South Sudan inclusive. This is because of rapid and unplanned development in the educational sector. Quality in education has two connotations; one is the relevance of educational programmes to the fulfillment of the societal needs and the second refers to the input in the practice of education that promotes quality in the society (Kofu, 2014).

Wang et al. (2011) argue that quality teacher education likewise has no precise agreed upon definition no uniformly accepted concept. Scholars here still attribute quality teacher education to teachers' cognitive resources, competence, their general effective performance and the positive results obtained as a consequence of the competence of the tutors and the tutors' context and credential also are looked upon as some elements that add to quality of teacher education. Smiksha,(2016) defined teacher education as a programme of education, research training of human resources, and equipping teachers to better teach at the basic levels of school ( pre-primary, primary and secondary schools). It is a systematic development of scientific attitude, knowledge, skills and behavior patterns required by an individual to enable him/her perform efficient and effective task. While teacher education programme refers to all issues that are related to teaching profession such as teacher preparation programme, teacher development, schemes of service for school teacher, in general it is a programme of education that characterizes teaching as a specialized profession with distinct features (Kofu, 2014).

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Sahito and Vaisanen (2017) contend that traditionally teachers' education programs were not designed based on concept of quality, the basic need to be acquired was the ability of a teacher to be able to apply the skills on preparation of schemes of work, lesson plan and competency in application of teaching methodologies which were teacher centered. This also did not make provision on how ethical values should be incorporated to the various disciplines taught in schools. In the absence of adherence to ethical commitment, the vices of cheating in examinations, of scorning duties, accepting bribes from parents, students and the other vices find their way in to school systems and hamper the quality of the system.

Historically the notion about teacher education emphasized the position of the teacher as a center of knowledge, skills and attitude. The teacher knows it all and the learner was a recipient of the knowledge imparted by the teacher, but today the world is advocating for a teacher education that prepares the teachers holistically. An education that prepare teachers to have professional teaching force, having steering skills that enable them to help learners discover their potentials through motivation, encouragement to let learner try out new skills of doing things and provoking innovativeness in learners. Besides that, the key element in life have to be encouraged in teacher education, that is having a teacher education that builds the teachers' knowledge on the foundation of ethical values, which will enable them to handle the crucial official exercises of their job in future (Zelchner, 2014). For instance, if teachers master ethical values and are committed to ethical practices, they will be able to manage examinations without stories of leakages of examinations, they will be punctual to their duties, they will have interest to try out new ways and methodologies that require more effort and time in teaching. The teachers' remuneration will not be the only value for which a teacher works. Teaching will change from being just a duty accomplished because of remuneration to a means of helping others to develop into useful members of the society.

Quality teacher education and provision of resources; Teachers are said to be central to the quality of any deliberation in the educational system, but the quality of education cannot be determined by teachers only. There are other factors that even make the teachers what they are. In the context of teacher education, other resources like the programmes that are effective, efficient and relevant to the current societal needs, Effective ethical values emphasis, competent tutors, physical infrastructure, communication facilities, electronic technological equipments( computers, technological programmes..) and effective selection procedure for the student teachers and the general environment all these contribute to provision of effective quality teacher education (Sanyal, 2013). Kofu, (2014) stated that teacher education programmes play a central part in the process of development and formation of quality teacher's education. If the teachers' education programme is relevant to the societal needs, up holds social ethical values, the outcomes will be production of quality professional teachers who in turn will provide quality teaching in the schools. The end results of a holistic teacher education will always lead to a transformation and development of the society, having ethically upright, committed people to the services of the community. Zeichner, (2014) on the other hand argues that research has shown that in the world today there are some teacher education programmes that do not meet the world quality standards, which should be closed down for they no longer meet the societal needs. Researchers in the current society are interested in providing clear understanding of the

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characteristics of effective teacher education programmes that form teachers to be able to promote learning in the learners. Researchers have devised ways and programmes that prepare teachers to be informed of how to use the modern technology in the process of teaching and provoking learners to be innovative and adventurers.

Teacher education role in enhancing learner centre teaching methodologies must be a part and parcel of teacher training to equip the student teacher with the skills of how to impart knowledge in the modern society. Kelly, Hohmann, Pratt and Dorg, (2012) highlighted the significance of teachers in influencing learners experience in classroom exercise. They stated that research has shown that specific political economies of countries and different systemic and accountability structures in which teachers work affect the concept of teaching and this is visible in their working practices. Taking such argument to consideration we contend that the quality of teacher education is also affected by such circumstances therefore, there is need to improve the quality of our teacher education institutions' programmes and methodologies of teaching to suit the current societal needs. The central thing that the current society needs most is having ethically committed tutors and teachers who are determined to transform society into ethically up right society where human values are up held, where humanity is the center of life and where justice and peace are honored.

The role of quality assurance officers in school police development, supervision, and monitoring and evaluation activities of teacher training institutions is very significant in promoting quality of teachers' education. In order to have effective and efficient quality teacher education, quality assurance and standards procedures of supervision, monitoring and evaluation should be based on authentic data gathered from research survey from the stakeholders, that is to say student teachers, tutors and the public ( Neihart and Ling, 2017). The student teachers as the recipients of the training will tell what they need most in their training. Tutors having experience in teaching the teachers will also express the challenges that they face and new innovation skills that they have discovered to be effective for the modern teacher. The public being the recipients of the services that teachers offer in schools for children will tell what is missing in the training of the teachers that need to be incorporated to the teacher education. All these finding put together will enable quality assurance officers and policy maker to construct policies and programmes that are suitable for the society. For instance, the need for ethical commitment and practice in the learners life that is very important element of human life, if it is pointed by the stakeholders the programme developers will ensure that adherence to ethical values is emphasized for trainers to practice and also inform learner of the importance of such values.

Another instance, in which the quality assurance can serve the quality function of teachers' education, is through authentic accreditation programme that maintains high standards to establish professional standards for preparation of teachers so that teachers can meet the national standard set by the national ministry of education of each country. The quality assurance policies must emphasize on provision of modern resources for teacher education institution order for them to be able to use appropriate modern equipment in imparting knowledge and also teach the student teachers on how to manipulate the equipment in teaching. And accreditation should be in compliance with the national educational regulations, adhere to professional norms, have positive outcome and create a positive

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student learning environment in institutions and strong student learning achievement and life skills (World Bank Report, 2009).

### **Methodology**

The literature review method was used to gather data for this study. This is a research method that involves analysis of documents and texts that have relevant information to the current research problem (Nyangau, 2014). Systematic and critical literature review was made to acquire accurate and relevant data to the research problem. Information from the internet published books on quality teacher education and ethical commitment in enhancing teacher quality education were reviewed. Quality assurance policies, analytical international conference reports and journals pertaining to quality teacher education were all reviewed.

The literature revealed what was going on, in other parts of the world regarding teacher quality education and in African countries and in South Sudan. Realist review and meta-narrative reviews were utilized to synthesize the data. Realist reviews are new set of approach to synthesize research that search for explanatory hub. The realist review discharged the mechanism of how and why complex intervention succeed or fail in particular settings (Machumu, 2014).

### **Challenges in Quality Teacher Education**

There are many challenges that teacher educational institutions face in process of trying to meet the quality of teacher education. Sanyal, (2007) highlighted some of the challenges faced in teacher training institutions as follows:

It is difficult to define and measure quality because it means different thing to different stakeholders, thus leaving the teacher training administrators in dilemma of not knowing what their clients really want. One of the principles of quality provision is that the organization or the institution must establish the real needs of their clients and satisfy, so in this case it is difficult to satisfy the clients. There are methodological problems related to measurement of quality, since many characteristics of quality are not measureable.

Secondly there is lack of trained tutors on the modern skills of teaching in teachers' training institutions (competence base skills of teaching). For instance, the use of scientific electronic devices and programmes for teaching student teachers, the use of the power point for teaching and in some instances no electricity for them to use the devices and also no computers.

The programmes designed for the teachers' training institutions are not relevant to the current societal needs. The programme of the institution being the central thing that drives the whole institution, if not well designed may always derail the smooth running of the institution. And the results affect the whole educational chain since teachers are central in educational activities. The curriculum that is offered in the teachers' training institutions is not relevant to the current societal needs. The result of poor teacher education is also felt in the basic schools, teachers are not delivering effectively the knowledge, skills and moral they are suppose to impart.

There is a problem of some nations especially in Africa and South Sudan for that matter, that the teacher education institutions are not taken care of seriously, the programmes are not



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taken care of by the authorities responsible so the tutors who are in the ground also take advantage of the negligence and relax on their duties.

Poor selection procedure for student teachers, in today society people belief that the profession of teachers is the last thing one can do after failing from others. In most instances people who go to the school of education are people who do not have interest in teaching but go there because their marks did not qualify them for other professions which they considered to be better than teaching. There are a lot of defects in the selection procedure of teacher education. There are no clear policies and procedures which are to be followed while admitting students for teacher education. Any student who has met the minimum requirement is accepted with little or without any interview on the motives for wanting to train as a teacher.

There are also poor accreditation services by the accreditation bodies, they do not pay attention to supervise and evaluate the activities of the teacher training institutions. Such significant things like infrastructure, teaching material, communication devices, environments may be wanting but since the accreditation bodies are not objective in their evaluation they just leave things that way no control over educational activities. This is an indicator also that the ethical values are not adhered to in those institutions.

Smiksha, (2016) contends that the other challenge is lack of scientific and technological advancement, since the world has become a global village and interdependent. There is need for the educational programmes for teachers to be advanced to use the latest technologies for developing teaching strategies that fit the modern society. But this factor is ignored while delivering knowledge. Traditional methods of teaching are still widely used for teaching the upcoming teachers. Students are not exposed to new innovations and experimentation. Modern classroom communication devices are found negligible in institutions.

Lack of creativity in both the teacher education institutions' administrators and in the student, teachers is also a challenge. Since creativity plays a central role in the activities of a teacher and it has direct contact with the cognitive abilities of a person as devised by Bloom on his higher mental order placing creativity at the top (Smiksha, 2016).

Micro-teaching and teaching practices are vital elements in educational practices, but teacher education institutions do not pay attention to diligent performance of micro-teaching and teaching practice. Yet these are the core activities that enable the student teacher to acquire the skills of teaching in the real classroom. The duration of teaching practice is either not enough for the practice or the student teachers are not supervised enough during their teaching practice. The end result is the production of sub-standard teachers for the schools.

There is also the challenge of lack of funds for running teacher training institutions. Since funds are a back bone of every institution's performance, that obstructs the effective running of most teacher education institutions. The administrators are not able to provide the teaching material required for teaching. They are not able to provide transportation of supervisors to go to schools to supervise student teachers and tutors are also not remunerated regularly all these bring about de-motivation in tutors and reluctance in accomplishing their duties effectively (Oluwagbohunmi,2013). Lack of coordination between tutors and principals on the function of the teacher education institutions, as such they fail to identify the crucial new needs that have emerged in the institutions.

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The challenge of globalization and Erosion of ethical values has stormed the world. Now advancement in science and technology has made the world become a small village accessible to all people. The internet services have made easy access to all information, but in turn have negative effects also on the students who are enticed to unethical deeds. The young always run after attractive things that look appealing to the sight, without giving a second thought so in that way the traditional ethical values are eroded in the process of trying to be modern and scientific. For instance, when they watch movies of war, fighters using machine guns they admire and begin desiring to also do the same, the result is we have many gung stars in the streets of our cities; the same is to any kind of crime, rape, cheating, and theft to mention a few.

### **Conclusion**

Higher education's ethical commitment cannot be undermined in provision of quality teacher education. Teachers' education remains a crucial weapon in the development of South Sudan. Although the government has tried to invest in education, there is still much more that is required in order make teacher education become a reality. Ethical commitment is a base to moral living therefore, it is very significant for the teacher education institutions to consider designing programmes that includes ethical values practices in the institutions and there after the training helps the teachers to fit well in society. Policy makers and all who are concerned about teachers' education must ensure that quality education is offered in the institutions. And that quality cannot just come but requires all the other factors put in place. Teaching /learning resources as well as having a conducive environment for the learning to take place must be provided. The Teachers' training program must be design carefully in order to fit the real societal needs of today. Teachers must be encouraged use and also to be friend the modern technology in order to be able to impart knowledge effectively. The only way for South Sudan to fit the current world economic, social and material competition is to make haste in improvement of her educational sector.

### **Recommendations**

The government of South Sudan through the Ministry of Education should consider improving the quality of the teachers' training institutions and the programmes that are offered. Teachers' Education programmes should be designed by qualified and experienced programme designers to suit the current needs of South Sudanese society and the global standard of teachers. The curriculum for the teacher's training should be carefully development and ethical considerations should be included in the content, to enable tutors to impart holistic and quality education to student teachers.

The educational policy makers should consider making policies that will guide the process of students' selection for teachers' training institutions. There should be some interview and placement tests that will test the capability of the candidate to become a teacher. One should be made to express their motives for desiring to become teachers and counseled accordingly to enable people who go to the school of education to really give themselves for the service of the students holistically.

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Ministry of Education Science and technology should provide the modern scientific equipment needed in the teachers' training, for promotion of the modern skills of teaching so as to improve the quality of teacher education. There should be in-service training courses to prepare tutors on the modern methodologies of teaching and manipulation of the modern machines for teaching.

The government should consider allocating sufficient funds for running teachers training institutions. The teacher' salaries should also be paid promptly to motivate them to give their time fully for the service of the students. Funds are the back bone of every institution so if there are no funds, the institutions will not run well and the facilities need for the running of the institutions will not be purchased also.

Creativity should be one of the values that should be encouraged in the teachers' education. The world today is singing a song of creativity and innovativeness so teachers should be in the fore front of creativity and innovation because they are the people who should impart knowledge and skills to others.

Quality education needs constant supervision and monitoring of the activities of the institutions. The Ministry of Education Science and technology in South Sudan should provide quality assurance and standards offices with the facilities to enable them supervise the institutions and improve the quality of teacher education. They should introduce the new skills and methodologies on how to impart knowledge practically.

Ethical Values are very crucial for running and flourishing of any institution. The educational policy makers should ensure that in any program of education there must be a provision for imparting and practicing of moral values in all educational activities. There must indicators that show that ethical practices are very significant part of the program on offer, so that the students too may values ethical regulations and values practice while in the institutions and also when out of the institution in the society.

There should be coordination and cooperation between the ministry of education science and technology and the Teachers' training institutions, so that there is smooth flow of activities between ministry and Teachers' institutions. The coordination and cooperation will enable the people concern in the running of these institutions to see the real needs of the institutions and provide for it promptly. Teachers' education is the only hope for the future of South Sudan's development, because they have the potential knowledge of how to develop a nation and how to help others develop the country.

The South Sudanese Community and Stake holders have a responsibility to voice out the needs of improving the teacher education in South Sudan to the government and to well wishers. They too should cooperate in giving ideas and physical help on improvement of the teacher education and also on how to motivate tutors and teachers to value their profession as a noble profession that the world cannot do without it. For example, in circumstances when teachers have to quit their profession because it is not paying and is considered least compared to other secondary professions. In moments when parents advice their children not to apply for a teaching profession because teachers are poor. The teaching profession does not pay so what they invested on the learner will not be gained by teaching.

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