



# Abukloi

*We Can Do It!*

## History and Vision





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## Message from the Founder

### *Why Abukloi Foundation Exists*

I was born in the country that is today South Sudan.

South Sudan gained independence on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011, after its people voted — heart and soul — to separate from Sudan. That came at the heels of many years of vicious civil wars between the then northern and southern regions of Sudan, and it made South Sudan the newest and most fragile nation in the world.



It had taken outside intervention to even get the warring parties to the negotiating table. The George W. Bush administration supported the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the people of South Sudan as they fought to resist the onslaught of the fundamentalist regime of Sudan under Omar al Bashir. It fell under the U.S.'s antiterrorism efforts: al Bashir had harbored sympathies for radical jihadists, which eventually landed the north Sudan government on the American list of "terror-sponsoring states." Sudan had once even hosted al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in the 1990s.

In this regard, there's a "special relationship" between the U.S. and South Sudan, historically. And the U.S. support for South Sudan did not end with independence. Americans continued to be key developmental partners in every respect: from health to education to physical infrastructure. The United States, for instance, funded the construction of the only modern highway in South Sudan, the Juba-Nimule highway. Private American entities have also contributed billions of dollars in aid to South Sudan since 2005.

Prior to Sudan's independence from the British in 1956, the British colonial administration had little educational infrastructure established in the southern Sudan, and Christian missionaries assumed responsibility for formal education there. In the South, education suffered during Sudan's civil wars (1955–72; 1983–2005), which resulted in more than 4 million lives lost and over 5 million people displaced in the two wars. During that time, the Sudanese national authorities had curtailed missionary activities, which were running most of the schools, in an attempt to "Arabize and Islamize" the southern schools and people. Beginning in the late 1980s, UNICEF coordinated educational instruction efforts in southern Sudan. But limited resources continued to be an obstacle, as was the ongoing civil conflict, which continued to negatively affect access to schooling. As a result, for decades many southern Sudanese were deprived of the opportunity for an education through the post-independence of South Sudan from Sudan.

## *Why this work matters*

The following document underscores what the Abukloi Foundation is and why it was established. But I want to say why it's vital.

Every moment I think about the challenges facing the newest nation on earth, I feel obligated to do my very best not to betray the ultimate sacrifice made by generations after generations of South Sudanese. That includes my own mother and siblings who were massacred.

I believe the best hope for South Sudan is through education, because individuals, families, communities, and nations prosper when citizens are educated. Nelson Mandela once said, "education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world." This is exactly what I and the Abukloi Foundation's board of directors are trying to do.

As a seven-year-old child I made it safely through the journey to the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and eventually to the United States of America, where I received sponsorship from a church in Virginia. I — alongside the thousands of other children — had survived a journey that lasted hundreds of miles. We were the fortunate few who made it out alive.

Since that time, I finished grade school. I went on to earn a bachelor's degree in International Studies and Political Science from Old Dominion University and a Master of Art in Organizational Leadership from Regent University. I married a beautiful American woman, Stephanie, and together we have three children.

Despite establishing a good life in America, I have pledged my life to help my country of birth and ultimately to return there with my family.

I have been sharing my story and message of hope to educate for years to support the people of South Sudan. I am supported by the interest group of several United Methodist ministers and other concerned individuals in Virginia. Many people wonder why I want to leave the well-established life in America to return to almost nothing in South Sudan. Here is my answer based on my personal guiding principles:

1. God created each of us for the reasons greater than ourselves; we should love kindly, do justice, and follow God's guidance;
2. It is not an obligation for an individual to complete the work, neither are they at liberty not to start the work;
3. One person can make a difference;
4. Make yourself count;
5. Never, never give up.

Based on these principles, Abukloi Foundation is my life and I believe God kept me alive for the reasons that are bigger than myself.

I encourage each of you to join me and the Abukloi Board of Directors in making the difference in the lives of young people in South Sudan. The children of South Sudan need you and me, please join!



Angelo Maker  
Founder of the Abukloi Foundation

## What Is Abukloi?

*“The aid given to lift up countries in need often gets used to dealing with the endless symptoms of crisis. It doesn’t solve the root issues, and before long everyone moves on to the next crisis. The story of Abukloi is about choosing to stay with a mission until it is complete. That is what Abukloi is doing for the people of Rumbek.” – Margaret Kutz, former Abukloi board president*

The word Abukloi comes from Dinka, one of the traditional Nilotic languages spoken by many in South Sudan. It means: “We can do it.” The South Sudanese founders selected this name to reflect the resilient and positive spirit they wanted in a school.

Our vision is to create a space where all South Sudanese can come together to learn, live, and work to make South Sudan a peaceful and fruitful nation. We are generating various self-sustaining projects to assist the country’s development. We are not graduating people who can be employed but citizens who can create employment opportunities.

A diverse group of South Sudanese and American members from business, civic service, education, and ministry leads us. Our teaching staff and administration are inspiring educators from East Africa, primarily from South Sudan.

We know that success will not come from forcing tightly held beliefs but through open dialog and the courage to take on new challenges. Abukloi intentionally works to reflect the values of the Rumbek community while inspiring new ways of thinking. It is essential that local perspectives inform our programs so that we are responding to real — not just outwardly perceived — needs.

We seek solutions that go beyond academic standards and teach the appropriate skills needed to develop the nation. Where values and techniques diverge, we listen and learn how to improve current methods and systems. Strategic partnerships provide the missing resources to bring local knowledge to fruition. This allows the foundation to build local institutional and human capacity by providing funding, training, and exposure to new technology and ideas.

We are not simply providing secondary education. At Abukloi, we create involved citizens for a new democratic and prosperous nation. The ancient people of South Sudan will help lead the way for a prosperous African future.



Mary Cassidy-Anger,  
Board President, Abukloi Foundation

## History

For generations, Sudan has endured violent conflict within and across its borders.

The staggering conflict was brought to the world's attention, in large part, through the experiences of the thousands of children from southern Sudan who fled merciless attacks by the Mujahideen by traveling on foot over hundreds of miles to reach safety in nearby African countries. Collectively, the children that survived the journey are known as the "Lost Boys" of Sudan.

It was one of those émigrés who first recognized the need for Abukloi.

### **ANGELO'S STORY**

A Sudanese expatriate, Angelo Mangar Maker, provided the original vision for Abukloi.

Angelo was one of the "Lost Boys," the 3,000 orphans brought to the United States in 2001 after fleeing the Sudanese conflict.

His village in Rumbek had been attacked during the civil war that escalated in Southern Sudan in 1983, which claimed over two million lives. Then only 7 years old, Angelo watched helplessly as his mother and two brothers were brutally murdered. Desperately trying to survive, he joined a large group of boys who were also displaced, and they began their long, hazardous journey across Sudan into neighboring Ethiopia. Many died along the way because of a lack of food and water, exposure to the elements, and attacks from wild animals and the government helicopters that had bombed their villages.

After living in a refugee camp in Ethiopia for three years, the Lost Boys were forced back to Sudan when the Ethiopian government was itself overthrown. Ethiopian rebels and the Sudanese government attacked their group before they could even leave the country. Some fled across the river separating Sudan and Ethiopia, but many perished because they did not know how to swim or were attacked by alligators. Once again, Angelo managed to survive. He and the remaining boys spent another harrowing year trying to stay alive in Sudan, starving and hiding from a government that still wanted them dead so they would not grow into adults and seek revenge.

The United Nations took notice of the situation and removed the boys from Sudan, placing them in refugee camps in Kenya. They lived there for 9 years and received some education. In 1999, the United States began a program that focused on bringing these children to America so that they would have a chance to educate themselves and return to Sudan to build a better future for their people. This program continued until heightened security after the 9/11 bombings forced the program to shut down.

Angelo now resides in Newport News, Va., with his wife, Stephanie Maker, and their three young children. He has bachelor's degrees in International Studies and Political Science from Old Dominion University and a Master's of Art in Organizational Leadership from Regent University. He remains active in numerous efforts to foster awareness of the plight of the South Sudanese people, working to create a better future for his friends and family in South Sudan.

## A New Country, New Challenges

South Sudan gained independence in 2011, after decades of civil war.

When South Sudan voted for independence from Khartoum, they were a country with no infrastructure, massive malnutrition, and one of the world's highest mortality rates. War and neglect had left two million in southern Sudan dead and another four million displaced. Generations of oppression had also devastated South Sudan's economy.

Since then, the history has been fractious.

It's a young country. More than 70 percent of South Sudan's population is under the age of 30. But South Sudan's youth have the least accessible primary education system in the world, with only 47 percent of school-age (7-14) children attending school. Today, only about 20 percent of students complete primary school. These statistics are even more daunting among females. Only 11 percent of girls have access to primary education, and only 5 percent complete eighth grade. These challenges are compounded by the lack of formal education and skills of their parents.

In 2009, Angelo Maker returned to his hometown of Rumbek with a few American friends. In Rumbek, they listened to heartbreaking stories of endurance. They also learned about the community's passionate desire to build schools and build a peaceful, prosperous nation.

A group of Angelo's friends and acquaintances formed a board and started fundraising to build a school, called Sudan Action Leadership Team (SALT) in connection with the United Methodist Church. In 2010, that was dissolved to become an independent nonprofit, and Abukloi was formed.

In September 2013, four members of the U.S. board traveled to South Sudan to start a secondary school in Rumbek. In-country, arrangements were made with the Catholic Church for the use of two classrooms. More than 100 students expressed interest and 45 were registered as students. Within a few weeks, four local teachers were hired.

As the U.S. Board was building awareness about life in South Sudan to raise funds to construct a school during the 2013 trip, members of the local Rumbek Community Development Council approached them with a proposal. A school was constructed in Rumbek, but there were no funds to operate the school, so these brand-new facilities stood vacant. The Foundation had funds for operations but insufficient to build a facility. Thus, a partnership was formed.

Four teachers were immediately hired: three local men and a woman from Kenya. An inaugural class of 90 students was enrolled. **And, in the spring of 2014, Abukloi Secondary School officially opened.**



<https://geology.com/world/sudan-satellite-image.shtml>

## Timeline

### **2001 – Angelo Maker, a “Lost Boy” of Sudan, arrives at an airport in Richmond, Va.**

- ◆ He is sponsored by Wellspring United Methodist Church in Williamsburg, Va.
- ◆ Angelo settles in Newport News with other Sudanese.

**2004** – Angelo receives his GED.

**2005** – Angelo earns his associate degree.

**2007 – Angelo marries Stephanie;** United Methodists in Virginia organize Sudan Action Leadership Team (SALT) headed by Rev. Doug Forrester.

**2008** – Angelo receives U.S. citizenship, becoming a dual citizen; Angelo and Stephanie have their first child.

**2009** – Leaders of SALT meet with Bishop Kammerer of Virginia and the Bishop of East Africa. A team from the United Methodist Church in Virginia travels to South Sudan in late 2009 to explore needs and response options. After meeting again with Bishop Kammerer, SALT decided to dissolve and became its own non-profit organization.

### **2010 – Abukloi Enterprises is established** (its name is later changed to Abukloi Foundation).

- ◆ A board is constituted with the task of starting and operating a secondary school in Rumbek, South Sudan.
- ◆ Abukloi becomes a 501(c)3

**2011** – . Philip Nyumba, a Kenyan with extensive UN experience, is hired as in-country director.

- ◆ Angelo receives his bachelor’s degree.

**2012** – *Akuac payam* donates property — 100 sq. meters — to Abukloi. The board constructs a fence around it.

- ◆ Abukloi paid for a borehole to be drilled on the Akuac property to provide water to the school and community.

**2013 – Volunteer Board members start teaching first classes** from borrowed classrooms at Catholic school

- ◆ Four teachers are hired
- ◆ Regent University partnership for trauma counseling initiated

### **2014 – Abukloi Secondary School Officially Opens**

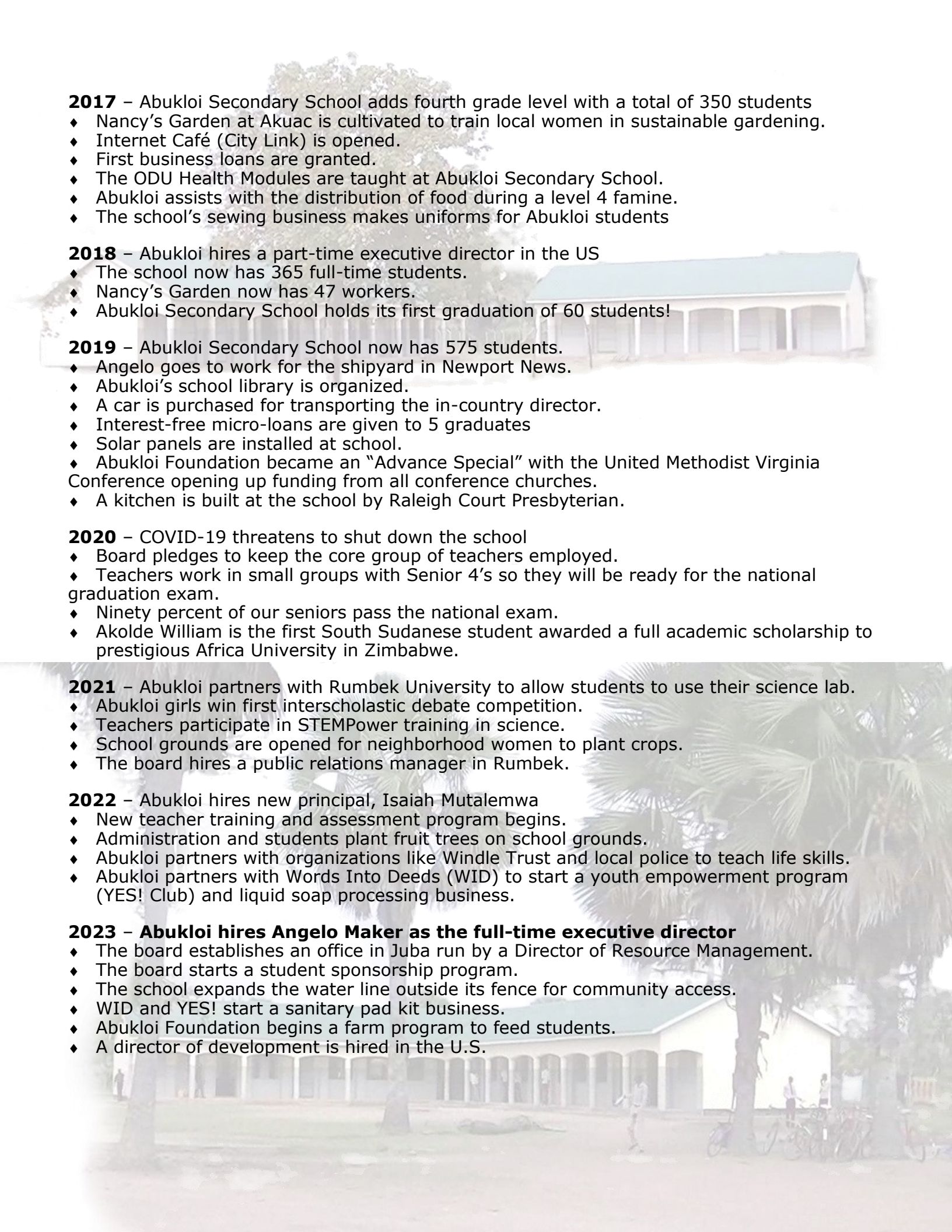
- ◆ Rumbek Central County offers Abukloi unused school buildings in *Matangai payam*
- ◆ Justin Mathok, South Sudan football star, is hired as the in-country director.
- ◆ Board hires two more teachers for a total of six.

**2015** – Rumbek University selects Abukloi Secondary School to send their student teachers

- ◆ A demonstration garden is started and grows ground nuts.
- ◆ A bank account is opened for Abukloi in South Sudan.
- ◆ Students are taught by a board member basic sewing skills and a sewing machine is purchased for the school.
- ◆ Abukloi Secondary School organizes clubs and sports.

**2016** – Rumbek Community Development Committee (CDC) provides free space for office and internet cafe.

- ◆ Donated rebuilt laptops are taken and students are taught basic computer skills by people from the US.
- ◆ Walmart and Quality Life Services become Abukloi’s first corporate sponsors.

- 
- 2017** – Abukloi Secondary School adds fourth grade level with a total of 350 students
- ◆ Nancy’s Garden at Akuac is cultivated to train local women in sustainable gardening.
  - ◆ Internet Café (City Link) is opened.
  - ◆ First business loans are granted.
  - ◆ The ODU Health Modules are taught at Abukloi Secondary School.
  - ◆ Abukloi assists with the distribution of food during a level 4 famine.
  - ◆ The school’s sewing business makes uniforms for Abukloi students

- 2018** – Abukloi hires a part-time executive director in the US
- ◆ The school now has 365 full-time students.
  - ◆ Nancy’s Garden now has 47 workers.
  - ◆ Abukloi Secondary School holds its first graduation of 60 students!

- 2019** – Abukloi Secondary School now has 575 students.
- ◆ Angelo goes to work for the shipyard in Newport News.
  - ◆ Abukloi’s school library is organized.
  - ◆ A car is purchased for transporting the in-country director.
  - ◆ Interest-free micro-loans are given to 5 graduates
  - ◆ Solar panels are installed at school.
  - ◆ Abukloi Foundation became an “Advance Special” with the United Methodist Virginia Conference opening up funding from all conference churches.
  - ◆ A kitchen is built at the school by Raleigh Court Presbyterian.

- 2020** – COVID-19 threatens to shut down the school
- ◆ Board pledges to keep the core group of teachers employed.
  - ◆ Teachers work in small groups with Senior 4’s so they will be ready for the national graduation exam.
  - ◆ Ninety percent of our seniors pass the national exam.
  - ◆ Akolde William is the first South Sudanese student awarded a full academic scholarship to prestigious Africa University in Zimbabwe.

- 2021** – Abukloi partners with Rumbek University to allow students to use their science lab.
- ◆ Abukloi girls win first interscholastic debate competition.
  - ◆ Teachers participate in STEMPower training in science.
  - ◆ School grounds are opened for neighborhood women to plant crops.
  - ◆ The board hires a public relations manager in Rumbek.

- 2022** – Abukloi hires new principal, Isaiah Mutalemwa
- ◆ New teacher training and assessment program begins.
  - ◆ Administration and students plant fruit trees on school grounds.
  - ◆ Abukloi partners with organizations like Windle Trust and local police to teach life skills.
  - ◆ Abukloi partners with Words Into Deeds (WID) to start a youth empowerment program (YES! Club) and liquid soap processing business.

- 2023** – **Abukloi hires Angelo Maker as the full-time executive director**
- ◆ The board establishes an office in Juba run by a Director of Resource Management.
  - ◆ The board starts a student sponsorship program.
  - ◆ The school expands the water line outside its fence for community access.
  - ◆ WID and YES! start a sanitary pad kit business.
  - ◆ Abukloi Foundation begins a farm program to feed students.
  - ◆ A director of development is hired in the U.S.

# Abukloi Foundation

Abukloi Foundation's mission is to collaborate with the people of Rumbek to help them rebuild their lives through education and community development and gender equity. All programs are developed in partnership with the school's administrators, the U.S. board, and local leaders and councils in the community and *payams* (local administrators) of Rumbek. It is vital that local perspectives direct programs so we respond to real — not just outwardly perceived — needs.

Abukloi actively works to ensure it is not imposing outside values. Where values and techniques diverge, international funders and board members listen and learn how to improve current methods and systems. Ultimately, the partnership with U.S. donors provides missing resources to bring local knowledge to fruition. This allows the board to build the local institutional and human capacity by providing funding, training, and exposure to new technology and ideas.

The beneficial returns on this model are exponential. Young women, former soldiers, and other displaced persons now have access to education and are encouraged to stay in school and participate in every aspect of the school's programs. The model also brings in self-motivated change within the community. Those whose lives have been dominated by war-time activities now have access to resources that allow them to imagine a different future for themselves and their family. And educating women is changing the cultural norm, encouraging the older generation to take time to learn new skills, and demonstrating the value of education on to the next generation.

## Community Empowerment

Abukloi combats food and job insecurity by empowering the local population to demand the resources they need from the regional or national government, deepening political participation and expanding political consciousness. Business development training shows students that they can create their own economy, generating demand for goods and services that others will be inspired to provide.

All these skills expand creativity, develop problem-solving techniques, and build pathways to success for South Sudan. Students learn alternative ways to respond to conflicting ideas in a country where intercultural conflicts are often addressed with violence.

## Gender Equity

According to UNICEF, communities surveyed throughout South Sudan identify the education of its children — almost universally — as a priority.

But while the education of females is critical for the nation to develop equitably, fewer than 30 percent of all girls have ever attended school of any kind.

Abukloi prioritizes women's education.

Currently, the school has 30 percent female enrollment. That isn't nearly enough. But it's a significant milestone for a society where so many women marry by 18. Abukloi works hard to maintain that enrollment, often engaging with the community and families to persuade them to keep girls and women in school.

For the rest of the country, the stats can be harrowing:

- ◆ Only 11 percent of girls under 18 have access to primary education in South Sudan. ([UNICEF 2023](#))
- ◆ Only 5 percent of girls under 18 in the country complete eighth grade. (UNICEF, 2023).
- ◆ In contrast, 50 percent of girls are married by age 18, with men often [marrying multiple wives](#).

***"Educating women changes the cultural norm, encourages the older generation to take time to learn new skills, and passes the value of education on to the next generation."***

***Education in South Sudan, International Policy Digest (2019)***

At Abukloi, young women are expected to take on **leadership roles** as head girls and prefects. They participate in clubs and school-led businesses. Often, the girls' teams are champions of interscholastic sports and debate. Each year, thirty percent of our graduates are female. Our top female students are offered scholarships to university. In fact, **the first South Sudanese girl to go to Africa University, Akolde William, came from Abukloi.**

We **actively seek women teachers.** Our female teachers play an outsized leadership role on campus. They lead training courses to teach students how to manage small businesses, like liquid soap and feminine sanitary kit production. (The kits include reusable pads and underwear, allowing girls to stay clean and comfortable in class.) Before this project, girls would miss around five school days a month. These pads also protect girls from unwanted "sex for pads" pressures that can lead to unwanted pregnancies and dropping out of school. An estimated 150 girls benefit from these kits every year. Now, they can attend school full-time.

We also rely on our women teachers to **design new programs** to meet our students' needs. They engage students in cultural experiences and creative projects through dance and theater. And they encourage our female students to express both the joys and heartaches of their lives through song and poetry.

Women who get married and/or have children find a safe and **supportive environment** at Abukloi. Teachers work with these students to ensure they complete their Secondary degree. Even if they cannot pursue higher education, educated women break the cycle of disadvantage between generations, setting up the next generation for even greater success.

As Abukloi's founder and executive director says, the school is changing the mindset of the entire community.

*"When girls succeed in school, pass the national exam, and even attend university, others want their daughters to be educated. This benefits not only girls but also their families, communities, and the nation of South Sudan," he adds.*



# Abukloi Foundation Programs



Abukloi Secondary School is educating the future of South Sudan. We teach our students critical thinking and problem-solving through experiential learning. We welcome all learners, no matter their background, beliefs, age, or identity.

With over 650 students, we are committed to girls' education, critical thinking, physical fitness, and conflict resolution. Abukloi students are recognized at the state and national levels in academics, debate, and sports.

Abukloi is committed to tackling food insecurity in Rumbek. Abukloi Farm will not only feed our secondary school but also provide food and economic development for self-reliance.

Beginning with an 100-acre vegetable and legume farm, Abukloi Farm will grow to over 350 acres, providing cereals and produce for sale, fruit trees, agricultural training, jobs, and secondary products.

**Abukloi**  
*Foundation*

**Abukloi**  
**Enterprises**

Abukloi Enterprises will expand on our current entrepreneurial training to provide start-up support, microfinance, and investment opportunities, empowering entrepreneurs to create jobs and drive economic growth.



Abukloi Academy will be a learning environment where secondary students across South Sudan can live, learn, work, and play together in a safe atmosphere and nurture the values of friendship, citizenship, peace, and reconciliation.



Abukloi Foundation has a vision to provide quality health care for the entire Abukloi community. Through preventative medicine, we will reduce the burden of chronic disease.

## Abukloi Secondary School

The citizens of Rumbek have always valued education. Even before independence, the government recognized the potential of Lakes State as a center for education and commerce. Unfortunately, multinational agencies have left secondary education underfunded, in order to focus on primary education.



Generations of war decimated South Sudan's economy. After gaining independence in 2011, it immediately became apparent that food and job training — without the direct aid of foreign organizations — was vital to economic and social growth. Opening spaces for self-determination expands creativity, develops problem-solving techniques, and literally changes destructive community patterns into proactive ones. This realization led Abukloi to emphasize alternative ways to respond to conflicting ideas in a country where intercultural violence is commonplace.

Abukloi, therefore, committed to providing a much-desired secondary school facility.

But Abukloi chose not to focus solely on conventional students aged 14-18, recognizing that the brutal war had left historic gaps in education which would need to be filled to create a stable nation. To answer this challenge, Abukloi actively encourages young women, former soldiers, and internally displaced persons to enroll. Previously, their lives had been dominated by war-time activities, but with the creation of a new country, they now have access to resources that allow them to imagine a different future.

Abukloi is also deeply committed to letting the community lead. Local leaders, community councils, and parents are integral to charting Abukloi's direction.

In 2015, the first class of students developed the vision, mission, and value statements that Abukloi Secondary holds on to today:

### ***Vision***

***To Build Human Communities of Love, Honesty, Justice, and Harmony***

### ***School Goal***

***To develop students into responsible, compassionate, and free individuals concerned about the welfare of others.***

### ***Abukloi School Mission Statement***

***To preserve, create, and disseminate knowledge and promote the dignity of individuals through quality and relevant teaching.***

### ***Core Values***

***1- Honesty, Love, Trust, Respect, Integrity, and Transparency***

***2- Promotion and defense of intellectual and academic freedom.***

***3- Fostering teamwork, collaboration, creativity, effective communication, tolerance, and a culture of Peace***

***-Written by Abukloi Students***

## Growing Popularity

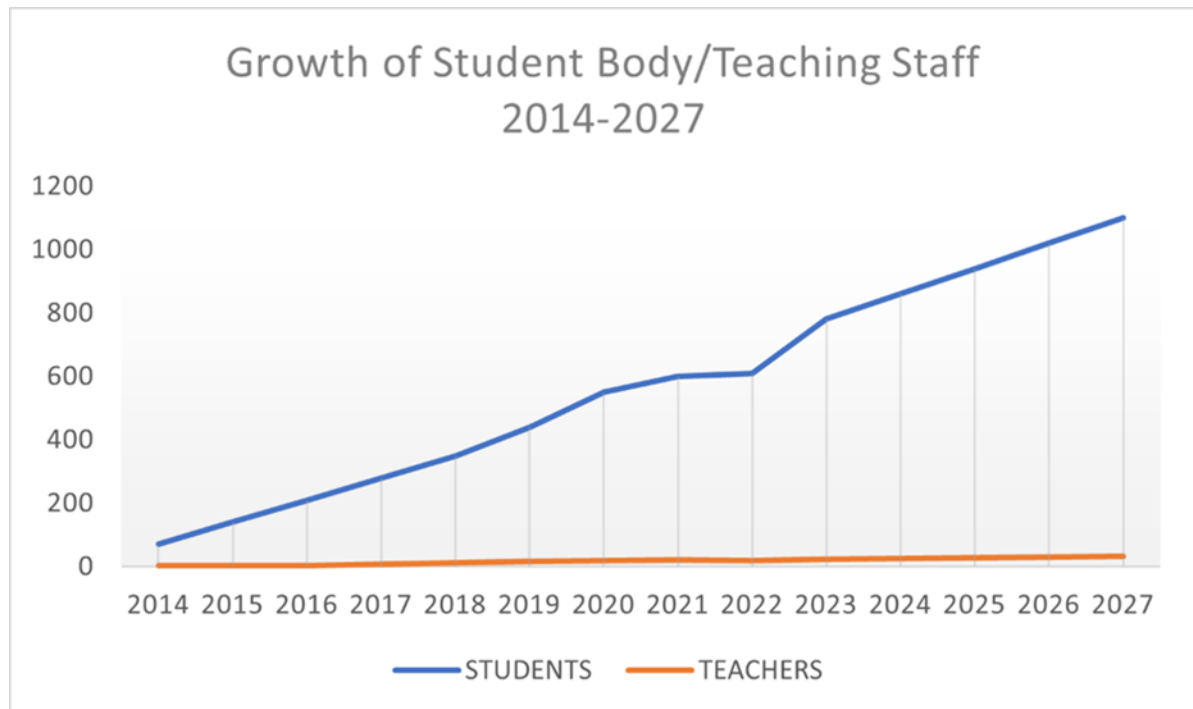
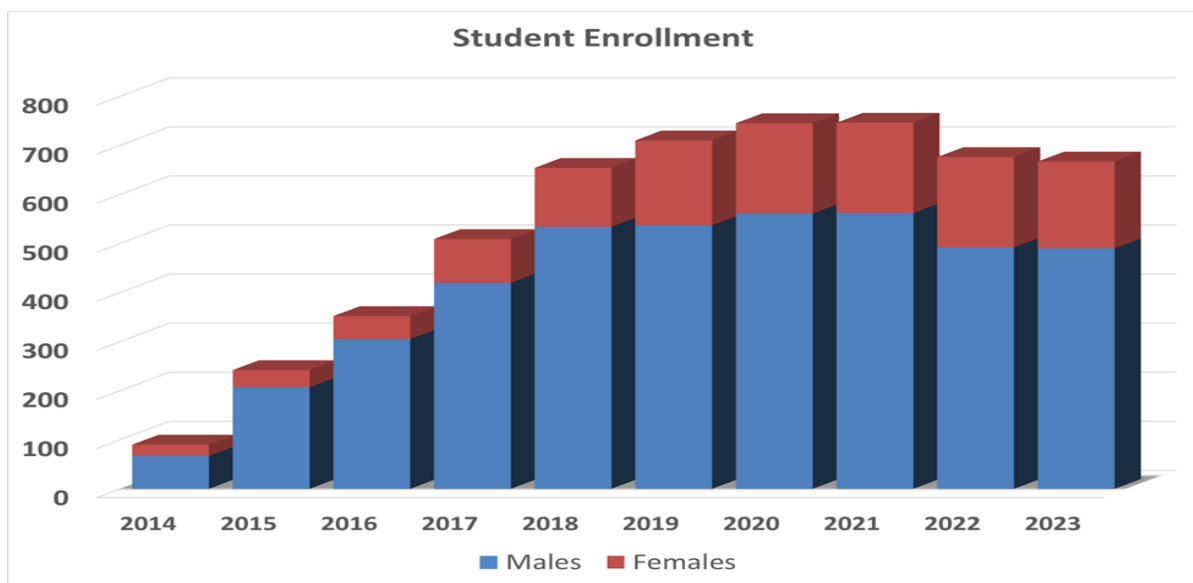
In the spring of 2014, Abukloi Secondary School officially opened its doors.

At the time, the school had four teachers (three local men and a woman from Kenya) and an inaugural class of 90 students. Since then, the school has grown in both reputation and size:

By 2015, 90 more students were accepted into the incoming class. 80 of those students were promoted into their sophomore year, an 88 percent retention rate.

By 2016, Abukloi hired 14 new teachers to ease the burden on the small teaching staff and expand curriculum opportunities.

On Feb. 10, 2018, Abukloi Secondary School graduated its first class, 60 strong. (The second graduating class, later that year, was 75 students.)



## Teacher Data by Year

The school management has the following data of teachers as from 2014-2023 as hereunder.

Year	Number of teachers	Status now
2014	04	1 present now
2015	06	2 present now
2016	10	4 present now
2017	18	6 present now
2018	18	13 present now
2019	18	14 present now
2020	10	10 present now
2021	19	15 present now
2022	22	18 present now
2023	20	17 present now

## Graduation Data from 2017-2022

Year	Number of students graduated by gender		Total graduated per a year	Remarks
	Males	Females		
2017				
Arts Students	27	02	29	<b>58</b>
Science Students	25	04	29	
2018				
Arts students	16	09	25	<b>76</b>
Science students	40	11	51	
2019				
Arts students	36	11	47	<b>92</b>
Science students	30	15	45	
2020				
Arts students	25	07	32	<b>97</b>
Science students	48	17	65	
2021				
Arts students	48	13	61	<b>153</b>
Science students	74	18	92	
2022				
Arts students	23	04	27	<b>59</b>
Science students	26	06	32	
<b>Grant Totals</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>535</b>

## Abukloi Secondary Campus



Abukloi Secondary School is located in Rumbek in the heart of Lakes State. It is 3 kilometers along Wau road from the Rumbek Center County main market in the Matangai payam.

The current campus consists of 12.35 acres with 3.7 acres fenced. There is a solar powered borehole, water tank, and two latrines for boys and girls. There are 8 large classrooms and 4 smaller rooms used as a library and teachers' offices.

The Abukloi Farm and future Abukloi Academy are located southeast of Rumbek Market.

## Administration

The Principal leads and manages the school's vision, mission, goals, and policies. S/he supports school culture, ensures high-quality teaching and learning, and oversees the school's operations, such as budget, facilities, student discipline, and safety. Our principal works collaboratively with students, parents, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders to promote the school's success and well-being.

Deputy of Academics and Deputy of Administration. Deputies review staff, deal directly with personnel issues, and make recommendations for employee advancement. The deputy of academics works directly with teachers to inform the curriculum, enforce discipline, and provide support to ensure teacher success. The deputy of administration works as support for the principal on issues concerning examinations, school grounds, and other programming. These two positions relieve the principal to focus on overall administration and improved programming.

## Training

If teachers are in short supply in South Sudan, teacher training is even more rare.

Ninety-three percent of South Sudan's available teachers are untrained, according to The Windle Trust. Further, many teachers are not proficient in English, the primary language of instruction in the country. And South Sudan's adult literacy rate is just 24 percent, far below the rate for the rest of East Africa. The teachers are also overburdened. In most secondary schools, the student-teacher ratio is 100:1.

In light of these figures, it's unsurprising that educational outcomes are poor. It has left the country without the basic needs for developing a modern economy and society.

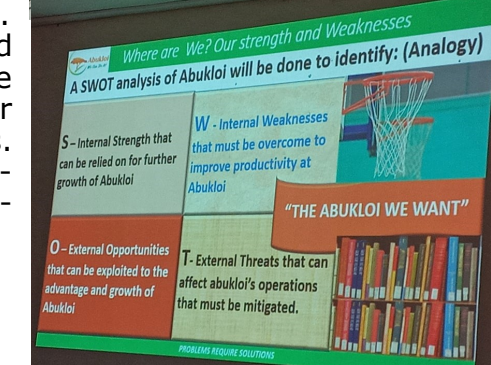
## Abukloi's Approach

Abukloi seeks to find the most qualified and motivated staff to teach the next generation of South Sudan's leaders. The school always looks to hire qualified teachers from within South Sudan. Currently, all of the school's 18 male teachers are South Sudanese. However, sourcing teachers within the school is not always possible. When it isn't, Abukloi hires from within East Africa. Currently, two of the school's 20 teachers are women from East Africa.

Abukloi's administrative staff strives to keep classroom sizes manageable to improve the learning environment.

Regular training sessions about classroom preparedness and school administration, including budgeting, are conducted by the Program Manager. Each teacher is given resources to create a teaching plan. Regular individual and peer evaluations motivate teachers to be accountable and learn from one another.

Regular teacher training is also worked into the school schedule. Training is designed to support the teacher's professional growth and effectiveness. By addressing training needs and utilizing effective techniques, all Abukloi teachers can be better prepared to deliver quality education and positively impact student learning outcomes. Ensuring that these training programs are contextually relevant, supportive, and sustained is crucial to foster long-term teacher development.





## Key Considerations

- 1. Pedagogical Training:** New teachers should receive comprehensive training on effective teaching methods, instructional strategies, and classroom management techniques. This training should focus on engaging students, differentiating instruction, and assessing student learning.
  - 2. Subject Knowledge Development:** Strong subject knowledge is crucial for teachers to effectively teach their respective disciplines. Training programs should provide opportunities for new teachers to deepen their content knowledge through workshops, seminars, and continuous professional development.
  - 3. Classroom Management:** Teachers should be equipped with strategies for maintaining discipline, establishing a positive classroom environment, managing student behavior, and promoting student engagement. Techniques like positive reinforcement, clear expectations, and proactive discipline approaches can be emphasized.
  - 4. Individualized Instruction:** Training should focus on promoting individualized instruction to cater to diverse student needs. Teachers should learn how to identify students' strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles to tailor instruction accordingly. Techniques like differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and formative assessment can be emphasized.
  - 5. Use of Technology:** Given the increasing role of technology in education, training programs should include guidance on effectively integrating technology into teaching and learning. Teachers should learn how to leverage digital resources, online learning platforms, and educational apps to enhance instruction and student engagement.
  - 6. Inclusive Education:** Training programs should emphasize inclusive education practices to support teachers in catering to the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities, special needs, or from marginalized backgrounds. Strategies for creating inclusive classrooms and adapting instruction should be covered.
  - 7. Community Engagement:** Teachers should be trained in building strong relationships with parents, guardians, and the community. Effective communication strategies, parent-teacher conferences, and involving the community in the education process can be highlighted.
  - 8. Mentoring and Support:** Establishing mentoring programs where new teachers are paired with experienced educators can provide valuable guidance and support. Regular mentorship meetings, observations, and feedback sessions can help new teachers refine their skills and address specific challenges.
  - 9. Practical Classroom Experience:** Providing opportunities for new teachers to practice their skills in real classroom settings, such as through supervised teaching practice or apprenticeships, can significantly enhance their readiness and confidence.
- Continuous Professional Development:** Training should emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development to encourage new teachers to stay updated on educational research, best practices, and emerging trends. Access to professional development workshops, conferences, and online resources should be facilitated.



Part of this process is allowing teachers' voices in Abukloi's practices, by ensuring them a voice in objectives and metrics. ***The school's teachers set a goal to have 100 percent of their students pass the national exam by 2027. That goal was achieved in 2023.***

# Curriculum

Abukloi Secondary School was established to provide educational needs for the best primary school graduate learners from families of low-income earners who could not afford to pay for the cost of tuition and scholastic materials of their students' education progress. The aim of Abukloi Foundation is, therefore, to address the educational needs of children who wish to continue with their education but cannot meet their educational targets.

The curriculum of Abukloi is designed to provide a comprehensive education that aligns with the national curriculum of South Sudan while incorporating future-ready innovation and skills. The curriculum aims to empower students with the knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and practical skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society. It emphasizes the development of core academic subjects, as well as essential competencies such as problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy.

Although it is outside the national curriculum, Abukloi's comprehensive education goals support learning and preserving local languages. Abukloi Secondary is one of the first schools in South Sudan to offer Dinka language studies to Senior One. Although Dinka was developed into a written form in the early 20th century, written literacy is not prevalent. The decision to introduce Dinka as a subject was reached by the Abukloi board of directors after consulting with the teachers and administrators. Two additional teachers were hired to instruct the course.



## Curriculum Structure

The curriculum is organized into three main components: Core Subjects, Electives, and Future-Ready Skills. Each is designed to enhance students' holistic development and prepare them for academic and career pathways.

**Core Subjects:** The core subjects cover the essential disciplines required for a well-rounded education. They are aligned with the national curriculum of South Sudan and include the following:

- a. Mathematics
- b. English Language and Literature
- c. Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology)
- d. Social Studies (History, Geography, Civics)
- e. Foreign Language (Arabic or French)

**Electives:** Electives provide students with the opportunity to explore their interests and develop specialized knowledge in specific areas. Abukloi offers a range of elective subjects, allowing students to tailor their education based on their aptitudes and aspirations. The elective subjects include:

- a. Information and Communication Technology
- b. Visual Arts
- c. Performing Arts (Music, Dance, Drama)
- d. Physical Education and Sports
- e. Entrepreneurship and Business Studies
- f. Agriculture and Farming
- g. Environmental Studies
- h. Health and Nutrition



## Future-Ready Skills

Recognizing the importance of equipping students with skills that are vital in the future, Abukloi integrates the following skills across the curriculum:

- a. **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Encouraging students to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and apply logical reasoning to solve complex problems.
- b. **Communication and Collaboration:** Developing effective communication skills, including verbal, written, and digital communication, as well as promoting teamwork and collaboration.
- c. **Creativity and Innovation:** Fostering students' creativity, imagination, and original thinking through various activities and projects.
- d. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** The capacity to embrace change, adapt to new situations, be open to learning, and adjust strategies in response to evolving circumstances.
- e. **Emotional Intelligence:** The ability to recognize and understand one's emotions and those of others, develop empathy, manage emotions effectively, and build positive relationships.
- f. **Digital Literacy:** Equipping students with the necessary digital skills to navigate technology, evaluate information sources, and use digital tools effectively.
- g. **Global and Cultural Awareness:** Promoting understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, global issues, and intercultural communication.
- h. **Adaptability and Resilience:** Cultivating resilience, adaptability, and a growth mindset to thrive in changing environments and overcome challenges.
- i. **Ethical and Moral Reasoning:** Encouraging students to develop a sense of ethical responsibility, moral reasoning, and social awareness.

As Abukloi grows and adapts, we are learning to integrate programs that will teach students practical skills to respond to South Sudan's immediate needs. Whereas, academic and professional fields are important, we want to educate job-creators who can fill South Sudan's development needs.



## Extra-Curricular Programs

**Extra-curricular programs** help students learn differently, apply their knowledge to practical situations, and live out the Abukloi School Mission.

**IFRC First Aid Club** trains students in lifesaving first-aid. The Red Cross Club trains students in basic first aid and environmental safety management, including how to keep the school grounds clean and safe. The club also supports the psychological rehabilitation of disabled students. Many of our students go through First Aid training and have attended the Red Cross conference in Juba.

**UN Peace Club** With the support of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Ministry of Education, the clubs were launched back in 2016 to promote peace and push for a change of attitudes between students belonging to different ethnic groups. The peace club focuses on human and gender rights awareness.

**DEBATE CLUB** The school hosts a winning debate team. Debating hones skills in English, critical thinking, analysis, and communication. Students learn debating strategies in the classroom. South Sudan-based Teachers Without Borders sponsors inter-school debate competitions. The local government has invited our students to engage in conflict analysis and resolution programs, debating the merits of issues such as women's rights and gun control.

**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT - YES! Club** During after-school remote seminars, Words Into Deeds uses resources such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as frameworks to provide water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) training and digital literacy to our students. Sustained support is provided for students and teachers to implement liquid soap and feminine hygiene kit businesses through the Youth Empowerment Summit. These products are manufactured at school by the students and sold at Abukloi's kiosk in the market.

**WELLBEING CLUB** Abukloi is introducing the Wellbeing Club, sponsored by UC San Diego and AfricaELI. The Wellbeing Club builds upon the evidence-based Gender, Wellbeing, and Ecological Common Framework. Through regular leadership meetings, the curriculum is adapted to meet the cultural and contextual needs of the facilitators and participating youth.

Youth use a multi-dimensional framework of art projects, hands-on activities, and talking circles to identify the many influences on their day-to-day wellbeing while developing trust and connection as a group. Conversations help the youth understand that their peers share many of their experiences and that others listen and care. These collective conversations also contribute to increased critical consciousness as youth recognize inequalities, oppressions, and sources of strength on multiple levels.

**Sports** help Abukloi's students by helping them develop the whole person, including the physical and mental health, as well as emphasizing teamwork.

Currently, Abukloi has the following sports:

Football — boys

Volleyball — boys and girls

Basketball — boys and girls

Dance — boys and girls



## Abukloi Enterprises

- ◆ Generations of colonialism and civil war have stunted South Sudan's economy.
- ◆ A lack of transportation and energy infrastructure leaves entire regions isolated.
- ◆ 97 percent of South Sudan's population is of working age. The median age is 16.
- ◆ Thirty-eight percent of Abukloi students are over 20.

Abukloi continuously seeks opportunities to develop programs and businesses that grow the local economy. These programs inspire others to create adjacent businesses, increasing employment opportunities for a community of more than a half million people.

We are expanding our small-business creation program through an endeavor called Abukloi Enterprises. Abukloi Enterprises will provide training, mentoring, and funding for aspiring entrepreneurs who want to start or expand their own ventures. This will create a network of small businesses that employ the local population, generating income.

Each student takes business studies and accounting in their final year, where they are taught to create a business plan. At the end of the year, they submit their plans to compete for donor-sponsored no-interest micro-loan funding. This program funded fourteen businesses that hire local employees and help stimulate the local economy.

Abukloi also looks for opportunities to employ alums. The school employs graduates to manage the library, significantly improving supervision and efficiency. Students who have received university scholarships are asked to return to Abukloi and share their experiences and lessons with current students.

Business development training shows students that they can create their own economy: generating demand for goods and services that others will be inspired to provide. The knowledge empowers the local population to demand the resources they need from the regional or national government, deepening political participation and expanding political consciousness.

All these skills expand creativity, develop problem-solving techniques, and literally change how the community behaves. Students are learning alternative ways to respond to conflicting ideas in a country where intercultural conflicts are often addressed with violence.



## Abukloi Farm

South Sudan suffers from a number of problems in agriculture:

- ◆ South Sudan lacks virtually every infrastructure, including an adequate agriculture sector.
- ◆ 60 percent of South Sudanese are food insecure; 40 percent face extreme hunger.
- ◆ 90 percent of South Sudan's land is arable, but the agriculture sector is severely undeveloped.
- ◆ Malnutrition impairs cognitive function and motivation.



Our newest program is Abukloi Farm which will provide a self-sustaining meal program for our school and an agriculture training center for the entire community. We are tackling food insecurity by teaching sustainable agriculture practices and techniques and promoting economic development through the production and sale of crops and livestock.

Abukloi Farm is located southeast of Rumbek Market in Rumbek Center in the *Akuac payam* (neighborhood). Abukloi Foundation currently holds 125 acres of arable land in the payam with the potential to add more acreage. There is a well on the property that can be modified for irrigation. Three acres are fenced.

### Food Security

The goal of this program is to provide approximately 700 meals per day, five days a week, for all students and staff of Abukloi Secondary School. Surplus produce will be sold at the market and the proceeds will be used to sustain the farm.

The *Akuac* area is good for sorghum, groundnuts, and vegetable production. Plans include a fruit tree nursery and sustainable compost development. The close location of the farm to the Rumbek market is economical for transportation and labor.

The first phase of the farm program is to plant vegetables and fruit trees. Five different vegetable varieties will be planted on ten-acre blocks each. Once the produce is established, additional acreage will be planted with grains and legumes at a larger scale. After three years, we anticipate that we will be able to provide enough crops to feed our students and sell surplus produce at the market.

### Agricultural Training

While addressing economic development, agriculture is one of our most essential programs outside the regular academic curriculum. We train students in agriculture techniques so they can take these skills back to their families to improve yields. Operating costs will be offset by marketing cash crops and by small manufacturing operations deriving from the farming operations. Through theoretical and practical experience with farming, students are introduced to the value of food production and marketing.

A course in the Science curriculum for 9th and 10th-grade students instructs in food production, farming methods, and land management for maximum food production. Students receive theoretical and practical farming experience and are provided with the necessary tools to engage in active farming. Students are learning the value of food production and marketing food products. Intermediate outcomes include success at land preparation/cultivation, crop selection and planting, crop monitoring, and harvest.

Practical agriculture education empowers the local population to meet their own basic needs and tackle food insecurity without the direct aid of government or multinational organizations. In collaboration with neighborhood women, the open space on Abukloi Secondary School's grounds is cultivated and used for food production. Students at the school are included in the project.

## Economic Development

The ten-acre blocks in the vegetable farm will support at least 10 farmers of which at least will be 6 women. These fifty smallholder farmers will transfer their learned skills to their own farms, as an opportunity for scalability and additional employment creation.

With the help of funding from U.S. donors, the Foundation has sponsored a women's community garden. The program utilizes sustainable agriculture practices and teaches the women how to market their produce and budget their profits to feed their families and sustain the gardens.

Community members work together to address problems such as pest and disease control and fertilizer. The Rumbek Community Development Council advocates for the women by championing their project to major funders, such as the Agriculture Bank of South Sudan, that supports farming activities in the country.



## Abukloi Clinic

Our future vision is to provide quality health care to the Abukloi community. Abukloi Health will use preventative medicine and public health education to reduce the burden of chronic disease. We plan to partner with local health workers and organizations to provide essential health services, such as vaccinations, screenings, and referrals.

Beginning in 2024, a school nurse will provide:

- Basic health education and nutrition support
- Water, sanitation and hygiene education
- Maternal and well-baby care
- Identification, referral and provision of childhood immunizations
- Control and treatment of communicable diseases
- Identification and referral of clients for appropriate health management
- Provision of essential drugs and supplies to those with minor illnesses and conditions
- Psychosocial support and counselling

# Abukloi Academy

To create a learning environment where secondary students across South Sudan, regardless of culture, language, creed, age, gender, or marital status, can live, learn, work, and play together in a safe atmosphere and nurture the values of friendship, citizenship, peace, and reconciliation. Half of South Sudan's population are children. The average age is under 19 years, yet the average 3rd grader is as old as 14. Youth in the country experience many challenges due to limited access to educational opportunities, health services, and high unemployment. Out-of-school youth are especially vulnerable to crime, early pregnancy, and mental health challenges. The lack of formal education, skills, and work opportunities for their parents compounds their needs.

South Sudan's economy cannot rely on higher education to develop a skilled workforce. Less than 20 percent of primary students finish the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Many of these students cannot go on to the secondary level. Young women often must fend for themselves and their children before age 18. Functional literacy, numeracy, and life skills must be mastered at a younger age. Furthermore, around 30% of our students are over the age of 20. They simply do not have the time or resources to spend another 4-5 years obtaining a university degree.

When citizens who do obtain secondary or higher education are met with pervasive unemployment, it threatens to destabilize any economic gains. All levels of education must be recalibrated to focus on *competency-based approaches that emphasize entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable development*. Experiential learning cultivates high-value skills and abilities that respect culture, engage students in sustainable technology, and inspires creative problem solving.

At Abukloi, we believe in the credo of the country's 2019 curriculum framework:

"A new nation needs a new curriculum" (*Curriculum Framework South Sudan, 2019*).

We do not want to replicate the standardized industrial model but bring to life the South Sudan 2040 Vision *to build an educated and informed nation by providing quality education for all, which is accessible and equitable, of good quality, efficient, and relevant*.

The Abukloi model balances the importance of history, traditions, and the urgency of current needs with forward thinking and innovation to produce sustainability, growth, and prosperity.

It also tackles the realities of discriminatory gender norms, psychosocial and socio-emotional stress, and debilitating health issues. On our campus and in the classroom, we consider a student body that is coping with generational trauma and chronic illness while looking for ways to create stability in their lives and their communities.



## Building the Future

Uniting the country under an independent government did not instantly create unity among the culturally diverse people of South Sudan. With over 60 different language groups living in one nation, much work needs to be done to create the sense of “one people, one nation.”

A new Abukloi Academy will be part of the foundation of national unity. Although the name may be from the Dinka, Abukloi intends to bring together youth and adults of all tribes, languages, genders, creeds, and political beliefs to live, learn, and play together in a safe learning environment. Abukloi Academy will impact the national narrative in economic development and peace-building, using multicultural education as a powerful tool for societal transformation and peaceful coexistence.

Abukloi Academy will serve all South Sudanese who are:

Youth of secondary school age (14-18)

Students of all cultures and creeds

Non-traditional and continuing education students (students older than 18)

Married girls and women with children

Marginalized: people with disabilities, IDPs, refugees

With its record of academic achievement, the time has come to move forward with the next step toward realizing Abukloi’s strategic vision. It has become clear that the current facilities do not have the space or the technical infrastructure to meet the needs of contemporary students. The performance record of Abukloi students exceeds that of the government schools; it is at the top of the national results. Because of this superior performance, the school’s biggest problem today is accommodating all the students who want to attend. The student population is expected to double in the next three years.

To address this overwhelming demand for education in South Sudan, the Foundation intends to build a new, larger school on a large parcel of land in the *Akuac payam* given to Abukloi by the Rumbek community. The master plan developed for the property includes the Abukloi Academy high school, residence facilities for 1,500 students, a sports complex, and a future Abukloi University.

### Features

The school will be built on 10 acres of the property. It will include these features:

- Sixty-four fully equipped classrooms accommodating fifty students each
- A school administration building with offices and facilities
- An extensive school library
- Fully equipped laboratory spaces to support all STEM disciplines
- A student cafeteria
- All necessary utilities including power, water, and sewage facilities



## Design in Phases

Understanding the need to ramp up the school facilities quickly, The design adopts a modular approach to the school layout. Multiple buildings may be constructed in many combinations according to the available needs and resources. There are, for example, four separate classroom blocks, each consisting of two levels, each level of which contains eight classrooms. Each classroom accommodates fifty students. This approach allows the school to begin holding classes after constructing the first level of classroom blocks.



## Construction Phases

Four phases have been developed for the construction of the Academy. These take advantage of the modular design approach that underlies the project. The phases range from a minimum of eight classrooms to a design capacity of sixty-four classrooms. Each will accommodate 400 students.

The first phase includes all structures necessary to make Abukloi Academy functional to begin to educate the first complement of students. It includes the following features:

- ◆ A perimeter security fence surrounding the entire 400 x 800-meter property
- ◆ The ground floor of the first classroom block containing eight classrooms
- ◆ External washrooms for student use
- ◆ All necessary utilities, including power, water, and sewage systems

The second phase includes the first and adds a second floor to the previous construction, thus doubling the number of classrooms for little additional cost. Phase 3 adds another complete two-level classroom block and adds the first level of the administration building, the student cafeteria, and washrooms.

The final full design will be 64 classrooms, a library, science and technology laboratories, and native, sustainable landscaping accommodating approximately 3000 students.

Abukloi leadership has inspired local agencies like the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to invest in their dream. With local assistance, the land has been cleared and fenced, ready for construction by 2024. A modular approach will make classrooms operational even during subsequent phases and maintain the hope the community has in Abukloi to realize this dream.

The original Abukloi Secondary School, located three miles from the Academy site, will remain open as a secondary school for underclassmen. Upon completion of the Academy, the Foundation proposes to convert the original campus into a vocational training site for people of all ages.

# Competency-Based Education

The Abukloi competency-based framework aims to create:

- (1) Good citizens of South Sudan and the world
- (2) Creative and productive individuals
- (3) Successful life-long learners
- (4) Environmentally responsible members of society.

South Sudan inherited an anemic economy and virtually no national infrastructure. Foreign investment, especially from China, provides some services, but their reliance on imported labor does little for high unemployment numbers.

Access to education is still a challenge for the 73 percent of the country's population that is under 19. Conflict and poverty have left the majority of adults illiterate. Over 30 percent of Abukloi's student body is over the age of twenty, with some students reaching forty by their fourth year. Many of our female students marry and are even mothers by graduation. Conventional education models that require higher education to learn professional skills are impractical for a population that relies on herding and the informal economy.

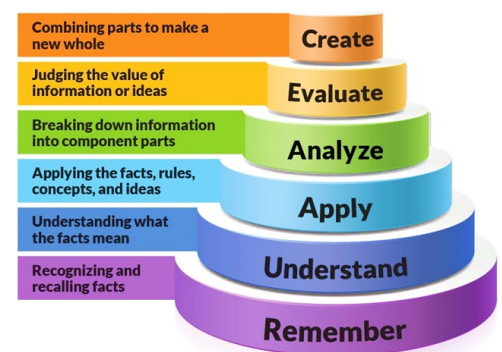
South Sudan needs more than buildings to grow. To build a new nation, South Sudan needs a nation of builders. Job skills must reflect the qualitative needs of the community. Abukloi aims to provide learning experiences that enable our graduates to be job creators rather than job seekers. We focus on the practical as well as the theoretical. Our goal is to reorient the curriculum to integrate technology and increase partnerships to develop skilled individuals who can address local development issues.

Developing technology infrastructure in South Sudan is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach. According to the African Development Bank, infrastructure development is a key driver for progress across the African continent and a critical enabler for productivity and sustainable economic growth. It contributes significantly to human development and poverty reduction ([Infrastructure Development | African Development Bank - Building today, a better Africa tomorrow \(afdb.org\)](https://www.afdb.org)). But even the best infrastructure cannot adequately address the entire learning spectrum.

The process for delivering instruction is equally important. Given the fast pace changes in our world, it becomes essential for teachers to develop techniques to help students adapt to global and community problems. Using the problem-based learning (PBL) process, students are taught to identify and analyze problems, apply knowledge and skills to solve problems, and create solutions.

If South Sudan is going to advance beyond current thinking, educators and students alike must think more deeply. Often government designed student assessments merely address lower-level thinking. **Bloom's Taxonomy** has been applied by generations of K-12 teachers and college instructors in their teaching. The framework elaborated by Bloom and his collaborators consists of six major categories: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. (Armstrong, 2010).

Abukloi will use this framework to create a nimble experiential learning environment that can respond in real time to the rapidly changing social, governmental, and economic realities in South Sudan. By providing a balance between philosophical and pragmatic exercises, Abukloi students will be able to meet the demands of their growing nation.





## Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning is a new venture in South Sudan that complements theoretical learning in academic institutions. It includes learning activities outside the classroom, supporting youth in “learning from doing”. Experiential Learning (EL) most often includes internships, mentored research, entrepreneurship, or civic activities that connect students with real-world opportunities to apply knowledge and develop important skills and competencies along the way.

In the United States, EL is growing in popularity at the undergraduate level, complementing coursework. In South Sudan, most students will not enter higher education. Students need access to practical instruction that can be implemented in fields that will foster South Sudan’s development. Therefore, practical learning experiences must be introduced at the earliest educational levels.

As more and more youth graduate from secondary institutions, no employment opportunities are available for them. Youth are left with little hope and often fall victim to the effects of poverty. Experiential Learning offers new possibilities for providing youth with valuable experiences connected with emerging innovations and also opportunities to address challenges created by climate change, economic failures, and chronic health issues.

Abukloi Secondary School is implementing an experiential learning model the 5-module PEARL training.

**Prepare:** Set intentions for personal and professional growth; explore needs and challenges to identify a Project Challenge; and develop a plan.

**Engage and Add Value:** put plan into motion focusing on making a meaningful contribution; engage stakeholders and flex professional competencies.

**Reflect:** monitor progress and adjust; revisit assumptions and understanding; connect experience with goals; develop narratives about struggles and achievement.

**Leverage:** building on efforts for greater capacity; integrating experience with individual growth plans, career development, and group goals.

This approach is highly flexible and easily used in different communities and contexts. It was developed by Dr. Mara Huber at the University at Buffalo and offers Experiential Learning Project Challenges that address the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Problem-based learning processes challenge students to acknowledge factual data, apply the facts to their lives, analyze the effects of the ideas, and judge the effects of those ideas on themselves and society. By applying theoretical concepts to real-world situations, young people start to understand how they can affect change.

Through experiential learning, students learn to be the drivers of economic change. They know their needs. The following competency-based strategies give students the experience to start solving their problems.

**Project-Based Learning:** Engaging students in hands-on projects like maintaining a garden or health clinic that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration.

**Use of Technology:** Integrating technology tools and resources into the learning process to enhance research, communication, and digital literacy skills.

**Field-Based Learning:** Organizing field trips, visits to local organizations, and community service activities to provide practical, real-world experiences. Collaborating with Abukloi's many local and international partners will expose students to solutions in action and give them an opportunity to contribute ideas.

**Peer Learning and Group Work:** Encouraging peer collaboration, cooperative learning, and teamwork benefits students and teachers and fosters communication, understanding, and social skills.

**Assessments for Learning:** Employing a variety of formative and summative assessments, including presentations, projects, portfolios, and exams, to evaluate students' and teachers progress and provide feedback for improvement.

There are a multitude of techniques Abukloi will use to implement an experiential learning strategy that will meet the skills needs of South Sudan.

### **Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)**

The goal of TVET is: "To promote relevant and quality non-formal and formal post-primary technical and vocational education and training that is governed by a unified and efficient TVET system and that provides nationally and globally competitive human resources while stressing gender equity and inclusiveness."

Abukloi Academy will incorporate vocational training into its program. Combined with business development and entrepreneurship, youth and young adults will create their own employment, boosting the economy of local communities.

### **Alternative education system (AES)**

The alternative education system (AES) aims to improve literacy levels and provide out of School populations with a second chance to continue their education. This Continuing education program will address the needs of many of Abukloi's non-traditional students who cannot attend secondary school full-time or are significantly older than the secondary population.

## **Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)**

The lack of primary schools, poverty, and insecurity have left a significant portion of the population without a primary education. To meet the needs of the un-schooled population, Abukloi will incorporate the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) into its program. ALP condenses eight years of primary into four and is designed for children aged 13-17 (though youth up to age 25 are allowed to Participate).

## **Community/Continuing Education**

Continuing education will be offered in the classroom and through workshops, seminars, and practical training. Cues will be taken from the informal economy: an economic driver in most rural and small villages. Life skills such as health and hygiene, first aid, personal finance, and citizenship will help participants meet family and community goals. Entrepreneurship, business development, sustainable agriculture, and public policy will train people to better participate in commerce and government.

## **Returning Alumni**

Donors provide the top male and female students with tuition scholarships to attend university in South Sudan every year. Upon completion, each student will be asked to return to Abukloi and share what they have learned with the secondary students. They may teach a subject for a term, conduct a workshop or seminar, or organize community-wide training.

This opportunity allows students to see how their secondary education can be used practically. It also provides a teaching opportunity for alumni to implement what they have learned and give back the school and community that provided their education. Since the program is new, the first visit will take place in the near future.

## **Cultural Literacy**

*"Education is, to a large extent, the transmission of the cultural heritage of the people. Culture is at the beginning and at the end of the educational process."* — Clifford Nelson Fyle

Although the name may be of Dinka origin, Abukloi sees itself as a school for all South Sudanese. Abukloi seeks to bring together youth and adults of all cultures, languages, genders, creeds, and beliefs to live, learn, and play together in a safe learning environment.

Abukloi impacts the national narrative in economic development and peacebuilding, using multicultural education as a powerful tool for societal transformation and peaceful coexistence.

Cultural Studies teaches the history, languages, and dialects of all South Sudan. This comprehensive course celebrates all South Sudan's unique cultures while developing a sense of national citizenry. Incorporating the language, music, art, and history of each of South Sudan's cultures promotes respect for each group. Discussing shared and different values builds trust and understanding that can lead to more egalitarian governance.

## **Trauma-Informed Education**

Addressing issues of generational trauma is a large part of the problem-solving discipline. We must address socio-emotional issues such as PTSD, conflict resolution, and conflicting moral philosophies as the building blocks for their livelihoods and civic engagement. This can only succeed with students actively participating in the educational process.

Abukloi brings all its students' unique gifts and shared trauma to the forefront seeking healthy resolutions and communal growth. Participating in programs like [AfricaELI's WellBeing Club](#), debates that challenge traditional norms, and cultural enrichment teaches students to value their uniqueness while celebrating the experiences of others.

## Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Nothing impacts community development more than the advancement of information communication technology (ICT). Computers, the expansion of cellular networks, and internet access have made the world a global village. Abukloi invests in ICT training by augmenting its tech infrastructure and partnerships as South Sudan expands its cellular and power infrastructure. Until that infrastructure is complete, Abukloi will bolster technology access by continually expanding its **solar energy** capacity. Resources such as [Internet-In-a-Box](#) will be used in the classroom to give students access to global information sources and computer skills even without access to WiFi.



Abukloi will be a central hub of technological knowledge and innovation. As electricity is established in Rumbek, Abukloi will provide the human capital to serve South Sudan's ICT network. ICT studies are gender neutral and accessible to all. In the classroom and through TVET programs, learners of any gender, age, or ability can empower themselves to solve problems facing their community.

## STEAM



Building **technology infrastructure** is necessary for problem solving and developing a robust education system. The recent world-wide pandemic has clearly demonstrated the need for digital education, and its significant role in teachers and learning. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a genie that cannot be put back into a bottle. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggests AI has the potential to address some of the biggest challenges in education today, innovate teaching and learning practices, and accelerate progress ([artificial intelligence in education - Search \(bing.com\)](#)). It has the potential to address inequalities and access to knowledge, research, and diversity of cultural expression (Nilson, 2010).

Abukloi students are trained to *analyze* new information, *evaluate* its appropriateness and potential for their community, and *create* solutions that will build South Sudan. Fundamentals of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and art will focus on the needs of the national economy, especially petroleum production, engineering, medicine, regional planning, and natural resource management. The introduction of new skills and techniques prepares students to take on jobs not known to their parents.

Over the next decade, Abukloi will examine climate change, regional development, and herding and animal husbandry best practices. Lessons will explore innovative techniques that respect and improve on traditional practices. Students are open to advances in health, sanitation, crop production and will lead their communities toward a healthier and more productive future.

## Environmental Responsibility

Floods affect more than 900,000 people annually in South Sudan and lead to outbreaks of cholera and malaria. Although over 90 percent of land in South Sudan is arable, little is used for agriculture. Chronic persistent hunger affects most of the population. The lack of regional infrastructure prompted Abukloi to address these issues on campus.

Environmental stability is a pillar of Abukloi's future growth. Building plans, infrastructure expansion, ground maintenance, and value systems revolve around the idea that everyone is responsible for protecting the Earth. Abukloi is producing the next generation of environmental leaders who respectfully combine traditional practices with advanced technologies.



Installing multiple handwashing stations and innovative technologies like microflush toilets for the students and staff at the school will improve hygiene and health. The microflush system uses aerobic vermiculture digesters to treat waste with very little water. Locals in the community can be trained to raise earthworms for the system and as a source of compost and fertilizer. Individuals participating in the program can earn income from selling the earthworm by-products.

The school campus is literally an oasis in the community providing green space and food. South Sudan rapidly faces desertification because of human activities like cutting forests for charcoal, timber, and farming. Abukloi's science education emphasizes humanity's effect on climate and practical solutions to address it.

Abukloi's campus is a laboratory of sustainable agriculture and reforestation. The administration addresses local food insecurity by planting fruit trees and allowing neighbors to cultivate open space within the fenced school grounds. Trees provide nutritious food, act as windbreaks, and provide much-needed shade. The gardens provide food while improving soil structure, reducing storm run-off, and lowering ground temperatures. As Abukloi grows, partnerships with other environmental leaders will help make the campus greener and more productive.

Moreover, the impact of severe food insecurity and floods, linked to the effects of climate change, continues to create an increased demand for water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. Employing microflush toilets with vermiculture techniques in future expansion plans will improve sanitation, conserve water, and provide organic resources that generate income. A solar-powered water pump and tank enable gardens around the campus to be irrigated. Expanding the water line to the surrounding neighborhood provides water to dozens of



## Partner Organizations

We are continuously forming new partnerships. In addition to working with local and national government ministries, we find ways to cooperate with international non-governmental organizations. Some of our most effective partnerships are with small non-governmental organizations, businesses, and academic institutions in the U.S., South Sudan, and other countries.

**Days For Girls International** is a nonprofit organization that prepares and distributes sustainable menstrual health solutions to girls who would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods. They supplied our girl students with reusable sanitary pads and training materials to help deliver menstrual health information to girls, women, boys, and men. We look forward to future partnerships with business development and advocacy work.

**Old Dominion University Center for Global Health** in Virginia collaborated with Abukloi on initiatives to address South Sudan's health infrastructure. The Center created a comprehensive health education curriculum for our teachers to use in classroom instruction. These resources were vital at a time when textbooks were not available, and our teachers had few teaching aids to use.

**Quality Life Services** A private company in Pennsylvania provides substantial financial support to Abukloi. Additionally, they have sent volunteers to the school to train students and teachers in entrepreneur training and computer skills. QLS sponsored interest-free microloans given to select graduates who present a viable business plan. To date, over 10 businesses have been funded.

**Rotary International** Abukloi partners with several U.S. and South Sudan-based Rotary Clubs to help finance new projects such as solar power, water projects, hygiene, and computer skills training. Rotary Club Ithaca, NY, funded a sanitary pad business for the YES! Club to implement. Rotary Club Pontotoc, MS, is preparing a grant to start a daily meal program. We are pursuing an RI Global Grant to fund a technology upgrade.





**Rumbek University of Science and Technology** The Foundation also utilizes the skill of individuals who come to the school and share their expertise with our teachers and students. Volunteers have conducted one-on-one training and multi-day group seminars on health and human reproduction, capacity training, basic-computer techniques, and small-business development. These clubs and other activities allow Abukloi students to grow and mature as peaceful and responsible community members. These students will be the next generation of leaders in South Sudan. By investing in their future, we are investing in a future of peace and progress.

**Sudan Sunrise: The Moringa Project** Malnutrition is widespread in South Sudan. It would be unsustainable to supply vitamins to the whole population. The Moringa tree, which grows well in South Sudan and was introduced decades ago, has leaves that contain a wide range of vitamins and minerals. Thanks to a grant in memory of Dr. Reinhold Mankau by his widow Dr. Saroj Mankau, Sudan Sunrise has been provided with millions of moringa seeds and the training to grow them. Moringa leaves are rich in vitamins and minerals. The high amounts of amino acids and antioxidants fight inflammation, act as an antiseptic, improve bone health and lactation, and naturally detoxify the body. Abukloi Foundation is partnering with Sudan Sunrise to acquire and cultivate numerous moringa seeds to plant on our campus and in the Rumbek community.

**The Windle Trust** believes that *expanding access to and improving the quality of education and training* is the best way to create a sustainable transformation of society. They accomplish this by providing cash transfers to pay for our girl students' academic needs, such as tuition and uniforms. We also engage Trust experts to lead life skills and hygiene techniques workshops.

**University of Buffalo Project Portal** is a web-based platform that connects UB students with mentored projects that engage global non-governmental organizations contextualizing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals while contributing resources and talents. Founder Mara Huber is partnering with Abukloi to transform the school's needs and challenges into collaborative project opportunities. Projects include researching community innovation models and sharing in ways that are accessible to South Sudan youth; researching ways to connect Abukloi youth with information about jobs and educational pathways along with scholarships, fellowships and other resources available to South Sudan students; contributing digital media and art to evolving Youth-Leader publications focused on Africa and South Sudan specifically.

**Words Into Deeds, Inc (WID)** is a 501C3 located in Ithaca, New York, USA. Working with teachers and community leaders, presenting workshops using resources such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals as frameworks. WID began collaborating with the Abukloi Foundation in 2020, providing mini-grant funds to support professional development and youth empowerment workshops, resulting in a total of over \$8,000 for initiating liquid soap production and sanitary pad creation. The mini-grants were supported in part by the Rotary Club of Ithaca. Most recently, three Abukloi teacher leaders attended WID's 3 days in January, "Teaching Global Citizenship for the 21st Century," at Gulu, Uganda University. Words Into Deeds has committed to providing ongoing curriculum resources and support.

## Success Stories

When Abukloi Secondary School opened its doors in 2014, we had a variety of students join us. Below are some of the success stories from over the years .



**Peter Muorwel** (in the middle of the photo, waving) was over 30 years old when he enrolled in our first class. His education was interrupted at the age of 13 when he joined the Sudan People's Liberation Army to fight against the Khartoum government.

After South Sudan gained independence, Peter wanted to devote his life to God: serving people, he says, not fighting them. In a country where people eat one subsistence meal a day, Peter said he wanted to nourish his classmates with his constant smile and words of grace. He decided first he had to finish his education. He enrolled at Abukloi and became a mentor to his fellow students and teachers.

After graduating, Peter became an Anglican priest and then Bishop.

Today, Peter serves one of the poorest communities in Rumbek, South Sudan. Their beautiful church services were held underneath the branches of an enormous baobab tree.

For years, with no resources, Peter and his family devoted themselves to their congregation. To this day, Peter is a source of inspiration to the Rumbek and Abukloi communities.



Abukloi Foundation is working to help Bishop Peter's community as well. We are expanding our secondary school and community programs to his side of town, where almost 70% of children are not in school. That number is even more devastating knowing that half the population of South Sudan is under the age of 19.

**Peter Manguak Bol** was 35 years old when he completed 9th grade.

Peter is one of our older students, married with 5 children.

In 2007 Peter was bitten by an adder (poisonous snake) and would have died but the Red Cross took him to Kenya for medical treatment. It was there that his leg was amputated to save his life.

Life in South Sudan is incredibly difficult, and is only made more so with a physical handicap. But Peter is a farmer and his wife and children work together to provide.

Getting himself through secondary school was his first goal. He was particularly excited about the addition of computer science and business classes. With this dual knowledge he hopes to be a businessman.

Peter graduated from Abukloi in 2022 and has found work with the local government.



**John Chok Malual** is a member of Abukloi's 2022 graduating class. He is a shining example of how educating one radiates out to the whole.

John's father died when he was young and was raised by a mother with an amputated leg. "Chok" means "one leg."

He is very grateful for the opportunity to finish his secondary education. "I would want to thank you so much for the incredible job that you are doing for us. We are really getting a quality education. This has inspired us to think of what we can also do for others."

In his second year, John formed "Mutual Gift of Alleviation," an organization that seeks to transform, strengthen, and alleviate the lives of vulnerable people, especially widows and orphans. After a successful fundraiser, they collected enough funds to register 13 orphans in primary school. The organization also received a grant to implement a peacebuilding and trauma counseling project in prisons in Lakes State (where Abukloi is located).

In 2023, John was one of fifteen graduates in South Sudan who received a full-scholarship to attend university in Algeria. He is studying pharmaceutical science.



**Akolde Vivian William Madong, also known as Akolde William,** graduated from Abukloi top of her class in 2019 and was awarded a scholarship to Africa University in Zimbabwe, a prestigious university.

She's working on a public health degree and hopes to bring that expertise back to her community in Rumbek.

Often, she speaks about the fruits of donors' generosity in her home country. "My journey to Africa University is one of the most satisfying journeys of my life thanks to Abukloi," she says.

Akolde wrote an essay about her experience going to university.

#### MY FIRST WEEKS ON CAMPUS

Traveling to a new place, you'll always have an experience. My first weeks on campus weren't all that great. I felt like I didn't fit in. Students already had their small groups. Being the only South Sudanese, it was hard connecting with anyone. People around me always had mixed reactions when I said I was from South Sudan. Some went as far as claiming they had never heard of the country. The ones who knew about the country were a little rude, often asking if I had ever held a gun. I mean, the country is war torn, but... Then other people were welcoming and wanted to know more about South Sudan.

Africa University, for a lack of a better word, is a very serious institution. The lecturers are dedicated to their work. The classes are usually three hours long, on rare occasions, two hours. During class time, the lecturers make sure to make everyone feel included.

They usually ask us to tell them about the current situations in our countries. Did I mention that they love giving assignments? Since the start of the semester, we've done more than 20 assignments for only six subjects along with a bunch of tests.

Just like most universities in Zimbabwe, AU does not have a uniform. AU has also got many activities like sports, club activities, etc. Right now as I speak, football and volleyball tournaments are being held on campus grounds.

Club activities like "Pinktober" (breast cancer awareness) are also ongoing. There's also going to be a culture event on the 5th of November. The university has 8 hostels for girls and 5 for boys. I'm in a certain block, B. My room is okay although the walls are too bright for my liking. The walls are a yellowish color with cream curtains and a pink three door wardrobe alongside a brown carpet.

Since a room should be shared by two students, I have a roommate. She is Zimbabwean. Her name is Angela, a freshman and she is studying for a bachelor of science in social work. She is really quiet and keeps to herself. I feel like she isn't used to seeing people a lot. Hopefully, with time, she'll be more free with me. I have also made new friends; two Malawians, three Kenyans, a Congolese and an Angolan. The students here at Africa University are just, I don't know, caught up in their own world. Some are very friendly, others are mean but I guess every school has such students. They aren't violent, just a little too mouthy.

The food at AU or Zimbabwe in general is very new to me. I don't eat most of the dishes. It's not that it's bad, it's just new, different and I'm getting used to it. They have a meal called *sadza*, a school favorite. I hear it's very good. I'd love to try it one day but fear of a stomach upset.

Because I have classes throughout the week, I get to speak to my parents only on Sundays or sometimes they leave messages for me to find.

Although AU is a big institution, it's so strange that there aren't any employment opportunities for the students. I'm quite baffled by this. That's not the only shocking thing but AU forbids students from leaving the school premises. They have gone as far as creating a calendar for town trips, you only choose between Wednesday, Friday or Saturday to go to town and do whatever you would like. A student can only meet the "outside world" only once a week. So even if a person would like to get a job in town, it would not be possible because of the "no random movement" rule. They say that the reason for the strict rules is because of COVID-19 which is kind of understandable but not entirely so.

I think what I like most about AU is the scenery, the weather and some people, LOL. I enjoy interacting with people and AU has people from all over the continent. I like that because it gives me an opportunity to learn different languages, cultures and other things. I guess the toughest part of all of this was fitting in. At first, it was very hard since every country represented at AU has about 5 or more students within campus and being the only Sudanese, I guess I was looking for someone to call a sister or something, someone who I had something in common with but with time all those feelings vanished. Although they are some bad days, I'm enjoying my stay at AU.

**Deng Joseph** is the second-born in a family of eight children. He came to Abukloi as a 14-year-old. His father was killed, so his mother brought her children to Rumbek, determined to get them into school.

Deng says he dreams of peace between all South Sudan's tribes.

While at Abukloi, he worked with another Abukloi student, Luke Laat, who's from a different tribe, to start a "Peace Club." That club attracted attention from the United Nations.

Eventually, Deng began to write down his dreams.

He credits writing short stories and sharing them with his Abukloi schoolmates as paving the way for him to write his first book.



Deng (pictured on the right) received [an award from Eve Organization](#), a leading national organization that focuses on women empowerment and development in South Sudan, for his story, "Death Kidnapped My Parents."

In 2020, Deng joined the University of Juba School of Law.

Today, writing has become part of his daily routine and it helps him project his thoughts to people. He has a lineup of books waiting to be uploaded on Amazon such as "The Girl with Wings", "The power of Hope", "You Belong To Me" and "Behind Shadows," and [The Freedom Fighter](#) (co-written by Mayo Dhal) which is available on Amazon.





**Panda Margaret Magel** completed her secondary education by the age of 20.

Panda is a younger child with six siblings. Rev. Elijah Panda, her father, is an Episcopal priest who receives a small stipend from the church. He has also served as chairman of the Rumbek Community Development Committee that gave Abukloi its school property.

Elijah relies on cattle and a garden to provide for his family. Their garden is irrigated and they grow okra and tomatoes for their own use and for sale at the market.

After graduating, Panda worked at Abukloi as a librarian until she got the funds to go to Juba university. Her father is opposed to "forced marriage" and wants her to choose her own husband.

Panda's goal is to one day become a doctor.

**Gabriel Kaman Malek** graduated in 2019 when he was 20 years old and in S4.

His father is dead and his mother lives in Rumbek.

Gabriel lives with an uncle, a pastor at a local church in Rumbek, where he feels more secure. There is no breakfast and sometimes no food at night.

He would like to start his own business — a store selling supplies to the local people. While an Abukloi student, Biology was his favorite subject.

Gabriel left for a university in Khartoum to study computer science. But when civil war broke out in Sudan in 2023, he returned to Rumbek. He is now looking to continue his studies at Juba University.







